

Sebastian Jobs, Gesa Mackenthun (eds.)

# Agents of Transculturation

Border-Crossers, Mediators, Go-Betweens

# Cultural Encounters and the Discourses of Scholarship

Edited by  
Gesa Mackenthun

Volume 6

This series seeks to stimulate fresh and critical perspectives on the interpretation of phenomena of cultural contact in both transhistorical and transdisciplinary ways. It brings together the research results of the graduate school „Cultural Encounters and the Discourses of Scholarship,“ located at Rostock University and sponsored by the German Research Foundation (DFG). One of the concerns of the volumes published in this series is to test and explore contemporary theoretical concepts and analytical tools used for the study of intercultural relations, from antiquity to the present. Aware of significant recent changes in the ways in which other cultures are represented, and „culture“ as such is defined and described, the series seeks to promote a dialogical over a monological theoretical paradigm and advocates approaches to the study of cultural alterity that are conscious of the representational character of our knowledge about other cultures. It wants to strengthen a recognition of the interdependencies between the production of knowledge about unfamiliar peoples and societies in various scholarly disciplines and ideologies of nationality, empire, and globalization. In critically investigating the analytical potential of postcolonial key terms such as „hybridity,“ „contact zone,“ and „transculturation,“ the series contributes to international scholarly debates in various fields oriented at finding more balanced and reciprocal ways of studying and writing about intercultural relations both past and present.

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# Introduction

GESA MACKENTHUN AND SEBASTIAN JOBS<sup>1</sup>

Formed and transformed through dynamic processes of transculturation, the landscape of the modern world must constantly be stabilized and represented, often violently, in ways that neglect the play of power in society. If a postmodern vision offers the image of fragmentary cultural formations unmoored from social foundations as an alternative to the modernist representation of integrated cultures rooted in bounded territories, Ortiz's perspective suggests that the formation of this vision be understood in relation to the changing geopolitics of empires.

Fernando Coronil (1944–2011)<sup>2</sup>

It has been the case for thousands of years that communication between members of different cultural groups has depended on translators, diplomats, traders, and other specialists with knowledge of both – and sometimes more than two – cultures. Successful communication and interaction was only possible through the mediation of people who had been exposed, often in childhood or through captivity, to the customs and languages of each of the cultures involved in the contact. Other border crossers and go-betweens were found among missionaries, traders, political refugees, beachcombers, pirates, anthropologists, actors in *Völkerschauen* in zoos, runaway slaves, and itinerant doctors. The need for such go-betweens has certainly increased since the early modern period and the accompanying global transformations that have taken place in human societies.

For that reason, recent discussion about the colonial 'counterpoints' of modernity have revived academic interest in these performers, as well as in the processes of transculturation they actively helped to shape. It is through observing their lives and works that the social "play of power" (Coronil xiv) becomes most visible. As figures inhabiting the margins and border zones of societies, cultural go-betweens have rarely been on the front pages of history books, but are now receiving belated credit for their work. The recent postcolonial turn in the historiography of knowledge has led to the inclusion of non-Western actors and histories, such as Muslim travelers to Europe "in search of knowledge" (Euben), and the contribution of South Asian "surgeons, fakirs, merchants, and craftsmen" to

1 As always, we thank our meticulous and reliable copy editor Paula Ross.

2 Coronil, "Transculturation" xiv.

the “making” of modern colonial science (Raj). A growing body of publications is providing information on the formerly ignored contributions of native informants, converts, and savants to the formation of imperial knowledge – a fact suggesting that the outcome is not, as was formerly often believed, a homogeneous, organically grown Western empire of knowledge but rather a “brokered world” full of contradictions and divisions (Schaffer et al.).<sup>3</sup>

In assessing this topic, the concept of ‘counterpoint’, introduced by the Cuban historian Fernando Ortiz in 1940, and again by Edward Said in the 1990s, has proven fruitful as a substitute for concepts like ‘subaltern’, ‘counter-hegemonic’, or simply ‘alternative’ in order to underline the interconnectedness and mutual dependencies between the forces at play, as well as stressing an element of creativity that we regard as essential for understanding processes of transculturation. The examples of contrapuntal agency to be presented in this volume take place in situations of cultural contact, and the majority of them are framed by what Fernando Coronil calls, in his splendid introduction to Ortiz’s *Cuban Counterpoint*, “the changing geopolitics of empire” (xiv).

Because of their marginalized existence within the border zones of colonial societies, the written traces left by transcultural figures are often fragmentary and thin. While some of their lives have to be carefully reconstructed through critical readings of the documents left by others – frequently by their enemies –, others, such as Olaudah Equiano or Sayyida Salme, have bequeathed autobiographical texts that allow for a richer assessment of their often precarious lives as cultural border crossers and go-betweens.<sup>4</sup>

The present volume gathers a number of studies of what we call “agents of transculturation.” While in some chapters, ‘transculturation’ is used as a *descriptive* term (and not always in the strict sense of Fernando Ortiz and Bronislaw Malinowski), other chapters assume a *critical perspective* on the material that has been shaped by discussions centered around the terms ‘transculturation’ and ‘agency’. A closer investigation of these terms is therefore in order here.

## Transculturation

‘Transculturation’, besides having lent itself to providing titles to an endless flow of publications, conferences, and bachelor and master programs (including one at Rostock University, where this volume was conceived), must be traced back to the work of Fernando Ortiz, who coined the term in an explicit act of discursive instauration in 1940 in his book *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar*.

3 See also Sivasundaram, Saifer, and Delbourgo/Dew.

4 See Equiano, *Interesting Narrative*; for biographies, see Carretta, *Equiano*; and Walvin, *An African’s Life*. On Sayyida Salme, see Salme/Reute, *An Arabian Princess*, and Euben, *Journeys* 156–73. For a reconstruction of the life of al-Hasan al-Wazzan, see Davis, *Trickster Travels*. Please note, this list is highly selective and could certainly be expanded.

*car*. Having enjoyed the fate of an often unacknowledged “traveling theory” (or, in Bal’s terms, “travelling concept”) in anthropological and Latin American philosophical texts for a few decades, the term resurfaced and gained wider recognition when it was reinvigorated by Mary Louise Pratt in *Imperial Eyes* in 1992.<sup>5</sup> As defined by Ortiz, ‘transculturation’ deviates from concepts that rest in an understanding of cultural influence as being monodirectional and instead emphasizes the multilaterality, but also the violence, of cultural interaction in colonial settings. Referring to the history of Cuba, but also mentioning that the Cuban case could be expanded to all of the Americas, Ortiz explicitly seeks to replace the term ‘acculturation’ and its implication that the weaker culture leaves not even a trace in the cultural texture once it is inevitably absorbed (i.e., ‘deculturated’) by the stronger culture.<sup>6</sup> The American experience illustrates, Ortiz argues, that all the cultures contributing to the cultural formation in the New World were changed in the process – a process best described as a “history of [...] intermeshed transculturations” (98). A new cultural constellation was the result. In his view, processes of transculturation actually preceded the cultural encounter in America; on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, the blending of various kinds of people and types of economies were already a sociological fact. The Spaniards, as with all inhabitants of the Mediterranean, were “representatives of different cultures” (98). But in Cuba/America, “the cultures that have influenced the formation of its folk have been so many and so diverse in their spatial position and their structural composition that this vast blend of races and cultures overshadows in importance every other historical phenomenon” (99). The clash was both savage (Ortiz names the transatlantic slave trade and the genocide of indigenous Americans) and transformative. This

painful process of transculturation [...] does not consist merely in acquiring another culture, which is what the English word *acculturation* really implies, but the process also necessarily involves the loss or uprooting of a previous culture, which could be defined as a deculturation. In addition it carries the idea of the consequent creation of new cultural phenomena, which could be called neoculturation. (102–03)

Bronislaw Malinowski, who provided much inspiration and a foreword to Ortiz’s book, stresses the aspects of processuality and innovativeness in his own reformulation of the term:

[T]ransculturation is a process [...] in which both parts of the equation are modified, a process from which a new reality emerges, transformed

- 5 “Traveling theory” is Said’s term. Coronil gives a comprehensive account of the transmigrations of the concept, as well as its effect on anthropological theory (“Transculturation” xxx–xlvii).
- 6 Ortiz’s explicit critique of the term ‘acculturation’ has not prevented the *OED* from equating ‘transculturation’ with ‘acculturation’ in its 1991 edition, thus realigning it with a conservative view of cultural interaction (Coronil, “Transculturation” xiv–xivi).

and complex, a reality that is not a mechanical agglomeration of traits, nor even a mosaic, but a new phenomenon, original and independent. (viii-lix)

Still, Malinowski's emphasis on the *mutuality* and *reciprocity* of cultural influence – an idea later picked up by Pratt in her definition of 'contact zone' (4, 6) – is not as evident in Ortiz's account due to the historical examples of genocide and slavery he has in mind. While Pratt regards the exchanges taking place in cultural contact zones in more or less dialogical terms – cultures "meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination" (4) –, Ortiz at times slips back into a quasi-Darwinian language of natural selection when he mentions the "disappearance" of America's "Paleolithic" and "Neolithic" populations due to their "inability to adjust" to Spanish culture (98). Or he uses organic metaphors when describing how the cultures of African slaves were utterly "destroyed and crushed under the weight of the cultures in existence here, like sugar cane ground in the rollers of the mill" (98). Native American cultures in Cuba simply "perished, as though struck by lightning" (100). But if the destruction of the "natives" amounted to a "transculturation that failed" (100), how can we still maintain the idea of mutual impact so important for Malinowski and Pratt? A closer assessment of plantation society also complicates the now often prevalent notion of slaves and masters "making" their "world together" (Sobel). Though there were unquestionably forms of slavery that allowed for mutual cultural influence, Ortiz's view of "the peculiar institution" (Stampp) is rather grim:

Under these conditions of mutilation and social amputation, thousands and thousands of human beings were brought to Cuba. [...] To a greater or lesser degree whites and Negroes were in the same state of dissociation in Cuba. All, those above and those below, living together in the same atmosphere of terror and oppression, the oppressed in terror of punishment, the oppressor in terror of reprisals, all beside justice, beside adjustment, beside themselves. And all in the painful process of transculturation. (102)

Subsequent reformulations of the concept of transculturation frequently effaced the aspect elements of terror, violence, and loss that often accompanied cultural encounters (and sometimes still do).

Since its reintroduction into Anglo-American critical discourse, 'transculturation' has been predominantly used as a descriptive term.<sup>7</sup> And most of the essays

7 We should mention the slightly different term, 'transculturality' used by the German philosopher Wolfgang Iser to describe the fact that the world can no longer be conceived in terms of binaries of identity and difference, or Self and Other, or "ownness" and "foreignness" (196) – although, unfortunately, these binary terms are still often used in the German context. For a discussion of the various concepts, see Stein, "The Location of Transculture."

assembled here take the position that the world always was and is transcultural and will continue to be shaped by processes of cultural exchange. But in addition to this, the concept of ‘transculturation’ is valuable for highlighting aspects of reciprocity in those historical phenomena and processes that were invisible to a critical logic of cultural assimilation and obliteration. In addition to being useful as a *descriptive* term, then, the concept also, and perhaps more importantly, informs a *critical perspective* that emphasizes formerly underrepresented facets in the history of cultural interaction. Alasdair Pettinger, writing in this volume, summarizes the situation thus:

Transculturation is not a template for making sense of what happens when something or someone moves from one culture to another; it is more usefully thought of as a guiding principle, one that insists on the range of possibilities, demanding that we attend to specific configurations and power relations that cannot be known in advance. They are certainly not always as cozy and reciprocal as Malinowski and – at times – Ortiz himself seem to suggest. (Pettinger in this volume 153)

Having worked with the concept for a number of years at the “Cultural Encounters and the Discourses of Scholarship” graduate school, some of us have noticed an increasing dissatisfaction with the term, mostly because the ingredient of power asymmetry that it still possessed in its original definition by Ortiz, and its resurrection by Pratt, is frequently forgotten in its later applications. Because, as Benita Parry asserts in her critique of Pratt’s text, while it is easy to find evidence for the cultural impingement of the so-called metropolitan centers on the so-called periphery, we mostly look in vain for any significant impact of ‘periphery’ cultures on the ‘center’: “[W]hereas the peripheries can readily be shown to have appropriated and redeployed materials from the centre, what emerges is that the centre was *unable* to recognize the materials from the periphery as constituting Knowledge” (Parry 9; Stein 256). The most frequent residence for cultural materials gathered from the colonies or the ‘periphery’ was the museum, where those materials were divested of their historical and cultural contexts.

To give two examples: Setting out to discover vestiges of transcultural reciprocity in autobiographical documents written by twenty young Africans sent to Württemberg to be trained as missionaries in the years before and after 1900, Kokou Azamede comes to the conclusion that no trace of their former tribal identity is retained in these documents. The adolescents of the Ewe tribe (in today’s Togo) who had been dispatched to Württemberg by the Bremen Mission were apparently fully ‘assimilated’ to the physical and mental lifestyle of their missions. As Paul Jenkins remarks in his review of Azamede’s book, scholars in search of transcultural moments have to develop better skills in reading the texts against their grain, taking into account the existence of large “areas of silence” (346).

The Native American writer D'Arcy McNickle's novel *Wind From an Enemy Sky* (1978) serves as our second example. McNickle, born in 1904 of Métis (mixed blood) Cree ancestry and adopted into the Salish Kootenai (Flathead) tribe in Montana, was a cultural broker throughout his life, both as a writer of fiction and as a trained anthropologist who served as a government adviser on Indian policy, including the repatriation of sacred artifacts. In this novel, the last work he completed shortly before his death in 1977, McNickle, as he stated in a letter to his editor, "wanted to write about the Indian experience as objectively as possible; not just the usual story of the wronged Indian, but the greater tragedy of two cultures trying to accommodate each other" (quoted after Owens, "Afterword" 258; see also Owens, *Other Destinies* 79). Based on the history of one of the repatriation cases for which he acted as 'cultural broker', McNickle constructs a plot set in the first half of the twentieth century that centers on a conflict over the building of a dam and the loss of a sacred medicine bundle. While the dam severely affects the ecological subsistence economy of the cattle-farming tribe of the Little Elk people, their social equilibrium had earlier been shattered by the loss of the sacred item. As it turns out, the architect who planned the dam is also the proprietor of the museum in whose vaults the medicine bundle languishes, gradually disintegrating due to ignorance and neglect. Meanwhile, an angry Indian youth shoots a man working for the dam, an act that triggers various fruitless attempts at intercultural communication by various figures familiar with both cultures. The bilingual mediators fail because of the architect's blatant ignorance of the Indians' spiritual beliefs and worldview, combined with an arrogant conviction of his culture's superiority. The catastrophic ending is primarily the result of both parties' 'voicelessness'. Both figures who act as decision makers are monolingual and have to communicate through interpreters. Finally, convinced that the life force of his tribe is forever destroyed, the tribal leader resorts to the only remaining 'language' at his disposal: physical assault.

As Louis Owens explains, McNickle had been struggling with this story since the 1940s, and in an earlier version he had envisioned a redemptive ending (the sacred bundle is returned, the tribe's subsistence restored) (*Other Destinies* 78–81). Yet, ironically, at the height of the Red Power movement's activities in the 1970s, his social vision had apparently undergone a pessimistic turn. McNickle identifies an incapacity to communicate as the main reason for the failure to reach a state of peaceful coexistence between indigenous and immigrant societies. This is related to the fact that the rules of intercultural dialogue are themselves made by the dominant side. The indigenous figures in the novel, as Owens points out, "have discovered the unequal power struggle inherent in dialogue between Indian and Euramerican worlds. Watching their world being appropriated by the invader, they have learned rather painfully the power of language as a weapon of conquest" (84) – an insight that echoes Antonio de Nebrija's famous comment when handing his first Spanish grammar to Ferdinand and Isabel in 1492: "siempre la lengua ha sido compañera del imperio" (quoted after



Hanke 127n31). Once again, Gayatri Spivak's memorable dictum, "the subaltern cannot speak," is being confirmed (308).

In this reading, *Wind From an Enemy Sky* is predominantly a reflection on the breakdown of a linguistic and cultural dialogue, the consequence of an *unwillingness* to 'transculturated', and a radical inequality of power. The novel ends with an elder beginning to sing the death song, which is borne along by the wind "as from an enemy sky. *That day, the cry of the plover was heard everywhere ... Ke-ree, ke-ree. No meadowlarks sang, and the world fell apart*" (McNickle 256). The brutal closing of *Wind From an Enemy Sky*, which is the apogee of McNickle's literary testament, is amplified by the fact that because of his professional experience, he knew well what he was talking about. It is also very likely that he was familiar with Ortiz's theory, translated into English in 1947 when McNickle was working actively as an anthropologist. The novel's catastrophic completion reiterates Ortiz's own awareness of the unbridled components of transculturation – indeed of the danger of a people's 'deculturation' that leaves no visible trace in the dominant culture.

These examples may encourage us not to delude ourselves about the power disequilibrium inherent in cultural exchanges, especially those taking place in colonial settings, as well as the disproportion between the colonial power's physical and structural violence and the comparatively pathetic attempts of dispossessed cultures to resist it. How, after all, did indigenous American cultures transform the dominant cultures of Canada and the US? Should a sacred medicine bundle, rotting away in a New York museum, be regarded as a sign of transculturation? Are the national myths of Thanksgiving or Pocahontas examples of an effective cultural exchange, or are they merely instances of mythical 'inoculation' – tranquilizing fictions of benevolent intentions used to cloud the perception against recognizing the persistence of colonial power relations?<sup>8</sup> The fact that Native Americans have survived and have been able to retain some of their traditional cultural elements should not obscure another fact – that their existence continues to be threatened by practices like landgrabbing and the destruction of rural environments, while their impact on mainstream culture is limited to the commodification of traditional jewelry and foodstuffs by an exoticist tourist industry. A similar situation is faced by many indigenous and rural populations around the globe.<sup>9</sup>

8 For 'inoculation' as a mythical function, see Barthes 140.

9 A story that remains to be written is that of the impact, since the eighteenth century, of Western encounters with indigenous cultures on the emergence of a modern ecological consciousness, of the ways in which a 'domestic' romantic idealization of nature in Europe and Euroamerica was reinforced by these engagements with traditional societies. Next to the immensely effective practice of *transcultivation* (think of introducing the potato or maize to European soils) this intellectual process of ecological *transculturation* involves a lot of mythmaking and misperceptions. It seems that the dominant culture benefited less from an adoption of indigenous knowledge in the fields of herbal medicine or farming technology but rather from translating that knowledge into the realm of fiction (e.g. the 'mother earth' cult so powerful in the environmental movement of the 1970s).

## Of Agency and ‘Voices’

Such disequilibria in economic and political representation manifest themselves in the uneven distribution of ‘voice’. The power of multilingualism, ‘voice’ is the cultural brokers’ most important cultural capital. And the focus on individual agents and their positions betwixt and between cultures, nations, states, or identities insists on the idea of ‘doing culture(s)’ and therefore helps us overcome the notion of cultures as being separate and hermetic entities (Hörning 33–37). Most of the contributions to this volume evolve around individual actors and analyze ‘transculturation’ as a social practice. These agents of transculturation oscillate between overlapping and often contradictory ‘webs of significance’, to borrow an image anthropologist Clifford Geertz used to describe culture as a complex and heterogeneous constellation (Geertz 5). Faced with their own goals and choices, limitations and misunderstandings, bureaucrats and translators, colonizers and colonized, scientists and native ‘informants’, soldiers and interpreters meandered through zones of uncertainty and ambiguity which, at the same time, made room for strategic action and creative adaptation.

The moments of silence and absence pointed out by both Azamede and McNickle in the examples above may invite us to look even more carefully for oppositional individual voices as they appear in literary texts and archival materials. In our narratives and analyses we have to find ways to represent the whole panorama of utterances, giving particular attention to moments of conflict and contestation. The essays in this volume therefore pay particular attention to processes of representation, ‘voice’ and agency. In addition to discussing the function of cultural go-betweens in general, they address the problem of individual agency and the limits imposed on it by systemic forces. Underscoring agency is not the same as foregrounding biographical details in a more or less picturesque or merely episodic fashion. Rather, the terms ‘agency’ and ‘agent’ are here tied to the concept of contact zone, where individual desire and action encounter social expectations, demands, and possibilities as well as prohibitions, pressures for consensus, or sheer nonrecognition. The essays here map out contact zones in which collective rules were transformed into individual action, and where, conversely, individual action shaped and changed collective rules. People living in-between cultures and constantly having to juggle their lives between different cultural codes could shape the character of these contact zones in carving out a space of agency that is also potentially a site of change. Some did (or do) these things in secret or outside the dominant culture’s sanctioned rules of conduct. Others, appearing to play the game, devised tricky ways of evading suspicion. And yet others, who represented the dominant – often colonizing – power, were forced through their interaction with members of other cultures to revise their original assumptions. Such a praxeological approach foregrounds the relations and exchanges between actors in the force field of cultural encounter. This focus on processes rather than seeming stabilities plays up the potential for trans-

formation of actors from different cultural backgrounds, as implied in the term ‘transculturation’.

But how did or do such go-betweens gain access to self-representation and cultural authority – how do they gain a ‘voice’? How was or is their search for identity affected by the practical necessity for camouflage, masquerade, and subterfuge? Even more important, how can we retrieve the voices of past agents of transculturation without oversimplifying the trajectories of human action and falling back on some kind of naïve intentionalism?

In spite of all attempts to ‘retrieve native voices’, historical actors of course never speak to us directly from the texts, but – as postcolonial critics like Dipesh Chakrabarty and Michel-Rolph Trouillot have repeatedly contended – the questions we ask, the tools we employ, the categories we use guide our analyses, revealing certain aspects while concealing others (Chakrabarty 9–16; Trouillot 60–107). Beyond the vision of ‘how it really was’ lies a multifaceted scene of different voices that challenge us to critically contemplate our own research methods – with all their opportunities and limitations. This volume encourages its readers to reflect on the methodology of dealing with ambiguity, uncertainty, and in-betweenness. The different chapters may deliberate on the discursive rules of scholarship that guide our perspective on the lives and work of cultural mediators – moving between the extremes of pure biographism on the one hand and the effacement of agency by the overaccentuation of structural forces on the other. The middle ground of viewing individual action as being both structured and structuring opens up a perspective on cultures (and transculturation) as a process, as a space within which to maneuver, as a negotiation without clear results. These differentiated methods of interpretation are inconsistent with teleological models of analysis and require us to find ways of writing about agents of transculturation that pay tribute to the complexity of cultural encounters – of accepting their messiness and fuzziness (see Mackenthun/Juterczenka). A better knowledge of these cross-cultural lives may improve our understanding of the intricate processes of daily practice and communication that a globalized world demands.

## **Agents of Transculturation**

The contributions in this volume are organized into five sections. The first, *Cultural Brokers in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period*, starts off with *Henk Driessen’s* analysis of the role Dragomans played in political and economic exchanges between the Ottoman Empire and European powers from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. In port cities of the eastern Mediterranean, this caste of professional mediators (composed primarily of Greek officials and traders) translated between two parties involved in commercial transactions or diplomatic negotiations. In addition to their language skills, their position as translators also required them to have intimate knowledge of European and Ottoman

customs and etiquette. Their in-between status gave them power over the transactions or negotiations, but also brought their loyalties into question and subjected them to constant mistrust by those for whom they conducted and interpreted these exchanges. *Peter Burschel's* chapter picks up the ideas of translation and identity. He tells the story of Yuhanna al-Asad, a former ambassador of the Sultan of Fès, who – while being held captive in Rome – wrote a book about sixteenth-century Europe from the perspective of an exile and in his native Arabic language. The interim spaces he inhabited allowed him contact with both Western traditions of scholarly life and Islamic thinking. As a cultural broker and translator he ambled between different intellectual, political, and religious worlds and, at the same time, assumed the freedom to critically assess the cultures of both Africa and Europe.

*Susanne Lachenicht* looks at the cross-cultural communication between Hurons, Iroquoians, and French Jesuits in seventeenth-century New France. Among all Catholic orders sent out into the world to missionize the ‘heathen’, the Jesuit order was the one most interested in collecting all available knowledge concerning the cultures to be converted. The acquisition of ‘other knowledge’ was regarded as the prerequisite for inserting Catholic ideas into existing belief systems. More than most other missionaries, early modern Jesuits practiced what ethnography would come to call participant observation: they lived with the ‘savages’, adapted to new natural and cultural environments, and copiously documented their experiences. Yet, some indigenous tribes – such as those constituting the powerful Iroquois League – rejected the presence of European friars. In her essay, Lachenicht sketches not only the difficulties encountered by the French Jesuit Gabriel Sagard, but his transcultural impulses as well, for example, his suggestion that maize be domesticated in France to alleviate the hunger of the poor. A closer look at documents reveals that processes of transculturation occurred in both directions, and that Europeans learned much more from Native Americans than scholarship on the Jesuits has so far conceded.

The second section is dedicated to *Agents and Networks in the Age of Expansion*. Here *Dagmar Freist* focuses on Mennonite and Jewish-Christian trading networks in eighteenth-century Europe. In order to maintain trading partnerships, these actors had to establish trust relations that allowed them to obtain or exchange credible information and thereby reduce the uncertainties and risks of trading. Trust was based either on a shared cultural background (e.g., religion) or it had to find new (and transreligious) frames of reference and spaces of cultural translation. For instance, London pubs became a common ground for Jewish and Christian trading partners, allowing them to interact across cultural borders. Through transcultural exchange, trust was constantly redefined and renegotiated.

