

The Impact of Colonialism in Hugh Lofting's *The Story of Doctor Dolittle*

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ABSTRACT

The Story of Doctor Dolittle is the first entry in the *Doctor Dolittle* series, a children's book series by English author Hugh Lofting. Despite being primarily aimed at children, the series contains mature themes that help it attract the attention of adults. In particular, *The Story of Doctor Dolittle* contains themes of colonialism that are drawn from the author's own experiences. This research aims to discover how colonialism in *The Story of Doctor Dolittle* has impacted the numerous characters found in it. The original 1920 publication of the book was used as the primary data source, which was analyzed using a thorough, closed reading of its contents, which was then compared with real-life colonial events. Jurgen Osterhammel's theory of colonialism is used as the primary theory for this research, which details the processes and results of colonialism on both the colonizers and the colonized, as well as the different types of colonies created to serve different purposes for the colonizers. The results have shown that there are multiple instances of colonialism in *The Story of Doctor Dolittle*, both positive and negative, that have impacted its characters to varying degrees. Characters such as Doctor Dolittle and the monkeys of the Land of the Monkeys benefited from colonialism due to the former's altruistic motives, while others like the Jolliginki tribe suffered due to reckless exploitation by the unnamed White Man.

Keywords: *Africa, colonialism, colonization, exploitation, missionary, indigenous populations.*

INTRODUCTION

The Story of Doctor Dolittle, which is the popular shortened form of its full title, *The Story of Doctor Dolittle, Being the History of His Peculiar Life at Home and Astonishing Adventures in Foreign Parts*, is the first book in the *Doctor Dolittle* series by the English author Hugh Lofting. The series tells the tale of its titular character, who possesses the unique ability to be able to speak and understand the language of animals, allowing him to befriend them and tend to their needs. *The Story of Doctor Dolittle* chronicles the doctor's journey to Africa on a mission

to save the land of the Monkey's inhabitants from a deadly plague while overcoming enemies and other obstacles along the way.

The series got its start as a series of separate yet related stories written by Lofting to be sent to his children through letters while serving in the British Army during World War I. He did this because writing stories about a doctor who can speak to animals is much more entertaining and optimistic compared to describing the grim realities of warfare. After the war had ended, he compiled these letters into one book and had it published in the United States in 1920, then in his native United Kingdom in

1924. It quickly became a success, which prompted Lofting to write eleven more books, totaling twelve main books in the series and a few spin-offs. The most famous of these is *The Voyages of Doctor Dolittle*, which is the second book of the series and an immediate sequel to *The Story of Doctor Dolittle*. (Schmidt, 1992)

The purpose of this research is to examine how colonialism in *The Story of Doctor Dolittle* has impacted its numerous characters. This is because the book was written during the height of Britain's colonial era, and Lofting himself worked as a traveling engineer who frequently moved between the British Empire's colonies. As a result, Lofting had no qualms about incorporating the themes of colonialism and racism into his book, which would nowadays be considered highly inappropriate or otherwise too advanced for a children's book. These include but are not limited to the generally unfavorable portrayals of the native African tribesmen, instances of racial slurs, exploitation of resources, and so on. Such themes, however, serve more or less as a satire or critique of the British Empire, as well as the general contemporary social climate that Lofting lived in. They also added another layer of complexity to the book that allows more mature or adult readers to enjoy it as much as the children do. Unfortunately, these themes were all but removed in later republications, and thus a significant portion of the book's content and themes are lost.

