

Big man' and 'small problems'

Literature



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European expansionist ideas overwhelmed the world after the onset of the 15th century. Every European colonial power had reasons for acquisition of new colonial territories. Gulliver's Travels shows a mixed impression about colonialism. Jonathan Swift's uses of satires to describe different events, outlines the mixed reaction Gulliver had in his travels of the remote areas. Gulliver opposed conquest battles, even among the natives themselves. For example, Gulliver offers to support the Lilliput when they are up against Blefuscu, but after the capture of Blefuscu's naval fleet, Gulliver does not participate in conquest against the Blesfucu as asked by the Lilliput. This shows that Gulliver is opposed to imperialistic motives. Despite the fact that Gulliver refuses conquest motives, some of his views, as portrayed in Swift's satire, depict a demeaning view towards the natives of these areas.

Gulliver's Travels portrays support for colonialism in different perspectives. For example, in the description of the region's governance. Swift's depiction of the Lilliputian debates is a satirical indication that Gulliver thought the Europeans were more advanced. Gulliver described Lilliputian debate as petty compared to English forms of debate. This view reflects one of the factors that led to European conquest. After the struggles of the Middle Ages, European powers such as the Spanish, the English, the Dutch, and the Portuguese believed they had the responsibility to civilize the rest of the globe. This belief showed the growth of imperialistic motives. So when Gulliver describes the inferior reflection of the English Tories and the Whigs in one of the remote areas, the cause must have been that establishment of English colonial rule in the region would help make the territory better from its inferior governance practices.

The text demeans the customs of the remote areas. The descriptions of the peoples' culture in the regions show Gulliver's concerns. Gulliver could have embraced the notion that different people liked diverse cultures. However, Gulliver's perception of the people's customs as barbaric shows his inner support for imperialism. Gulliver must have held beliefs that Europeans had the responsibility to save the region from their primitive traditions, a view represented but most European explorers to other parts of the world. Also, the text describes these areas' customs as cause of conflict between the natives of these lands. The demeaning perception of these customs shows Gulliver's support for imperialism.

The need to spread Christianity to the rest of the world was one of the main reasons for European colonization. Many Europeans thought that Christianity was the rightful religious practice and that it should be embraced globally. These biased religious beliefs made European colonialists want to establish colonies all over the world. Gulliver also depicts conflicting views towards the spiritual practices in the areas he visited. Gulliver ridicules religious beliefs in Lilliputian and The blesfufcu regions. In fact, Gulliver is detained for extinguishing a palace fire by urinating on the fireplace. This act portrayed arrogance towards the areas of religious practices. However, the act also depicted the imperialistic views that Christianity is the rightful spiritual practice. Therefore, the attitude of the region's religious beliefs is an indication of Gulliver's indirect support for imperialism.

The text further portrays indirect support for colonialism by outlining Gulliver's inner views. At Brobdingnag, Gulliver is warmly received in the region's palace where he becomes popular in the court. However, despite <https://assignbuster.com/big-man-and-small-problems/>

this friendliness, Gulliver praises the English government. These praises for the English government show disrespect for his hosts who decide to throw him out of the region. In one instance, the text praises the massive achievements of the English race. These descriptions come after the text's funny depiction of the ethnic groups inhabiting the remote areas. This shows that Gulliver regards the European race as superior to the native ethnics and therefore shows his support for colonialism. Colonialism thrived on the belief that the Europeans were superior people which is portrayed in Swift's satires.

The text outlines how the Laputa attempted to extract sunbeams from cucumbers. This sought to portray the barbaric practices in the remote areas. Gulliver further indicates that the natives showed interest in areas such as mathematics. However, there was no practical application for learning it. The description shows the natives as barbaric and now having any component of civilization. The description of natives' ignorance shows that to some extent, Gulliver shared the belief that Europeans had the responsibility to civilize the world. However, European civilization was based on the acquisition of colonies. Gulliver must have harboured significant support for imperialistic motives, otherwise, the western civilization could not change the barbaric practices described in the text.