Assignment for ENGL 877 (Advanced Topics in the Digital Humanities: Digital Project Development). Refinement of selected sources and further elaboration of the themes.

Introduction

Upon refining the data set, five themes which are in conversation with each other connected the nine works. The nine works are distributed evenly between, recovered texts, book-length works, and periodical pieces. Five of the texts are loosely connected by time period, ranging from 1874 to 1877, while the other four range between 1891 to the early 20th century, ending in 1912. Location wise, the works span Japan, Africa, and North America. Narratively, they showed themes of colonial sensibilities intruding the writing of indigenous creators. The over-arching theme linking the works is a worship of the West. These works display a reification of colonial logic and uncritical praise of the West. Although in *Mrs. Spring Fragrance*, there is a section which seems like a sarcastic critique towards the United States government. In works linked to David Livingstone, these is also aggrandizement of David Livingstone which appears exaggerated.

Branching off this theme, are themes of paternalism and racial characterization. These two themes appear heavily in works related to David Livingstone, showing how colonial rule is based of infantilizing the oppressed. They also appear in the book-length works selected, with Onoto Watanna being the more egregious offender. Onoto, while writing about the Japanese, stereotyped her characters. It can be argued that she had to conform to racial expectations to sell her works but that remains to be decided. Periodical works selected also come with a heavy dose of racial characterization. The indigenous missionaries whom the works originate also carry with them paternalistic attitudes towards unconverted peoples.

This leads to the fourth theme of Christianity in a colonial world. Missionaries are common characters in the bibliography, either as authors or within the works. On one hand, missionaries reify colonial rule and logic by spreading the gospel which has the effect of homogenizing local society. On another hand, people of color have appropriated their connection to Christianity for self-improvement. The last theme to discuss is the usage of "broken English" as a narrative tool. It appears that characters closer to the West are given perfect English in writing while broken English are given to characters further from the West. To illustrate the point, Christian missionaries, friendly local rulers, and "Westernized" characters always "speak" in grammatically sound English. In contrast to the native Japanese and British traveler Henry M. Stanley's Arab personal assistant Saleh Bin Osman who "spoke" broken English.

Themes

Worship of the West

* Overarching theme that connects the authors and characters within the selected works. Exposes the colonial logic rife in Western education throughout the colonial period.

Christianity in a colonial world

* An institution with an edge, reifying colonial logic but can be subverted by indigenous peoples. Missionaries are also most likely the first Westerners encountered by indigenous peoples.

Colonialism and paternalism

* Paternalism was, and still is, a common justification behind colonialism. Christian missionaries, western and indigenous, are common offenders.

Characterization/Stereotyping of race

* Colonial logic relies on simplifying the world to binaries, leading to uncomplicated characterization of indigenous populations. Some examples from the texts: “warlike Wagogo”, “dirty Kafir”

Broken English as a narrative tool

* “Broken English” used as a way to distinguish a person’s relationship to the West and Whiteness. The more eloquent the English, the closer a person is to whiteness. A logic still present today.

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