Another reason why this particular book was chosen is that the *Doctor Dolittle* series has so far received relatively little attention in terms of academic research. This is especially true when compared to other major children's book series such as Lewis Carroll's *The Chronicles of Narnia* or J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. There are far fewer academic publications found both online and in libraries that study any entry in the *Doctor Dolittle* series. This scarcity of research papers focusing on *Doctor Dolittle*, including the first one, can be attributed to the aforementioned republications by different publishers over time. These republications, while making the book more appropriate for children (and today's society in general), slowly strip away the thematic complexity and messages embedded in them until they were almost nonexistent. It also makes the book less interesting

for older readers as well. A third reason is that most people nowadays are more familiar with film adaptations, of which there are three of them released in 1967, 1998 (which spawned numerous sequels itself), and 2020. However, each of these films is only loosely adapted from the books and has also been simplified to be more family-friendly to general audiences, removing almost all of the mature themes found in the originals. They were also, quite frankly, terrible.

This research aims to address the following research questions:

1. How is colonialism depicted in *The Story of Doctor Dolittle*?
2. How does colonialism impact the characters that appear in the book?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Due to the scarcity of academic papers and publications that review the *Doctor Dolittle* book series, let alone specifically *The Story of Doctor Dolittle*, we relied on works that have any mention of *Doctor Dolittle* in their titles or comprise a majority of their content. However, most of these works instead researched the linguistic aspect of *Doctor Dolittle*, namely his ability to speak to animals. These works are of limited use for this research and thus had to be set aside in favor of works that did cover the literary aspects of *Doctor Dolittle*, no matter how small. Additionally, books that covered colonialism in other works of literature, such as Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, are also used, as they would prove helpful in dissecting the colonial aspects of *The Story of Doctor Dolittle*.

There are two books of note that were the most useful for this research. These are *The Presence of the Past in Children's Literature*, written by Lucas (2003), and *Narration, Navigation, and Colonialism: A Critical Account of Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-century English Narratives of Adventure and Captivity* by Benhayoun (2006). These books discuss how 17th and 18th-century literary authors drew inspiration from their own personal lives and experiences for their works. Examples include adventure-themed novels such as the famous

Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe. Additionally, they also discuss how these same authors are also influenced by contemporary society and events in writing their stories.

In Lucas' book, one of the authors discussed was Hugh Lofting, and it explained how he became disillusioned towards European colonialism before and during World War I. Before the outbreak of the Great War, Lofting served as a railroad engineer who was stationed in the British Empire's colonies and frequently moved between them. One of these colonies was in Africa, where there is no doubt that he had witnessed first-hand the reckless exploitation of its native population and natural resources by his country. While serving as a soldier for the British Empire, he was so taken aback by the excessive violence of warfare that, instead of writing about the grim reality of the battlefield, he wrote what would eventually become *The Story of Doctor Dolittle* in letters to his children back home. While seemingly a simple children's book at first glance, it contained colonialist themes, which gave it much greater depth, something that is not present in most of its toned-down republications or film adaptations.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The word "colonialism" alone has many definitions, and its exact meaning is still subject to heavy, ongoing debates among academics and scholars for a long time. For the purposes of this research, Osterhammel's definition and theory of colonialism will be the primary theory used, as found in *Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Osterhammel, 2005). In it, he defines "colonialism" as a system of domination in which a sovereign country rules over one or more territories, often overseas, with the intention of exploiting its land, resources, and/or population. It is distinguished from the related terms "colony" and "colonization", which are the physical settlements and the process of acquiring and/or constructing said settlements, respectively. Colonialism is also distinguished from imperialism in that, while they are two very similar and almost overlapping concepts, colonialism often involves the overseas domination of a far more technologically backward native population by a much more advanced sovereign empire.

Osterhammel divided colonialism into three primary types, which are settler colonialism, exploitation colonialism, and maritime enclave colonialism. Settler colonialism involves the migration of an empire's citizens from the metropole (native, contiguous territories) into a distant colony. Compared to other colonialism types, this primarily has the long-term goal of establishing a permanent presence in a region in order to deter other colonial empires from attempting to exploit that same region without causing major diplomatic incidents. Exploitation colonialism, in contrast, is much more short-term as it involves the comparatively rapid exploitation of a colony's indigenous population and resources. These involved making use of the natives as cheap labor in order to harvest those resources, and then those same laborers were relocated elsewhere once the resources had been exhausted. Finally, maritime enclave colonialism involved the use of a powerful naval force to establish a major seaport settlement in an overseas territory. These seaports functioned as trading posts as well as naval resupply bases. They also made their owners a great presence in their regions for other colonial empires to be cautious of without having to endanger their civilian citizens by immigration to conflict-prone areas.

