Prelim Questions on European Empires and Colonialism

Please respond to one question from each section.

Section (I)
1. The emergence of modernity in Europe is often identified as the “Great Divergence” (Huntington) or the “European Miracle” (Eric Jones). Discuss: (a) The meaning of these theories; (b) Historiographical problems associated with them; and (c) Two different critical approaches (choose at least one critic for each approach).

2. To what extent were largely Marxist, or materialist, critiques of imperialism displaced or supplanted by Saidean critiques of imperialist representations, or what became known as postcolonial studies, after 1978? One useful way to slice into this issue would be to focus on the actual and theoretical role of women and gender in the two approaches or paradigms.

Section (II)
3. Since the beginning of sixteenth century, European colonial powers competed with one another over territories and the resources extracted from them. Although they generally followed the same objectives, each had their distinct means of administration and implementation of their colonial policies. Choose three empires with overseas expansions and illustrate the distinctions in their colonial policies. Also, discuss in what ways these distinctions became relevant in the processes of decolonization after WWII.

4. To what extent were the structures and practices of the Ottoman, Habsburg and continental European empires more similar than dissimilar up to 1918? In addition to Ottomans and Habsburgs, discuss any two continental European empires in your response.

Section (III)
5. The Russian Revolution of 1917 changed the question of colonialism from a peripheral problem to a central question for the European revolutionaries. It linked the anti-imperialist struggles against colonial powers with Marxian notion of anti-capitalist revolutions. Imperialism also had its liberal opposition. Therefore, displeasure with colonialism from within, particularly during the 19th and 20th centuries, was neither uncommon nor ineffective. Choose two examples and identify internal
frictions which played a role in shaping colonial policies and the processes of decolonization.

6. To what extent have “center” and “periphery” models of imperialism changed over time, and to what extent do such models correspond to understanding the actual historical practice of imperialism? In your response, discuss two or three authors such as Wallerstein, Cooper/Stoler, and Bernard Cohn.