

Evils of imperialism assignment



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The oppressor and the oppressed are both corrupted by imperialism. Doing what is expected of a person to do and doing what is morally right are not always reconcilable. One can relate to the emotions of being pressured and not wanting to be humiliated in front of people. Imperialism is pernicious because it causes conflict internally, causes the unjust shooting of the elephant, affects both the oppressor and the oppressed, and impacts the individual and the society. What makes Rowel's essay relatable and easy to understand is his use of language.

He illustrates his experiences as a police officer in Burma, and uses those experiences to expose the real nature of imperialism. He wants people to sympathize and feel the emotions associated with his experiences. In this essay, Orwell states how the Burmese people treated him as a sub-divisional police officer. He writes, "As a police officer I was an obvious target and was baited whenever it seemed safe to do so. When a nimble Burman tripped me up on the football field... The crowd yelled with hideous laughter... In the end the sneering yellow faces of young men that met me everywhere, the insults hooted after me... One of them seemed to have anything to do except stand on the street corner and jeer at Europeans"(1). This shows that Orwell was constantly criticized and mocked by the natives. The Burmese have the power to manipulate Orwell, he opposes the British government and supports the natives, but yet their insults and jeering causes him to feel disgust towards them. Orwell uses language to show the people the resentment imperialism caused him to feel.

Imperialism impacts Rowel's life on a personal manner, it causes internal conflict, making him feel torn between his occupation as an officer and his

morals. As human beings, people tend to give into other peoples' ideas to avoid looking like a fool. In Rowel's case, it was either kill the elephant, or be faced with ridicule and mockery from the Burmese people. He knows the elephant deserves to live, but if he does not shoot it he would have to deal with looking like a fool. Orwell wants the readers to understand the struggles he has to face while deciding whether or not to shoot the elephant.

He states, " Here I was, the white man with his gun. Standing in front of the unarmed native crowd- seemingly the leading actor of piece; but in reality I was only an absurd puppet pushed to and fro by the will of those yellow faces" (7). Orwell is surrounded by thousands of Burmese people, who despise the British, and must not show any weaknesses around them; therefore, this leaves him in a position where he has no choice but to appear decisive and kill the elephant. Imperialism has caused a very hostile environment in Burma, it creates an atmosphere with a sense of threat.

This setting plays a major role in the shooting of the elephant because it pressures Orwell to kill the elephant. He goes against his conscience to save the face of the British Empire . Imperialism impacts the individual in many ways. In Burma the Burmese people are forced to give up their individuality. The oppressors use names, such as collie, natives, and priests' to diminish the individuals. It causes the Burmese people to become inferior in their own country. This inferiority leads to the people feeling resentful and violent against the police officers.

The Burmese are filled with so much hostility, they have become impelled to see the British be euthanized. Imperialism has also caused internal conflict

within Orwell between the issues of morality and immorality. He is being forced to wear a mask, he opposes imperialism but is forced to carry out the imperialists' actions and obey their laws. Orwell states in his essay, " A sahib's has got to act like a sahib's; he has got to appear resolute, to know his own mind and do definite things" (7). He is caught between his moral beliefs and his official position as an officer.

Imperialism causes Orwell to go against his own consciences, and rely on other people's morals not his. He knows that he is merely just a puppet, who is forced to give up his freedom of morality. The real nature of imperialism affects both the oppressor and the oppressed. In an imperialistic society no one is truly dominant over one another, both the oppressors and the oppressed end up becoming slaves of each other. For example, the Burmese natives have power by numbers in which they use to manipulate Orwell. He was at the complete will of everyone else but himself, and the consequence was the shooting of the elephant.

In " An Overview of ' Shooting an Elephant", the author states, " ... In oppressing the Burmese, the British incur their righteous wrath... A humiliated people understandably hates its contempt and seeks the means to return the disavow of conquest; absent a direct means, indirect means must suffice, as when the anger that the crowd feels towards the narrator as an agent of empire gets deflected to the elephant" (Breastbone 2). This shows that in imperialism, the oppressed indirectly hold the power and control over the oppressors.

However, the oppressors must maintain their authority and power over the Burmese people by enforcing violence against them. The author also states, "Burmese cruelty is that is a response to British cruelty..." (Breastbone 2). Although the Burmese people are inferior to the British power, they respond by tormenting European individuals. Imperialism is a pernicious, in the end it ends up demoralizing a society. It shames the Burmese people in their own country. Instead of upgrading the Burmese peoples' standard of living and civilizing them, the British are diminishing it and depriving the Burmese people.

One can see how the irruption of imperialism impacted Rowel's life. It cost him his freedom to act according to his own morals. As stated earlier, doing what is expected of a person to do and doing what is morally right are not always reconcilable. Decisions that may seem difficult at a time in one's life, may have a tremendous impact on one's life for many years. As people, sometimes one must choose whether to meet the expectations of others, or to meet one's own expectations and follow one's moral beliefs. He did not want to be humiliated, so therefore he chose to kill the elephant.