*Felix Konrad's* essay deals with the career of Joseph-Anthelme Sève, alias Süleyman Paşa, a Frenchman who worked as a political and military adviser in Egypt in the first half of the nineteenth century. Not only did Sève function as a neutral broker between Europe and Egypt, he even converted to Islam, rose to the

rank of a general, and assumed the honorary title *paşa*. But Konrad goes beyond these biographical details and examines how the French *paşa* was later remembered in Europe and the Ottoman Empire. In France he was, at first, regarded as a traitor and a defector who had turned his back on Greek Christians seeking religious freedom. But after 1830, the new political alliances between France and Egypt shed new light on his role as a valuable interpreter and translator. In the late nineteenth century, Egyptian memory lauded his loyalty and his conversion to Islam. These shifting and somehow contradictory post mortem assessments reflect the multiple identities Sève could and had to perform during his life.

The last essay in this section is *Alexandra Ganser's* study of the “coastal figuration” of the ‘pirate’ in transatlantic narratives of the seventeenth century. She introduces the useful category of “coastality of knowledge” to refer to the specific knowledge constellation that existed in peripheral areas of the colonial system, areas where various European forms of knowledge (scientific and otherwise) interacted with various indigenous knowledges and belief systems (e.g., African, American). Ganser analyzes situations in which narrative authority and interpretative hegemony – Europe’s “epistemic mercantilism,” in Ralph Bauer’s terms, – are suspended and unstable. Using the examples of famous pirate narratives by Alexander Olivier Exquemelin, William Dampier, and others, Ganser indicates that the ways in which ‘pirates’ acted as authors are not always distinguishable from their activities at sea: while juggling with the emblems of national identity (for example, in their notorious practice of cross-flagging), they also evinced a “freewheeling” style of dealing with epistemological crises in their texts by mixing empirically reliable information with mythic elements. Both in writing and at sea, these coastal agents used contrapuntal strategies that disturbed the ‘secure’ epistemological categories of the colonial order.

The third section is entitled *Cross-Cultural Agency and Ambivalent Identity in the Nineteenth Century*. Here, *Alasdair Pettinger* analyzes the encounter between two go-betweens, the “coloured man” Joseph Jenkins and the African-American abolitionist William Wells Brown, who, recently freed from slavery, met Jenkins during his visit in London. His encounter with the Africa-born, jack-of-all-trades impresses Brown not least because it forces him to recalibrate his own position vis-à-vis white society on both sides of the Atlantic ocean. Various referred to as an entrepreneur and a confidence man, Jenkins exists above all as a textual sign that circulates in mid-nineteenth-century source texts and contemporary scholarly texts. As Pettinger demonstrates, however, Jenkins remains an elusive character: Brown’s emphasis on Jenkins’s racial ambiguity and his humorous presentation of the man’s admirable survival skills first and foremost produce Jenkins as a *textual* presence. In Brown’s travelogue, the figure of Jenkins can be related to Brown’s own self-fashioning as a former American slave in the (in his view) racially more liberal Britain. The question that remains is whether Jenkins was a real character, a composite figure, or a figure altogether invented by Brown, created in order to narrate his own process of identity performance.

Moving from the Atlantic to the Pacific, *Lorenz Gonschor* explores the question of how and why in the nineteenth century Hawai'i became the first non-Western entity to be recognized by the West as a nation-state. To explore processes of political exchange, he focuses on Hawaiian international diplomacy and its spreading of the Hawaiian model among the other archipelagos of Oceania by examining the roles of three selected Hawaiian political leaders and diplomats who played major roles therein. He concludes by arguing that the historiography of nineteenth-century Oceania needs to be critically reexamined. He challenges the notions of 'colonial preludes' and 'missionary kingdoms' common in Pacific historiography, while addressing instead the agency of Polynesian leaders in transforming and modernizing their countries.

The fourth section, *Agents of Religious Transformation*, introduces us to a series of cultural go-betweens in the context of the various European mission endeavors in India and Africa. *Paul Jenkins* looks at two indigenous figures interacting with the missionaries of the Basel mission in the first half of the twentieth century, Channappa Uttangi (India) and Theophil Opoku (Africa). Both acted as interreligious mediators but are today virtually forgotten. Jenkins investigates the possibilities of regarding these characters as models of peaceful religious interaction in practical terms, but also tries to reconstruct Uttangi's philosophical contribution as part of a cross-cultural religious dialogue. The reason these men have largely vanished from Western historical memory is the fact that they combined different, if not oppositional, cultural registers in their writing and thinking. An adequate commemoration was prevented by the hegemony of religious orthodoxies on both sides, none of which cherished the idea of philosophical or theological border crossing. Thus, the essay also alerts us to the fragmentary status of our knowledge about these figures due to incomplete documentation.

In the second essay by an expert in interreligious studies, *Richard Friedli* discusses three different examples of religion-related conflict resolution in twentieth-century Africa. Setting out to explain which skills are necessary for agents of transculturation – in this context, meaning people acting as mediators in contemporary conflictive contexts with religious dimensions – Friedli presents the individual acculturation model of Placide Tempels, who worked as a missionary in the Belgian Congo, the interethnic trauma-healing processes in the postgenocide context of Rwandan society, and the interreligious clash at the UN population summit in Cairo in 1994. Convinced that religious motives are frequently disguised as sociopolitical and economic conflicts, Friedli nevertheless emphasizes the active part psychological counseling can play in interethnic conflicts. Among the skills required of mediators in such conflicts are the analytical tools and methods offered by cultural anthropology, the ability to empathize with others, and a regard for the most urgent of human needs, which obviously include those of emotional balance and spiritual well-being.

The last section of this volume is an inquiry into *Native Informants, Clandestine Journalists, and the Politics of Discourse*. In his essay "Across the Tropic

Line,” *Peter Hulme* presents seven intercultural brokers – US-American journalists and spies who visited Cuba at critical points in that country’s fascinating history and reported on their experiences there during times of ideological and military conflict. Employing a very nuanced understanding of the process Ortiz calls transculturation, Hulme is especially interested in complicating the other term in the title of this volume, “agent.” In all instances of investigating the agency of border crossers, Hulme urges, it is important to ask who the agent is acting *for* and what his or her ‘politics’ are. Obviously, the significance of the term ‘agent’, thanks to the performative turn in the cultural sciences, has more or less been divested of one of its original dictionary meanings – agent as spy, as a clandestinely acting figure within complex and dangerous political settings. ‘Native informant’, with its proximity to the term ‘informer’, is another of those ambivalent terms that is invested with the historical legacy of political conflict so often at the heart of cultural encounters.

*Anja Schwarz* analyzes the encounter of go-betweens in late eighteenth-century Australia – William Dawes, a colonial officer, and his interpreter, Patyegarang, a young Indigenous woman. Schwarz uses this historical backdrop against which to consider the politics of remembering in contemporary Australia. A close reading of Dawes’s notebook, which contains a record of the conversations he had with Patyegarang, reveals both his efforts to understand and catalogue the aboriginal language as well as the limits and blind spots of his own categories, which failed to capture the situational meaning language assumed for Indigenous speakers. Today this encounter serves as a canvas upon which artists and scholars can ponder the colonial past – as a ‘postmemory’. Schwarz’s discussion of the Australian example helps us to understand how go-betweens are functionalized and mythologized in postcolonial settings through scholarly and popular discourses of collective, especially national, identity formation.

The volume ends with *Luciana Martins*’s instructive reading of Claude Lévi-Strauss’s representation of his ‘native informant’, the Bororo Indian Roberto Ipureu. She shows how the writings of even one of the most skillful anthropologists and myth critics reiterates cultural mythologies that can be traced back to the European exotic imaginary, as when Lévi-Strauss refers to Ipureu as his “tropical Papageno.” Scientific writings about non-European people, as this case study once again lays bare, are cluttered with the residues of colonial discourse, among which the denial of historical coevalness (pointed out long ago by Johannes Fabian) is one of the most prominent. Martins also evinces, through a careful reconstruction of Roberto Ipureu’s activities, that this indigenous border crosser, as did so many others, had an agenda – and a subversive ‘agency’ of his own – which is now difficult to piece together. Ironically, our anthropological knowledge depends on the reliability of these characters, for whom faithfulness to the truth was not always the number one priority. As Martins suggests, these fuzzy representations can be observed in various media, including painting, photography, and ethnographic film. In any event, romantically inclined scientists have not

minded, and the resulting travelogues and formal studies are records of transcultural dynamics between groups and individuals that the scholarly disciplines in whose names these studies were published have long ignored.

It is one of the aims of the present volume to avoid falling back into a narrative of victimization nourished by dualistic notions of essential antagonism. However, when exploring the dynamics of cultural encounters, it is equally important to avoid the seductive lure of the liberalist narrative of individual equal opportunity and creative freedom in a ‘postcolonial’ or ‘globalized’ world, and of projecting this narrative back in time. The radius of contrapuntal agency, for representatives of all involved cultures, was and is for the most part rather limited. We hope that this present collection will add to our understanding of both the conditions of coercion under which agents of transculturation operated and the creative potentials they were able to realize in order to make this a better world for themselves, their peer groups, and for humanity as a whole.

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**CULTURAL BROKERS IN  
THE MIDDLE AGES AND  
EARLY MODERN PERIOD**



## CHAPTER ONE

# **Mediterranean Divides and Connections: The Role of Dragomans as Cultural Brokers**

HENK DRIESSEN

### **Introduction**

The aim of this contribution is twofold. First, I will discuss the notions of translation and cultural brokerage in anthropology, tracing them from prenetwork approaches to globalization studies. Second, I will offer a classic case of translation as cultural brokerage in the Mediterranean region, that is, the role of dragomans in the encounters between Western Europeans and locals in the Ottoman Empire, in particular officials and traders in the port cities of the Eastern Mediterranean. I will argue that dragomans as go-betweens in the interaction between Europe and the Ottoman Empire were important for paving the way for the liberal cosmopolitanism that developed in Mediterranean port cities during the nineteenth century. Moreover, they played a vital role in the emergence of modern tourism on the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean.

### **Cultural Translation, Brokers, Networks, and Globalization**

Being involved in the ethnography and history of Mediterranean societies for almost forty years, it is nearly impossible for me to disregard instances of cultural brokerage. Long before the beginning of written history of the area, mobility, exchange and conflict were already major modes of interaction in the area, as testified to by numerous archaeological findings. Cultural brokerage fits very well into this sequence.

As a student, I enjoyed the benefit of teachers among whom Anton Blok, Jeremy Boissevain, and Eric Wolf stood out as theoretically sensitive to patron-client relationships, open-ended networks, and fluid configurations of people at a time when the majority of anthropologists were still struggling to get away from the dominant structural-functionalist paradigm with its ahistorical emphasis on socio-political equilibrium.

Another teacher, Leo Triebels, a specialist in Caribbean ethnography, admired the work of Melville Herskovits and lectured on the concept of acculturation, the

exchange of cultural features that is the result of continuous firsthand contacts between different groups. This teacher briefly referred to the notion of transculturation, coined by sociologist and historian Fernando Ortíz in his book *Cuban Counterpoint* (1947). Herskovits considered this notion as more or less similar to his own use of the term acculturation. However, Ortíz gave a much higher priority than Herskovits to “processes in which features are not mechanically aggregated, but give way to a new phenomenon, independent and original” (García-Canclini 7096). Moreover, Ortíz emphasized reciprocity in the process of transculturation. In his words, Columbus may have discovered America, but the Americans in their turn discovered Columbus. In sum, we may consider Ortíz as a precursor of creolization and hybridity studies.

Bronislaw Malinowski, the British-Polish pioneer of ethnographic fieldwork, wrote an introduction to Ortíz’s book and, with his undisputed authority, endorsed the concept of transculturation. Whereas acculturation had already become more or less obsolete by the time I was doing my master studies in the early 1970s, transculturation saw a revival in postcolonial and cultural studies of the 1990s in the wake of widespread scholarly attention to processes of globalization, transnationalism, and hybridization.

Intimately related to the notion of transculturation is of course the idea of cultural translation as a description of the mechanism by which cultural encounters produce new and hybrid forms. In fact, it was again Bronislaw Malinowski who introduced into anthropology the metaphor of translation in an attempt to capture the discipline’s core mission. He saw the learning of a foreign culture as akin to the learning of a foreign tongue, and the aim of his monographs, among which *The Argonauts of the Western Pacific* stands out, was to translate aspects of the cultures of Melanesian/Trobian into British ones. It was, however, Edward Evans Pritchard who became a key figure in advocating the art of translation as the heart of anthropology. His students Lienhardt, Beattie, and Beidelman advanced the translation idea even further. In *After Babel*, literary critic George Steiner defined the act of understanding as a kind of translation, turning other people’s notions and activities into the corresponding terms of our own languages. In doing so, he spread the notion of cultural translation far beyond the boundaries of anthropology.

The role of translation in its narrow linguistic as well as in its wider cultural sense has been crucial in the commercial and colonial expansion of Europe into other continents. According to cultural historian Peter Burke, the notion of translation has the advantage of stressing the work of domesticating what is alien and the tactics employed in this process. Taking into account the view of the donors and the receivers as well as the brokers, we may also find out what resists translation and what is changed and even lost in translating from one culture to another (Burke, *Cultural Hybridity*). Burke also stresses that as an exchange of ideas and meanings translation always involves negotiation since translators “need to steer between the opposite dangers of unfaithfulness to the culture from which they

translate and unintelligibility to their target audience” (Burke, *Lost in Translation* 3).<sup>1</sup> Below, I will address the question of who the translators in cultural encounters between Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean actually were. This is not an easy task since for the most part dragomans remained anonymous and invisible men.

The concept of brokerage entered anthropology through Eric Wolf’s seminal 1950s article, “Aspects of Group Relations in a Complex Society.” It was further developed by Clifford Geertz and elaborated in ego-centered network approaches in the late 1960s and early 1970s. These were in fact attempts to break away from dominant structural-functionalist studies that were rather static, with their emphasis on impersonal roles, structures, and equilibrium.

Wolf, who conducted fieldwork in Puerto Rico, Mexico, and South Tyrol, focused on the encompassing web of relations between communities and national institutions, arguing that in Mexico both community- and nation-oriented groups used mediators who then drew resources and influence from their strategic intermediate positions:

The position of these “brokers” is an “exposed” one, since, Janus-like, they face in two directions at once. They must serve some of the interests of groups operating on both the community and the national level, and they must cope with the conflicts raised by the collision of these interests. They cannot settle them, since by doing so they would abolish their own usefulness to others. Thus they often act as buffers between groups, maintaining the tensions that provide the dynamics of their actions. The relation of the hacienda owner to his satellite Indians, and the role of the modern politician-broker in the lives of his community-oriented followers, may properly be viewed in this light. (138)

Some years later Clifford Geertz picked up Wolf’s notion of broker and used it in his famous essay on the Javanese Kijaji as a cultural broker. The local Muslim schoolteacher translated the somewhat abstract ideologies of the New Indonesia into the concrete idioms of rural life, in a way similar to his standing between those villagers who considered themselves as more pious and orthodox than the mass of their animistic neighbors and international Islam.

Boissevain and Blok used the concepts of patronage and brokerage to make ethnographic fieldwork and writing more dynamic by following informants across the boundaries of their communities and by focusing on nodes in social networks, in other words, on the role of patrons and brokers. The analytical distinction between these nodal entrepreneurial figures is linked to the nature of the resources they manipulate, so-called first-order resources (land, capital, jobs) in the case of patrons, and second-order resources (information, networks, knowledge, skills) in the case of brokers. Of course, there is considerable overlap between these roles and resources.

1 For a recent review essay on translation studies in anthropology, see Catherine Tihanyi.

Inspired by Edmund Leach's book on Highland Burma, Frederick Bailey's study on politics and change in Orissa, and Fredrik Barth's study of political leadership among the Swat Pathans, Jeremy Boissevain became a prominent representative of an actor-oriented approach to society. In his influential book, *Friends of Friends*, he set forth a process-inspired perspective on people, groups, and institutions of interlinking, multilevel networks. Being a fieldworker, and averse to grand theory, network analysis allowed him to remain close to the small politics of people in their daily interactions. Although he was well aware of the methodological limits of network analysis, he made a forceful plea to include it in the research tool kit of every ethnographic fieldworker (compare the formal and statistical network approaches based in quantitative sociology that are based on different assumptions, procedures, and goals).

Anton Blok's widely acclaimed monograph on the mafia of a Sicilian agrotown analyzed the development of the rural mafia in response to larger social, political, and economic forces, and *mafiosi* as brokers who both bridged and maintained the gulf between local society and the Italian state. Blok contributed to a major shift in Mediterranean ethnography: a move away from the community study to the problem-oriented monograph informed by history and political economy. He became a leading exponent of historical anthropology, inspired by Eric Wolf's work on peasant societies and by Norbert Elias's work on state formation and the civilizing process.

Pierre Bourdieu's notion of social capital, which refers to connections within and between networks, and his concept of cultural capital as forms of knowledge, education, and skills (later he added symbolic capital as a category consisting of honor, prestige, and recognition), further defined the stakes involved in brokerage. Sociologist Manuel Castells Oliván elaborated on the idea of network society in an age of digital communication. He concluded that "dominant functions and processes in the information age are increasingly organized around networks," that in the network society "the power of flows takes precedence over the flow of power" (an obvious example of exaggeration, H.D.), and that society is now marked by "the pre-eminence of social morphology over social action" (469). Unfortunately, Castells hardly had an eye for the role of agency in his network society, in other words, neither for the networkers, brokers, and gatekeepers, nor for the stakes, values, and meanings involved in the networking.

An influential anthropologist worth mentioning here is Ulf Hannerz and his pathbreaking study, *Cultural Complexity. Studies in the Social Organization of Meaning* (I still remember the excitement of reading this book twenty years ago). Hannerz was one of the first anthropologists to deal in a systematic way with transnationalism, global flows of meaning, Creole cultures, and cosmopolitanism, claiming, among many other things that "there can be no cosmopolitans without locals, representatives of more circumscribed territorial cultures" (252). If intellectuals in the geopolitical periphery are cosmopolitans they are also in a sense



transformers and mediators between the local and transnational. To quote Hanerz:

As cultural brokers they are in part gatekeepers, deciding what gets in and what will be kept out, ignored, explicitly rejected. They are also interpreters [...] and they are also guardians of local culture [...] they are likely to argue for its preservation or revitalization rather than its destruction. (258–59)

Transculturation by definition implies people who connect people, artifacts, meanings, and ideas, often across geopolitical and symbolic divides. But at the same time, brokers tend to perpetuate divides in order not to undermine or lose their own *raison d'être*. In other words, we are dealing with the ability of brokers to connect resources of various actors at different levels of sociocultural integration, whereas on the other hand, as go-betweens they derive their livelihood from maintaining the gaps between the parties involved. Let us now move to Mediterranean port cities in the past and consider some case material.

## Port Cities

In an article on Mediterranean port cities, I argued that if we are searching for Mediterranean cultural brokers, we are more likely to find them in port cities than in the mountains or inland towns. Porosity, passage, openness, and flux are among the most striking structural qualities that inhere in port cities. As junctions of connections between land, sea, and centers of power and cultural domination, they have often played a decisive role in Mediterranean history. In fact, port cities such as Marseille, Barcelona, Tangier, Venice, Genoa, Alexandria, Beirut, Izmir (Smyrna), Istanbul, Piraeus, Thessaloniki, and Trieste have not only been workshops of cultural translation, places where words and meanings have been exchanged for centuries, they have by implication also been cradles of protoglobalization.

Between the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, roughly two-thirds of the Mediterranean shores were controlled by the Ottomans. Ottoman *cabotage*, that is coastal navigation and transport with small boats hopping from port to port in search of cargo (soap, rice, wheat, textiles, and passengers), was to a large extent dominated by seamen from the Provence, Venice, and Ragusa (Dubrovnik). Although Greeks, Jews, and Armenians played a prominent role as middlemen in chartering ships, the maritime caravan trade was largely ruled by Turks and Arabs, as Daniel Panzac has shown in his *Le caravane maritime*. The caravaners and brokers were in fact the lubricant of trans- and supra-Mediterranean trade networks, making long-standing commercial and diplomatic relationships possible.

These men mastered at least a basic level of the Mediterranean lingua franca, the Frankish language, based on Italian with words from Provençal, Greek, Turkish, Arabic, Armenian, and Spanish. This ‘*trait d’union* language of the two shores’, as Dahklia has recently defined it in her fascinating study of the lingua franca, was used by a wide variety of what we may call in-between people, such as seamen, captives, pirates, slaves, renegades, and diplomats. It was a simple language with a minimum of syntax and a maximal use of infinitives and repetitions. The demise of this transcultural language coincided with the increasing pressure of European colonialism in the Mediterranean. The French soldiers who conquered Algiers in 1830 still had been taught some very basic lingua franca. But in the course of the nineteenth century it became almost obsolete with the European colonial domination of the southern and eastern shores and the rise of nationalism.

Before the victory of British and French colonialism, the services of official dragomans at trading posts, embassies, and consulates in Eastern Mediterranean ports (Istanbul, Smyrna, Istanbul, Latakia, Beirut, Haifa, and Alexandria) were absolutely necessary for drawing up written contracts between sellers and shippers and for diplomatic transactions. As I have shown in my Mediterranean port city article, these brokers played a pioneering role in the emergence of nineteenth-century liberal cosmopolitanism on Mediterranean shores. Liberal port city cosmopolitanism included the following overlapping characteristics: the substantial presence of ethnic trading minorities; a general enterprising atmosphere; linguistic and religious plurality; openness and tolerance; considerable economic growth; common interests across ethnic boundaries; a basic educational system modeled after the French and English systems; and vast commercial, social, and cultural networks that transcended the Mediterranean world. Dragomans facilitated the communication among people of different linguistic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, and in doing so, contributed to the emergence of this nineteenth-century version of cosmopolitanism.

## **The Dragoman: a Prototypical Cultural Broker<sup>2</sup>**

The office and function of translator were already well understood in the Bible. The Hebrew word used in Genesis is *melitz*, rendered in Aramaic as *meturgeman*, translator. It passed from Aramaic to Arabic (*tarjumân*), Turkish, Italian, French and, finally, to English where it became *dragoman* or *drogman*.

Early examples show a two-tier translation process through an intermediate language, which for the European Mediterranean of the later Middle Ages was Italian. After the expansion of Islam, Arabic became the dominant sacred, commercial, political and scientific language (later Persian and Turkish were added).

2 This section owes much to the seminal work on the dragoman by Bernard Lewis.



Fig. 1 & Fig. 2: *Dragoman*, about 1809, anonymous Greek artist. (Source: <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/>) & David Wilkie, *The dragoman of Mr. Moore, English consul at Beyruth*, lithography, 1841. (Source: <http://archive.constantcontact.com/>)

During the crusades especially, there was a growing need for professional interpreters.

Who were these early interpreters? After their expulsion from Spain in 1492 and resettlement in the Ottoman Empire, some Jews learned Turkish and specialized as translators. Among them were also men who changed religion, renegades or *muhtadi*, with at least a basic knowledge of Italian or Arabic, and adventurers and seamen who mastered words and phrases from several Mediterranean languages. Jews also worked in the customs administration of the Supreme Porte. Gradually, we see a shift from Jews to Catholic Greeks, and to a lesser extent Armenians, as interpreters in Ottoman dealings with foreigners, mainly West Europeans.

The main task of dragomans consisted of translating between two parties involved in commercial transactions. Written transactions often took place at consulates. Let me just give one standard example taken from the work of Daniel Panzac. On February 21, 1756, four men meet in the office of the French consulate of Alexandria. Jacques Dumas, captain-owner of a bark from Saint-Tropez, tries to reach an agreement with Mohammed Basja, a Turkish merchant from Candia on Crete, through the agency of a dragoman in the service of the consu-

late. The chancellor acts as a notary and writes down the nature of the cargo, i.e., various goods and three passengers, and the route that will be taken to the destination, the island of Chios by way of Smyrna. The tax for the cargo will be paid by the shipbroker, whereas the captain is responsible for the tax on his sailing ship. The chancellor also stipulates the terms of loading, unloading, and sailing, as well as the cost of transport. To conclude the transaction, captain, merchant, chancellor, and two witnesses sign the agreement.

While the majority of dragomans were involved in the daily routine of translating, in particular when written contracts were drawn up, a minority of them performed diplomatic tasks in which consuls or ambassadors from Western European countries and local dignitaries were involved. These dragomans could become prominent and very influential. This was, to give an example, the case with the dragomans of the Dubrovnik Republic studied by Vesna Miović-Perić. Ragusan dragomans were often self-educated merchants who learned Turkish during their long business stays in the Ottoman Empire. They mainly operated in Istanbul, neighboring Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in the Turkish chancellery in a city palace of Dubrovnik. They were vital links in the transactions between the local people and the Ottomans.

