

## Denmark's Innocent Colonial Narrative

Gabriella Isadora Nørgaard Muasya,

Noella Chituka Birisawa & Tringa Berisha\*

This paper analyses the multifaceted expressions of white innocence in the educational game *Historiedysten* (2016) published by Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR) in collaboration with The Museum of National History Frederiksborg Castle. This case study of *Historiedysten* displays how a racial grammar embedded in the Danish physical and cultural archives continue to shape and (re)produce a restricted, innocent Danish self-representation, as well as a dominant model of 'thinking, feeling and speaking' about the Danish colonial history.<sup>1</sup> The paper concludes that colonial power relations continue to transcend time and space via *Historiedysten*, proving that the downplaying of violence, oppression, and legitimisation of racism is intrinsic to Danish white innocence in the colonial narrative.

### Introduction

With the 100th year marking of the Danish sale of the Virgin Islands to the United States, there has been an increased attention upon Denmark as a former colonising nation. The following analysis unpacks the Danish dominant understanding and self-representation of the shared colonial past with the Virgin Islands, by focusing on the cultural and physical Danish colonial archive reproduced in primary school educational material. In doing so, the article focuses on the educational game *Historiedysten* produced by DR, to grasp the ways in which Danish cultural institutions participate in shaping public understanding of Denmark's colonial past, and the

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\* **Gabriella Muasya, Noella Birisawa, and Tringa Berisha** are three graduates from Roskilde University with bachelor degrees in Cultural Encounters and Communication Studies. Their main area of interests are issues of power dynamics and inclusion/exclusion in a Danish context.

<sup>1</sup> *Historiedysten* was tested on an ethnically diverse 9th grade in Strandvejsskolen, Copenhagen, in 2017 to investigate the emerged discussions and rationales that appeared, subsequently to being exposed to the narrative of the game. The full analysis is available in our report. See bibliography.

nation's constructed, dominant self-perception. Therefore, the article questions the processes in which dominant perspectives, positions, and taken for granted truth(s) in *Historiedysten's* game-frame reproduces a race-gender<sup>2</sup> hierarchy, simultaneously silencing the Other in the echoes of colonial nostalgia, which reminisce sugary riches and explorations of the exotic other.

### **History, Archives and Denmark's Cultural Institutions**

The creation of historical records in addition to the collection and maintenance of archives lies at the heart of a nation's narrative-building. To understand a nation's self-perception one must pay attention to the narrative, the archival records available, and the recorded moment itself in which the nation's 'sense of self' is firmly rooted.

Denmark was the seventh largest colonising nation. Through the "Triangular Trade", to use the common—though with innocent connotations—historical Eurocentric terminology, Denmark obtained considerable financial gain, primarily via sugar production. Further, Denmark participated actively in the transportation and selling of human beings. The trade route began in Denmark and made its way to Guinea where people were enslaved and transported to the Virgin Islands—those who survived the transportation were introduced to an intense, cruel and dehumanising system of exploitation named *slavery*. The route ended again in Denmark with newly acquired life-sweetening commodities to be sold to Danes.

The colonial project that unfolded on the Virgin Islands was founded and funded by the Danish monarchy, and it engendered stark power relations between the coloniser and the colonised (Hornby 1980). Hence, racial hierarchy, supported by the power to enforce categorisations that reduced the colonised to mere work tools—a relation mediated by violence or its threat—framed record creation from the position and perspective of the powerful. Although this colonial perspective is both limited and produces 'silences', it is today mostly taken for granted as a universal truth, resulting in a profound lack of critical inquiry into the way we engage with and construct national self-perceptions based on these records (Bastian, 2003). In relation to Danish

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<sup>2</sup> This article views race and gender as socially constructed categories which are socially, politically and historically contingent.

colonial history, this hegemonic<sup>3</sup> position to decide on the narrative of Danish colonial history was (and is) further enhanced through language, as many records were written in Danish. In addition, the archives were also split and shipped to Denmark and the United States (US), respectively, when Denmark sold the islands to the US in 1917. Therefore, Virgin Islanders have met the challenges of limited perspective, language barriers and geographical distance when attempting to access their history (Bastian, 2003). Considering the prominent unequal power relations in record-collection and archive maintenance during the colonial era, it is interesting to scrutinise how this dominant perspective flourishes in understandings of Denmark's colonial history. If colonial archives are treated as neutral, complete, and true, then the choices of representation that institutions make when operating with these records is worth analysing (Bastian, 2003). In Denmark, DR's educational game *historiedysten* should be considered an interesting point of departure for such an analysis. National state-owned DR delivers information, news, culture and entertainment via mediums such as TV, radio and internet. The Danish Parliament obligates DR to tackle cultural and social projects following the Radio and Television Act:

“The public service company must provide the Danish population with a wide range of programs and services covering news, education, arts, entertainment [...]. The offer must aim at quality, *versatility*, and *diversity*. [...] *The information dissemination must emphasize fairness and impartiality*. [...] Special emphasis must also be placed on Danish language and Danish culture [...]” (DR, 2015: np. Own emphasis and translation)

DR is considered a trustworthy source of information with the responsibility to reflect the diverse Danish society. The broadcasting corporation serves Danes with a wide variety of programs to satisfy different tastes and interests. This paper analyses one of the productions of DR that emerged in the wake of the centenary of the Danish sale of the Virgin Islands to the US: the educational game *Historiedysten 2016* [The History Battle] (Berisha et al, 2017). This game was produced as an attempt to transform a ‘dull’ and ‘dusty’ colonial past into an engaging game for Danish 5th-6th graders.

If a production of DR is considered an authoritative source of information and critical engagement, then *Historiedysten*, supported by archival paintings and drawings, is likely to be

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<sup>3</sup> The article applies the term hegemony as a broad understanding of naturalised power which requires consent to operate successfully, and appears inevitable in its leadership and functions through constituted active groups in various fields (Hall, 1997: 259).

accepted as a reliable insight to Denmark's colonial history. However, considering that Danish cultural institutions continue to possess power to frame the dominant narrative of a 'shared' colonial history, we, in the following, scrutinise DR's chosen style of representation by focusing on the medium of choice: video games.

### **Historiedysten's Game Frame**

*Historiedysten's* game frame invites students to engage with Denmark's and the Virgin Islands' colonial history, encouraging learning in alternative ways apart from traditional blackboard-teaching. In the attempt to update the curriculum's mediation, the game suffers from the reproduction of colonial tropes governed by inflexible positionality of characters and game features, such as competitiveness in the quest of attaining riches through sugar.

Danish primary school education frequently applies games with educational purposes, keeping up-to-date with the continuous development of modern technology. The popularity of educational games is rooted in the intrinsic factor of motivation in gaming: user participation and competitiveness, which take form in Collaborative- and Competition-based Learning (CBL and CnBL), respectively. Games offer agency and thereby give the impression to a player that they co-construct their learning content through user participation (Burguillo, 2010: 566). *Historiedysten* encourages navigation in small groups of four to facilitate intragroup collaboration. Every decision throughout the game's storyline requires agreement from participating members, and so competition in offering the best point and right answer emerges in discussions, adding on to the natural competitiveness in the motivation of playing: to win. Competitiveness is further enhanced by DR's annual competition between the best players of *Historiedysten*.

The introductory narrative to *Historiedysten's* animation reveals a compass, eight silhouettes of enslaved persons, and a title: 'The Hunt for the White Gold'. The adventurous tone of entry to Denmark's colonial past is one of exploration moving through time and space. Music of royal trumpets adds a majestic touch to one's position in the narrative: that of a Danish sailor on a slave ship under Captain Bernt Jensen Mørch.<sup>4</sup> Immediately, *Historiedysten* sends Captain Mørch on a

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<sup>4</sup> Captain Bernt Jensen Mørch's (1729-1777) role in the transatlantic slave trade has been converted into a character in *Historiedysten*, which the gamer follows throughout parts of the game. Captain Mørch was a male, Danish captain on four slave ships, which have been documented in Danish cultural archives. In Danish institutions, his legacy is painted as 'saintly', a christian family man who was also a slave ship captain. The Maritime Museum of Denmark

grand voyage following the “Triangular Trade” routes in search for the white gold. From the outset, the participation in the enslavement and exploitation of humans in order to generate revenue is hidden behind euphemistic terms: “Triangular Trade” [the transatlantic slave trade] and ‘white gold’ [the revenue product: sugar]. The coloniser’s privileged position to conquer and exploit is not addressed, allowing the coloniser-player to embark on a journey with a so-called “clean” conscience.