Osterhammel added that colonialism has a motive, process, and end result. For example, a particular nation or empire can be driven to establish colonies based on several factors, including resource acquisition, pressure from neighboring countries or internal affairs to spread its culture or religious beliefs, or any combination of these. It then sends explorers to search for territories to colonize, and if they find a territory that is suitable for their goals, such as being strategic or plentiful in resources, they will send a colonial expedition to colonize it. From here on, both the colonizer and the colonized (if there are any) undergo the process of colonialism based on the goals of the former. Regardless of the intentions, method, and process, there will inevitably be consequences and influences that result from colonialism, affecting *both* the colonizer and the colonized. The colonized population or territory may continue to be loyal to their colonizers or declare independence and revolt. On the other hand, politicians in the colonizer's home country may either push for or be pressured to grant the colonies

independence and grant emancipation to the indigenous and/or enslaved populations in them.

METHODS

The primary data source for this research would be the book itself, specifically the original 1920 publication. This is because later republications have stripped most, if not all, of the colonial themes found in the original, causing them to lose the author's original intent and messages to readers. The method used in researching the book's contents was done by a thorough close reading from the beginning to the end. Data collection is done by taking sentences and paragraphs from the chapters that contain colonialist themes, especially the ones that are set in Africa. These are then analyzed based on their context in the novel's story, as well as real-life parallels and contemporary social climate.

Afterward, the impact of colonialism on the characters was analyzed based on whether the character in question is primarily a colonialist/imperialist or colonized entity in the story. Each character is analyzed based on their situation before, during, and after the story, as well as their disposition and actions towards other characters from a colonialist perspective. These were reviewed to determine whether these characters have been impacted primarily positively or negatively by colonialism.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Types of Colonies in *Doctor Dolittle*

In the book, two colonies or colony-like establishments are found in the book, both of which are located in Africa. They served opposite functions of each other, based on the goals of the characters who built them. One was built to exploit the resources and native workforce, while the other was built to cure the natives from a plague and give them better health standards.

The White Man's exploitative colony

A temporary exploitative colony was established by the White Man to exploit the lands of the African Jolliginki tribe. This colony served to benefit the White Man by making use of Jolliginki labor to mine gold and hunt elephants for their ivory tusks. These activities resulted in the land being dug up and barren and the elephants becoming regionally extinct. To add insult to injury, the Jolliginki were not at all compensated for all the work they've done for the White Man, who instead secretly fled Africa on his ship with all the resources he acquired from them. As a result, they have developed highly xenophobic stances towards all outsiders of white skin color, including Doctor Dolittle. This depiction of colonialism is how Lofting viewed and satirized the European powers' exploitation of the African native workforce and resources during his time as an engineer.

Doctor Dolittle's missionary-like hospital establishment

In contrast to the White Man's colony of exploitation, Doctor Dolittle developed a missionary-like establishment, consisting of a small hut and a much larger hospital-like building, in the plague-stricken Land of the Monkeys. This establishment provided healthcare to the region's natives, which are the monkeys and primates, by first vaccinating the healthy, then curing those who were ill. The vaccinations and health education done by the establishment allowed the monkeys to become self-dependent in dealing with future plagues after the doctor left to return home. Dolittle had no intentions of exploiting the native inhabitants for his own gain, and his goal was purely altruistic. Despite this, he is rewarded with an exotic animal by the end of his mission by the monkeys, which allows him to regain the wealth he had lost at the beginning of the story.