The Ottoman Greek and Armenian communities possessed considerable multilingual skills because a substantial percentage of their members did business not only in the Mediterranean but also in the Black Sea, Atlantic and Indian Ocean worlds (Quataert 79). The Greeks of Constantinople often sent their sons to Italy to study at universities there, and they returned to the Ottoman Empire with a profound knowledge of Italian and European customs and etiquette, and began work in the burgeoning Ottoman bureaucracy. At the same time, we see toward the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of modern times the emergence of permanent embassies in Istanbul established by the Venetians, Genoese, French, Dutch, and the English. They negotiated with the Ottoman government primarily on commercial matters. The embassies and consulates largely relied on Levantines, dragomans who were overwhelmingly Catholic and mostly spoke Italian. They intermarried with Catholic Greeks and formed a more or less self-contained community, not only in Istanbul but also in other Eastern Mediterranean towns with consulates and trading posts.

Levantines and dragomen were prototypical in-between people. They were Europeans yet not really or fully European; they were locals, fluent in Turkish and Turkish manners yet not Muslim nor fully local. For centuries they were the brokers par excellence between Western Europe and the Ottoman Empire. They took advantage of their betwixt and between position, mediating between the Muslim East and Christian West, owing a kind of allegiance to both. This 'double consciousness' both facilitated and hindered their task of translation and diplomacy.<sup>3</sup> Given their divided loyalties they were often accused of serving their own

3 See for a brief discussion Hannerz 132–33.

interests and selling their services to the highest bidder. Another allegation was that they were too frightened of the Ottoman authorities to do their job properly. The main European powers decided that they could no longer rely on the Levantines and Ottoman Greek men and that they had to train their own people to learn Turkish and the art of diplomacy.<sup>4</sup>

By the beginning of the nineteenth century the old dragoman system was dying. Its demise was accelerated by the Greek War of Independence between 1821 and 1832, which made the loyalty of Ottoman Greeks suspect. In 1821 the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople was hung and the Greek dragomans, who had been in positions of power and influence, were seen as potentially treacherous. Ottoman state reforms included education largely based on Western and Central European models: “Knowledge of European languages, which provided access to the sought after administrative and technological skills of the west, became increasingly prized” (Quataert 62). A Translation Bureau was also established in Constantinople in 1821, and more and more, knowledge of French became a symbol of cultural modernity.

In the course of the nineteenth century the Ottomans increasingly had to adapt to the new balance of power between the European imperialist powers and their own declining empire. Both sides of the west-east divide now trained their own people in the skills of language and diplomacy. The classical dragoman gradually disappeared. Some of them redeployed their language skills and contacts to the emerging international tourism industry in the Middle East.

Before the advent of mass tourism, travelers had to rely on a hired dragoman to help them with the travel logistics:

These intermediaries acted as interpreters as well as guides, though most travelers and guidebooks considered their knowledge of ancient Egyptian antiquities limited and untrustworthy. Many travelers even complained about how dependence on their dragoman prevented them from direct experience of the Orient [...] As helpful as he might be (especially when travelling to Palestine and Syria), the dragoman often generated mixed feelings. Guidebooks routinely noted that many were unscrupulous... (Hazbun 8)

It was the duty of the dragoman to prevent the experience of any discomfort or inconvenience of his clients, for instance to keep beggars at bay and shield the travelers from the local crowds. In fact, Thomas Cook, the inventor of modern organized tourism, often employed former dragomans as local travel agents.

4 See Erving Goffman on the role of the mediator: “The go-between learns the secrets of each side and gives each side the true impression that he will keep its secrets; but he tends to give each side the false impression that he is more loyal to it than to the other” (*Presentation of Self* 148)

## An Example of Mediterranean Transculturation

The dragomans unintentionally facilitated *convivencia*, a key notion in nineteenth-century liberal cosmopolitanism. *Convivencia* (Latin, *convivator*, meaning a companion in feasting; *convivor*, host; *convivo*, live and eat together) has deep roots in Mediterranean history and denotes the ethos and practice of living together among several ethnicities and faiths. It was first used in English after the 1850s. From Gibraltar to the shores of the Levant, urban ethnic trading minorities fostered tolerance well into the twentieth century.

The pillar of more recent expressions of *convivencia* was the multiethnic, multilingual and interreligious diversity constructed by merchant communities in the large port towns along the Mediterranean sea. This cosmopolite urbanity has (partly mythical) antecedents in urban medieval Al-Andalus and Sicily. The concept of *convivencia* is often used to refer to the period in Iberian history between 711 and 1492 when Jews, Muslims and Christians lived together for long periods in relative peace within the different kingdoms and developed an ideal model of interfaith harmony. The Arab term for this model is *dhimma*, the contract through which the Muslim community gives protection and hospitality to members of other Abrahamic faiths on the condition that they acknowledge the dominance of Islam.

However, the practice of religious tolerance in medieval Andalusia and Sicily has been more complex and multidimensional than the ideal of *dhimma* suggests. It has often been described in one-dimensional and too simplistic terms, serving the ideological interests of nostalgia and interfaith utopia of recent times. For one thing, encounters between Muslims and Christians took place in the wider context of military conflict, albeit this may not always have affected their relationships in the same negative way. For another, Jews were in a social and political position different from Christians. Finally, as María-Jesús Rubiera and Mikel de Epalza argued in their article on Al-Andalus, the notions of religion and tolerance deserve to be re-examined and should not be projected uncritically into the medieval past.

Since the time of medieval Al-Andalus and Sicily, the idea of *convivencia* has gradually become part of a Mediterranean legacy, serving the region's self-defined pride. Historian David Lowenthal claimed in his essay on Mediterranean heritage that stressing continuity with a distant, more glorious past may help Mediterranean peoples to reclaim *convivencia*. The liberal cosmopolitanism of port cities flourished during the nineteenth century until twentieth century nationalism and essentialist homogenization made Thessaloniki thoroughly Greek, Trieste Italian, Izmir Turkish, Tangier Moroccan, and Alexandria Egyptian, and forced Turkey's and Maghreb's Sephardic Jews into exile to their ancient Palestinian 'homeland.' The last remnants of cosmopolitanism in Beirut vanished in the Lebanese civil wars of the 1970s and 1980s. It survives in attenuated form in Malta, which uniquely bridges Catholic and Arab culture, and in such remnant impe-

rial outposts as Gibraltar and the Spanish enclaves Melilla and Ceuta in Northern Morocco.

During fieldwork in Melilla in the mid-1980s, I found a Spanish enclave on the Mediterranean coast of Morocco – held by Spain since the end of the fifteenth century – where a strong version of *convivencia* was operating among the political and economic leaders of the four religions, or ‘cultures’ as they were called locally. Middle- and upper-class representatives of Catholicism, Islam, Judaism, and Hinduism, as well as the enclave government dominated by liberal Spaniards, most of whom were nominal Catholics, celebrated what they considered to be an age-old peaceful coexistence among the four religions in this corner of the Mediterranean world. The enclave ethos of *convivencia* was played out in official celebrations and in so-called *agasajos*, informally organized yet highly formal banquets where members of the ethnic middle and upper classes irrespective of ethnic background gathered, socialized, and paid their respects to each other. The ethos and practice of *convivencia* also fits into the multiculturalism policy that has been embraced by Social-Democrat Spain at national, regional, and local levels since the 1980s.

More recently, as Lowenthal argued in the heritage article mentioned earlier, *convivencia* is being revived from above as part of a Mediterranean inheritance in efforts to bridge divisions between Christian, Muslim and Jew, Turk and Greek, Europe and North Africa and the Levant in the fields of arts, environmental and cultural heritage partnerships, and in the overall ethos of multiculturalism that has emerged in several Mediterranean countries and cities. But there are also attempts to recreate *convivencia* from below. A case in point is the neighborhood of Belunce in Marseille where, according to the German anthropologist Barbara Preveling in a recent summary of her fieldwork, old relations between lower middle-class Arabs and Jews, going back to the preimmigration past, appear in new forms. Here Muslims and Jews live together and use their collective memories to reinvent their relationships.

## Conclusion

In this contribution, I have briefly traced the history of the concepts of translation and brokerage in cultural anthropology and sociology from prenetwork approaches to globalization studies. Departing from the seminal work of Fernando Ortíz, there has been an accumulation of insights and a reintroduction of the notion of transculturation. These concepts were applied to the historical and prototypical case of dragomans, who played a pivotal role in the encounters between Europe and the Ottoman Empire in the domains of trade and diplomacy and, more recently, in the emergence of modern tourism. These consummate go-betweens took advantage of their betwixt and between position mediating between the Muslim East and Christian West that demanded fidelity to each.

This ‘double consciousness’ of the dragomans both advanced and hampered their work of translation and diplomacy in the widest senses of the terms.

May we conclude on the basis of Mediterranean evidence that transculturation largely springs from the work and power of go-betweens or mediators between cultures and religions such as dragomans in the case of the Mediterranean world before the advance of nationalism? Here I would like to evoke Lowenhaupt Tsing’s concept of productive friction of connections. The image of friction reminds us that heterogeneous and unequal encounters across differences can result in new arrangements of culture and power and of cultural production, in the case of the Mediterranean, the ethos and practice of *convivencia*. The notion of productive friction reminds us of Eric Wolf’s contention of more than fifty years ago that cultural brokers often act as buffers between groups ‘maintaining the tensions that provide the dynamic of their actions.’

Our case of the dragoman is congruent with this notion and contention, mediating as they did between Ottomans and European merchants and diplomats and local peoples who dwelled in the port cities of the Mediterranean. Later, in their role as tourist guides and interpreters, one of their functions was to insulate their European and American patrons from the local crowds. In summary, connection and division is the core business of cultural brokers.

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## CHAPTER TWO

# Yuhanna al-Asad, or the Language of Exile

PETER BURSCHEL

### Johannes Leo de Medicis

The entry for January 6, 1520, in the journal of the Papal Master of Ceremonies Paride de Grassi, describes an occasion that appears to have caused something of a furor in Rome. In meticulous detail, it also records the circumstances that led up to the event:

Some time ago our fleet captured a Moorish fleet that came from the Great Turk [*classis maurorum venientium a magno turcho*]. Together with this fleet, an ambassador of the King of Fès [*orator regis feciarum*] also fell into captivity. [...] After this ambassador had been incarcerated for a lengthy period in Castel Sant'Angelo, he declared – whether merely calculating that this would enable him to leave the prison, or motivated by true desire – that he had decided to become a Christian. The Pope first ordered that he be asked why he had decided to abandon his faith in order to strive for another with which he was not familiar. As he was considered a true scholar [*vere doctus nam in lingua sua peritissimus esset dicitur in philosophia et medicinis*] many philosophers and physicians held discussions with him. In addition, earning universal praise [*cum laude universali*] he also improved Arabic texts that in many cases had been translated nonsensically, or indeed foolishly and wrongly. The Pope commissioned me together with two other bishops to examine this ambassador. He told me that he wished to renounce the Mauritanian faith because it was thoroughly confused and contradictory [*fidem mauretanie non velle habere propter varietatem et confusionem suam ac in se ipsam multipliciter contrariam*] since Mohammed, a deeply divided man, had introduced this sect out of contempt for Christ and for the Christians. [...] When at last he encountered some of the principles of our Christian teaching, he said that they pleased him without exception and that for this reason he wished to possess them all. It remained without question, however, that he still had doubts, as he had not yet received sufficient instruction.<sup>1</sup>

1 Text of this passage following the Latin manuscript in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana: Rauchenberger 455–56 (English Translation by Peter Burschel). For a more extensive background, see Davis, *Christian Slaves*; Schwara.

Paride de Grassi further reports how he and other clerics gave the captive ambassador religious instruction; how he gradually lost his doubts; and how under examination he ultimately recognized all of the articles of faith: *examinatus de articulis fidei respondit in omnibus credere*, making it possible to schedule the baptism for the Feast of Epiphany, conducted by no less a figure than the Pope himself at no less a place than St. Peter's Basilica. Paride de Grassi stresses that he himself assisted at the ceremony, and also names three cardinals who were chosen to be godfathers.<sup>2</sup> It is not difficult for us to construe that they all had good reason to attribute this honor to the commitment and dedication they had demonstrated in the struggle against Islam.<sup>3</sup> The name under which the captive ambassador was baptized was that of the Pope himself: his birth name, his papal name, and the name of his family – Johannes Leo de Medicis.<sup>4</sup>

### Joan Lione Granatino: A Bird That Can Also Swim

Six years later in Rome, an Italian manuscript was completed that had a great career ahead of it, despite the fact that it was linguistically flawed. Indeed, it suggested an author whose mother tongue could hardly be Italian: the *Libro de la Cosmographia & Geographia de Affrica*. Together with the date and the place where the manuscript was created, we learn the name of the author only from the colophon: Joan Lione Granatino, Johannes Leo from Granada.<sup>5</sup> Encompassing almost five hundred sheets, the manuscript held in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Rome consists of nine sections.<sup>6</sup> At the end of the first section, which is intended to be a general introduction to the geography, climate, economics, and culture of Africa, the author proceeds with a discussion of the virtues and an examination of the vices of Africans, “Dellj Vitij & cosè nephandè chè hanno lj Affricani” (Joan Lione Granatino fol. 41<sup>v</sup>), which, as he is keen to emphasize, he finds anything but easy to do.<sup>7</sup> For it was in Africa that he grew up; it was in Africa that he became a respectable man, a “buon homo.” Nevertheless, like every “compositorè,” he is required to tell the things as they are, “narrarè le cosè come sonno,” whether he wants to or not (Joan Lione Granatino fol. 43<sup>v</sup>).

The author underscores just how serious he is by telling the story of a man who is forced to carry out the punishment of flogging a friend, and who thereupon, to the latter's surprise, strikes the blows with full force. At the same time,

2 Bernardino López de Carvajal (Santa Croce di Gerusalemme), Lorenzo Pucci (Santi Quattro Coronati), and Egidio Antonini da Viterbo (Santo Bartolomeo all'Isola).

3 This argument already with Davis, *Trickster Travels* 62–5.

4 On conversions in a transcultural perspective, see e.g., Bennassar and Bennassar; Greene; Penelas; Siebenhüner.

5 Print of the colophon: Rauchenberger 137, 448.

6 MS V.E. 153 (beforehand MS V.E. 953). – On the manuscript (and its ‘ways’), see Rauchenberger 126–39; Davis, *Trickster Travels* 94–7.

7 On this (quite remarkable) ‘confession’, see Davis, *Trickster Travels* 109.

however, the author gives his audience something else to ponder: concealing the vices of the Africans would cause him to appear vicious himself. For this reason he wishes to behave like a bird told in another story. Like the story of the man who flogs his friend, this story also originates, the author continues, from a book that contains one hundred stories, the *Libro del cento novelle*.

In the days when animals were still able to talk, an intelligent and courageous bird had the remarkable ability of being able to live both in water as well as in the sky. When one day the king of the birds levied taxes, the bird immediately flew into the sea in order to live among the fish. However, when the king of the fish shortly thereafter also levied taxes, the bird shot back out of the water into the sky: “da lacqua fugendo allj vcellj dicendo al loro la medesima scusa.” Without any question, according to the author, mankind acts in exactly the same manner all over the world. Wherever he can, man seeks out his advantage: “dovè chè l’homo vedè el suo vantagio sempre ad quello attendè.” At the same time, the author announces that he will also be taking this principle to heart as “compositorè.” If the Africans are to be criticized, he says, he will excuse himself by stressing that he was born not in Africa, but instead in Granada. However, if the country of his origin is to be criticized, then he will insist that he grew up in Africa, and not in Granada. It is his intention, though, to favor the Africans and to exclusively report on those vices that are general knowledge (Joan Lione Granatino fol. 43<sup>v</sup>–44<sup>v</sup>).

Many searches have been made for the *Libro del cento novelle* that contains the two stories the author mentions here. As far as we can tell, a book of this nature never actually existed, neither in Europe, in Africa, nor anywhere else. The two stories are simply his stories.<sup>8</sup>

## Yuhanna al-Asad

It will not come as a great surprise to anyone that the convert Johannes Leo de Medicis and the inventor of stories, Joan Lione Granatino, are one and the same person. Not just because of the similarity of their names, which can hardly be accidental. We are able to retrace the life of the convert – although admittedly not without interruption – up to the *Cosmographia*, because he certainly did not use his restored freedom to leave the Land of War, the *Dar al-Harb*. On the contrary, Johannes Leo de Medicis, Joan Lione Granatino remained here to conduct research, to teach, and to write. When he completed his *Cosmographia* at the beginning of the year 1526, he was already well-known within Italy’s humanistic scholarly circles, and not just as a teacher, copyist, commentator, and translator, but also as the author of scholarly tracts. For example, in the years following his conversion he presented inter alia a study of Arabic verse in Latin (Rauchen-

8 Cf. (pointed) Davis, *Trickster Travels* 110–16.

berger 83–125; Davis, *Trickster Travels* 69–108). Concurring with his biographer Natalie Zemon Davis, it was the humanistic transcultural alien, influenced not least by Jewish scholars, who transformed himself, the former ambassador of the Sultan of Fès, into an “author of his own,” who following his baptism revealingly called himself Yuhanna al-Asad, Yuhanna the Lion, whenever he wrote his name in Arabic (Davis, *Trickster Travels* 65, 87).

## **Al-Hasan bin Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Wazzan al-Fasi**

What we know about him, we have learned mainly from his own pen. Or rather from a bird that could also swim. For example, the name he used before his baptism, because as a learned ambassador he was able to borrow manuscripts from the Vatican library even while in captivity. In two instances he signed his name in Arabic as “Al-Hasan bin Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Wazzan al-Fasi” (Rauchenberger 68–69). Incidentally, while here he stressed his North African heritage with “al-Fasi,” on another occasion he also added “al-Gharnati,” “from Granada,” to his Arabic signature (Davis, *Trickster Travels* 15).

At the same time, we know about his North African past only because Yuhanna al-Asad – as I shall be calling him from now on – actually mentions this in his *Cosmographia*. Granted, he does so in a fragmentary, shadowy, and misleading manner. It is only here that we find references to his early childhood in Granada, before his family fled to Fès, possibly in 1491, to escape the victorious Castilians; for centuries Fès had drawn émigrés and refugees from the Iberian Peninsula. Or his time as a student at one of the local mosque schools; or his experiences as a junior lawyer, *faqih*, in a hospital for the mentally challenged; or his *hajj*, his great pilgrimage to Medina and Mecca; but above all, his travels as a diplomat (and probably slave buyer too) in the service of the new Wattasid Sultan Muhammad al-Burtughali, which took him more than once to Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as to Algiers, Tunis, Istanbul, and Cairo (Zhiri; Rauchenberger 27–66; Davis, *Trickster Travels* 15–54).

On the other hand, we also know that Yuhanna al-Asad – apart from the scattered communicative diversions in the *Cosmographia* – was less than effusive about what were probably the two most decisive incidents in his life: his capture and his conversion.

## **The Language of Exile**

One may indeed ask why Yuhanna al-Asad chose to conceal these momentous events from his readers. The answer would appear to be contained in a passage in the eighth section of the *Cosmographia* which, ostensibly, by-the-by, concerns the author’s plans. This is an answer that also addresses the issues of this paper.

In this passage, Yuhanna al-Asad does not merely announce his intention to write a book about Europe, he also informs his readers that he will write this book as soon as he has returned from his voyage to Europe. What he thereby gives us to understand may be summarized as follows: while in Europe I wrote a book about Africa that enables me – or at least does not make it impossible for me – to return to Africa to write a book about Europe (Joan Lione Granatino fol. 432<sup>v</sup>–433<sup>r</sup>).

Within the context of the central questions of this volume, this means that by addressing the case of Yuhanna al-Asad, we have the opportunity to get to know a cultural go-between of a very unique nature.<sup>9</sup> A scholar who found himself a prisoner in a foreign land in which only converting to another faith guaranteed the ambiguous freedom that deserves to be called exile (Trojanow). A convert who gradually mastered a language of exile, as articulations of this freedom may be so named by alluding to James Clifford and Diaspora research (Clifford 310), and who became an “author of his own” on the horizon of return, although cut off from the networks of Islamic tradition. A broker, ultimately, who facilitates insights into a cultural process of translation that is quite unparalleled.<sup>10</sup> After all, anyone in Europe at the beginning of the sixteenth century who wanted to write about Africa, in order subsequently to write in Africa about Europe, would need to be thinking about Africa while already in Europe, even if this was only in the person of the Ottoman ambassador in Venice, who tended to keep a very close eye on the Italian book market. In other words, while writing in Europe, Yuhanna al-Asad is unlikely to have had only a Christian audience in mind.<sup>11</sup>

In turn, this also means that by addressing the case of Yuhanna al-Asad, we are able to interpret this process of cultural translation<sup>12</sup> – beyond the conventional definitions of “intellectual history” – with Bertolt Brecht (and others) as an “interventionist thinking” (*eingreifendes Denken*) that spotlights the power of words to guide actions in order to change the social world’s patterns of perception and interpretation. For this enables us to learn not just more about the genesis of cultural autonomy as a precondition for “interventionist thinking.” We also encounter those spaces of translation that have yet to be adequately surveyed, in which bodies of experience and knowledge are semantically altered in such a way that they may be used for intervention, may appear in interpretative competition, and last but not least, can also be made politically productive (Gilcher-Holtey).

Against this backdrop, if we return to the question of why Yuhanna al-Asad hushes up his captivity and conversion, then in at least one instance the answer is clear: anyone in his situation (and with his plans) who was intending to return from the Land of War to the Land of Peace, the *Dar al-Islam*, had every reason

9 On the term (and the concept) of ‘go-between’, see, e.g., Greenblatt 119–51; Fludernik and Gehrke; Schaffer, [et al.]; Häberlein and Keese.

10 For a comparison: Davis, “Non-European Stories.”

11 On this problem already Davis, *Trickster Travels* 107–08.

12 For this argument see Bachmann-Medick, *Übersetzung als Repräsentation*, and Bachmann-Medick, “Übersetzung als Medium.”

to treat his conversion, which had anyway become evidenced by his change of name, with commensurate discretion. But why does Yuhanna al-Asad also conceal his capture by Christian pirates on the sea route from Cairo back to Fès in the summer of 1518? Although this is merely conjecture, my supposition, in contrast to Natalie Zemon Davis and others, is that Yuhanna al-Asad left this event unmentioned because he wished to place his sojourn in a foreign non-Islamic land in the tradition of the *rihla*. Many Islamic authorities consider this ascetic challenge (and educational journey) the only rightful justification for a Muslim to spend a protracted period of time in a non-Islamic country (Touati).

We can also express this differently: our bird, which could also swim, was perfectly aware that cultural translation means above all the ability to establish oneself in a series of ‘interim spaces’ (Weigel, especially 53). And he also knew that this required *hila*, crafty, holy guile. To return once again to the bird story, to ‘his’ story: when Yuhanna al-Asad claims in his *Cosmographia* that this story derives from a certain *Libro del cento novelle*, then in view of the cultural horizon of his age, he is likely to be fairly certain of evoking at least two responses from his audience, an Arabic as well as an Italian origin of the story.<sup>13</sup>

## Africa

If one approaches the *Cosmographia* from this perspective, it becomes apparent that Yuhanna al-Asad sees ‘Africa’ as a geographical unit in profoundly European terms – as a continent. He consequently breaks decisively with the Arabic-Islamic tradition, which never (or almost never) gave this space any name at all. To put it bluntly, in his *Cosmographia* Yuhanna al-Asad created a space that was not yet known in the Arabic-Islamic world, and which on his travels he is unlikely to have ever ‘come across’ as a contiguous or indeed uniform space. (And which he probably would not have been able to ‘come across’ in any case.) However, this means he had to do what other Arabic-Islamic scholars had previously never had to do, and had moreover never done. He had to think about what made this space a space.<sup>14</sup>

While Yuhanna al-Asad was doubtless very much aware of this problem, an initial perusal of his *Cosmographia* does not make clear whether (or how) he solved it. For example, he is familiar with the principle of climate zones, the *aqalim*, whose structuring power had been described by the famous cosmographers al-Idrisi and Ibn Khaldun. Nevertheless, he does not attempt to constitute ‘his Africa’ or to organize this into a hierarchy corresponding to what is generally understood as reflecting climate zones. In fact, he does quite the opposite; whether he is discussing the “Affricanj de la Barbaria” in the north or the “Affricanj nigrij” in the south, rationality and irrationality, belief and disbelief, justice

13 Cf. also Davis, *Trickster Travels* 114.

14 See also Davis, *Trickster Travels* 125–28.



and injustice, virtue and vices tend to be distributed throughout his *Cosmographia* in a remarkably consistent manner.<sup>15</sup> Admittedly, along with Ibn Khaldun and others, Yuhanna al-Asad also assumes in broadly humoral-pathological terms that the climate has an effect not merely on skin colour, but also on the external appearance, temperament, attitudes towards morality, and forms of social and political communal relationships.<sup>16</sup> Unlike his predecessors, though, Yuhanna al-Asad does not exclude the possibility that Africans with black skins could also be “civilj,” “justj,” “ingeniosj,” and “rationabilj,” bookish and legal scholars, hospitable and prosperous. In addition, he ascribes to sexual relations between the individual population groups in Africa – he refers mostly to “mescolanza” – a significantly greater influence on character and cultural developments than long-term climatic factors. For example, while he regrets that the Arabic language has tended to suffer among the “mescolanza,” and that they speed the spread of syphilis, he also states that this is certainly not a barrier to their general prosperity, peaceful neighborliness, or good poetry (Joan Lione Granatino, e.g. fol. 41<sup>v</sup>, 365<sup>r+v</sup>, 376<sup>v</sup>–377<sup>r</sup>, 378<sup>r</sup>–383<sup>r</sup>).