The journey and the different choices presented create the illusion that the player is able to contribute and shape the plot. However, the narrative in fact limits the player’s agency both through its euphemising ignorance discussed above and by invariably steering the narrative down a singular path for the purpose of completing the game successfully. This is highlighted in the telling example where *two* answers are right: When the player is on the journey between Guinea and the West Indies, they are informed about ethical conflicts concerning the conditions of the enslaved peoples. The game narrator says: “several die on the journey” and “their conditions are, mildly put, really bad” (*Historiedysten*, 2016). What follows is a conversation between two Danish sailors about the mistreatment of the enslaved on the ship *Fredensborg*. The player then has to make a ‘moral’ decision regarding punishment of the enslaved peoples on their own ship,

1. “You clearly believe that the punishment will be as brutal as on the ship *Fredensborg*. Whip and shackles.
- Or,
2. Many slaves die on board the ship, so there is no reason to increase the risk that they die. Then you have fewer slaves to *sell*’

This exemplifies how *Historiedysten*’s narrative does not alter according to the decision made by the player and there is no further information provided in order to give a more in-depth, nuanced perspective on the conditions faced by people forced on board the slave ships. Thus, the player travels through a consistently partisan and guilt-free narrative to the West Indies, regardless of whether the choice is to punish or not.

Albeit the dilemma posed in *Historiedysten* carries great potential to invite the student into a critical reflection of their own position as a coloniser and the power it holds, both options in the game operate within the dominant ‘revenue’ rationale in the game frame. As the relationship

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describes Mørch as following: “Captain Mørch was a God-fearing man, who wrote a catechism on his many voyages. He was a loving father and wrote sweet letters to his wife. At the same time, he was captain of four slave ships”.

between the player and the enslaved is kept within the categories and positions of merchant and commodity, the non-punishing option formulated in relation to the player's sale of enslaved peoples reproduces the colonial power dynamic. With *Historiedysten*'s beguiling fixation on revenue, ethical dilemmas are overshadowed by the wish to win the game: any decision made in relation to economic profits leads to cultivating competitiveness and forces ethics to be of minor relevance. The minimisation of experienced pain and superordination of revenue provides a romanticising insight into the logics of the colonial transactions of economy and thus shape an uncritical attitude towards colonialism as the enslaved peoples' narrative is kept in parenthesis.

Games include challenges for adrenaline, problem-solving for creativity, representation and story for emotion (Prensky, 2001, in Batson et al., nd: 35). *Historiedysten* is simplistic in terms of features applied for adrenaline as it centres on a narrative which unfolds through simple navigation and decision-making based on the given "historical facts". However, the narrative represents a certain logic that frames Danish colonial history in innocent and somewhat romantic terms, hence limiting the narrative. The narrative follows a home-out-home structure of storytelling as it begins with a demand for sugar; unfolds as the sailor enslaves West Africans to establish colonies on the Virgin Islands; and ends with the sugar production moving from the colonies to Lolland, Denmark. The game-frame provides an adventurous full circle of riches with a 'happy' ending and avoids addressing repercussions of slavery. While games can offer advantages such as "interactivity, collaborative work inside the group, active participation, challenge versus duties, and motivation for the students to explore their own topics" (Burguillo, 2010: 575), they may likely lead to the actual narrative taking a backseat to the gaming activity, as games speak into a mindset of winning and losing. *Historiedysten*'s narrative offers a white, male coloniser's perspective as a point of departure for 'winning' the 'history battle'. Ultimately, putting Denmark's colonial history into this particular game frame is an attempt to 'sugarcoat' old learning content from the history curriculum to a younger target audience. *Historiedysten* reproduces an uncritical attitude and position towards Denmark's colonial history by reaffirming an innocent self-representation.

### **White Innocence and Cultural Archives: Dominant Perspectives in *Historiedysten***

This section dives into workings of the dominant perspective and Denmark's innocent self-representation in *Historiedysten*, which continuously prevails due to the reproduction of colonial

Danish physical and cultural archives by applying the notion of white innocence coined by Gloria Wekker.

As outlined in the previous section, *Historiedysten* foregrounds a dominant model for the player to interact, understand and relate to Denmark's colonial past. In *White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race* (2016), Wekker argues that a rigorous racialisation found in former imperial European nations' physical and cultural archives continues to affect ways of 'thinking, speaking and feeling' about a nation's sense of self. Wekker unpacks intrinsic paradoxes when examining the dominant Dutch self-representation through a decolonial lens, notably the idea of the nation being a "guiding light" - an innocent and 'colour-blind' society free of racism. In doing so, Wekker challenges institutional displacement in the form of denial such as naming and legitimising the Rawagede massacre which killed 431 men as a "police action" and critiques the lack of attention paid to the violent imperial past in the Dutch 'sense of self' and self-representation. According to Wekker,

