

Did the explorers do more harm than good in the Age of Exploration?

The explorers in the Age of Exploration did more harm than good. Although the explorers conquered new lands, gained lots of wealth, and spread the Word of God, the way they conquered other lands and treated the natives was not in a very kind manner. They conquered lands and enforced new rules, sold blacks into slavery, and many explorers did not even think twice about how they treated the blacks and the natives. Many blacks lost their lives after being shipped across the world on the Middle Passage, many native people lost their freedoms after colonizers took over their native lands, and the conquerors? All they wanted was fame.

One of the most recognized explorers, Christopher Columbus, a daring and persistent man, discovered many new lands, while also taking away freedoms of the native people. Columbus said "...for the better and more speedy colonization of the said island, no one shall have liberty to collect gold in it except those who have taken out colonists' papers." The native people of the said island didn't have colonists' papers. Therefore, any gold found on the island, couldn't be owned by the islanders, which is taking away what is rightfully theirs. Columbus set many new rulers for this island, the Island of Espanola, many of which benefitted only the colonizers, without thinking about how these rules would affect the islanders. For example, some rules Columbus made were setting up new towns, electing mayors, and most of all, making sure only those who deserve to have gold receive any gold that is discovered. He disregarded any form of life or township there already was on the island, and set up what he wanted. Although this was good for Spain, it probably harmed the islanders more than Columbus thought it would.

Another reason the explorers during the Age of Exploration did more harm than good is because they treated blacks without any respect. They shipped blacks on the Middle Passage, hurt the blacks, and then sold them into slavery. John Barbot, an agent for the French Royal African Company, witnessed blacks being sold into slavery and treated badly. While he didn't approve of the way they were treated, he didn't do anything to stop it. As said by John Barbot, "Abundance of little Blacks of both sexes are also stolen away by their neighbours, when found abroad on the roads, or in the woods; or else in the Cougans, or corn- fields, at the time of the year, when their parents keep them there all day, to scare away the devouring small birds, that come to feed on the millet, in swarms." He also tells us, "These slaves are severely and barbarously treated by their masters, who subsist them poorly, and beat them inhumanly, as may be seen by the scabs and wounds on the bodies of many of them when sold to us." So while Barbot didn't necessarily like the way the slaves were treated, he supported it by buying slaves anyways. Therefore the slave trade went on.

Although the explorers conquered new lands, the ways they went about doing it caused more harm to others than the good the explorers got out of it.

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