Incidentally, in view of this finding it comes as no great revelation that Yuhanna al-Asad – even though the inhabitants of ‘his Africa’ are also descendants of Noah (Joan Lione Granatino fol. 6<sup>v</sup>, 18<sup>v</sup>–19<sup>r</sup>, 395<sup>r</sup>, 429<sup>v</sup>) – does not mention that Noah cursed Canaan, son of Ham, or that Noah blessed Shem, to whom he gave Canaan to be his servant. This is a remarkably radical break with the Christian tradition, which applied Noah’s curse to all of the descendants of Ham, thus condemning them to eternal servitude (Haynes; Goldenberg). We can only assume that if Yuhanna al-Asad deliberately accepted the puzzlement, indeed, the indignation of his Italian audience concerning this issue, then he probably did so keeping in mind that Noah’s curse merits no mention in the Koran either.

Whatever our assumptions, merely the fact that Yuhanna al-Asad also considered Africans to be the descendants of Noah does not ipso facto create an Africa worthy of this name. So must we abandon all hope of learning from the *Cosmographia* what holds ‘his Africa’ together? I don’t think so. If one then endeavors to view the African population groups in the *Cosmographia* from climate-related and humoral-pathological perspectives, it becomes possible to make a simple observation. It is more or less consistently Islam that leads a group to be law-abiding, God-fearing, hospitable, and above all cultured. We may therefore clearly state that groups without faith, groups that are far removed from Islam, or groups that do not practice Islam as they should do not appear in the *Cosmographia* as “rationabilj,” or at least do not unequivocally qualify as “rationabilj” (Joan Lione Granatino fol. 376<sup>v</sup>–377<sup>r</sup>, 380<sup>r+v</sup>).

So is it Islam that makes Africa what it is? One does not have to respond in the negative to this question in order to set a different tone. In my view, the Africa of the *Cosmographia* is above all one thing: it is the Africa of a skilled

15 Cf. Davis, *Trickster Travels* 134–51.

16 For a wider perspective: Demel; Groebner; Walz; Becker; Keevak.

diplomat and professional traveler, and for this reason it is first and foremost an Africa of spatial movements and dynamic relationships. It is an Africa of highly complex, interregional political and economic networks; an Africa of giving and taking; an Africa on equal footing. However, this also means it is an Africa that has very little to do with the huge continent of the same name with which the Europeans had previously been familiar. Without doubt, it is an Africa of a bird that can also swim.<sup>17</sup>

## Ramusio Without End

In view of these findings it comes as no shock that when the first publisher of the *Cosmographia*, the Venetian humanist Giovanni Battista Ramusio, revised the manuscript, he did not confine himself merely to linguistic improvements when he came to arrange for its printing in 1550 (Ramusio; Romanini). For example, he repeatedly endeavored to put the moral, political, and socially productive influences of Islam on black African population groups into perspective by switching passages relating to the pre-Islamic history of these groups from the past to the present tense (Ramusio 77<sup>v</sup>).

Irrespective of how far-reaching (and significant) such interventions were, if one casts a glance at the Christian translations of the *Cosmographia*, then Ramusio's edition appears decidedly harmless. This is not merely because the translations frequently lack passages that were seemingly deemed to present Islam in equitable terms, particularly in direct comparison to Christianity. The translators also repeatedly intervened in the original text, adding new passages to make Joan Lione Granatino–Yuhanna al-Asad a strident (i.e., strictly anti-Islamic) convert. Furthermore, both Ramusio's edition as well as the translations more or less without exception omit passages that their interpreters appear to have found too explicit, not least passages of homoerotic content.<sup>18</sup> Yet, critical editions of the manuscript of 1526 are currently being prepared (Rauchenberger 136–71; Davis, *Trickster Travels* 313, note 21).

On the other hand, our bird would not have been a very special kind of bird if it had made life for its Christian interpreters too easy: it should not be forgotten that this author is a master of the language of exile. But what does this actually mean? It means that while Yuhanna al-Asad reports on his past as a Muslim, thereby carefully describing an Islam untainted by any eschatological militancy, he also elegantly sidesteps his current life as a Christian. We know that on his journeys across Africa he preferred the company of poetry-writing legal scholars to that of holy warriors; and that he viewed the excesses of miracle-working Sufis with some skepticism; we know that he had little time for heroic asceticism; and that he accused the Shiites of wanting to destroy the Muslim world (Joan

17 Cf. also Davis, *Trickster Travels* 149–51.

18 Examples: Davis, *Trickster Travels* 153–57, 196–211, 259–60.

Lione Granatino fol. 21<sup>r</sup>–22<sup>r</sup>, 56<sup>v</sup>, 100<sup>v</sup>, 115<sup>r</sup>, 151<sup>r</sup>, 168<sup>r+v</sup>, 173<sup>r+v</sup>, 185<sup>r</sup>, 322<sup>r</sup>, 406<sup>r</sup>, 411<sup>r+v</sup>, 418<sup>v</sup>). But what were his views on the incarnation of God? Of the Roman papacy? Of the emerging Lutherans? We don't know about any of these matters.

Although there are grounds to suppose, in view of these findings, that the *Cosmographia* is evidence of the practice, accepted by Sunnis and Shiites alike, of the *taqiya*, of concealing one's true faith while under duress, Yuhanna al-Asad himself points us in a different direction (Strothmann and Djebli; Keddie). At any rate, this is my view. When he turns his attention toward the history of North African Christianity, he appears to take it for granted that Saint Augustine had been an Arian Christian, and consequently an anti-Trinitarian (Joan Lione Granatino fol. 27<sup>r</sup>). Yet this is the same Augustine who spoke out against the Arian heresy like almost no one else. There is only one possible explanation: Yuhanna al-Asad must have had some other knowledge of this matter. At the same time, Ramusio and the later translators of the *Cosmographia* appear to have simply missed the anti-Trinitarian Augustine. A mistake, a faux-pas, an oversight? I think not. For what is Yuhanna al-Asad doing when he makes Augustine an anti-Trinitarian? He is reclaiming him for an anti-Trinitarian Africa that was much better prepared for the spread of Islam than a Trinitarian Africa.

### Once Again: “io faro come uno ucello”

We have therefore come full circle. For regardless of whether we wish to apply the *taqiya* label to Yuhanna al-Asad, it is clear that his *Cosmographia* leads us into a world that could not have existed without the double freedom of conversion, which I wish to call exile: the freedom to write in freedom, and the freedom of the ‘in-between’, the freedom of those ‘interim spaces’ that are not possible without cultural translations. However, this also means that in whatever way we define the product of this double freedom, the problems that his publisher and translators had with it, not to mention those that they should have had with it, suggest that bodies of experience and knowledge have indeed been productive here. So productive that we are indeed entitled to call this “interventionist thinking.”

Yet how could this be otherwise? When the good humanist Giovanni Battista Ramusio was getting the *Cosmographia* ready for printing, he used the first person in place of the third person; only a few passages needed no such intervention. One of these passages was “io faro come uno ucello” – “I shall act just like the bird” (Joan Lione Granatino fol. 43<sup>v</sup>).

As far as we can tell, our bird survived the Sacco di Roma one year after completing the *Cosmographia*, and then returned to Africa, appearing to have spent time in Tunis in 1532 (Davis, *Trickster Travels* 245–60). By this point, his *Cosmographia* had already become well-known among Europe's humanistic circles

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## CHAPTER THREE

# Hurons, Iroquoians, French Agents and Processes of Transculturation in Seventeenth- Century New France<sup>1</sup>

SUSANNE LACHENICHT

In 1540, Ignatius of Loyola received papal permission to found a new religious order: the Society of Jesus, whose members would later be called Jesuits. It soon became one of the so-called Counter-Reformation orders, whose purpose was to extirpate the ‘Protestant heresies’ spreading throughout Europe and the recently ‘discovered’ New World. In the sixteenth century, the Society of Jesus was at the forefront in the competition for souls, in Europe as well as in the Americas and China. Through the global network of schools and missions that they built, the Jesuits were able to position themselves, as in the case of New France, in the vanguard of the colonization process. Jesuits from the Spanish territories of the Habsburg Empire set out to missionize within the ever growing Spanish Americas; Portuguese and French Jesuits established missions in Mughal India, Japan, China, the Caribbean, and in what is today Canada.

It has often been held that the Jesuit missions owed their success in obtaining conversions to their ability to adapt to local conditions. They learned the languages of the ‘heathens’, became familiar with their rituals and cults, and developed methods to conserve indigenous languages. Thus, the story goes, the Jesuits became important linguists, anthropologists, and ethnographers, that is, true agents of transculturation by integrating the Catholic faith into preexisting belief systems. With the onslaught of European colonization and missionary efforts, European goods and aspects of European lifestyles entered indigenous lives in such forms as firearms, axes, knives, copper kettles, European garments, needles, alcohol, as well as cattle in the form of cows, pigs, and sheep. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a lingering process of transculturation, more often than not described in terms of disintegration and destruction, affected indigenous cultures in North America. With the beginning of the nineteenth century, the effects of the European expansion became disastrous and destroyed many ele-

1 This paper presents the first results from a research project on *Contested Knowledge in the Atlantic World*, which investigates, in cooperation with Dagmar Freist (Oldenburg), Gesa Mackenthun (Rostock), Alexandra Ganser (Erlangen), and Astrid Windus (Hamburg), the complex genesis and implementation of knowledge practices in the Atlantic World.

ments of those indigenous civilizations. That this took place is undeniable. And for a long time, historiography has emphasized the ‘crumbling’ of indigenous cultures once Europeans arrived in the New World. However, more recent publications depict colonial encounters as a “braiding of cultures” (Zemon Davis 19–32). As this paper will argue, the Jesuit encounter in *La Nouvelle France* can very well be read from a transcultural perspective, while its analysis may add to our understanding of how transculturation works in a situation of religious encounter.

For the last two decades, scholars worldwide have become increasingly interested in the Jesuit missions and their global network (e.g., Clossey) in order to better apprehend how cultural contacts took place, how they shaped new cultures, or served as a motor for transculturation (e.g., Grant; Gagliano; O’Malley, Bailey, Harris, and Kennedy, *The Jesuits* and *The Jesuits II*; Blackburn; Havard; Austin and Scott; Worcester). Their research makes evident that the phenomenon of transculturation was quite complex, including multiple agencies, reciprocity, selectivity, and rejection on all sides – on the part of the indigenous nations as well as on that of the colonists and the missionizing orders. The Jesuits’s and other missionizing orders’ ethnographic and linguistic programs were linked to their own learning and transculturation. Early modern ethnography was by no means the result of long-distance learning but of living with the ‘savages’, of learning to adapt to new conditions, plants and animals, foodstuffs, and architecture. It included new ways of surviving in a – from a European perspective – rather hostile climate and environment. Recent research emphasizes that in all colonial contexts, Europeans learned from the ‘natives’ on a much larger scale than earlier historiography might have suggested (Schiebinger, Scott Parrish, Safier).

Early writings on the Jesuit missions have mostly been written either from the specific perspective of the Society of Jesus, that is, the Catholic Church, or from Protestant observers. Even though the Jesuits in New France were far less successful in the ‘harvest for souls’ than their brethren in South America, information concerning missions in France’s developing overseas empire is fairly accessible through annual reports the Jesuits sent from New France’s missions to the provincial superior back home in France: the *Relations des Jésuites*. The *Relations* can be considered as the earliest documentation of Jesuit missionary efforts in the Catholic Atlantic World. The Province<sup>2</sup> edited and published the manuscript reports in a series known as *Les Relations des Jésuites*. They were meant to promote the activities of the missionaries and encourage public donations to the order. Hence, the Jesuit *Relations* have to be treated as a biased source because of the lenses through which the Jesuits viewed the cultures they encountered, but also in view of the audience back in Europe. The *Relations* had to present a faithful narrative of the ‘harvest’ of souls but also of the history of Jesuit martyrs in the service of missionary efforts. Therefore, the *Relations* were more about hagi-

2 The Jesuit order is organized into Provinces, each with a provincial superior, with the head of the order being the “general superior.”



ography than about historiography (Cushner). Despite the *Relations* being a typical example of early modern confessional historiography, they offer (as much as the *Letters of Marie de l'Incarnation from New France* and so-called ethnographical texts such as Gabriel Sagard's *Histoire du Canada*) insights into cultural encounters and transculturation in more than one way.

## Hurons, Iroquois, and the French in Canada

Before looking at agents and processes of transculturation in New France in the seventeenth century, it seems necessary to sketch out the complex political, economic, and cultural setting in which European-indigenous encounters, colonizing and missionizing endeavors took place.

Prior to the first official arrival of Europeans in 1534, the territories later known as Acadia, Labrador, Canada (which at the time meant the lands on the shores of the St. Lawrence), and the islands in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, Cape Breton (Île Royale), and Prince Edward (Île Saint-Jean) Islands, were settled by tribes and bands of the Algonquian, Abenaki, Miq'maks, Huron, and Iroquois nations. For the French colonial enterprises and Jesuit missions, established from the early seventeenth century onward, the political, economic, and cultural landscape as they had been formed by the Huron and Iroquois nations became of particular importance.

While scholars still debate about the actual arrival of the first peoples in the Americas, there are also ongoing discussions on the founding of the Iroquois League or the Five (later Six) Nations Confederation. Recent research holds that the Five Nations Confederation, which would shape diplomacy and wars in Canada and the Great Lakes region in much of the early modern period, (Mann and Fields 105–63, Fenton 198), formed between the twelfth and the fifteenth centuries. In order to put an end to the constant state of feuding and foster peace among themselves, the Iroquois nations of the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca instituted this alliance. This league of different Iroquois nations was also intended to protect the Iroquois from attacks by enemies such as the Huron Confederacy. The Five Nations Confederation had one common council that served as a general court and made decisions involving war and peace treaties. Within their own individual nations, the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca had full sovereignty. In 1722, the nation of the Tuscarora was added, and the Five Nations Confederation became a Six Nations Confederation. A federal *res publica* was in place long before the first Europeans came to establish colonial empires in North America, and long before the United States of America was founded in 1776. Iroquois territory stretched from the confluence of the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers in the east to the Genesee River in Western New York, with the Mohawk nation in the east and the Seneca in the west. Much of today's upper New York State, then, was Iroquois territory.

About two hundred miles north of the Iroquois territory, in today's southwestern Ontario, the Huron nations had formed another confederacy consisting of the tribal groups Arendaronnon, the Attingneeongnahac, the Ataronchronnon, the Tahontaenrat, and the Attignaouantan. Compared to Iroquoia, Huronia was much more densely populated; to a large extent the land was cleared for agriculture, but it was less fertile than that in Iroquoia. Due to a colder climate in the Great Lakes region, growing seasons were shorter. While the Iroquois nation possessed fertile lands, the Hurons had to struggle with longer and colder winters (Carpenter 7–14).

The Huron and Iroquois nations maintained important trade networks, exchanging foodstuffs, pelts, weapons, and household goods. When the French started moving into Canada, these delicately knit trade webs came under pressure as the French disturbed Iroquois trade interests with the Great Lake and the northern St. Lawrence regions. The Iroquois League became a powerful foe of the French missions and colonization in New France, and an important ally of the English colonizers (Trigger, Dickason, *Canada's First Nations*).

When Jacques Cartier (1491–1557), sailing to North America on behalf of the French King Francis I, arrived in Stadacona in 1534 (today Quebec), he probably came across members of the Iroquois nations. However, Cartier's sojourns in what later would become New France were short-lived. France did not press its colonial schemes during the second half of the sixteenth century, being preoccupied with the so-called Religious or Huguenot Wars back in France, starting new colonial campaigns only after 1589. Troilus La Roche de Mesgouez (c. 1540–1606), a nobleman from Brittany, became Viceroy and Governor of New France. In 1598 he initiated a colony in today's Nova Scotia (Acadia), which, however, only lasted five years. The harsh climate and supply shortages hindered the French from forming durable settlements on the northeastern coast of Canada and on the St. Lawrence River. New projects started up when King Henry IV of France sent Pierre Gua, Sieur de Monts (c. 1560–1628), and Samuel Champlain (1567–1635) to New France, together with a small number of Franciscan friars and Jesuits to convert the 'savages'. In 1608, Champlain founded Quebec, but supply problems persisted and made permanent settlements if not impossible, then extremely difficult to sustain.

Jesuit missionary efforts increased with the death of King Henry IV of France in 1610, when his wife, Maria de Medici (1575–1642), put herself at the forefront of the French Counter-Reformation movement. In 1611, the ship *Grâce de Dieu* brought two Jesuit missionaries to New France: Pierre Biard (1567–1622) and Ennémond Massé. At Port Royal (Annapolis), founded in 1604 by Jean de Biencourt Sieur de Poutrincourt (1557–1615), they set up the first Jesuit mission in New France. Another five Jesuit missionaries (after Franciscan and Récollets missions had failed abysmally) followed in 1625. Again, Ennémond Massé, assisted by Jean de Bréboeuf (1593–1649) and Charles Lalement (1587–1674), pursued missionizing plans. Bréboeuf spent one year among the Montagnais and

then moved on to live among the Hurons, where he sought to learn their languages, customs, and traditions. The *Compagnie de la Nouvelle France*, in charge of colonizing New France beginning in 1627, supported the Jesuit missions by granting them a vast amount of land on the St. Lawrence River, which was then transformed into *seigneuries*. This property provided the Jesuits with a living and space for setting up missions where converted Indians could also work their own holdings. However, the Jesuit missions in New France, prior to the late 1630s, were pretty much a failure, as not only the Iroquois but the also the English made French settlements and Jesuit missions almost untenable. From 1629 to 1632 the English had full control over French Canada (Campeau, *La première mission; La mission des Jésuites*; Blackburn).

Only after 1632 did French Jesuits move back into their missions. Paul le Jeune (1591–1664), the most important figure of the post-1632 Jesuit missions, made plans to have the Ursulines open a convent in Quebec. And in 1636, Marie de l'Incarnation, an Ursuline nun from Tours, set out to found a convent for Indian girls in Canada. After having been taught the Huron, Algonquin, and Montagnais languages, the nuns were to support the Jesuit missions in New France. Barthélémy Vimont (1594–1667), who took over from Pierre le Jeune, extended the Jesuit missions up to the Saguenay River and Lake St. John and toward the Hudson Bay and Labrador. In 1641, the Jesuits installed a mission in Montreal. At least until 1660, the Jesuits, despite many setbacks, were more successful in their attempts to gain a foothold in New France than the French Crown and various commercial companies had been. In addition to the harsh climate, lack of supplies, and few colonists ready to settle in New France, competition with the English and the Dutch, conflicts with the Huron and Iroquois nations, and shortages in funding made the French colonial enterprise in North America founder.

With the arrival of Europeans on North America's northeastern coast, Iroquois trading interests had started shifting. The Hurons and the French excluded the Iroquois from trading pelts with the Algonquian nations. The Iroquois would have sold those pelts to the English and the Dutch in exchange for weapons, metal tools, copper kettles, and alcohol. Furthermore, the increase in the number of settlements in the English colonies swept the Iroquois from their fertile lands, making their survival more difficult. The conflicts between the Hurons, the French, and the Iroquois over trade and political influence peaked in the late 1640s and 1650s when the Iroquois not only destroyed a huge number of people of the Huron nations but also most of the Jesuit missions in Huronia (Francis and Morantz). Attempts to missionize among the Iroquois ended in 1646 with the martyring of Jesuits such as Isaac Jogues, who was killed by Mohawk Iroquois, and Jean de Bréboeuf who was murdered in 1649. Not until 1653, when the French concluded peace with the Onondaga Iroquois, were the Jesuits allowed to send missionaries into Iroquia. However, even after 1667, with the final French victory over the Iroquois, very few Jesuits were able to preach to them and only a small number converted to Catholicism.

Life for Europeans in New France, both for missionaries and colonists, was difficult, as the *Relations*, the *Letters of Marie de l'Incarnation from New France*, and other sources of the time show. It was impossible to survive without the knowledge and help of the very same indigenous nations that made Europeans struggle for their existence in Canada.

In New France, cultural encounters and transculturation took place in the 'wilderness', when Jesuits chose to live among the 'heathen' or when European hunters (the *coureurs de bois*) came in search of beaver and other pelts. In 1626, in his *Histoire du Canada*, the Recollet friar Gabriel Sagard describes the methods by which Jesuits, Recollet friars, and French *coureurs du bois* forced encounters:

If one wants to stay or spend the winter with the [nomadic] Savages, one has to put oneself under the guidance of a head of family who then takes care of feeding and housing you like a domestic servant, or like his child, putting oneself independently among them would not be good advice, as one could not subsist for a long time, as they often separate to go hunting and would not take special care of you then, which would mean that you die from hunger or that you return with the French. (Sagard, *Histoire*, vol. 1: chap. VI)<sup>3</sup>

Encounters also took place during times of war, when Europeans and First Nations slaughtered each other, when First Nations and Europeans formed uneasy alliances, and when prisoners and hostages were taken, and – in some cases – later exchanged. Europeans and First Nations encountered each other in Jesuit missions on the St. Lawrence, including Quebec, Sillery, Tadoussac, Trois-Rivières, Béancourt, and St. Francis de Sales, as well as in centers of trade and commerce.

The *Relations* make evident that the Jesuits in New France, as much as those in Chinese or South American missions, were at the forefront of seeking encounters when they chose to live in the 'wilderness' in little cabins near the First Nations' habitat. There they adopted indigenous dress, food habits, hunting practices, and – to a lesser extent – rituals. When learning the Huron and Iroquois languages, efforts were made to codify the latter. In 1657, Chrestien Leclerc developed a five thousand-sign hieroglyphics system for the Iroquois languages (Dickason, *Louisbourg* 20–21; Steckley 478–509). Between 1669 and 1673, Philippe Pierson translated *De Religione* into Wendat, a language spoken by the Hurons. This text was to be used in evangelizing work in Iroquia, the goal of which was conversion to the Catholic faith (Chancel de Lagrange 431–32; Greer 8). The

3 "Quand on veut aller demeurer ou hyverner avec les Sauvages errants, on se met sous la conduite d'un de leur chef de famille, lequel a soing de vous nourrir & heberger comme son domestique, ou comme son enfant, car de se mettre au commun on ne seroit pas bien, & si on n'y pourroit subsister longuement, pour ce qu'ils se separent souvent pour la chasse, les uns d'un costé & les autres d'un autre, & par ainsi ne pouvant faire vostre cas à part, faudroit que mourussiez de faim ou que retournassiez avec les François." All translations from Sagard are my own (S.L.).

translation of *De religione* shows the difficulties the Jesuits encountered in trying to convey Christian concepts in languages and belief systems that had nothing or very little in common with each other. Notions such as ‘Holy Trinity’, ‘Transsubstantiation’, ‘Sacraments’, or the ‘Lamb’ and the ‘Herd’ and their Christian semantics were difficult to render (Dickason, *Louisbourg* 51). Until recently, research on the Jesuit missions in New France focused on transculturation as a one-way phenomenon, but more contemporary studies, as mentioned above, have revealed that the acquisition of knowledge was a mutual one, and during the first century of European occupation, the First Nations probably gave more than they received. The Hurons and Iroquois were far more selective in choosing and integrating European and Christian elements into their practices and belief systems than scholarship has suggested so far. This is not only true for New France but for all other colonial empires as well. In the following, this paper seeks to provide some apprehension of the Iroquois and Hurons as agents of and the Europeans as subject to transculturation, looking at habitat and nutrition, hunting and agriculture, as well as diplomacy and warfare.

## The Flip Sides of Transculturation

Iroquois and Huron nations lived in villages in series of longhouses protected by palisades. Far from being nomadic, the Iroquois and Hurons farmed their land but moved entire villages (including their dead) when that land was exhausted and could no longer provide an adequate living. Estimates vary in terms of how often these moves occurred, ranging from between every thirty to every fifty years. When Europeans arrived in New France and established the first permanent settlements, they seem to have copied at least some indigenous building practices. Farmhouses and small villages were sheltered by wooden palisades, while the fortifications of larger towns such as Quebec followed the European model (the Vauban from the later seventeenth century). In Quebec, and later Montreal, only the governor’s house and convents were built of stone (Marie de l’Incarnation, *Lettres* 2: 171). In Jesuit missions, such as Kahnawake (Saint Francis Xavier at Sault St. Louis), cabins for the newly converted were built according to Huron and Iroquois designs; churches and permanent dwellings for the missionaries were of European style, with temporary structures following the dictates of either Huron or Iroquois longhouse architecture. In settlements where First Nations and French settlers (*habitants*) lived next to each other, such as La Prairie, European and indigenous architecture coexisted (Greer 90, 95, 126; Lavallée).