"a racial grammar, a deep structure of inequality in thought and affect based on race, was installed in nineteenth-century European imperial populations and that it is from this deep reservoir, the cultural archive, that, among other things, a sense of self has been formed and fabricated." (Wekker, 2016: 2)

The cultural archive transcends its physical form and spills into how "the affective and rational economies are organised and intertwined" (Wekker, 2016: 2-19) alluding to Raymond Williams 'structures of feeling'. Consequently, the racial grammar and 'racialised common sense' found in former imperial European nations have not been contested as socially constructed, and are complicit in reproducing hegemonic categories and positions. The racial grammar finds itself looming in 'innocent' folkloric figures such as Zwarte Piet (Sorte Per in Danish) and blatant denial of racism through the use of the term ethnicity. Similarly to Denmark, in a Dutch context 'ethnicity' is associated with a 'marked' category, and always already refers to the "Other", whereas Dutch 'whiteness' is the norm - an invisible, non-racialised, unmarked category manifested in the binary as white, superior norm, and the culturally inferior other (Wekker, 2016: 33). This embedded racial grammar prevails in all spheres of the Dutch society, and "[...] makes sense on the basis of a cultural archive, in which an imperial and "neutral" hierarchy between different [races] has been firmly installed" (Wekker, 2016: 64). Consequently, *White Innocence*

contests the idea that the Netherlands is a leading nation in terms of dealing with issues of racism, contrary to the 'troubled United States or South Africa' (Wekker, 2016: 18).

As implied in the previous sections, the notions of white innocence and racial grammar also apply to the strategy of storytelling in *Historiedysten*. The game bases its audiovisual narrative upon colonial records and paintings created by and for Danish colonisers, hence maintaining the perspective of the male white coloniser. When the Danish coloniser conquers the world under euphemistic terms such as "Triangular Trade" in the quest for sugar, an unquestioned power dynamic is reproduced. Through this "innocent" dominant perspective upon Danish colonialism, the euphemistic terms become part of the Danish cultural archive - and a way of 'thinking, speaking, and feeling' about Denmark's colonial past, ultimately putting revenue in the forefront and the enslaved in the background. Innocence also entails addressing the imperial past but doing so while comparing it to other European nations, making some actions appear less violent than others. This is exemplified in the introduction of *Historiedysten* when the narrator speaks of Denmark's past in the following manner,

"Just like many other European countries in the 16th – and 17th centuries, Denmark then got colonies in the West Indies to trade with sugar. The Danish colonies consisted of St. Croix, St. Jan, and St. Thomas. Typically, Europeans took the colonies by force" (*Historiedysten*, 2016. Own translation, own emphasis).

As previously mentioned, the game frame of *Historiedysten* invites the player to 'relive' Denmark's and the Virgin Islands colonial past by going on an adventurous journey. Here, the player encounters Danish physical archives in form of paintings of peaceful 'exotic' landscapes, glorious ships, and the slave trade in Guinea that insinuates negotiation and cooperation. The interaction between *Historiedysten* and the player happens exclusively through the colonial Danish cultural archives, and the 'affective and rationale economies' reproduced in the game are solely from the position of a coloniser. Consequently, the player interacts with limited ways of 'thinking, speaking and feeling' about the colonial relationship to the Virgin Islands and the Danish investment in the institution of enslavement.

The racial grammar reveals itself in the use of characters and colonial archive paintings, which is exemplified in the use of an archive image, *The Slave Market on the African coast* by A.F. Biard, that portrays the slave trade on Guinea's coast. In the painting, trade and revenue are emphasised by depicting negotiating men in front, whereas violence is kept in the background. Enslaved

Guinean men are whipped, and enslaved Guinean women are positioned in rows and held captive, minimising the aspect of pain and suffering. The direct relationship between the negotiators and this dehumanisation is hardly noticeable, as the image is presented in a gliding motion with a limited exposure-time, narrowing the possibility for the student to understand the colonial situation in its entirety. In addition, the presented colonial encounter is accompanied by exaggerated voices that bear signs of ridicule, and an imitation of a Guinean language, giving the player “something to laugh about”. This way of applying humour and distance to violent encounters is frequent throughout the game creating an overall ‘lighter’ atmosphere. The means applied arguably serve the purpose of making Denmark’s colonial past suitable for the intended target audience, however, in this (mis)representation of a ‘shared’ history, with its use of humour and theme of adventure, an epistemic violence materialises in depicting the ‘other’, that now is a minority group present in contemporary Denmark.