Other forms of imperialism

These are examples of imperialism found in the story that are not in the form of true colonies per Osterhammel's definition but still involve one party imposing dominance over another. The first of these is the leader of the Lions and his kin ruling over the other animals in the Land of the Monkeys. Using their influence and fearsome reputation, their leader

can command the other animals to refuse to help Dolittle, who is struggling with the overwhelming number of plague-ridden monkeys without question. Secondly, there are the Jolliginki tribe and their king, who attempt to imprison and enslave Dolittle simply because he shares his skin color with that of the White Man. Third and lastly, there are the Barbary Pirates, led by Ben Ali, who plundered countless ships on the Barbary Coast of North Africa, either killing their crews or holding them prisoner for ransom. These instances of imperialism are undeniably oppressive, with the imperialists only caring about how much they could exploit their subjects or captives without taking their well-being into consideration.

Two of these entities are influenced by Dolittle's intervention over the course of the story. The lions are implied to have relaxed their rule over the other animals due to Dolittle curing their leader's cub of an illness similar to the symptoms of the monkey plague. Ben Ali's pirates would cease to continue their ways of piracy, as they were tricked by the doctor and his animal allies into being stranded on an island and their ship stolen. Only the Jolliginki tribe remains unaffected, as they continue to remain hostile to all white men after Dolittle's departure from Africa, except for Prince Bumpo.

How Colonialism Impacted the Characters in *The Story of Doctor Dolittle*

Doctor Dolittle and his animal companions

As the titular character, Dr. John Dolittle, along with his animal companions, benefited the most from their adventure to Africa. Dolittle's journey from a bankrupt veterinarian to a wealthy retiree is that of a rags-to-riches story reminiscent of older colonialist literary works. However, Dolittle distinguishes himself from other colonialist protagonists due to his reason for departure, philanthropic motives, and pacifism. For starters, Dolittle embarked from England to Africa not out of a desire for glory or wealth but simply out of altruism. He had bankrupted himself at the beginning of the story due to his stubbornness in refusing to remove his more intimidating animal companions, such as a crocodile. This resulted in him losing clients and running out of money to maintain his large animal menagerie.

Despite this, he still set off for Africa anyway by borrowing a ship from one of his former clients after he had received the news of the plague in Africa from a messenger bird.

Dolittle, for the majority of the story, does not resort to violence in dealing with the problems he encounters. Instead, he relied on his cunning, wits, and his ability to speak to animals and ask for their help to solve them. The closest he has gotten to a violent act in the story is a verbal threat to the Barbary Pirates. After he tricked them into being cast overboard on their ship, which he then stole, he threatened them to stop their ways of piracy or else be devoured by the sharks encircling them. They agreed, and they subsequently swam ashore to an uncharted island on the Canary Isles, ending their reign of terror once and for all.

Despite his purely altruistic motives, Dolittle returned from Africa as a far wealthier man than before his departure. This is because he had been gifted the Pushmi-Pullyu, an extremely rare two-headed animal, by the monkeys as a reward for saving them from the plague, which he reluctantly accepted. Before returning to England, the doctor went on a tour around Europe with the exotic beast, selling tickets for people to see it. This earned him enough money that he could feed and maintain his animal menagerie for a lifetime and still have many left over to retire in peace.

The White Man

Despite not making a direct appearance, the otherwise unnamed White Man simultaneously represents the most explicit and malicious representation of colonialism in the entire book. Lofting's incorporation of a white colonialist (which is referred to as a single individual in the book) exploiting the lands of the Jolliginki was in no small part influenced by his personal experiences. While working as a railroad engineer in one of the British Empire's African colonies, he witnessed first-hand the excess hunting of animals and the forced labor of natives by his British brethren. Elephants, which were once plentiful, had been hunted for their ivory, causing their population to plummet drastically, even becoming extinct in certain regions. The once pristine lands of the African savannah had been relentlessly dug up to make way for railways and

mines. These scenes would be reflected in the book through the White Man's exploitation of Jolliginki labor for gold mining and elephant hunting. The natives were not compensated at all for their work and, as a result, became highly xenophobic towards all white men, including Doctor Dolittle.

