**ENGL 877 One More Voice Exploration 2 by Tina Le.**

This assignment comes from a course called ENGL 877 Advanced Topics in Digital Humanities at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Spring 2023.

We narrowed down the texts from One More Voice Exploration 1 to 9 works and explained 5 themes that the works engage.

Tina Le

Dr. Adrian Wisnicki

ENGL 877

28 February 2023

OMV Exploration 2: Small Data Set

**Introduction**

The texts in this data set deal with the role of colonizers, particularly religious missionaries, in shaping education and literacy in colonized communities. The overarching questions that encompass these texts are: What are the purposes of education, and who gets to decide those purposes? What motives do missionaries have for setting up schools? What kinds of knowledge are valued or devalued, and by whom? What is the role of literacy in empowering or controlling colonized people? Most of the texts are about Christian missionaries setting up schools or informal out-of-school learning environments in order to spread religion. They present observations from missionaries, statements from local leaders, and excerpts from students’ writing as “evidence” of people’s learning—making the case for the success of their missionary work. These discussions often include contrasting the locals’ lives before and after missionary influence, disparaging the locals’ existing beliefs and lifestyles while lauding the “progress” and “growth” brought about through missionaries. The majority of the texts are about communities in Southern Africa, and others are about communities in India. Through these texts, local community members’ attitudes towards the colonial education systems are interpreted and filtered through the Europeans’ perceptions and transcriptions. However, the texts give us a glimpse into the beliefs and motives of the colonizers, and how they use education to impose beliefs onto others.

Some of the texts are reports written by missionaries about the work they have done in the area, their observations about how the colonized peoples are responding to the missionary initiatives, and their assessment of their initiatives’ success. These texts include “‘Kat River Mission, South Africa,’” “East Indies. Combooconum,” and “Adult Sunday-Schools Among the Nestorians.” Some of the texts purportedly showcase perspectives of native people, such as “‘Minutes of Evidence’ (Excerpt),” “Letter to A.M. Chirgwin,” and “India. Native Female Education.” These texts speak glowingly of the missionaries; however, it is unclear how much the colonized people were coerced or pressured into giving praise, or to what extent their perspectives were filtered by the missionaries. For example, in “‘Minutes of Evidence’ (Excerpt),” the British interviewer asked leading questions such as, “Then you consider that the missionaries have done a great deal of good amongst the Hottentots?” (Buxton et al.). In “Letter to A.M. Chirgwin,” Khama writes a letter of gratitude to London Missionary Society for the "instructions and the guidance" that missionaries gave to Native women, but the letter is sparse and does not specify the “guidance.” One book in this data set, Plaatje’s *Sechuana Proverbs with Literal Translations and Their European Equivalents*, contrasts with the other texts because the flow of knowledge is reversed; rather than missionaries imposing knowledge on colonized peoples, it teaches others about existing knowledge in the Sechuana community. However, even then, European missionaries’ influence is evident: Plaatje discusses how the proverbs display European values, such as peace.

**Themes for Critical Exploration**

*Leadership:* Some of the texts praise specific missionaries for their leadership qualities and accomplishments, and some are missionaries praising the role of local leaders in helping them to implement their mission. The praise reveals the traits that the colonizers value in their own leaders and the traits they value in the representatives of the colonized.

*Purposes of education and schooling:* The spreading of religion was a major reason for education and schooling, but it also included occupational training such as farming. The agenda for schooling is determined by the priorities of the missionaries, not those of the students. *Literacy and morality:* Literacy was used to push the missionaries’ morality onto others, such as by teaching people to read using the Bible. *Progress and improvement*: Missionaries had their own vision for what would benefit and improve the lives of colonized peoples. For example, in “Minutes of Evidence,” the British interviewer asked questions such as, “Has the character and condition of the Hottentots been improved since the missionaries came among them?” and “Have they got any knowledge of agriculture?” (Buxton et al.). The push for progress and improvement does not include input from native folks about what they think would benefit their communities.

*Gender:* The education that men receive and women receive sometimes differs, which establishes and reinforces gender roles. This can be seen in texts such as “Adult Sunday-Schools Among the Nestorians” and “India. Native Female Education.”

**Recovered Texts**

Anonymous; James Read, Jr. “‘Kat River Mission, South Africa’” (9 October 1838; 1 April 1839). Mary Borgo Ton, Adrian S. Wisnicki, eds. *One More Voice*, site launch edition, 2020, https://onemorevoice.org/html/transcriptions/liv\_020033\_TEI.html.

Buxton, Fowell; James Read, Jr.; Andries Stoffels; Edward Baines; John Bagshawe; Charles Lushington; William Gladstone. “‘Minutes of Evidence’ (Excerpt)” (27 June 1836). Jared McDonald, Adrian S. Wisnicki, eds. *One More Voice*, solidarity edition, 2022-23, https://onemorevoice.org/html/transcriptions/liv\_020065\_TEI.html.

Khama, Semane Setlhoko. “Letter to A.M. Chirgwin” (5 December 1934). Heather F. Ball, Adrian S. Wisnicki, eds. *One More Voice*, site launch edition, 2020, https://onemorevoice.org/html/transcriptions/liv\_020024\_TEI.html.

Moss, Charles Frederick Arrowsmith; Ranavalona II. “‘The Late Mr. James Cameron of Madagascar’ (Excerpt)” (1875; 1 March 1876). Heather F. Ball, Adrian S. Wisnicki, eds. *One More Voice*, site launch edition, 2020, <https://onemorevoice.org/html/transcriptions/liv_020044_TEI.html>.

**Book-Length Published Works**

Crowther, Samuel Ajayi. *The River Niger. A Paper Read Before the Royal Geographical Society, June 11th, 1877. And a Brief Account of Missionary Operations Carried on Under the Superintendence of Bishop Crowther in the Niger Territory*. London: Church Missionary House, 1877.

Plaatje, Solomon T. *Sechuana Proverbs with Literal Translations and Their European Equivalents*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1916.

**Periodical Pieces**

Anonymous; Chenjee; Tooloosee; Lutchmee. “India. Native Female Education” (1849). Trevor Bleick, Kenneth C. Crowell, Kasey Peters, eds. “BIPOC Voices,” *One More Voice,* solidarity edition; Collaborative Organization for Virtual Education (COVE), 2022, https://onemorevoice.org/html/bipoc-voices/digital-editions-soas/liv\_025029\_HTML.html.

Anonymous; William Clapham’s Reader; William Cooper’s Reader; Inverkeithing’s Reader. “East Indies. Combooconum” (1826). Trevor Bleick, Kenneth C. Crowell, Kasey Peters, eds. “BIPOC Voices,” *One More Voice*, solidarity edition, Collaborative Organization for Virtual Education (COVE), 2022, <https://onemorevoice.org/html/bipoc-voices/digital-editions-soas/liv_025020_HTML.html>.

Anonymous; Yonan. “Adult Sunday-Schools Among the Nestorians” (1852). Kenneth C. Crowell, Cassie Fletcher, Kayla Morgan, Jocelyn Spoor, eds. “BIPOC Voices,” *One More Voice*, solidarity edition; Collaborative Organization for Virtual Education (COVE), 2022, https://onemorevoice.org/html/bipoc-voices/digital-editions-amd/liv\_026016\_HTML.html.