Huron and Iroquois peoples had different planting and growing seasons since their environs varied in climate; both groups, however, relied on maize as their basic foodstuff. Upon arriving in New France, Europeans initially found some maize dishes revolting, but then readily adopted maize as their most important crop. During the first decades of the seventeenth century, wheat and rye, the most

important crops for Europeans back in Europe, did not grow well in Huronia and the St. Lawrence River valley, not the least due to the effects of the Little Ice Age. To a large degree, European grains seem to have been replaced by maize. It not only became the Europeans' most important basic food, it also changed European cooking and eating habits. As the Recollet friar Gabriel Sagard remarks in his *Histoire du Canada*:

[...] maize bread, with the *sagamite* [a corn soup] made from it, is of very good substance, and I was surprised that it supplied such excellent nourishment [...] drinking only water [...] and eating this bread only very seldom, and meat even more rarely, and taking almost nothing but *sagamite* alone, with a very small quantity of fish, one keeps well and in good condition, provided that one has enough of it; there is no necessity to add meat, fish, butter, salt, oil, herbs or spices, if one does not want it, as this grain [maize] has a lot of sauce in itself; this makes me wish for having maize cultivated in France, to better the conditions of the poor, of which we have a lot in France, and which will ever increase in numbers as much as the miseries of this century multiply. (Sagard, *Histoire 2*: chapter XIV)<sup>4</sup>

While most sources do not dwell on the French diet in Canada, but focus on ethnographic descriptions of First Nations food, there is evidence that Europeans incorporated some indigenous food patterns. In her *Letters from New France*, Marie de l'Incarnation mentions that the Jesuit missionaries kept swine in their missions, "afin de vivre en partie à la française" [to live to some extent in the French ways] (*Lettres 2*: 129). Unfortunately, Marie's letter does not tell us anything about the Jesuits's non-French foodstuffs. Surviving in New France's 'wilderness', at least during the first two centuries, required that Europeans acquire knowledge and skills from the First Nations. And while with the importation of European fire arms the First Nations were able to increase their success in hunting, Europeans had to learn which aquatic animals could be fished, which game could be hunted, and which plants could be eaten. The third book of Sagard's *Histoire du Canada* provides some valuable insights into this process of knowledge acquisition regarding plants, fish, fowl, and game. In most cases, Sagard gives the indigenous names for fowl or mammals, and then the new Latin or European terms for them. His *Histoire du Canada* leaves no doubt about the

4 "Ce pain de maiz & la sagamité qui en est faite, est de fort bonne substance & nourrit merveilleusement, comme peut voir en ce que ne beuvant jamais que de l'eau pure, mangeant peu souvent de ce pain, encore plus rarement de la viande, n'usans presque que des seuls sagamitez, avec un bien peu de poisson, on se porte fort bien, & si tous ces apprests se font à fort peu de frais, sans qu'il y ait nécessité d'y adjouster de la viande, du poisson, beure, sel, huyle, herbes ou espices, si on ne veut, car ce bled porte presque toute la sauce quand & luy, c'est ce qui me fait souhaiter d'affection, d'en voir beaucoup de terres cultivées en France, pour le soulagement des pauvres, qui y sont par tout en tres-grand nombre, & vont tousjours multiplians à mesure que les miserés du siecle croissent."

agents of transculturations: Hurons, Algonquians, and Iroquois. The following passage from the *Histoire* is representative of many in Sagard's account:

Also, they have birds which they call *Stinondoa*, which are of the size of a turtledove, their feathers are red, and one could take them for little parrots, if their beaks were of the same shape, because not all parrots are green, yellow or white; I saw some with red feathers with blue or purple stripes, rather gentle birds; they [the Hurons] gave a *Stinondoa* to our religious order in Quebec, which was not bigger in size than a sparrow, but a little taller, which you cannot eat as it is too fatty; the Hurons gave me another bird; its head and its neck were red, and the rest of its body white as snow. (Sagard, *Histoire* 3: chapter II)<sup>5</sup>

From the survival skills shared by the Hurons and Iroquois, the missionaries were then able to select the most appropriate knowledge and practices, whether indigenous or European, that would make of the French missionary and colonial endeavors in New France a "success story":

My savages wanted to take predators for me out of their nests which they call *Ahouatantaque*; they wanted to try a nest on a large tree close to the river, of which they made a great fuss; but I thanked them and did not want them to take the pains in doing so; nonetheless I retained the information, as those could have been vultures of which the skin is excellent for a cold stomach. (Sagard, *Histoire* 3: chapter II)<sup>6</sup>

But Native Americans not only made Europeans learn how to chase, catch, and eat birds, they also taught them how to turn "wild beasts" into food, a must for getting through the cold and snowy winters.

Bears provide excellent meat; this is why our Savages are very fond of it & and think very highly of it; I am not sure to which meat one could compare it; it does not taste like beef nor like mutton & even less like venison [from red deer], more like venison from roe deer; old bears taste differently and are greasy like bacon; I once told Monsieur le Marechal de Bassompierre that I had eaten bear and that I had enjoyed it; and he

5 "Ils ont aussi des oyseaux qu'ils appellent *Stinondoa*, environ de la grosseur d'une tourterelle; qui ont leurs plumes entièrement rouges où incarnates, on les pourroit prendre pour petits perroquets, s'ils en avoient le bec, car tous les perroquets ne sont point verts, ny jaunes, ny blancs, j'en ay veu de plumage rouge, & quelques autres tirans sur le bleu ou violet, également gentils & de mesme nature des communs. On donna à nos Religieux de Kebec un *Stinondoa*, qui n'estoit guère plus gros qu'un moyneau, mais un peu plus long, lequel pour estre trop gras ils ne purent nourrir, non plus que moy un autre oyseau que les Hurons m'avoient donné, il avoit la teste & le col rouge, les aisles noires, & tout le reste du corps blanc comme neige."

6 "Mes Sauvages me vouloient aussi desnicher des oyseaux de proye, qu'ils appellent *Ahouatantaque*, d'un nid qui estoit sur un grand arbre assez proche de la riviere, desquels ils faisoient grand estat, mais je les en remerciay, & ne voulût point qu'ils en prissent la peine, neantmoins je m'en suis repenty du depuis, car il pouvoit estre que ce fussent Vautours, desquels la peau est excellente pour un estomach refroidy."

assured me that during his last visit to Switzerland, sent by the [French] King, he had also eaten bear, served by the Swiss, and that he had not found it inedible. Our savages make fatten the bear (as they use grease instead of sugar), using a very simple method; they erect a little tower, made of palisades, in the middle of their huts, where they keep the bears, and feed them with *sagamité*, without fearing their paws nor their teeth; and when the bears have grown really fat, they have a feast and eat them all. (Sagard, *Histoire* 3: chapter III)<sup>7</sup>

While some game could be domesticated, others had to first be identified, then hunted, and then their meat conserved according to the proper techniques, as illustrated by the following quotation:

The deer which they call *Sconoton* are more to be found in the land of the Neutrals than among the other Huron nations; they [the deer] are smaller than ours [back in Europe] and very light-footed; nonetheless the *Attioindarons*, with the help of their snowshoes, move as fast as the deer, and they hunt them with the help of other inventions that we do not have in Europe; they smoke them to have meat during winter, & cook the entrails with their *sagamité*; in the beginning this astonished the French, but they had to get used to eating everything as they had no other meat to choose [...]. (Sagard, *Histoire* 3: chapter II)<sup>8</sup>

The transfer of knowledge that advanced the action of transculturation on the part of the Europeans in New France thus consisted of three of steps: (1) learning to distinguish those animals that could be eaten from those that were inedible; (2) selecting the proper techniques for hunting or keeping those animals; and (3) learning methods of processing and conserving meat in a climate much different from that of Europe.

- 7 “Les ours sont tres-bons à manger, c’est pourquoy nos Sauvages en font un grand estat, & tiennent sa chair fort chère, je ne sçay à quoy l’accomparer, car elle ne sent ny le boeuf, ny le mouton, & encore moins le cerf, mais plustost le chevreau, les vieux ont un autre goust, & sont gras comme lard. Il m’arriva de dire à Monsieur le Mareschal de Bassompierre que j’avois mangé de la chair d’ours, & l’avois trouvée bonne. Il m’assura que au dernier voyage qu’il fit en Suisse pour le Roy il en avoit aussi mangé en un festin que luy firent les Suisses, & ne l’avoit point trouvée mauvaise. Nos Sauvages les engraisent (car la graisse est leur sucre) avec une manière facile, ils font une petite tour au milieu de leurs cabanes, avec des pieux picquez en terre, & la ils enferment la beste, à laquelle ils donnent à manger par les entredeux des bois, des restes de sagamité, sans crainte des pattes & de leurs dents, & estant bien grasse, ils en font un bon festin à tout manger.”
- 8 “Les cerfs qu’ils appellent Sconoton, sont plus communs dans le pays des Neutres, qu’en toutes les autres contrées Huronnes, mais, ils sont un peu plus petits que les nostres de deça, & tres-legers du pied, neantmoins ces Attioindarons avec leurs petites raquettes attachées sous leurs pieds, courent sur les neiges avec la mesme vitesse des cerfs, & en prennent en quantité, par d’autres inventions qui ne sont pas en usage en nostre Europe. Ils en font boucaner d’entiers pour leur Hyver, & n’osten point les fumées des entrailles qu’ils font cuire ensemble avec les intestins dans la sagamité. Cela faisoit un peu estonner nos François au commencement, mais; il falloir avoir patience & s’accoutumer à manger de tout, car il n’y avoit pas là de viande à choisir [...].”



Learning from Native Americans, however, not only enhanced operations of transculturation in the New World. The many natural histories published from the sixteenth century in Spanish, English, French, Dutch, and Portuguese Europe relied on information that European missionaries and colonizers had gathered from Native Americans. Sampling, visualizing, printing, binding, and disseminating this knowledge about the New World was first of all dependent on Native Americans being willing to teach Europeans about the New World's flora and fauna. Once this knowledge was taken back to Europe, processes of transculturation were on their way, and were to fundamentally change both consumer behavior and medicine, as clearly indicated by the incorporation into the European cornucopia and pharmacopeia of such American plants as sweet corn, potatoes, and tomatoes.

Besides botanical and zoological knowledge and practices, Europeans learned how to build and use dog sleighs and snowshoes during the winter (Sagard, *Histoire* 3: chapter III), how to construct birch bark canoes, and how to navigate Canada's waterways, which served as 'highways' through the so-called wilderness (Sagard, *Voyage*, chapter IV). European hunters built cabins in the woods according to First Nation designs, wore moccasins and leather garments to protect themselves from thorns and stinging insects, and married indigenous women, creating a category of off-spring, the *Métis*, who in many cases were capable of living in two or more worlds (Brown, White).

When in 1645 the Iroquois and the French concluded a peace treaty in Trois Rivières (Three Rivers), according to the *Relations*, the ceremony followed Iroquois protocol. Kiotseaeton, the chief diplomat on the Iroquois side, not only arrived in a dress covered with wampum but also used the latter to offer, in words and gestures, peace to the French and the Huron. In a performative act, he made known the events leading to the peace treaty and then offered a French captive to his peace treaty partners. Prior to the exchange of prisoners of war, Iroquois conventions required Kiotseaeton to "place his listeners in a rational state of mind,"<sup>9</sup> which in European parlance meant that he had to assuage their grief and console them, thus clearing the way for peaceful and friendly relations between the Iroquois, the Huron, and the French. While the French might not have understood the refinements of Iroquois diplomatic practices, they knew that peace treaties with the First Nations called for the exchange of gifts and the expression of words of consolation, and they fulfilled those obligations. The exchange of gifts, of hostages, long ceremonies in which all parties involved had to perform an act of condolence were part of statecraft in New France whenever the Five Nations Confederation was involved. While the French did not bring Iroquois diplomatic customs into their peace negotiations with other colonial powers, they discovered that if they wanted to remain in New France, they would have to abide by Iroquoian rules, another illustration of transculturation. However, while Iroquoians

9 As Carpenter puts it in his excellent interpretation of this report in the *Relations* (XIII).

considered the condolence ritual in peace negotiations a gesture of renewal that lay at the very heart of their beliefs, including a cyclical concept of time and space diametrically different from the linear time concept of modern Europeans, the French had taken up but also misunderstood elements of this ritual, a selective act that should have guaranteed their survival in New France. Transculturation and misunderstandings, adaption and selectiveness went hand in hand (Thwaites 27: 247, 253, 259, 261, 297).

Europeans and First Nations not only had different approaches to diplomacy but to strategies of warfare as well. Huron and Iroquois conflicts attempted to avoid massive casualties on both sides. More often than not they attempted to resolve disputes through individual combat or by negotiating rules before the actual onset of battle. European warfare, in the early modern period, sought battle in open fields, with the aim of destroying as many of the enemy as possible. In the North American context, during the seventy-four years of the French and Indian Wars in Iroquoia and Acadia, Europeans adopted Huron and Iroquois warfare strategies for several reasons. As regular troops tended to be small in number, French and English colonial governments relied heavily on Indian allies. The latter, often refusing orders from the European army officers, applied their own methods, such as the famous “ambush and surprise,” which in the Eastern Woodlands were much more effective than European battle plans (Lafitau 2: 141–42; Richter 535). Indigenous military tactics would later be used by colonists in American-British conflicts, including the American War of Independence and Mr. Madison’s War (i.e., the War of 1812).

## Conclusion

In 1623/24 Gabriel Sagard wrote in his *Histoire de Canada* that the French had strong inclinations to copy the ways of the ‘savages’ (Sagard *Histoire* 2: chapter V).<sup>10</sup> It would be an overstatement to say that the French (and other European) colonists turned ‘native’ upon arrival in New France. However, subject to a lingering process of transculturation through contact with Canada’s First Nations, the French adopted far more of the ‘Indian way of life’ than research has suggested so far. Transculturation in colonial enterprises not only made indigenous peoples subject to change, it also changed Europeans, both in Europa and – as this paper has indicated – in the colonial context itself. Hurons, Iroquois, and other First Nations were agents of transculturation, transculturation that affected European settlers, not only with regard to habitat and agriculture, diplomacy, warfare, and hunting but also concerning botanical, ecological, and medicinal knowledge generally. A careful rereading of European sources, together with archaeological and ecological evidence, would allow us to gain a better and a fuller

10 “Les François mesmes, mieux instruits & eslevez dans l’Escole de la Foy, deviennent Sauvages pour si peu qu’ils vivent avec les Sauvages.”

understanding of the flip sides of transculturation in New France and in other colonial contexts. While some important research has already been embarked on (e.g., Scott Parrish; Schiebinger; Parsons), a more comprehensive view of reciprocal learning in colonial contexts and new worlds of knowledge remains to be undertaken.

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**AGENTS AND NETWORKS IN  
THE AGE OF EXPANSION**



## CHAPTER FOUR

# Uneasy Trust Relations, Transcultural Encounters, and Social Change – Diasporas in Early Modern Europe

DAGMAR FREIST

In December 1677, the Hamburg merchant Carel Lubbers approached the London merchant Jacob David, who had migrated to London from Rouen, in the following manner:

Dear Sir and unknown, yet dearly valued, friend – greetings! For lack of material I have never before had the honour of writing to you, but I am doing so now on the recommendation of my good friend, Mr Reinholt Garlinghoff [...] This is only a trial, and if I find it advantageous and you do not reject my correspondence I shall continue to send you further consignments – but do be careful always to sell to reliable people. (quoted in Roseveare 489)

A year earlier, Bartholomew Möll, also from Hamburg, had addressed David in a similar way:

On the recommendation of my good friend Mr Bene (who may have also mentioned me to you) I take the liberty of troubling you with a letter. My object in seeking the honour of your correspondence is to find a good friend on whom I can rely when opportunities arise, for I like to enjoy peace of mind and my previous friend in [England] has given me reason to distrust him. (quoted in Roseveare 416)

That same year, David received a letter from Daniel von Reusch, of Breslau, saying:

For lack of introduction and of matter I have not written to you before, but I have been encouraged to send these few lines by Johan Arnold Funck in Hamburg, from whom I understand that you are of service to your friends in handling bills of exchange as well as goods [...] P.S. I would be grateful if you would also inform me reliably what sort of man Gabriel de la Porto is, and if one can really trade with him or ought to avoid him. I shall keep your advice secret and, if the opportunity arises, do the same for you. (Roseveare 407)

These three very similar missives have in common the tentative search for a trustworthy partner outside a familiar group of people, the reference to a mutual acquaintance, and the awareness that things might go wrong. A central feature of the addressee of these letters is that they were immigrants – Jacob David was one of many immigrants – who had recently arrived in such cities as London, Amsterdam, Hamburg, and Stockholm as well as in small towns and rural areas in late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Northern Europe. Jacob David was born in a small village near Rouen and in 1668 his employer, Robert Oursel, recommended his services to the London merchant Charles Marescoe, originally from Lille, and for many years a close correspondent of Oursel's (Roseveare 4). Like his new employer, Jacob David moved within a close circle of migrants in London. Furthermore, these migrants belonged to a religious minority, either Calvinists, Mennonites, or Jews, who maintained strong links to their coreligious believers and to their home countries. In other words, they were part of a diaspora. By questioning the concept of diaspora as a close network of fellow believers, I will argue that these diasporic traders were people living between cultures who, in the course of conducting their lives constantly had to switch between different cultural codes, and who were forced to carve out a space of agency. I would also argue that they presented a potential source of social change, which they inspired through the importing of luxury material goods, thus providing objects of desire, but also through their habitus and lifestyles.

## **Diaspora trading networks**

The term *diaspora* means both the dispersion of people from their original homeland over different parts of the world *and* the community formed by such a people within their new place of residence, as well as across borders through family and religious networks. Whereas earlier research equated diasporas with victims, more recent studies, first introduced by the sociologist Robin Cohen, include in the concept of diaspora migrants who voluntarily left their homeland and formed a strong religious, cultural, and/or religious identity abroad (Cohen). A fundamental aspect of these diaspora communities was their close-knit networks, which extended across borders and also tied people together in a new environment based on family ties, ethnicity, religion, origin myths, and a feeling of togetherness, that is, on trust and mutual dependence. The links were kept alive through people being constantly on the move and in virtual ways through correspondence and various media, which reiterated as well as constructed the sense of a closed community of shared and exclusive values and belief systems. A further characteristic of these diasporas was the awareness of 'belonging' to this group of people, the creation of an inner structure (e.g., poor relief, education, value system, church, synagogue, loan system, trust) and loyalty toward one's own translocal group, as well as the construction of memory and narrative structures of belong-



ing and identity. Traders who belonged to a diaspora profited from these networks across borders because they allowed distant economic markets to be linked through trustworthy partners, composed mostly of family and cobelievers (Baghdiantz McCabe, Harlaftis and Pepelasis Minoglou).

Research on diasporas has traditionally focused on these closely knit networks as the key to success for their members. Jonathan Israel, for instance, defined the economic power of Jewish networks as follows:

The heightened confidence, trust in trading patterns of the same community, and the systematic reduction (and in some instances complete elimination) of transaction costs fully incurred by others, generated by a geographically widely scattered but religiously and culturally close-knit, international community possessing a distinctive language and communal institutions particular to itself. (Israel 2)

The role of networks as the strength of diasporas, especially those of Jews and Mennonites, is widely accepted in early modern research. A vivid example is provided by the seventeenth-century Jewish trader Glückl von Hameln, who time and again had to adjust her network to in response to market opportunities. In order to enter the trade of precious metals in Poland, she needed trustworthy and competent agents who would undertake this business on her behalf. In her autobiography she writes:

At that time there was a young man from Hannover called Mordechai. He stayed with my brother-in-law Lipman. Then he came to visit us. We gained a good impression of him and decided to take him in. Our intention was to let him travel and trade on our behalf where good business was to be expected. He was from Poland, spoke Polish and so we sent him to Danzig to trade in pearls, since we had heard that it was an excellent market there to trade in precious metals. So we installed him with a bill of exchange and he did well. (Glückel 69)

After Mordechai's unexpected death, the whole process started over again, relying, as before, on the Jewish network. Glückl replaced Mordechai with her brother-in-law Lipman's nephew, whom she sent to Poland and entrusted with bills of exchange and money. Although, Glückl writes, "we were still young and without wealth" (Glückel 74).

Nevertheless, in spite of the comfort of strong networks and exclusiveness, I want to show that those traders who belonged to a diaspora had to carefully build up new networks if they wanted to succeed in their new places of residence and establish successful trading links in a new economic space, Northern Europe. Thus, one crucial research task will be to trace social networks that stretched over national and cultural boundaries and combined areas within a specific region.

Due to migration processes and trade and family networks, Northern Europe is such a region. Expanding cities such as London, Amsterdam, Hamburg, and Stockholm were connected by means of a network of traders who easily moved between these urban localities (Noldus). Furthermore, a large number of these traders had a migration background stemming from the Spanish Netherlands and from France, thus bringing existing networks into their new surroundings (Freist “Southern Dutch Calvinist”). These networks were formed by business interests and family connections (Schulte-Beerbühl and Vögele), but were also related to specific migration backgrounds – many of the leading traders in London, who originated from the Spanish Netherlands or from France, for instance, were active members of the French Church in London, and they kept networks with family and old business partners alive.

### **Diaspora networks: strong and weak ties**

An essential element of these networks is that they are on the one hand closely knit – due to the shared experience of migration and family ties – and on the other hand loosely knit – due to the personal and economic challenge of connecting with other networks in a new milieu. Thus, while these networks are not exclusive, they are still distinct. This becomes clear if we look at the network in which the well-known Marescoe family moved. Charles Marescoe, born in Lille around 1633, was employed by a Dutch trader in London in 1653, and by the 1660s he was one of the wealthiest merchants in London. His correspondence as well as his account books attest to the strong bonds he had with leading merchants in Stockholm – the de Geers, the Momma-Reenstiernas, the Kock-Cronströms – in Hamburg, among others, John Buck, and in Amsterdam – Louis Trip, Steven de Geer, and Joseph Deutz, to name just some. Nearly all of them originally came from the Spanish Netherlands. Owing to his marriage to Leonora Lethieulliers, daughter of a prominent London merchant who was also from the Spanish Netherlands and was a member of the French Church in London, Marescoe allied himself with “a close-knit community of prosperous merchants – among them the Houblons, the DuQuesnes and the Burkins, member of the Dutch church in London – who were to provide London with several civic leaders and great trading companies with many of their directors.” (Roseveare 1–3) However, Marescoe’s correspondence also bears witness to the fact that he carefully tried to build business contacts outside these well established circles, a move that would prove useful in the event that he and his partners were approached by strangers, as Jacob David, mentioned earlier, had been. The outcome of these new alliances was uncertain and thus a web of weak network relations was spun around the more dense networks of the diaspora communities.

The value that the concept of networks holds for the analysis of social structures in general had first been pointed out by American sociologists in the 1970s and is by now a highly theorized, diverse, and interdisciplinary field (Stegbauer and Häußling). Social network analysis is based on the assumption that society is constituted of and / or constructed by social networks (the latter refers to narrative networks). These networks are characterized by the specific positions and interdependencies of its actors. Depending on the constitution of networks, sociologists have differentiated between strong ties, which are densely knit, and weak ties, which are loosely knit. Social actors in densely knit networks interact with everyone involved (Granovetter, “Strength” 201–03), and they experience a high degree of social support and trust, that is, diaspora networks. In low density networks individuals do not interact with all of its members, are not familiar with all of them, and the relationships that do exist are loosely connected.

Opinions differ concerning the quality and efficiency of these networks. Whereas Granovetter and others argue that individuals with many weak ties have a strong standing in society because they are widely networked and thus flexible, Coleman and others are convinced that strong networks are more efficient because they are the most reliable and guarantee continuity and the highest degree of trust (Marbach 348).

The majority of late medieval and early modern trading dynasties were characterized by endogamy and strong family ties and they could be classified as densely knit networks. Trade correspondence provides ample evidence of the necessity of trust and competence for the success and survival of early modern long-distance trade. An initial sample survey of the family correspondence of different southern German trading houses of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as well as of the Bright-Meyler Papers of the eighteenth century, has confirmed the assumption of densely knit networks (Morgan 14–25). Members were carefully recruited within and supervised by the family. Nonetheless, the picture changes when looking at the correspondence of migrants who had voluntarily left their place of origin and who lived in a diaspora situation. The different dynamics within these networks can best be recognized with reference to Granovetter’s differentiation between ‘strong and weak ties’ (Granovetter, 1977). “Intense relations – strong ties - have the tendency to dismantle a global network in closely knit local networks, while weak ties tend to link local networks to global networks” (Schweizer 16). Thus, weak ties are more fluid and open, yet they are also more vulnerable.

A growing number of researchers have applied social network theories in order to understand these mechanisms of early modern commerce and trade (Häberlein and Jeggler). They found out that the key ingredients of early modern trade fell into the categories of “trust” and “credit,” which in turn were based on densely knit networks characterized by family links (Sullivan 26–40). I want to argue that traders who were part of a diaspora moved in networks with both strong *and*

weak ties. They thus had the benefit of the highest degree of trust at the heart of their network, which was characterized by family, religion, and endogamy and stretched across borders. But they also profitted from a strong social standing because they networked beyond kinship, cultural, and religious identities, and consequently were more flexible and had access to a wider range of information sources (Marbach 348). Correspondence and ware lists show that Jewish, Mennonite, and Calvinist newcomers in northwestern and northern Europe used their family trading networks vigorously, while simultaneously reaching out to new partners: they thus connected northwestern and northern European markets with so far unexplored markets in Southern Europe, the Atlantic World, and East India, territories outside the dominant structures of chartered companies (Studnicki-Gizbert 75). Furthermore, although there is ample evidence that migrants in London, Amsterdam, and Hamburg flocked to their fellow religious believers, to people of their native tongue, and that their children intermarried, we also know that they were at the same time moving into influential trading circles through multiple church memberships, office-holding, and gradual intermarriages with leading local families, while still remaining deeply committed to the well being of their diasporic origins and affiliations.