The White Man is implied to have been already wealthy by the time he first arrived in Africa, as he arrived on the continent by ship. In the time period, *Doctor Dolittle* is set in, the ownership of a ship would have required immense wealth or state sponsorship. By the time he had finished exploiting the Jolliginki, he would have become even wealthier through the sale of the gold and ivory he acquired from his exploitation of Africa. Additionally, his exploits would have inspired other would-be colonists, individuals and countries alike, to do the same thing as he did and embark on their own colonial ventures.

Ben Ali, the Barbary dragon

While not colonialists in the sense of establishing colonies, Ben Ali and his crew are imperialists by way of taking up piracy and terrorizing the North African seas. Having mercilessly plundered many ships and kidnapped, murdered, or enslaved their crews to be ransomed or sold, Ben Ali deservedly earned the title of "The Dragon of Barbary". They are one of two entities in the story that have been mentioned to have others killed for personal gain, the other being the White Man, who had slaughtered the elephants for their ivory.

Despite their ferocity, they were outmatched by Dolittle's cunning and animal-speaking ability, which put an end to their reign of terror. They had been tricked into being cast overboard and their ship stolen. The doctor threatened them to end their ways of piracy or be devoured by the encircling sharks which he could command, to which they agreed. The defeated pirates swam to shore on a nearby island and became birdseed farmers per Dolittle's agreement. Their defeat is a symbolic allegory of how the Barbary Pirates eventually came to an end in real life. As the pirates were all males, their small farming community would eventually disappear, as they would die out one by one of natural causes unless they found a way to repopulate themselves. Their only options are by venturing out to sea again, which

would have them breaking Dolittle's agreement, or by passively waiting for rescue or the arrival of women by ship sometime in the future, which would take a long time due to the remoteness of the island they reside in.

The lions and their leader

The Leader of the Lions is an imperialist, as he and his kind pridefully rule over all the other animals in the Land of the Monkeys and can command them as he wishes. They are, however, four-legged animals and thus are incapable of building colonies. Furthermore, they do not have any grander colonial ambitions and are content with simply ruling the Land of the Monkeys. As they are carnivorous animals, they would have been hunting and killing the other animals to eat them, though this is more for sustenance and not for financial gains, like what the White Man and Barbary pirates did.

The Leader of the Lions initially viewed Dolittle with both suspicion and hostility. This is due to his growing popularity with the monkeys, which could be seen as a threat to his power. Particularly he found his calling for the other animals' help to be particularly offensive, seeing it as him trying to extend his influence beyond the monkeys. For this reason, he commanded the other animals to ignore Dolittle's pleas for help and took pride in it. However, his pride would not last long, as one of his cubs suddenly fell ill, and his wife, the Queen Lioness, heavily scolded him for offending the only person who could cure their cub. He was forced by her to offer Dolittle help in curing the monkeys so he could get to tending to the cub sooner. In the end, the lions are implied to have relaxed in their rule over the Land of the Monkeys due to Dolittle's efforts.

The African Jolliginki tribe and the Jolliginki king

The African Jolliginki tribe, led by a king, is easily the most negatively affected by colonialism in the book, yet they are certainly not innocent. They had their lands exploited by the White Man, with all the gold having been dug up and the elephants slaughtered for their tusks, creating a barren landscape almost devoid of life other than themselves. Worst of all, according to the king, was

that the White Man was ungrateful, not even thanking them after he had finished. As a result, they developed a hatred towards all white men, including Dolittle, whom they would arrest and imprison without hesitation. Unlike the Barbary pirates and the Lions, they did not undergo a change of heart at all over the course of the story. Indeed, they retained their xenophobia towards all white-skinned men after Dolittle left Africa, as he was unable to reason with them.

