

The Male Perspective

Hiripan Ontiveros

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Imperialism told by men



England's norms were built on a patriarchal system. Therefore, the political matters of the empire were influenced by and managed by men alone. Imperialism, itself, or the idea of exploration was thought to be strictly for men. Women were supposed to remain at home and deal with the domestic affairs of society. The gender roles of society in England affected the way information was told about the new world.

Imperialism during the 18th century reached a peak, England had become the largest power in the world. Exploration, settlement and trade was at its highest rate. Because the population of explorers/travelers was highly shifted to majority male, all the documentation about their findings abroad was filtered by male perspectives. The imperialist movement brought a cultural shift to English society.

Entertainment, consumerism, art, and writing were all heavily influenced by discoveries abroad. All this relaying of information was used as propaganda to attract the public to increase the populations in settlements abroad. Most of the time, this propaganda targeted the dominant head-figure of households. Whether low to upper class, men were in charge over their families and wives. To be able to attract this audience, Novelist would write about exotic discoveries and abundance of life and wealth in the form of action-filled heroic novels that elevated explorers to a state of patriotism. Most of the time, women in this novels remained portrayed as fragile but beautiful figures: *the dangers of discovery were simply too much for a woman's endurance.*



Women are muted are muted in Literature and Politics



Male recruitment like the *Salvation Army Movement* during colonial expansion definitely impacted the information presented in imperialist propaganda. Fictitious novels like *Robinson Crusoe* by David Defoe were the only depictions about life abroad for the people in England. These stories were fake or very much altered to provide a good

depiction of a patriotic male figure. F. M. Coetzee wrote *Foe* in order to present a commentary about the false information that was being presented by these imperialistic novels. Coetzee uses the female perspective of Susan Barton to show how and author, Mr. Foe, would not write her story because it was not exciting or patriotic, and instead wanted to shift her story to the story of Crusoe. While that novel remains fictitious as well, it shows how women lacked representation. Garret Fawcett, who wrote *The Women's Suffrage Bill* in 1889, also makes a commentary about the lack of representation for women and how the movement of imperialism led to a masculine society that did not able women to become more involved.

“But when it is seen that a large body of representative Englishwomen for nearly a century have worked for definite purposes with persistence and devotion... I think it is not unreasonable to claim that the national characteristics of the English people... are not the exclusive property of one sex” (Fawcett, 556)