### **Transcultural spaces, ritual idioms, and social change**

These partnerships outside the diaspora involved the sharing of social spaces that were otherwise separate due to religious and cultural differences. It also involved participation in the same communication systems. Furthermore, actors of various backgrounds had to overcome prejudices and put new forms of trustworthy relationships in place. And such partnerships also required knowledge and mutual tolerance of cultural differences, rituals, and holy days. These transcultural spaces, which are not necessarily fixed but “emergent” in various forms of transcultural interaction, form the basis for an understanding of cultural transfer that focuses on people as mediators of things and habits and on artifacts as coactors of the social (Latour).

One of the challenges for the history of cultural transfer lies in understanding its dynamics and effects on society. In other words, there has to be a shift away from concentrating on the transfer and appropriation of cultural goods to focusing on the interaction of people across national and /or cultural borders and the social effects of these interactions. What processes of cultural transfer are sparked by these social interactions, and what ramifications do they have for the social groups involved? The concept of intercultural diversity as emphasized by cultural anthropologists can also be applied to the understanding of transcultural networks. Their functioning is not based on the subjection to existing power structures, nor to the internalization of specific cultural norms (Weißbach 265). Instead, I maintain that these transcultural networks emerge across existing social milieus, or, to

draw on Bourdieu here, across existing fields thus challenging existing habitus and social and cultural capital because of their newness, or otherness if you like, and diversity.

In Bourdieu's sociology, habitus, field, and capital are interdependent. 'Habitus,' as the subconscious incorporation of structures and values, informs group-specific dispositions, which again generate social practices and structures (Bourdieu 165–69). The 'Habitus' corresponds with a specific 'Field' or social milieu, its internal logic, and set of rules. In a way the habitus determines individual and collective subjectivities and determines forms of belonging and exclusion (Zima 310–11). 'Capital' (economic, social, symbolic, or cultural) is, generally speaking, understood as social energy and determines a person's status within a specific field. In spite of the close interdependence of habitus, field and capital, there are *Spielräume* (i.e. rooms to maneuver) within the inner logic of a field. These *Spielräume* can be successfully explored as long as this does not violate the internal logic of the field (Wacquant 40). The generation of new practices will only work if they promise to be successful and intelligible, otherwise they cause estrangement and loss of status.

Therefore, transcultural networks that connect to existing fields within a given society can either upset these 'fields' and be rejected, or they can gradually transform them by introducing new practices that benefit the internal logic and thus slowly change them. A third alternative would be that transcultural networks create their own field, habitus, and capital without connecting to or merging with long existing fields within a given society. Are we dealing then with a 'cosmopolitan society' that defines itself by the multicultural background and mobility of its subjects rather than with their national or religious backgrounds? The formation of a new field characterized by its cosmopolitanism, or the gradual transformation of existing fields through encounters with cultural difference are both influenced by cultural transfer.

People in the early modern period were increasingly aware of cultural diversity through media, new luxury goods, as well as through travel. Travel books like James Howell's *Instructions for Foreign Travel* (1612) advised people not only how to travel but also how and what to observe while traveling. Their mind was to be just as attuned to the discovery of political, social, and economic differences as to differences in behavior, taste, customs, religion, and architecture. Books like John Barclay's *The mirror of minds or Icon animorum* (1612) sensitized people to the fact that "beside the Spirit of the Country every man doth have a proper Disposition and affection given Him; the chiefe of them may be found out" (Barclay 26). Francis Bacon offered advice on how to organize a travel diary in order to keep track of differences observed along the way. Curiosity about the other, or, to quote Linda Peck, the "intense curiosity, appetite for news at home and abroad, interest in the new and the extraordinary, whether marvelous or monstrous,"

inspired people to engage with cultural differences (Peck 125). John Evelyn, for example, son of wealthy landowners in seventeenth-century England, displayed great interest in cultural and religious differences during his travels on the continent between 1643 and 1651. In great detail he noted everything new and different and wrote it down in his travel diary (Stoye 131–52). His journey was obviously driven by curiosity. Immediately after his arrival in Amsterdam he visited the synagogue because “the ceremonies, ornaments, lights, laws and schools of the Jewish people have always fascinated me and filled me with curiosity; women are seated in galleries separate from men, their heads are covered in a fantastic and somewhat extraordinary fashion” (Evelyn 21). “Afterwards,” Evelyn continues his report to say that,

from thence, I went to a place without the town, called Overkirk, where they have a special field assigned them to bury their dead, full of Sepulchers with Hebraic inscriptions, some of them stately and costly. Looking through one of these monuments, where the stones were disjointed, I perceived divers books and papers lie about a corpse; for it seems, when any learned Rabbi dies, they bury some of his books with him. With the help of a stick, I raked out several written in Hebrew characters, but much impaired. (22)

From John Stoyes’s research on English travelers between 1604 and 1667 we know that Evelyn’s interest in cultural difference was not an isolated phenomenon. In an essay on the encounters between travelers and their hosts in seventeenth-century Europe, Dorothea Nolde has also emphasized that people were well aware of cultural differences abroad and that they verbalized what seemed strange to them (Nolde 2005). Cultural difference, however, was also experienced among the residents in cities like London, Amsterdam, Hamburg, and Stockholm. Exiles from the Spanish Netherlands in London were still described in terms of difference thirty years after their first arrival:

combynd themselves together, they marry not wth our nation, they sett their owne people aworke in all sortes of trades ... they alter not their affection, their apparrell ... language ... nor conforme themselves to our churches [and] government. (Luu 2005, 160)

Similarly, the inhabitants of the newly founded Dutch Republic noted the difference of style and dress among the migrants from the Spanish Netherlands, who made up about fifty percent of the population in such towns as Haarlem and Leiden (Briels 1976). These differences were commented on in a negative tone, criticizing the migrants for their luxuries and arrogant behavior, and ridiculing them for their accents. Vice versa, the Dutch were eyed by these migrants as dull and boring. Yet we know that at the same time the style and habitus of these migrants increasingly attracted the growing Dutch middle class, which started to adapt to this lifestyle in fashion, taste, and consumption. It has even been argued by his-

torians such as Jan Briels that through the influence of wealthy and educated migrants from the Spanish Netherlands, the Dutch middle class emancipated itself from both the lower orders and the nobility, developing a new identity (Briels 1985). Klas Nyberg, in studies of Stockholm, has suggested a similar transformation of specific social groups and the impact intercultural encounters had on its residents (309–26).

When connecting these phenomena to the above raised question of how cultural transfer actually works and what impact diaspora networks had on social change, I want to assert, in the vein of Bourdieu, that existing fields are open to cultural transfer since it is triggered through the encounter of cultural differences. If this openness promises to enhance the capital and thus the social status of its actors. Georg Simmel's theory of fashion, understood as the introduction of novelty into goods, was considered to have aesthetic significance that "connects directly to a symbolic anthropology of social networks and lifestyle. He defined fashion as the coding of objects in order to claim a membership or allegiance" (Berg 252). If the adaptation to new styles, tastes, and habitus increases the status and the exclusiveness of those within a field, it operates within the logic of the field. At the same time, the increase of exclusiveness causes social tension with other social groups moving in different, perhaps competing fields, as was the case between the nobility and the rich upper middle class during this period. Therefore, one could argue that through cultural transfer the relations within and between fields are reordered through the cultural display of power. The re-formation of fields reorders the relations among its actors as well as between fields, which causes competition and conflicts; the result is that the social energy of capital is redefined, with, for example, new status symbols replacing old ones. In these changes we can make out the social and cultural dimension of the transformation of societies on both a macro and micro level (Weymann 14).

If these mechanisms are to be tested in a specific historical context, one final aspect of cultural transfer needs to be taken into consideration. How does social interaction work across cultural difference? As argued above, through media, migration, trade, traveling, travel reports, and correspondence Europeans had a basic knowledge of cultural differences. In spite of these sporadic acquaintances with the 'other,' those interacting across cultural and religious borders did not share a common interpretation of gestures, idioms, or habitus. In order to be able to interact in a meaningful way, however, people need, as the American sociologist Ervin Goffman has argued in his theory on social interaction, a shared frame of reference, mode of interpretation, or ritual idiom to use Goffman's terminology (Goffman 1974). Whereas Goffman developed his theory of social interaction for different social groups within one culture, his theory can also be applied to transcultural communication, as has recently been demonstrated by Dimitri Zakharine's work on cultural transfer between early modern Eastern and Western

Europe (Zakharine), and Dorothea Nolde's essay on travelers in seventeenth-century Europe (Nolde).

The obvious question then is how a shared frame of reference or ritual idiom that would allow meaningful interaction across cultural difference was established. Apart from language acquisition (Häberlein and Kuhn; Freist "Das 'niederländische Jahrhundert'"), educated people especially had different resources to aid in overcoming cultural communication barriers, for instance, by preparing a journey through reading and therefore learning. The perception of difference and the degree of estrangement obviously influenced modes of social interaction across cultural boundaries. Thus, in order to understand cultural transfer as a process, a final step has to be taken, the systematic analysis of the active engagement with the 'other' as a prerequisite to meaningful social interaction across cultural boundaries. The various strategies employed in dealing with 'the other,' the linking of transcultural and local networks, and the motives behind these strategies allow us to understand to what degree cultural transfer has transformed societies in northern Europe.

Cultural transfer and the adoption of new styles were not solely a question of supply and demand or the commercial creation of new desires, but had to do with social interaction across cultural and religious borders and symbolic capital. This becomes clear when observing that the introduction of foreign styles was often accompanied by prejudices against their very foreignness. This can be demonstrated by examining the prejudices toward Henrietta Maria, the French bride of Charles I, in the 1630s. Her fashion and luxury were rejected for being too elaborate, too extravagant, too French (Stedman 2013). Nevertheless, following in her wake, French tailors and fashion dealers opened new shops in one of the most exquisite shopping areas of seventeenth-century London, the Royal Exchange. Inspired by the court, as well as by wealthy immigrants from France, French fashion spread among the gentry and also gradually among the upper middle classes. Yet it still aroused suspicion in London streets and provoked the well-known stereotypes against French male fashion as being effeminate and unsuitable for the English. Thus, new styles needed to be advertised in order to become fashionable, they needed agents to promote them across cultural borders, and they needed networks in order to be successfully introduced into a new social context through habitus and lifestyle.

The analysis of diaspora networks in their wider meaning, and particularly by concentrating on weak ties as a crossroad into other social, cultural, and religious groups, offers an interesting point at which to begin tackling these questions and mechanisms.



## Uneasy trust relations

The so far largely neglected cross-religious and cross-cultural trading partnerships were often fragile, and the people involved were not sure about the outcomes, as already illustrated in the quoted material at the outset of this article. Whereas research on early modern trade has convincingly stressed the necessity of “trust,” “credit” and “reputation” as the cultural underpinnings of early modern trade relations, here we are dealing with what I would call “uneasy trust relations,” a term first introduced by Lauren A. Benton in her book *Law and Colonial Cultures*, and that was taken up by Francesca Trivellato in her recent book on *The Familiarity of Strangers*. When considering the term “trust” one has to differentiate between Christian morality, philosophy, and economics. In the seventeenth century, trust was still widely used in a religious sense. Whereas trust in God should be unconditional, trust in other humans should be carefully weighed, based on whether or not someone embodied Christian virtues. Thus, a common saying warned people, for instance, not to trust Jews or women. “Trust” as defined by economists and cultural historians in the context of early modern trade, was closely connected to “credit.” It implied, and I quote from Craig Muldrew’s seminal study on the *Economy of Obligation*, that individuals “were willing to trust someone to pay you in the future” (3). This “culture of credit,” however, was not based on the modern utilitarian meaning, but rather on the ethical and moral assumption that a person could be trusted, and on moral grounds, would pay back what was owed. Trust was thus part of social relations, communication, and “the circulating judgment about the value of other members of the community” (2). Trust and credit were also central categories in the *ars mercatoria*, manuals for traders. In the famous German *Universallexikon*, Zedler defines “trust” as the belief that a trusted person has both the competence and the willingness to fulfill an obligation (Zedler 48: 20).

In contrast, uneasy trust relations, as defined by Benton, imply that cross-cultural, cross-religious networks were based on expected behavior, which always involved a risk, an uneasiness, distrust, and failure (26). As Francesca Trivellato has shown for the Jewish diaspora in Livorno, Jews established trading networks with Christians if they promised to be more successful than those with co-religionists. Mennonites, as a number of Dutch historians have shown for Amsterdam, formed trading partnerships with Protestants in order to extend business and social links into the wider society. The same applies to Huguenots, which Susanne Lachenicht has demonstrated (Lachenicht). Research in progress by Pia Lundquist and Anna Brismark on Jewish textile traders in Göteborg in the eighteenth century, after the readmission of Jews to Sweden, is producing fascinating insights into long-term partnerships between Jewish and non-Jewish peddlers. These peddlers bought textiles from Jews on credit and vended them across Sweden. The subsequent analysis of newcomers to London and Amsterdam, as well

as to smaller towns and rural regions in northwestern Germany, shows a similar pattern for traders who belonged to a diaspora.

In order to understand these diasporas, the definition of uneasy trust relations will be modified. Initially, these networks that traversed cultural and religious lines could not rely on a shared understanding of trust, common Christian virtues, for an example. Furthermore, they even had to overcome certain preconceived notions, such as “don’t trust a Jew,” which were popularized in proverbs and popular literature. In other words, they did not share the same ritual idioms. Thus, a new transcultural value system, as well as forms of communication, spaces of exchange, and even legal frameworks had to be formed in order to allow these interactions to take place.

In the second part of this article I will present three different examples of establishing uneasy trust relations as a means of crossing religious and cultural borders in an economic and cultural setting. The first case focuses on Mennonites who linked rural northwestern Germany to Amsterdam through a combination of strong and weak networks. The second case refers to a Jewish-Christian trading partnership in rural northwestern Germany with links to the Baltic area. And the third is the Jewish-Christian financial networks that operated in and between London and Amsterdam during the South Sea Bubble.

### **Case 1: Mennonite trading networks**

Among the leading *Leinenreeder*<sup>1</sup> in the eighteenth century in Leer, a small town in East Frisia, were twenty-five Mennonites who originally came from the Netherlands. One of them was Conraad Zijtsema, a Mennonite convert. He occupied important offices for several years, including the function of deacon in the community of Mennonites in Leer (Staatsarchiv Aurich Dep. 89 A 3.7.1-2), and he represented the concerns of his diaspora to the area’s respective rulers, the Frisian princes Georg Albrecht (1708–1734) and Carl Edzard (1734–1744). He was also attorney of the Leer Leinenreederei, which comprised all linen traders irrespective of religion, and was regarded as one of the town’s wealthiest shipowners according to the contribution lists for protection money from 1745 and 1775. (Staatsarchiv Aurich Dep. 89 A 3.1.4) Zijtsema acted within the well-situated diaspora network of the Mennonites, which extended from the Netherlands to the Baltic Sea, as well as outside the diaspora, developing new contacts as a political representative of the community *and* of the linen trade to the successive ruler of the territory, Georg Albrecht (1708–1734) and Carl Edzard (1734–1744) before Ostfriesland came under the rule of Prussia under Friedrich II.

1 Leinenreeder were weavers who engaged in the publishing business.

Through his marriages Zijtsema formed kin relationships with the most influential and richest linen shipowners in town, among them the Mennonite families Vissering, Alring, and Bavink (Henninger 325, Staatsarchiv Aurich Dep. 89 A 3.1.4). He founded the company Coenraad Zijtsema & Compagnie in 1738 for the import of quality linseed from Riga (Wiemann 57; Henninger 329–31), together with Conrad Cloothack, who came from Leer and was, like Zijtsema, a converted member of the Mennonite community.<sup>2</sup> The religious affiliation to the Mennonites proved to be a sustainable network for these trading connections (Kauenhoven; Penner; Henninger 332).<sup>3</sup> The Zijtsema and Alring families of Leer set up contacts with leading trading companies in Amsterdam, foremost being the firm of Jean de Neufville and Compagnie, whose family roots lay in France.

Through marriages the Neufville family had joined the Mennonites in the seventeenth century and moved in the same world as the most influential Mennonite patrician families in Amsterdam. Originally having founded their fortunes by trading textiles and silk, the Neufvilles established themselves as bankers in the Dutch business metropolis.

The Leinenreeder from Leer cooperated closely with Jean de Neufville. We know from the exchange of letters between Jan Hendrik Alring and Jean de Neufville that linen from Leer was sent via the Amsterdam trading house to the bleaching factory in Haarlem. In particular, financial links with Amsterdam were of the utmost importance for Leer's long-distance trading.<sup>4</sup> In the correspondence between Coenraad Zijtsema and Jean de Neufville financial transactions were often the principal issues.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, insurance contracts for ships and shiploads were finalized through Neufville, and the amount was stated in detail in these exchanges.

Decisive for the success of these networks, however, were the intersections between diaspora and nondiaspora networks and business contacts. This eventually becomes obvious in the Mennonites' activities on behalf of the economic well-being of Leer.

2 Like Zijtsema, Cloothack originally belonged to the reformed faith.

3 For relevant papers about the economic importance of minorities, see (among others) Ina Baghdiantz McCabe et al., (eds.), *Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks. Four Centuries of History*, Second ed., Oxford 2005.

4 During the seventeenth century, after the foundation of the Amsterdamer Wisselbank in 1609, Amsterdam developed into the most important national as well as international bank for drafts. See Markus A. Denzel, "La Practica della Cambiatura". *Europäischer Zahlungsverkehr vom 14. bis zum 17. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart 1994, 399f.

5 The correspondence between Neufville, Alring, and Zijsema is located in the "Gemeentearchief Amsterdam: Familie Brants en a anverwante families," and is currently being evaluated by the author within the framework of a project about the entanglement of northern Europe. A part of the correspondence between Neufville and Zijtsema is available in a translated edition. See Karl Bartels (eds.), *325 Briefe von de Handelshaus Amsterdam aus den Jahren 1738–1745, 1848/49, 1751, 1753–1756*. "Translated from Dutch into German, plus additional annotations, this was published as an unverified manuscript, Aurich 1985." Thanks to Dr. Jürgen Henninger for offering information about this manuscript.

Zijtsema and other Mennonites from Leer sent petitions to the Frisian count with detailed proposals for economic measures and improvements and thus engaged in a heavy political and economic debate. The surviving documents show that in their role as principals of the linen mills in Leer, the Mennonites opposed the proposals of the chamber councilor responsible for economic advancement. He had suggested starting a bleaching factory in Leer and recruiting professionals from Haarlem. The Mennonites were against this scheme and favored having the linen from Leer bleached in Haarlem itself, and even offered to coordinate the endeavor, thus thinking in translocal categories, which, however, transgressed territorial borders and was counter to some mercantile political interests. Nonetheless, the Leinenreeder from Leer had the welfare of their region in mind when they appealed to Neufville to flex his financial power in Amsterdam, asking for “only a little bit of support for the linen trade to do good for East Frisia.” (Wiemann 60)

## **Case 2: Jewish-Christian trading partnerships in rural northwestern Germany**

“Since trade by water and land around here is great, a large number of Jews are attracted to this place” (Schudt 4: 372)

With these words the eighteenth-century annalist Johann Jacob Schudt comments on the motives of Jews who settled in Hamburg but who also began to settle in northwestern rural Germany in the sixteenth century. Whereas Sephardic Jews migrated to Amsterdam and Hamburg, and for a short period of time to Emden, a number of Ashkenazi Jews settled in small places such as Norden, Esens, Wittmund, Neustadtgödens, Leer, and Aurich, near the towns’ coastal and canal streets, as well as in Jever and Oldenburg. Through inventories, correspondence, ware lists, and the surviving material culture we know that northwestern Germany was widely connected with big trading centers, especially Amsterdam and Hamburg, and that luxury goods from overseas had been making their way to rural areas since the late sixteenth century. Jews and their trading networks played a central part in this. Without going further into the economic activities of Jews in this region, existing prejudices and anti-Semitism – the denouncing of Jews for price dumping, the imposing of special fees and trading regulations on and for Jews, which all characterized Jewish-Christian relations – can be read as a backdrop to what is to follow. But I want to focus on a Jewish-Christian trading network that facilitated the import of linseed from the Baltic area via Emden to these coastal regions.

This particular network became public when in 1733 a number of people were accused of having violated the regulation controlling linen manufacture. The initial list of the seven accused, small-scale traders, shipmen, and peddlers, identified several as Jews, among them Lazarus Moses Juden zu Marienhaf, Salomon Benedix Juden zu Marienhaf, and Meyer Isacs zu Winbelsbuhr. A note said that the Jews from Marienhaf and Winbelsbur were known “to trade intensively with Christians on a daily basis” – “dass sie täglich mit Christen so starken handel treiben”.<sup>6</sup> In the course of the investigations the list grew, and more Jewish and Christian traders were named as part of the network whose center was in Emden, the residence of Jonas Goldschmidt, a rich Jewish merchant.

The court case unfolds an interesting matrix of fraud, which consisted of the trading of high quality linseed far below market prices. Barrels of high quality linseed were hidden in ships under barrels of low quality linseed, a ploy to avoid the higher taxes that were levied on the higher quality crop. Once in the country, after the barrels were inscribed with the “proper” imprint, the low quality linseed was also sold as high quality at the same price below market price. Members of this network included Jonas Goldschmidt who coordinated the trade of linseed between Emden and Königsberg, Christian shipmen who mixed barrels of low and high quality linseed on their ships, and small shipmen who transported the wares by canals into the hinterland, as well as Jews who unloaded some of the ships’ stock onto carriages to distribute it further.

They all collaborated at different stages, i.e., smuggling the low quality linseed onto ships and placing it on top of good quality linseed, avoiding customs inspections, burning new imprints on barrels, and selling it below the usual market price. This cross-religious and cross-cultural network was based on the complementarity of different competences, including its various actors’ access to different markets, and, surprisingly, on prejudices that gained a strategic force: the fact that “Jews” were always selling their wares more cheaply than Christians in this area, in and of itself caused little stir. All the participants, independent of their cultural, social, or religious background, were bound together by the struggle for personal economic gain and the fear that the swindle might become public.

So the quality of trust here did not rest on reputation and moral standards but on the assumption that all those involved were personally invested in the fraudulent trade activities remaining undiscovered, and that each had the ability to ensure that the status quo was maintained. Further, they had to build up a shared knowledge of each others’ different skills and the networks that could be used to support this particular undertaking. So the judgment of a person’s or a group’s reputation in a given community had to circulate and be passed on and become part of the credit culture of another community.

6 State Archive Aurich Rep 4 B 2 X Nr. 97 vol. 1 fol. 197–249.

Apart from unveiling this transcultural and transreligious network, the court case also shows to what extent Jews and Christians were living in separate cultural, religious, and social spheres, and how these spheres intertwined through cross-cultural networking. In addition, it demonstrates the power of stereotypes held about Jews, which became even more prevalent once the fraud was made public. Let me illustrate these findings with just a few more examples.

That trade relations in the northwestern German coastal hinterland were characterized by migrant religious minorities, and that transcultural and transreligious trading relations were part of everyday practices becomes evident in the strategic defense of the Jew Lazarus Moses and the reaction of the court officials. Lazarus claimed that he had “no knowledge of trade regulations” because he “did not attend the Christian church, so he could not have heard the public proclamation of the order” (*nicht in der christlichen Kirche gewesen und die Publicationen gehört*) (fol. 206). Although the goal of his argument was to extricate himself from the charges made against him, at the same time he also revealed his precise knowledge of Christian communication practices.

The investigating officials commented on this in their report:

As for Baptists, Mennonites, Neowallists, and Jews, trade regulations and court proclamations would have to be read in their assemblies and explicitly published in their respective synagoges, and in such places as they do not have, and since they do not come into our churches, this kind of news would have to be for each of them insinuated or assigned. (fol 206)<sup>7</sup>

Even so, these religious minorities were still expected to be informed about trade regulations. In their reply the officials in turn divulged that they were aware that Lazarus knew how politics outside the Jewish community functioned. They declared that Jews “were liable to order such people who attended church to inform them about the most recent proclamations” [*leute, die die kirche besuchen, [zu] bestellen [schuldig], welche ihnen davon Nachricht geben*] (fol. 205–206).

Here the initial impact of religious difference and its influence on the interaction of Christians and Jews – their separate social spaces and separate sources of information – becomes apparent. Obviously, this separateness had to be overcome, as has already been pointed out. At the same time, officials expected both groups to interact and meet in order to communicate. In these informal communication processes new spaces of communication outside designated sites, such as

7 Original quote: “gerade als wenn für die Bapisten, Mennoniten, Neowallisten und Juden die Handelsobrigkeitlichen Verordnungen und Gerichts Proclamationen in derselben Versammlungen und respective Synagogen besonders publiciret, ja an denen Ohrten, wo sie dergestalt nicht haben, und in unser kirchen nicht kommen, es ihnen jedem insinuiert, oder bloß ihretwegen assigniret werden müste”.

the church, were created through social interaction across religious and cultural borders. In these spaces, it was not only business that was transacted, but information about the cross-cultural framework in which it occurred was also shared, for example, the observance of different holy days, access to markets based on particular group memberships and their accompanying privileges, as well as the quality of business contacts and networks, different channels of information, and ultimately, different trading practices.