Although the actions of the White Man would have deprived the Jolliginki of food, the illustrations of the king and his family in the book's original publication have shown them to be quite rotund and well-fed, implying that the king would have hoarded most of the tribe's food for himself and his family. This would show that in addition to being bigoted, the Jolliginki King would be greedy as well, with most of his kin simply following his orders. As the Jolliginki lack the ability to speak to animals, unlike Dolittle, they would have seen the doctor's animal friends as nothing but mere animals and would have probably killed them for food eventually after a long time of imprisonment. However, it is arguable that the Jolliginki King does what he did to Dolittle simply because he truly does care about his tribe, especially his family, and wants to prevent another White Man's exploitation from ever happening again.

Prince Bumpo

Unlike his father and kinsmen, who deeply resent the white men and their actions, Prince Bumpo is the polar opposite. He idolizes white people to the point he strives to become physically like them, developing an inferiority complex about his natural appearance. He developed this complex after having read the book of European fairy tales, most likely left over by the White Man, countless times. He believed that he, as an "ugly" Black African man, was not worthy of the white princesses in the book. His luck would soon change during Dr. Dolittle's second imprisonment.

The prince went to Dolittle's prison cell after being tricked by Polynesia into impersonating a fairy queen and was told that the doctor could fulfill his wish to become a white man. Indeed, his wish was "granted" in the form of having his face temporarily

whitened with a hastily-made mixture from the doctor's medicine bag. Although his facial structure and other physical attributes remain the same, Bumpo is overjoyed at his "new" face and repays Dolittle with a ship for sailing home back to England. These courses of action show that although Bumpo is the opposite of his father in regards to their sentiments towards white people, they are still considered just as equally dimwitted and gullible. Even so, Bumpo is a step above the rest due to his tolerance and gratitude for Dolittle, even if it's mostly out of desperation and being tricked.

The African Jolliginki tribesmen, including Prince Bumpo, are heavily caricatured in their illustrated depictions in the book, which were drawn by Lofting himself. They were drawn with large, exaggerated lips, protruding jaws, extremely dark skin, and other features typical of stereotypical African caricatures of Lofting's era. These depictions emphasize their 'ugliness' as mentioned earlier, which is loudly proclaimed by the prince due to his admiration of the white race, and for his failure in winning the love of a white princess he supposedly once rescued. It is for these reasons that he became easily tricked by Polynesia's impersonation of a fairy queen in order to rescue Dolittle from his second imprisonment.

It is not shown what happened to Prince Bumpo after the concoction that made his face white wear off. At best, he would have been laughed at by the rest of his kinsmen. At worst, he would have been punished or even executed by his father for trying to mimic the appearance of a white man, fearing that by adopting their appearance, he would also eventually adopt their behaviors, including and especially that of the White Man who exploited them. The latter would likely not happen, though, as the Jolliginki King would have known of his son's behavior for quite some time but tolerated it because he thought it was nonsensical or because he cared for his own son.

The monkeys of the Land of the Monkeys

Unlike the Jolliginki tribe, who were hostile to Dolittle upon his arrival, the monkeys are effectively their opposites as they greeted the doctor with open arms, having asked for his help in the first place. They helped the doctor with constructing the

necessary buildings to cure and vaccinate the monkeys from the plague, as well as becoming nurses and caretakers for the sick ones. While Dolittle did not expect any form of financial reward for completing his mission, the monkeys gifted him an exotic animal which he would later use to regain the wealth he had lost at the beginning of the story. Overall, the monkeys in *The Story of Doctor Dolittle* are a literary example of a positive outcome for an indigenous population being impacted by colonialism.