The exclusive focus on the Danish colonial cultural and physical archive, contributes to a limited ‘Danishness’ in the ‘shared’ colonial past by making certain characters visible whilst making others invisible. Similarly, the distance and humour apparent in the previously mentioned lax choice concerning punishment of the enslaved is testament to the lack of understanding of violence inflicted upon the enslaved peoples. Instead of seeing brutal actions carried out, the sailor casually chats about collective punishment carried out ‘by a different captain, on another ship’. The sensitive topic is treated with displacement and distance, reminiscent of the expression “out of sight, out of mind”. The narrative of negative actions carried out by the colonial masters proceeds to be shallow, serving to be one of the pillars which supports the dominant innocent Danish self-representation as well as ‘thinking, feeling and speaking’ about one’s Danish historical sense of self.

The unmarked, invisible position of white privilege enables the player to uncritically ‘conquer’ countries and exploit enslaved peoples, as the notion of invisibility manifests and sets the norm. Consequently, the exclusive use of Danish colonial records reproduce power relations in knowledge production, which silence the Virgin Islands’ archive, in attempt to delegitimise experienced dehumanisation and dispossession. This power position arranges the player’s priorities to complete the game, as well as dictate the standpoint from which one interprets the ‘shared’ history. Having established the colonial tropes which continue to direct Danish student’s conception of race, the following section will discuss its intersection with gender in the power

relation, and how *Historiedysten* reproduces structuring ‘affective and rational economies’ that uphold a privileged Danish male innocent colonial gaze.

### **Coloniality of Gender in *Historiedysten***

The Danish innocent self-representation in *Historiedysten* is upheld by a dominant white cis-gender male perspective, with a hegemonic position that excludes males of colour/all females as legitimate actors of the past and the present. The following analysis pays attention to the latter in an attempt to dismantle objectifying tropes in one of the rare representations of the enslaved woman in *Historiedysten*.

In *Coloniality of Gender*, the Argentinian post-colonial gender critic Maria Lugones develops an alternative epistemological perspective on the violent exploitation and domination at the intersection of race-gender categories upon women of color. Within the field of intersectionality and with a critical approach to the hegemonic Eurocentric colonial body of knowledge (Lugones, 2008), she draws strong inspiration from Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991), in pointing out that realities of women of colour are excluded from feminism, and that white females have not been systematically and historically exposed to similar violent domination and exploitation (Lugones, 2008). According to Lugones, it is necessary to go beyond the coloniality of gender. She suggests a questioning of the colonial, Eurocentric, capitalist construction of gender, as this approach will enable us to fully understand the intersection of economic, political, and cognitive inferiorising factors in the categorization of women (Lugones, 2008). Lugones argues that the category of gender is formulated by and for the coloniser:

“gender arrangements need not to be either heterosexual or patriarchal. They need not to be, that is a matter of history. Understanding these features of the organization of gender in the modern/colonial gender system—the biological dimorphism, the patriarchal and heterosexual organizations of relations—is crucial to an understanding of the differential gender arrangements along “racial” lines” (Lugones, 2008: 2).

To Lugones, the categorical separation between gender and sexuality lies within the social construction of race. Towards the end of *Historiedysten*, the painting *Sur l'Île de Gorée: un dîner*

*en Guinée*<sup>5</sup> (1843) by Prince François d'Orléans is shown to depict life on St. Croix. Notably, the painting is used in a geographically incorrect context to show the life on St. Croix, however, the painting is from Guinea as mentioned in its title. The misuse of the painting in *Historiedysten* points both to a grave lack of knowledge and to a homogenisation of culture, time and place leading to a reproduction of an objectifying gaze upon Africans. The uninformed use of the source demonstrates how colonial-insensitive homogenisation operates contemporarily, and how a racial grammar is reproduced based on the established Danish cultural archive.

The painting illustrates a dinner party in Guinea, with five Guinean females serving the white colonial ‘masters’—a rare encounter with the black female in *Historiedysten*. In this colonial situation, their bodies move differently in space: one operates as an active subject with power, and the other as a passive powerless object. The contrast between the white, rich, seated, clothed body, and the black, poor, standing, naked body, exhibits the unequal power relations, again demonstrating and reproducing the self-proclaimed superiority of the “slave masters” in terms of race and gender. The black body is portrayed in a non-personal way: the females look relatively the same, without variety in their blackness or womanhood, whereas the white body is shown from multiple lights, with varying personality and physical traits, emphasising their individuality. The male colonisers are presented as humans, in contrast to their servants, who are displayed as sub-human.