All of those who were part of this network were well acquainted, having already known each other for a period of time. They knew each other's nicknames (e.g., the "iron thief"), they knew who was doing what, and they collaborated in hiding barrels with falsely labeled linseed in each other's houses. Christian shippers also concealed undeclared linseed in their homes, which was then ordered by neighboring Jews via Emden from Königsberg. The list of everyday forms of cooperation could go on and on.

State officials were also influenced by religious differences, and I think this is another interesting point. The investigations into the corrupt trading were put on hold by order of the office of the Vogt when the Jewish Pessach began. The Vogt argued that during the Jewish festivities doors and windows would be closed, and if he continued to investigate he would be accused of disturbing Jews on their holy days. At the same time, however, he rejected the testimony of the Emden Jew who had said under oath that there was no fraud. The Vogt said the testimony "would not pass as a Jewish Oath." (*das Attestat für eines Juden eydlichen Attestats nicht passieren könnte*) (fol 211). In the course of further investigations, the network crumbled and some of its Christian members started to argue that Jews were known to cheat, thus distancing themselves from trading practices that they identified with Jewishness. Similar forms of transreligious and transcultural interactions can be observed on a European scale.

### **Case 3: Jewish-Christian financial networks in and between London and Amsterdam during the South Sea Bubble**

Two other questions at stake are how Jewish and Christian communities interacted if they did not share the same social, religious, and political spaces and communication channels, and what effect this interaction had on cross-cultural exchange. More precisely, after their readmission to England in 1656, how and when did Jews enter the London shareholder market, which was focused on chartered companies and dominated by Christian traders? According to a recent study on the London share market by Ann M. Carlos, Karen Maguire, and Larry Neal, Jews who were in the first generation to arrive in London had to open their

diaspora networks and form “connections across groups, and not merely within groups” (728).

The trading in shares in London around 1700 was a face to face business that brought buyers and sellers in direct personal contact. Before the establishment of the first official exchange, these transactions took place in coffee houses. In the 1720s, coffee shops in Exchange Alley. Jonathan’s and Garraway’s coffee shops in particular, were centers for networking and making informal and semiformal commercial contacts. It was also in these same spaces where most of the shares of this period changed hands. Jews were not part of the London coffee house culture of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Religious and national minorities tended to have their own meeting places in London, which were known as such, and which served as a first meeting point for newcomers of the same religious or native background, as we know from correspondences. Nevertheless, we find Sephardic (Francis Aaron Pereira) and Ashkenazi Jews (Moses Hart) as buyers and sellers in the same coffee houses that were frequented by Christian traders. “These overlapping circles created bonding, bridging, and linking social capital, generating ties between and across non-Jewish communities,” (Carlos, Maguire, and Neal 734). At the same time, London Jews informed members of their diaspora in Amsterdam about the ups and downs of the share market in London and thus attracted Amsterdam Jews to the share market across the channel. The same patterns can be observed in the Dutch Calvinists who had migrated to London but still kept their original networks in the Southern Netherlands and Amsterdam alive. Jewish and Dutch Calvinist members of those networks were among the largest group of nonresident shareholders of London chartered companies. And a statistical analysis of shareholders on the eve of the South Sea Bubble shows that London and Amsterdam Jews bought the majority of shares at the peak of the crisis, thus preventing an even more serious crash of the London market.

Whereas these examples so far have concentrated on some of the mechanisms and cultural patterns of transcultural trading networks, the question left unanswered is how these diaspora traders represented a potential source of change, these people who lived between cultures, constantly juggling different cultural codes, and forced to carve out a space of agency in alien spaces. Generally speaking, due to their access to long-distance markets through widespread diaspora networks, multilanguage skills, and broad communication grids, these traders were agents for luxury material goods, thus creating objects of desire. Jews in rural northern Germany traded in, among other things, tobacco, coffee, spices, jewelry, and furniture. In their role as agents, and because they were known to be well-connected, they were approached by their Christian neighbors and asked to order and obtain specific products from global markets. The same was true for other well-connected merchant migrants to London. Objects of longing were created in different ways in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe. There were luxury and fashion journals to which even people in rural areas subscribed, and there



were trading cards that advertised specific goods and defined the latest fashions. Last but not least, trading companies were already responding to a fashion-oriented market as well as generating new desires. However, individual people also played a role through their own habitus and lifestyles, as argued above. The interdependence of the mobility of early modern society, the phenomenon of fashion trends, and the change of habitus are documented by numerous treatises on fashion, which had been appearing in various formats since the sixteenth century. The article in Krünitz's *Oekonomischer Encyclopaedie* from the eighteenth century offers insight into the catch word "fashion" and its potential for enacting change through transcultural networks.

[...] and the travels of merchants, which through the thriving particularly in German, Italian and Dutch cities became more frequent than they had been in former times. The poet Conrad Celtes blamed it on the traveling salesmen, who moved around all countries as well as on the princes who strolled around the whole of Europe that the dresses and the language of their fathers were despised and new clothing and foreign languages were introduced. (Krünitz, 92: 367)

## Conclusion

All three case studies have the following points in common: (1) The traders in question moved within a diaspora that was characterized by strong ties across borders and outside these networks, thus establishing new trading and at times even social contacts with other religious groups. The intersections between diaspora and nondiaspora networks were a key to connecting different economic and financial markets and regions. (2) Due to the lack of a shared frame of reference, new spaces and forms of transreligious and transcultural communication and interaction had to be instituted, either physically (e.g., pubs in London that were patronized by both Jewish and non-Jewish traders), or virtually (Jews would contact Christians in order to get information about the most recent proclamations on trade that had been read out in Christian churches). (3) Religious and ethnic prejudices had to be overcome and new forms of "trust relations" had to be developed that reached beyond closed religious value systems and virtues.

The ability to provide and obtain information about the credibility and past conduct of an agent was the best way for merchants to take action to reduce hazards in a world where uncertainties loomed large and the means of minimizing uncertainties were restricted. In their letters, merchants conveyed agreements of reciprocal assistance, promises of future profits, and outrage about fraud, as well as the uneasiness about who could be trusted (Mathias 22). At the same time, correspondence shows the willingness to establish new ties outside the familiar diaspora networks while being well aware of the risks involved therein. These new

ties transcending religious and cultural differences were a central stimulus for the emergence of new lifestyles, habitus, and, subsequently, social transformation.

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## Religion, Political Loyalty, and Identity: French and Egyptian Perceptions of Süleyman Paşa Sève (1788–1860)

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### Introduction

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Ottoman Empire embarked upon fundamental military reforms. Under the label *niẓām-ı cedīd* (“new order”), Sultan Selim III (r. 1789–1807) set up a completely new military structure in order to remedy the obvious weakness of the Ottoman armies. The *niẓām-ı cedīd* was to replace the traditional military units and structures with technically up-to-date troops. As the most advanced weapon technologies, drill methods, and organizational models were to be found in the European armies, the project depended, partly at least, on the successful adoption of know-how and techniques from abroad and their adaptation to local needs (Aksan). Governors of semiautonomous provinces similarly endeavored to create new military structures. Most successful among them was without doubt Mehmed Ali Paşa, the viceroy of Egypt (r. 1805–1848) (Farhi; Fahmy 76–97). His *niẓām-ı cedīd* army became crucial in establishing his centralized dynastic state and consolidating Egypt’s position as an autonomous province within the Empire.

Like the sultan, Mehmed Ali had to draw on European personnel in order to acquire new military methods. At the end of the long Napoleonic wars in Europe, when thousands of soldiers and officers were made redundant, it was easy for him to recruit the necessary experienced instructors and advisors. Many unemployed officers had difficulty finding a way back into civilian life after years, if not decades of military service, and so were attracted to well-paid job opportunities in Egypt. The viceroy hired these mercenaries, or ‘soldiers of fortune’, from different European countries, though Italians, and particularly Frenchmen from the Napoleonic armies, predominated (Farhi 179–80; Dunn 469–70). Most of them returned to their home countries sooner or later, though a number remained in Egypt for the rest of their lives.

The best known among these is probably Joseph-Anhelme Sève, alias Süleyman Paşa. Although certainly not the only Frenchman to make a career in the

Egyptian state service,<sup>1</sup> he was the only one to rise to the rank of general in the army and acquire the title of *paşa*. What further distinguishes him from most of the other Europeans in Mehmed Ali's service is the fact that he was one of the few who converted to Islam.<sup>2</sup>

Without a doubt, Joseph-Anthelme Sève, alias Süleyman Paşa, was a transcultural figure, a man who crossed cultural borders and acted as a mediator in several respects. He transmitted French military expertise to Egypt, backed French Saint-Simonians who came there to carry out their fanciful project of "uniting Orient and Occident" (Kaegi), and mediated between European travelers and Egyptians. He led an existence between, or maybe rather within two cultural contexts, speaking French, Turkish, and Arabic (Viesse de Marmont 266; de Salle 204), and was accustomed to French as well as Ottoman-Egyptian elite culture, probably switching quite easily between the different codes. Living in a contact zone, he built up networks within the Cairo-based elite as well as with the local French and wider European colony, and maintained links with his family back in France.

The focus of my essay is not so much on the biography or extraordinary career of Süleyman Sève, but on how he was perceived and evaluated in the nineteenth century. Addressing this topic from both the French and the Egyptian perspectives, I will try to elucidate the complex ways in which nineteenth-century observers coped with a border crosser and go-between, and discern what 'national identity' they ascribed to him. At first glance, it seems that Sève, alias Süleyman Paşa, remained a Frenchman for the French as well as for the Egyptians. In France, he was a cause célèbre from the 1820s on, and was still called "le colonel Sève," although his being "Soliman-Pacha," a Muslim in the service of Mehmed Ali, must have also made him 'Egyptian'. In Egypt, he was known as Sulaymān Bāshā al-Faransāwī ("Süleyman Paşa the Frenchman"). Yet, as a high-ranking army officer, a loyal servant of Mehmed Ali, and a member of the Ottoman-Egyptian elite, he must also have had an 'Egyptian' identity. Here, two questions are of particular interest: How was the perception of Süleyman Sève's 'national identity' shaped and transformed by his loyalty to the Egyptian ruling house? And of what relevance was his conversion in shaping the loyalty, identity, and perception

- 1 In 1833, there were about seventy Frenchmen in the Egyptian state service; in addition, there was a fairly equal number of Italians, who usually held less important positions than the French, and about half a dozen each of Spaniards and Britons (Douin, *Boislecomte* 109).
- 2 To my knowledge, at least eight other Europeans who embraced Islam in Egypt between 1820 and 1840 can be traced; all of them were in Mehmed Ali's service at one time or another, or at least tried to enter it: Émile Prisse d'Avennes/İdrīs Efendi; Thomas Urbain/Ismā'īl; Philipp-Joseph Machereau/Muḥammad Efendi; Noël/Ḥasan; Jean Prax/'Abd al-Raḥmān; William Thomson/'Osmān Efendi; Thomas Keith/Ibrāhīm Ağa; George Bethune English (Carré 270–71, 301; Kaegi 114–16; Crecelius 146; Thompson; Dunn 471). It should be noted that before Mehmed Ali's reign, there were Europeans employed as Egyptian troops; these were usually mamluk slaves of Ottoman-Egyptian elite households. (Cf. Crecelius 142–48.)

of his person? I will also try to investigate whether and how Sève himself participated in the construction of his image in France and in Egypt. My argument will be based on printed sources: French travel accounts, published letters of diplomats, and contemporary European journals on the one hand, and Egyptian historical writing in Arabic on the other. Though archival material might further elucidate the picture, it could not be considered for this essay.

### Life<sup>3</sup>

Joseph-Anthelme Sève<sup>4</sup> was born in Lyons in 1788, the son of a draper. He joined the French navy at a very young age and later enlisted in the army where he served in a hussar regiment and participated in several campaigns in Italy, Germany, and Russia under Napoleon's command. During the Emperor's hundred-day attempt to recover power in 1815, Sève served on the staff of a general, and it seems that he was also present at the battle of Waterloo. After the final restoration of the Bourbon monarchy, as a Napoleonic partisan, Sève was dismissed from the army or, at least, put on half pay, and according to his biographer Aimé Vingtrinier, tried different jobs. Early in the year 1819, he learned that Mehmed Ali Paşa was in need of European instructors to train officers and soldiers for his new army, and apparently Sève presented himself in Egypt as a colonel, although he had never passed the rank of captain in the French army.

In 1820, Mehmed Ali commissioned him as an army instructor (*ta'limci*) charged with the training of officers in a newly established training camp in Aswan. Sève was quite successful at this task, and in 1823, the first *nizām-ı cedīd* infantry regiments were formed. In the following year, Sève was made colonel (*mīralāy*) of one of the new regiments and promoted to the rank of *bey*. It must have been sometime between 1820 and 1824 that he converted to Islam.

Over the next twenty years or so, Sève served as an officer in all the campaigns fought by the Egyptian army.<sup>5</sup> From 1824 to 1828, he had a command in the Egyptian expeditionary forces fighting against the Greek independence movement in the Morea and climbed to the rank of a lieutenant general (*mīrlivā*). In the first Egyptian-Ottoman war from 1831 to 1833, which led to the Egyptian

3 Although to date there is no critical biography of Sève, for other book-length biographies in French, see Vingtrinier, and Guillot. The latter is not an academic work and reads in part like a historical novel; both of them relate his life as an adventurous and heroic tale, as do Lichtenberger and Lichtenberger. For scholarly short biographies, see Goldschmidt (185), De Groot, and Brégeon (362–65). A biography in English by a contemporary can be found in Houghton (1–17). Among the Arabic biographies are: Farīd, *Bahja* 43–62; Zaydān, *Tārīkh* 184–85; Zaydān, *Tarājim* 165–69; Ṭūsūn 10–15; Zakī 35–44; al-Rāfi'ī 292–93; Mardam 296–99.

4 In the nineteenth-century sources, the spelling of his name differs. “Selves” is more frequently used than “Sève.” “Sèves” is used less often, and “Seve” and other variants may also be found (cf. Vingtrinier 5–6).

5 For an analysis of these wars, see Fahmy 38–75.



Figure 1:  
*Suleiman Pasha (Col. Selves).*  
 From a drawing by M. Gudin  
 in Lord Houghton's possession.  
 (Source: Houghton iv.)

occupation of Palestine and Syria, he served as a high staff officer of İbrahim Paşa, Mehmed Ali's son. During this campaign, he was promoted to major general (*mîrmîrân*) and thus acquired the title of *paşa*. In 1839, when the Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II tried to retake control of Syria by ousting İbrahim Paşa's forces, Süleyman Sève took part in the decisive Battle of Nizip, which ended with an Egyptian victory.

When peace was finally reestablished between the sultan and the viceroy of Egypt in 1841, and the Egyptian regular army reduced from over one hundred fifteen thousand to eighteen thousand, Süleyman Paşa's services were still required by the Egyptian government. In the years before his death in 1860, he served as commander-in-chief of the army (*re'îs-i ricâl-i cihâdîye* or *serdâr*), directed military schools, and was involved in dispatching Egyptian students to Europe. He also served as an advisor to the government of Mehmed Ali and his successors in their relations with France, and acted as an intermediary between Egyptians and French travelers, whom he often received as guests.



In his Cairo palace, he led the life of an Ottoman-Egyptian grandee. He had a big household with a harem and was well integrated into the Ottoman-Egyptian elite, sustaining close connections with prominent figures and acting as a patron of young officers. Two of the latter, Murad Hilmi (d. 1885) and Mehmed Şerif (1826–1887), married his daughters and became generals and ministers in the 1860s and 1870s. Mehmed Şerif's granddaughter Nazlı (1894–1978) later married King Fu'ād (1868–1936, r. 1917–1936). Thus, by the early twentieth century, Süleyman Paşa's offspring had become part of the ruling house of Egypt: the last King of Egypt, Fārūq (1920–1965, r. 1936–1952), was Süleyman Paşa's great-great-grandson.

### Religious, Ethnic, and Political Affiliation

An individual's identity can be conceived as being composed of different elements such as lineage, linguistic or 'ethnic' background, religious denomination, and political affiliation. Some of these elements may well become markers of an individual's 'national identity', which is closely connected to political identity.

Recent research has pointed out that in the early modern period, affiliation with a political entity, usually a ruling house or dynasty, was crucial in defining an individual's political identity (Isom-Verhaaren). Ethnic origin or birth in the territory of the ruling house was not a determining factor, however, and thus 'foreigners' could easily be integrated into the elite around a specific ruler. Therefore, changing allegiance from one dynasty to another entailed a change in political identity. Whereas ethnicity was insignificant in determining early modern political identities, the contrary was true in the case of religious confession. In the context of confessionalization of rule, men in the service of a specific ruling house or state had to profess the same religious denomination as their employer. When loyalty to a ruler or dynasty was the key to someone's political identity, religious identity was clearly subordinated to or depended on political identity and could be changed to demonstrate loyalty. It was the rule rather than the exception that state servants would change their religious denomination to that of the ruling house they served to confirm and display their loyalty. Christine Isom-Verhaaren has shown that in this respect, sixteenth-century France did not differ from the Ottoman Empire. A Greek naval officer and diplomat who became a Catholic in the service of the French king was perceived as a Frenchman, whereas his cousin, who accepted Islam and served the Ottoman sultan, was deemed to be an Ottoman.

The Ottoman Empire had a long tradition of integrating people of different ethnic and religious origins into its state apparatus. Christian subjects and European prisoners of war were recruited for state service and normally became Sunni Muslims in the process of integration. Those among them who by receiving higher offices were accepted into the elite became Ottomans (*Osmanlı*). This term

did not convey any ethnic connotation; rather, being an *Osmanlı* meant having an Ottoman political identity in the sense sketched above, as well as a distinct socio-cultural identity.<sup>6</sup> This does not mean that a person's ethnic or regional origins (*cins*) were completely forgotten (Dursteler 103–05, 126; Kunt), but became part of an individual's identity as can be seen in surnames like Abaza Mehmed Paşa (“Ahmed Paşa the Abkhazian”) or Venedikli Hasan Paşa (“Hasan Paşa the Venetian”).

European observers, too, were aware of the ethnic, regional, and above all religious origins of many high-ranking Ottoman officials, especially if they had a European Christian background. While these ‘renegades’ were always frowned upon in Europe, to some degree, Europeans still perceived them as one of their own. Eric Dursteler has shown, using the example of two high-ranking Ottoman officials of Venetian origin, that in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, identity tended to be very complex and that “[...] changing one's religion did not mean replacing or abandoning some former, essentialized self. Indeed, conversion signified simply a complication of identity, an addition to the important regional, ethnic, religious, and familial elements that were at the core of self and community in this period” (129). Gazanfer Ağa, for example, who was chief eunuch of the imperial harem, was seen to be as much an Ottoman as a Venetian not only by the Venetians, but also by members of the Ottoman elite. Gazanfer himself maintained such a double identity (Dursteler 121–23). In a similar manner, Hasan Paşa, who was governor of Algiers and later *kapudan paşa* (grand-admiral), combined Venetian, Ottoman, Muslim, and other elements in his identity (Dursteler 123–25).

Another example from the eighteenth century is the famous count, Claude-Alexandre de Bonneval (1675–1747), who switched allegiances several times, from one ruling house to another. Bonneval was a Limousin nobleman who served the French king; later, he defected to the Habsburgs until a conflict with the Austrian military commander Prince Eugene of Savoy (1663–1736) made him flee to the Ottoman Empire. After converting to Islam, he was employed by the Ottoman government to reform the artillery, and he became known as Humbaracı Ahmed Paşa (“Ahmed Paşa the Bombardier”). Bonneval's adoption of Islam in 1730 happened at a time when Europeans were beginning to ascribe national characteristics and identities not only to themselves but also to the Ottomans. In this context, Bonneval's conversion was widely discussed in Europe as it raised the question of whether he was still considered a Frenchman or had definitely “turned Turk.” Bonneval himself engaged in these discussions and struggled to maintain a double identity as both an Ottoman and a French nobleman (Landweber).

Though the circumstances in which Joseph Sève accepted Islam were different from Bonneval's, the sociopolitical structure of the eighteenth-century Ottoman

6 An Ottoman would not have been perceived as a “Turk” (*Türk*). *Türk* referred to the nomadic and peasant population of Anatolia. In Europe, however, the term “Turk” simultaneously denoted both a religious (“Muslim”) and a political (“Ottoman”) identity.

elite continued in part into the early- and mid-nineteenth-century Ottoman-Egyptian elite. The latter was essentially an office-holding elite committed to serving the Ottoman-Egyptian dynasty of Mehmed Ali, who gave them jobs in the army or the administration. The majority were Muslims who came from various regions of the Ottoman Empire, though some had roots beyond the Empire's borders. Despite their different ethnic backgrounds, they spoke Ottoman Turkish and were culturally oriented toward the Ottoman elite in Istanbul (Toledano 16). What differed from the eighteenth-century Ottoman context, however, was the fact that service in Mehmed Ali's state apparatus did not automatically require European or Ottoman Christians to convert.

## Becoming Süleyman

Neither the date of Sève's conversion to Islam nor his adoption of the name Süleyman are entirely clear. The earliest meetings of Sève with a French traveler in Egypt can be found in the travelogue of Count de Marcellus, published in 1839. De Marcellus, who mentions several face-to-face encounters with "M. Selves" in Cairo during the summer of 1820, reports that Sève became a Muslim *after* the two men had met (285–86). Another early reference to Sève is in a French chronicle of Mehmed Ali's reign published by Félix Mengin in 1823.<sup>7</sup> Dated rather imprecisely as May 1822, Mengin refers to "M. Seve" in connection with the formation of the new military school in Aswan (250–51), but makes no reference to Sève's conversion or the name Süleyman. In Egyptian archival material regarding plans for a new army and for the training of officers in Upper Egypt, however, Sève is already referred to as Süleyman Ağa early in 1822 (Fahmy 82–83; Hilāl 139–40). Because the adoption of a Muslim name usually followed immediately after the embracing of Islam, Sève's use of this name may imply that he had accepted Islam before that year.<sup>8</sup>

Later French accounts link Sève's conversion to his promotion to colonel and *bey* in 1824. Most precise is that of Jules Planat, another French military advisor who, in 1830, published the letters he had sent to France. In one dated November 16, 1826, he states that Sève had been promised the command of a regiment if he converted to Islam; Sève, "driven by ambitious passions," accepted and was circumcised in June 1824 (58–61, cf. 40–41). Planat's dating of the circumcision does not correspond to Sève's promotion to the rank of a colonel and his command of an infantry regiment. According to a news item dated February 7, 1824,

7 A further, though very short reference of 1822 does not mention any conversion either (Saulnier 7).

8 Some later sources suggest that he made use of this name before his conversion (Vingtrinier 100; cf. "Matériaux" 58). In the early nineteenth century, there was at least one other Frenchman, an individual named Mari, in the Egyptian military who was known by a Muslim name (Bekir Ağa), although he did not convert (Lauvergne, *Souvenirs*; Lauvergne, "Notice").

and published in a German newspaper in April 1824, “Oberst Seve” commanded the 6<sup>th</sup> regiment of the line and had already converted to Islam and adopted the name “Soliman Bey” (*Baireuther Zeitung* 186).

What is of more interest here is the explanation given by Planat of the reasons for Sève’s conversion: Sève, he says, was unable to return to his native country because he had lost everything in France and saw no future there. Egypt however, offered him not only “an existence according to his taste” and a military career, but also “a second fatherland”; this is why his “national pride paled” and he adopted Islam (58). Furthermore, according to Planat, Sève considered Christianity and Islam as equal cults of the same God, and becoming a Muslim would have changed only his religious practice but not his beliefs (59).

Planat’s record seems to be confirmed by a statement Sève allegedly made about his conversion. This statement is printed as part of Sève’s self-narrative in a travel account by Hubert Lauvergne, who met him in Greece in 1825 (Lauvergne, *Souvenirs* 48–61). Though the authenticity of this account might be doubted, it nevertheless reflects the then current explanation of Sève’s conversion. Sève supposedly said to Lauvergne that Mehmed Ali gave him the choice either of being promoted to *bey* if he accepted Islam, or, if he did not, of being appointed to the position of first military instructor, which would not have given him access to any military command (Lauvergne, *Souvenirs* 57–58; cf. Lauvergne, “Notice” 559). Sève hesitated, but a friend, who is not named, gave him some advice: “France has rebuffed you; the hope of returning there is a delusion, the king of Egypt embraces you; believe me, a fertile country as a fatherland and a mighty king as a protector are of higher value than everything you give up” (Lauvergne, *Souvenirs* 58). Even Mehmed Ali made an effort to convince him: “[T]he sacrifice I ask of you is not a big one, and if I was a Muslim in the service of the King of France, I would not waver to renounce Muhammad and embrace the religion of my new fatherland [...]; fortune led you to find in Egypt a fatherland and friends; duty and gratitude oblige you to adopt our customs”<sup>10</sup> (Lauvergne, *Souvenirs* 59). Lauvergne cites Sève’s comments on his conversion: “[C]onsidering my new situation a mere convenience, I said and did everything I was asked in order to prove myself worthy of the advantages attached to my fake apostasy”<sup>11</sup> (Lauvergne, *Souvenirs* 59–60). In order to prove that Sève saw his conversion as fake, Lauvergne has him assert that although he had three wives, he stayed a Christian in

9 “La France vous a repoussé ; l’espoir d’y rentrer ne peut pas vous bercer, le roi d’Égypte vous adopte : croyez-moi, une contrée fertile pour patrie et un puissant roi pour protecteur, valent mieux que tout ce que vous abandonnez.”