The concept of a plague ravaging the inhabitants of the Land of the Monkeys is analogous to the historical incidence of disease epidemics that occurred in Africa and the Americas. The nature of the disease is not explicitly shown, but given that the infected were bedridden and dying in masses, it is similar to the outbreak of smallpox that ravaged the indigenous tribes of the Americas between the 15th and 16th centuries. This disease was brought to the New World by European explorers, and while they were themselves resistant to it due to centuries of exposure, the newly infected Native Americans were not. One such outbreak occurred in 1837, where over 23,000 individuals of the Missouri Plains Tribes succumbed to the disease unintentionally brought on by White American fur traders. (Robertson, 2001) When some European colonists learned of the effects of smallpox on the native population, they took advantage of this by distributing infected blankets and other goods to them to further spread infectivity and death. Many of these indigenous peoples died as a result, and those who survived became desperate and more easily manipulated by the European colonialists. Other Europeans, however, felt compassion for the natives and sent missionaries to perform charitable and medical work, which is what Dolittle did with the monkeys.

In the context of the colonization of Africa by the Europeans, missionary work was done to “westernize” the indigenous population by converting them to Christianity, as well as giving them better education and quality of life (by European standards). This was done with the goal of making the natives easier to manage and assimilate into the culture of the colonizing nation and its colonies. However, as Dolittle had no interest in creating a colony for his own gain, his missionary work was purely philanthropic. In addition to being

cured, the monkeys received vaccinations and additional implied health education, which ensured that they would never have to fear any future plagues again.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, *The Story of Doctor Dolittle* does indeed show instances of colonialism, both in negative and positive lights, as well as the impact these had on the native population and their homelands. These include the formation of a temporary exploitative colony by the White Man to extract the gold and ivory from Africa for his own gain at the expense of the environment and the native Jolliginki tribe. In contrast, the construction of a missionary-like hospital establishment by Doctor Dolittle not only allowed the inhabitants of the Land of the Monkeys to survive a plague but also better prepared them for future health crises. There are also other instances of imperialism, in the form of royal characters such as the Jolliginki King and the Leader of the Lions imposing their rule over others in their respective regions of Africa.

The book additionally depicts how its numerous characters have been impacted by colonialism to varying degrees, either as the colonizers or the colonized. Doctor Dolittle, the titular character, is a colonialist by virtue of his construction of a missionary-like establishment and rags-to-riches story. Yet, compared to the other colonialist or imperialist characters in the book, he is easily the most benevolent of them. He had no intentions of exploiting the indigenous African monkeys at all, only doing it out of pure altruism. Other characters also underwent major changes due to the impact of colonialism. For example, the monkeys of the Land of the Monkeys in Africa went from suffering from the plague to becoming not only healthy but also being able to treat themselves and other animal species due to Dolittle’s teachings.

Even imperialist antagonists became changed by Dolittle’s intervention over the course of the story. One such example is the lions and their leader who, although initially cruel to their subjects in the Land of the Monkeys, became more relaxed in their rule after Dolittle cured one of the leader’s cubs from

an illness similar to that of the monkey plague. Another example is that of the Barbary pirates led by Ben Ali, who, after years of terrorizing the seas of North Africa, was forced to retire from their life of piracy by Dolittle. However, not all of them were changed, such as the Jolliginki tribe and their king, who remain xenophobic to white-skinned outsiders after Dolittle escaped from their clutches. There is also, of course, the White Man, who made the Jolliginki what they are currently, who avoided justice while continuing to bask in the riches he exploited from Africa.

Limitations in this research include the limited scope, which is being focused on only one book in the Doctor Dolittle series instead of multiple entries. Said book consisted of just 180 pages in its original publication, which was hard to acquire amongst its many toned-down republications. Additionally, there is limited previous academic research regarding the literary themes of *The Story of Doctor Dolittle*. Therefore, we had to rely on sources that analyzed the colonialist themes of other literary works as a point of reference. We hope that the results of this research can be beneficial for future analyses of mature themes in children's literature, especially the other entries of the Doctor Dolittle series.

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