

## **Introduction:**

After narrowing down the works, I decided to keep what I am passionate about and keep my focus on mostly women authors and pieces of literature that reflect the westernization of Asian cultures. We have Sui Sin Far, Semane Setlhoko Khama, and Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain who's pieces of literature focused mainly on feminism and the impact that westernization had on women. Then we have Menelik II, Yoshio Markino, *The Outcast from China Brought Safely Home, Japan, Praying for Rain in China*, and *South Seas. Mangaia* that cover a lot of ground regarding Christianity and civilization. The importance of the women in literature comes from the idea that many of the women during the era of literature production, their main job was child-bearing and housewives, other than that these women had no rights and weren't allowed to vocalize their thoughts. For them to have opinions on religion and speak openly about feminism was a big deal. For Sui Sin Far, the Chinese American experience is spoken about with topics of hatred and prejudice intertwined, not only was gender inequality a thing— women were treated less than, someone who happens to be a woman and a foreigner can be culturally shocking. In *Sultana's Dream*, they envisioned this matriarchal society in which women lead life in a way that is equal, peaceful, and prosperous without the male influence. This brings us to the issues of gender inequalities that are still heavily prevalent today. Especially in terms of accreditation for original thoughts, ideas, and actions. For the religious aspect of it, these countries and peoples lives were shaped by a culture that was not their own. Forcing religion and conversions were popular during this time, as many people believed there was one homogenous way to look, act, and feel. For example, the four periodical pieces I chose all speak of how Christianity has saved them and their people in some manner and the idea of encouraging people to convert to Christianity in order to be saved as well, is strongly present. These pieces of literature reflect mainly on prejudices and cultural beliefs during that time. By reading these more critically as we get closer to our final project, we learn about Anglo-European intellectual traditions that silenced minorities— in my connections, silencing women and people of different races. Because of the focus on colonialism, a lot of the pieces seem biased based on their views and dramatization of colonialism and Christianity, saving them. What I notice a lot throughout the themes, is that the connection between them is the issues that arose from these ideas and the issues are still seen today but in a micro-manner. There is still a lot of room for improvement.

## **Themes for critical exploration:**

*Christianity & Missionaries*; Religion and particularly Christian Religion is one of the biggest common themes in relation to the texts I have looked at. We see how missionaries brought to foreign countries pushed their religion onto others, brainwashed these people, bribed these people, and took a part of their heritage and roots away, in order to homogenize and create a society that is closer to the majority's ideal.

*Modernism*; Throughout these texts one will notice both philosophical and artistic movements that arose from Christian churches that pushed people to modify their personal beliefs to match up with Anglo-European ideas. This idea of modernism prevents diversity.

*Colonialism*; This specific theme is not directly brought up throughout these literature pieces, but is however an underlying theme. As prior to the introduction of Christianity in these Asian countries and cultures, their religious beliefs were different. This idea that the introduction of Christianity allowed Anglo-Europeans to establish colonies, allies, and economic dominance—gaining control by using their abundance of resources to increase power and wealth. In these readings, there are a lot of first-middle-ending pieces that follow the lines of “I was introduced to this new belief, I follow the new belief and teach others, our lives are now better”.

*Feminism*; Though not a main focus of most of the pieces of literature, the three pieces of literature I chose written by women, explores and challenges the idea of modern roles. These pieces focus on creating empowering and utopian worlds in which women are treated as equals.

*Race*; There is a common theme of racial minorities that are prevalent in each of these pieces of literature. This idea that minorities are easily persuaded and are impressionable is an issue I draw from the themes listed above, because of their race, the other themes were able to take place due to positions of power and access to resources due to white privilege— an issue that is still prevalent today.

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