François d'Orléans, who is also displayed in the painting, represents colonial masculinity: his role becomes the representation for whiteness, hence the standard for the normative. This painting was created as a record, an expression of the contemporary societal context, to later become part of the Danish archives and contribute to the cultural archive; how one ‘thinks, feels, and speaks’ about one’s own white, male superiority. Indeed, a binary structure is (re)produced in *Historiedysten* as this painting demonstrates an explicit social distance between the black female and white male, which takes part in the dehumanisation and portrayal of the black female as an object of desire and inferiority. The marking of her as a sexualised primitive being contributes to the cultural archive that ultimately regards her purpose of existence to please her ‘master’. This is supported by the body language: a female leans towards one of the white males, creating an illusion of reciprocal enjoyment of the forced situation. The illusion of reciprocity reinforces the power dynamics, the coloniser’s view on the black female, his undeniable access to her body, and her

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<sup>5</sup> Translation: On the Island Gorée: A dinner in Guinea

consent and enjoyment of his exploitation, which again, support white innocence (Wekker, 2016: 131).

By tearing at the fabric of the colonial power structure, consisting of patriarchy and racism, the positionality in this painting displays the encounter between the two ends of the hierarchy-spectrum of the colonial project, which organises humans as white male, white female, black male, and black female. The interaction and clashes make up the extent to which race and gender intertwine. These social constructions have been inherited into contemporary ideas of gender. Wekker adds,

“Black peoples were envisioned fundamentally as vehicles for white enjoyment, and the extraction of sexual pleasure from enslaved women fit seamlessly into this vision, while excessive enjoyment of the sexual act was imputed to them. [...] “the white man’s burden became his sexuality and its control, and it is this which is transferred into the need to control the sexuality of the other” (Gilman 1985, 256). As subjects, the enslaved were socially dead, not entitled to bear witness against any white person who harmed them” (Wekker, 2016: 131).

The rare glimpse of the enslaved woman in *Historiedysten* demonstrates the reinforced historical social death of the black female. In this colonial misrepresentation, a positioning of the oversexualised black female as naturally subordinate in the modern/colonial gender system, bespeaks the thriving tropes which continue to legitimise processes of racial inferiorisation and gendered subordination.

## Conclusion

The special attention that has been given to the 100th year marking of the colonial relationship to the Virgin Islands, awakens troublesome questions about Denmark’s dominant innocent self-representation. In the quest to retell the colonial past, the reproduction of colonial rationales and affective economies seems unquestioned, to the extent that major Danish cultural institutions continue to use colonial archival records innocently and uncritically. As seen in the case of *Historiedysten*, the dominant point of departure in Danish history teaching proceeds to be that of a supposedly superior male coloniser perspective.

The dominant model in *Historiedysten* continues to focus on revenue and adventure legitimising euphemistic terms such as “Triangular Trade” and “white gold”. The neutralised racial

grammar attests to a list of mechanisms of colonial and racial oppression that constitute the historical and contemporary relationship between Denmark and the Virgin Islands. These mechanisms rooted in enforced unequal power relations, consequently shape the dominant perception of the Danish nation and the colonised other.

The archives were made by and for the coloniser by recording their actions, ideas, and experiences, previously fixed power relations are thus fostered in the rebirth of old narratives. With a male dominant narrative formulated within a hegemonic discourse from the outset, the physical colonial records continue to influence prevailing ways of ‘thinking, feeling and speaking’ innocently about colonialism. The influence of racial grammar in the attempt to ‘sugarcoat’ colonial history to its target audience is found in the naturalised subject position of the player as the self-entitled privileged coloniser. This dominant colonial position establishes the unmarked norm that mutes and veils the colonised as a continued effort that reinforces the colonial racial hierarchy centred around whiteness. *Historiedysten* seems to put its every effort into preventing that the young target group critically reflects over gaps and positionality, and therefore it invites them into adopting predetermined fixed attitudes of the racial, gendered hierarchy. This may influence their general attitudes to their own and others’ place in the world, and thereby how contemporary issues, such as structural racism are dealt with. *Historiedysten* exemplifies the urgent need for critical perspectives and diverse representation in colonial history education that does not accept the archive as a ‘natural singular truth’, in order to acknowledge different ways of ‘thinking, speaking, and feeling’ about Denmark’s colonial past.

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