10 “[L]e sacrifice que je vous impose n’est pas grand, et si j’étais mahométan auprès du roi de France, je ne balancerais point à renier Mahomet pour embrasser la religion de ma nouvelle patrie ; [...] le hasard vous fait trouver en Égypte une patrie et des amis, le devoir et la reconnaissance vous imposent l’obligation d’adopter nos coutumes [...]”

11 “[C]onsidérant mon nouvel état comme une pure convenance, je dis et fis tout ce qu’on voulut pour me rendre digne des faveurs attachées à ma feinte apostasie.”

his heart, followed ceremonies in the mosque only “hypocritically” and, in private, still drank wine (Lauvergne, *Souvenirs* 60–61).

In commenting on this account, Lauvergne compares Sève to another Frenchman in the Egyptian military service, named Mari, who was not promoted to the rank of *bey* in the army because he was not willing to accept Islam. A link between the rank of *bey* and a function in the army must be emphasized, because at least from 1831 onward, several Frenchmen were made *bey* in Egypt, but none of them had a military command. French observers stressed the point that Muslim soldiers were unwilling to accept orders from ‘infidels’, because they felt superior to them. Furthermore, in the 1820s, Mehmed Ali tried (rather unsuccessfully) to give his *niẓām-ı cedīd* army a Muslim image, which was officially called *cihādīye* (from *jihād*, “holy war”), and even to present himself as a defender of the faith (Hamzah 63–66; Farhi 173; Fahmy 99, 252).

There are three important aspects to the accounts of Sève’s conversion. Firstly, the adoption of Islam and a Muslim name strengthened his personal and political loyalty to the Egyptian viceroy and his state since adopting Islam seems to have been required of a man who held a high military command. In this regard, Sève is no different from the early modern state servants discussed by Isom-Verhaaren. In some ways he also resembles the comte de Bonneval to whom he was sometimes compared by contemporaries (e.g., Houghton 15–16). Secondly, the change of religion implies a change of ‘nationality’, defined by the allegiance to a specific ruler; together with Islam, Sève adopted a ‘new fatherland’ and became ‘Egyptian’. Eusèbe de Salle was probably quite right to call this step Sève’s “letter of naturalization” (203), as it entailed the loss of French consular protection and certain privileges enjoyed by European Christians in Mehmed Ali’s Egypt (Farhi 180). This change of religion and ‘nationality’ is not described as entirely voluntary but rather as the result of the contrast between the lack of prospects in France and good opportunities in Egypt. Thirdly, the religious or spiritual meaning of becoming Muslim is minimized by the allusion to the inner conviction of the officer as either still being Christian or adhering to a belief that transcends both Christianity and Islam. In a similar vein, some later observers called him a “deist” or “Voltaireist,” or, more negatively, a man of no beliefs at all (de Salle 203; Houghton 15; Michaud and Poujoulat 307).

## Changing Perceptions in France

Turning to the question of how this change of political and religious allegiance was judged in France, two phases can be distinguished: one from the start of the Egyptian military engagement in Greece in 1824 until around 1830, and another beginning in the early 1830s, when Süleyman Sève served as an officer in Mehmed Ali’s army who was backed by France in his conflicts with the Sultan.

In the mid-1820s, Sève's conversion was closely linked to the Greek War of Independence in the Morea. Europeans frequently saw this conflict as a battle between Christianity and Islam and/or a clash of 'progressive Europeans' (the Greeks fighting for liberty) and 'retrograde Orientals' (the despotic Ottomans aided by the Egyptians). The European interpretation of the conflict reflected a widespread philhellene attitude (cf. Barau), which in turn strongly influenced the way in which Sève was perceived.

In the context of the Greek war, Sève's conversion was assessed in overwhelmingly dismissive and negative terms. This begins with Lauvergne who, in his book, states after Sève's own narrative: "These are the circumstances in which Mr. Sève has renounced his fatherland and his religion. I do not venture any reflection; I leave it to the reader to judge such conduct which is made bizarre and incomprehensible by the events"<sup>12</sup> (Lauvergne, *Souvenirs* 61–62). In the course of the book, Lauvergne's opinion becomes even more clear. He depicts Sève and the other French military men in Egyptian service as the instruments of a barbarous and illegitimate power fighting against the legitimate cause of the rebellious Greek nationalists. In addition, Lauvergne repeatedly maintains that Sève's conversion was fuelled by ambition and greed for money. Thus, Sève's conversion was commonly explained with his ambition (cf. "Biographische Skizzen" 324; Michaud and Poujoulat 307; Planat 58, "Aperçu" 14; de Pardieu 41; Luquet 181–82).

By citing Mari, a French instructor in the Egyptian army who was not on good terms with Süleyman Sève, Lauvergne proceeds to disparage the latter's military competence and to describe him as a commander of soldiers powered by religious fanaticism (Lauvergne, *Souvenirs* 9–13). Lauvergne also does not believe Sève's avowal that he remained a Christian in his heart, claiming to have seen him ardently assisting at Muslim prayers (Lauvergne, *Souvenirs* 35). Other judgments about Sève during the Greek War of Independence were even more severe. An anonymous philhellene reviewer of Lauvergne's book comments on Sève's conversion as an odious thing and purports that he shows "diabolic fervor" in religious ceremonies ("Review" 799).

Interestingly, during this same period, Sève was very negatively portrayed as a character in a short drama by Ida Sainte-Elme<sup>13</sup>. The heroine of *Le renégat, ou la vierge de Missolonghi* (1827) is a young Greek woman taken prisoner by Egyptian soldiers during the siege of Missolonghi in 1826. The Egyptian commander-in-chief İbrahim Paşa gives her to Süleyman Bey Sève, who promptly falls in love with her. Trying desperately to get her favor, he asks what he can do to win her love. She answers that he must defend the Christians instead of persecuting them, as well as become a Christian himself. It is only at this point in the story

12 "Telles sont les circonstances qui ont poussé M. Sève à renoncer à sa patrie et à sa religion. Je ne hasarde aucune réflexion, je laisse au lecteur le soin de juger une conduite que les évènements [sic] ont rendu bizarre et inintelligible."

13 Pseudonym of Maria Johanna Elselina Verfelt (1776–1845).

that the *bey* reveals his true identity: “Don’t you know, answered Soliman, that I have abjured my fatherland and my God, that I am Selves, the renegade?” Horror-struck, the young woman shouts: “Soliman-Bey! Selves the renegade! Your name is cursed by all who remain of the unlucky Greeks and by beautiful France whose sons fight in our lines [...]”<sup>14</sup> She then kills herself by jumping out of the window (Sainte-Elme, *Renégat* 22–23). Of course, this short and rather trivial drama is a political statement in support of the Greek cause and reflects the prevailing philhellene attitude of the European public at the time (cf. Barau 422–23).

In summary, the European perception of Sève in the first phase may be characterized as follows: Sève was considered a “renegade” whose apostasy denied him acceptance as a Frenchman. On account of his loyalty to the Egyptian vice-roy and the Ottomans, he was perceived not only as antagonistic to the Greek cause but also to European culture and values. In this respect, Ida Saint-Elme’s drama is certainly typical of public opinion. Although I was unable to do extensive research in contemporary periodicals, random sampling revealed that in Swiss, German, and British newspapers similarly negative if somewhat more balanced statements can be found (“Biographische Skizzen” 324; “Soliman-Bey” c. 913; “Aperçu” 14).

Süleyman Sève must have been aware of this unfavorable image circulating in the European press because he seems to have actively sought to correct it. In this he was successful: after the settlement of the Greek affairs in 1829/1830, his public image in France was transformed into a highly positive one.

The most striking example of this change of opinion is probably Ida Sainte-Elme herself. Having journeyed to Egypt in 1829, she published a six-volume account of her travels in 1831. In the third volume, she relates how she stayed for several weeks in Süleyman Sève’s house and that she had contact with him during her entire trip to Upper Egypt. She repeatedly calls him “our friend Seuliman-Bey,” and “my good Seuliman,” and describes him as a Muslim who is a very good Frenchman and one who sometimes “forgets the law of the prophet” (*Égypte* 26, 28, 30, 37, 74, 135, 238).

Ida Sainte-Elme was only one among many French travelers who stayed at Süleyman’s palace or visited him there. There are dozens of travel accounts by tourists, diplomats, artists, and literati who met him in Cairo or in Syria and enjoyed his hospitality (cf. Carré, 208 f., 214 f.). They mention the French dinners, the wines, champagnes, and cognacs he served, as well as his billiard table. Almost without exception, these travelogues convey a positive image of Süleyman Sève. What is perhaps more significant is the fact that the French writers regularly call him their “compatriot” (e.g., de Salle 203; Goupil Fesquet 20; Gis-

14 “Sais-tu bien, reprit Soliman, que j’ai abjuré ma patrie et mon Dieu, que je suis Selves le renégat? [...] Soliman-Bey ! Selves le renégat ! ton nom est maudit par tout ce qui reste des malheureux Grecs, et par cette belle France dont les fils combattent dans nos rangs [...]”

quet 278; de Charolais 35), or a “Frenchman” (e.g., Viesse de Marmont 259; Gisquet 190, 278; de Pardieu 41; de Charolais 40).

Undoubtedly, Süleyman Sève was as much interested in these visits as were the travelers themselves. They afforded him the opportunity to show himself in a favorable light. Through his hospitality he presented himself as a Frenchman, and according to reports there were portraits in his home recalling his services under Napoleon (Viesse de Marmont 267–68).

Some of Süleyman’s guests were even presented to his family. Père Enfantin, the leader of the sect of the Saint-Simonians, stayed for some time in his palace in 1833. In one of his letters, he sent kisses to Süleyman’s daughter Zara (Zahra) and “respectful salutations” to his wife “M<sup>me</sup> Marie” (Enfantin 190). A travel account of 1843 even published a painting of his three children (Goupil Fesquet between pp. 42 and 43). From the 1830s on, there are hardly any reports of Sève having more than one wife unlike in the previous decade (Planat 33–34; Lauvergne, *Souvenirs* 61).<sup>15</sup> Instead, he is presented as monogamous, his only wife being a Greek woman called Maria or Maryam (d. 1895), whom he supposedly had saved from slavery in 1828 (de Salle 204; Houghton 11–12; Vingtrinier 192). When considering the practices of the Ottoman-Egyptian elite, it would, however, seem more likely that she had been one of his slaves before becoming his concubine. This would be supported by the fact that Süleyman’s Cairo palace consisted of two parts: a *selamlık* or male quarter, where his male retainers and servants were lodged and where he received his guests, and a *haremlık* for his family and female servants (Guémard 71, 74).

By presenting Sève as monogamous, he appears as the head of a rather middle-class family, a man who loves his wife and children (cf. de Salle 204; de Pardieu 41; de Charolais 36<sup>16</sup>; Vingtrinier 229 f.). This, of course, changes the image of the “renegade” and makes him much more respectable in the eyes of Europeans and easier for them to accept as a Frenchman. Sève himself was probably interested in promoting this image, as Europeans considered polygamy one of the major flaws of Islam and one of the ways in which Christians were superior to Muslims in terms of morality.

Though detrimental assessments by clerics were still being rendered in the 1850s (cf. Luquet 181–82), critical comments on Sève’s conversion became increasingly rare from the early 1830s onwards. Some travelers do not even mention that Süleyman Paşa was a Muslim. Of course, discussions about his turning Muslim did not disappear overnight. In October 1832, the French medical doctor Antoine-Barthélemy Clot Bey (1793–1868), who had set up the Egyptian health

15 Scott’s mention in 1837 of “three wives” is an exception during this time (229).

16 Louis de Charolais contradicts his own assessments of Sève’s private life. In one instance, he writes that Sève “had adopted, little by little, with the [Ottoman] costume all the Oriental usages, except polygamy” (“Cependant, peu à peu, il avait adopté avec le costume, tous les usages orientaux à l’exception de la polygamie,” 36). But in another instance he states: “In his quality as a Frenchman, Soliman has preserved French habits” (“En sa qualité de Français, Soliman avait conservé les habitudes françaises.” 40).



service for Mehmed Ali, traveled from Alexandria to Marseille to see his family. There he found press accounts circulating that claimed that he himself, like Sève, had turned Muslim when promoted to the rank of *bey*. Clot, who described himself as “Christian and French,” obviously viewed these rumors as an attack on his integrity. In his memoirs he wrote that he had a “formal denial of this calumny” published in the major newspapers of Marseille, and that “with indignation,” he “denounced apostasy and the renegades in violent terms”<sup>17</sup> (Clot, *Mémoires* 188–89; cf. Toledano 79). Unfortunately, I was unable to get hold of these Marseille journals,<sup>18</sup> but from Clot Bey’s memoirs, we know that Süleyman Sève felt offended and never forgave his colleague for attacking converts.

Besides the correction of Süleyman’s image from ‘renegade’ to ‘normal’ family father and French host who entertained travelers, there is also a transformation of the perception of him as a military man. His military skills had already been noted during the Greek war, but evaluated in an unfavorable light because he displayed them on the ‘wrong’ side. From the early 1830s, his abilities as a military man were affirmatively revalued (Viesse de Marmont 265–66, 293; Scott 229; Blondel 255; “Méhémed-Ali” 407–08; Clot, *Aperçu* 200–02; Gisquet 278; Houghton 8). He was reckoned to be “the father of the modern Egyptian army,” a view supported partly by Mehmed Ali, at least in conversations with French diplomats when he stressed the role of Frenchmen in his state-building project (cf. Douin, *Guerre* I: 201; Douin, *Mission* 108). Süleyman also acquired fame as a military hero during the Egyptian occupation of Syria and the subsequent wars between Mehmed Ali and the Ottoman Sultan. Some commentators however, grossly overstated his role as chief of the general staff and in the Egyptian victories at Konya (December 21, 1832) and Nizip (June 24, 1839).<sup>19</sup> They went so far as to say that he was the main driving force behind the Egyptian military exploits (Vingtrinier 100–01, 216–18, 327–28, 332), or even that İbrahim Paşa, the actual leader of the Egyptian army, was Sève’s lieutenant (Houghton 8–9).

In addition to his capacities as an army instructor and a general, biographical notes on Süleyman record legendary or semilegendary tales that referred to his military abilities and bravery. Most prominent among these is one dating back to the early 1820s when Sève was training Mehmed Ali’s mamluk slaves as officers in the new military order. At the time, Sève was said to have been so unpopular among the soldiers, not only because he was a drillmaster, but also because he was a Christian, that they made several attempts on his life. During a shooting

17 “Dès lors, je me crus obligé de donner un démenti formel à cette calomnie. J’adressai une lettre aux journalistes de Marseille, dans laquelle je repoussai énergiquement cette accusation. Dans l’indignation qui m’animaient, je flétris en termes violents l’apostasie et les rénégats [sic ...].”

18 One of Clot’s disclaimers was published in the *Sémaphore de Marseille* (see *Ami de la religion* 588–89). In November 1832, he had another short statement about his not being a “renegade” published in the Paris daily *Le revenant* (3) (cf. Clot, *Mémoires* 220).

19 A photograph that shows Süleyman Sève holding a scroll with the label “Nezib” suggests that he maintained the self-image of a great strategist. For the photograph, see <http://www.flickr.com/photos/askamel/2096454724/in/set-72157603965126815> (14 March 2012).

exercise, Sève heard bullets whizzing around his head; he turned to his soldiers, swearing that they were incapable of hitting a man at close range. He then ordered them to shoot at him again, with better aim this time. The soldiers, of course, did not shoot again; so impressed were they by his sangfroid that from then on they recognized his authority unconditionally. This story seems to have been published for the first time in the *Revue britannique* of 1825 (“Aperçu” 10),<sup>20</sup> but similar or related tales were also in circulation (“Biographische Skizzen” 323–24; Planat 27–28; “Méhémed-Ali” 408; Clot, *Aperçu* 202–03; Goupil Fesquet 21; Gouin 378 with an illustration). Moreover, other legends were told about his early life when he was serving in the French army (“Biographische Skizzen” 323; Houghton 3; *Vieux*). Together with the hero image, these tales contributed to the mythologization of Süleyman Sève’s person in France. It later culminated in Aimé Vingtrinier’s biography of 1886, which reads like the heroic saga of a man who made his fortune in Egypt but nevertheless remained French and, what is more, effected the spread of French ideas and influence in the Levant.

While it cannot be denied that the general himself was invested in creating such an impression, French political interests also played a major role. During the Egyptian-Ottoman wars, France was Mehmed Ali’s main ally and the only European power that supported his rebellion against his suzerain. In their efforts to win him over, French diplomats in their communications addressed him as a Frenchman, and Sève eagerly replied. For example, in January 1833, shortly after the battle of Konya, Baron de Varenne, the French chargé d’affaires in Istanbul, wrote to him: “It is not for nothing that you were born in France which you honor and who claims you as one of her children; as one responsible for French interests here, I will speak to you in confidence and leave my letter to your loyalty. Besides, I have nothing to ask you that would not be to the benefit of the country you adopted”<sup>21</sup> (Douin, *Guerre* II: 12–13). In his response, Süleyman Sève wrote: “Yes, I do love and honor France; I have never heard the name of our beautiful fatherland without feeling in my entire body the thrill of glorious souvenirs”<sup>22</sup> (Douin, *Guerre* II: 49). This exchange of letters might suggest that Süleyman Paşa took on a double loyalty. He was loyal to the family of Mehmed Ali and thus to Egypt, and he was also able to display loyalty to France which was, of course, a simple matter since French and Egyptian interests were presented as congruent.

His double loyalty might also reflect a double identity. For the French, he was “le colonel Sève,” a military hero who brought the glory of French arms to the

20 Cf. Vingtrinier 102–04. The earliest report of the incident was in a British consular dispatch of January 1824 (Farhi 156).

21 “Ce n’est point en vain que vous êtes né en France ; et, chargé ici des intérêts de la France que vous honorez et qui vous réclame pour un de ses enfants, je vous parlerais en toute confiance et je livre ma lettre à votre loyauté. Au surplus, je n’ai rien à vous demander qui se soit très conforme au bien du pays qui vous a adopté.”

22 “Oui j’aime et j’honore la France ; jamais je n’entends prononcer le nom de notre belle patrie sans éprouver dans toute ma machine une vibration de glorieux souvenirs.”

Levant, and he cultivated his French identity in the company of his French guests in Cairo. After the 1830s, his being a Muslim does not seem to have mattered much anymore. On the other hand, Süleyman Paşa lived the life of an Ottoman-Egyptian grandee, fostering personal links of patronage with other elite figures and residing in great style in a palace that included a harem building.

## Egyptian Perceptions

After discussing the French perception of Süleyman Sève, we come to the Egyptian side of the story. Here, the problem of sources arises. Between 1820 and 1880, there seems to be a gap in the recounts of Egyptian history of the period written in Arabic.<sup>23</sup> When it comes to sources for Süleyman Sève, the situation is particularly bleak, as there are, to my knowledge, no printed sources in Arabic by his contemporaries. Of course, one might find texts on Egypt in Mehmed Ali's era and even references to Süleyman Sève in books dealing with other subjects, but since going through them would be like looking for a needle in a haystack, I will limit myself to Egyptian historical writing in the strict sense.

The chronicle of 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī, the most important historiographer of the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, ends in 1821, shortly before Sève enters the scene (al-Jabartī). A second chronicle of the early nineteenth century, written by Khalīl ibn Aḥmad al-Rajabī, ends only a few years later. Although al-Rajabī has a lengthy discussion of Mehmed Ali's military reforms and the organizing of a new army, Sève is nowhere mentioned by name. Al-Rajabī briefly refers to "leading instructors and men experienced in the art of horsemanship and instruction" to whom Mehmed Ali gave orders "to teach those youths the manners of wars and the particular ways of gun firing" (235, cf. Hamzah 75). Both chronicles were manuscripts of very limited circulation<sup>24</sup> and thus cannot have been a formative influence on historical works published in Egypt in the later nineteenth century.

An early direct reference to Süleyman Sève can be found in a little-known book called *Feats and Glorious Deeds of İbrahim and the Khedives* by Iskandar Bey Abkāriyūs (1826/27–1885), published in 1881/82 but written sometime before 1874. Abkāriyūs was a Syrian man of letters of Armenian origin; in the 1870s, he worked as an administrator in an Egyptian elite household (163, 180) and must have been well acquainted with the elite. His book, composed partly in rhyming prose, is a eulogy to İbrahim Paşa and his campaigns in Syria, which is supplemented with short chapters on other members of the Egyptian dynasty and elite figures. Although Abkāriyūs has several references to the commanders who

23 For nineteenth-century Egyptian historiography, see Crabbs; for the twentieth century, see Gorman.

24 Al-Jabartī's chronicle was printed for the first time in 1879/80 (Crabbs 46), al-Rajabī's not until 1997.

led corps of İbrahim's army, Süleyman Paşa is only mentioned once. In the battle array of Konya, he is described as "the resolute and accurate expert in military maneuvers" who commanded two regiments arranged in a "position that made success and triumph likely" (76). The reference to his expertise does not distinguish him much from other officers whom Abkâriyūs eulogizes with comparable words, nor does he attribute any major role in the Egyptian victory to Süleyman's units. In the account of the battle of Nizip, he is not mentioned at all.

Another early and very brief reference to Süleyman Sève is inserted in the monumental historio-topographical compilation of 1887 by 'Alī Paşa Mubārak (1823–1893), an Egyptian bureaucrat and minister who must have been acquainted with Sève during his early career. Mubārak's reference is part of an account of Mehmed Ali's military reform, which, like al-Rajabī's, deals with the gathering of prospective officers to be sent to Aswan in 1820. Here, Sève shows up as one foreign officer among others, although a rather important one (Mubārak 186).<sup>25</sup> Mubārak does not comment on Sève's conversion nor mention him in the following sections on the Greek and Syrian wars. In a book on the history of modern Egypt first published in 1889 and reissued several times, the famous journalist, historian, and biographer Jurjī Zaydān (1861–1914)<sup>26</sup> does not elaborate any further on Sève (Zaydān, *Tārīkh* 186).<sup>27</sup> Like Abkâriyūs and Mubārak, Zaydān does not attribute to him any specific role in the wars.

From around 1890, Süleyman Sève appears fairly regularly in Egyptian history books. The first book dealing extensively with Süleyman Sève that I was able to trace is *The Eminent Delight about the History of the Founder of the Khedival Family* (1890/91) by Muḥammad Bey Farīd (1868–1919).<sup>28</sup> Farīd, who in the early twentieth century became the leader of the National Party, was at the time of writing a high-level employee of the viceregal domain administration. His book is basically a military history of Mehmed Ali's rule. In the presentation of the Egyptian campaigns, Süleyman Sève is depicted as a great man who had a role in almost every major military event (Farīd, *Bahja* 75, 77–79, 81–82, 90, 95, 97, 102–04, 130–33, 136–37). Strongly contrasting with Abkâriyūs' account of the victory of Nizip, Farīd credits Süleyman Sève with a decisive role in the battle, but does not mention any of his fellow officers (Farīd, *Bahja* 136–37). When he comes to the military reforms of the early 1820s, Muḥammad Farīd not only credits Sève with a key role, but also includes a lengthy "Biography of Sulaymān

25 "He [Mehmed Ali] appointed for them [the prospective officers] two of the experienced French teachers in order to teach them the European military directives and movements. One of them was called Mari and the second one Sève who rose in the ranks, embraced Islam and became known as Sulaymān Bāshā al-Faransāwī. He started to drill and to teach the soldiers until the will of the *paşa* developed satisfactorily."

26 For Jurjī Zaydān's works cf. Crabbs 191–95.

27 "With respect to the setup of the military of the new order he [Mehmed Ali] turned to the useful lessons of a French commander whose name was General 'Sève'. Yet he became a Muslim and called himself Sulaymān Bāshā and rendered the Egyptian government faithful services during its wars in Syria and elsewhere."

28 For Muḥammad Farīd and his book cf. Crabbs 167–75.

Bāshā al-Faransāwī” (43–62). This chapter is divided into four sections: the first two cover his life in France and the reasons why he came to Egypt (43–58); the third concerns his role in the military reform (58–61); and the final one appears under the title “Sève’s entrance into the Islamic confession” (61–62). Although Farīd does not reveal his sources, it is quite obvious that his account relies on French material and, in particular, on Aimé Vingtrinier’s biography. Farīd paraphrases Vingtrinier’s discussion of Sève’s birth, ancestry, first name, and family name (Farīd, *Bahja* 43–44; cf. Vingtrinier 6–12), his dabbling in different trades after being dismissed from the French army (Farīd, *Bahja* 52–53; cf. Vingtrinier 44–46), and the legendary ‘shooting incident’ described earlier (Farīd, *Bahja* 61; cf. Vingtrinier 102–04). Many other examples of Farīd’s paraphrasing Vingtrinier throughout the book could be provided, and not just for Sève’s biography.<sup>29</sup> The most interesting part of Farīd’s account of Süleyman Sève’s life, however, is the section on his conversion, as he is the only author I know writing in Arabic who commented on it. According to Farīd, Sève became a Muslim because he felt his soldiers would obey him more readily if he shared their faith. In addition, becoming a Muslim was easy for him, as religiousness in general was foreign to him, and if he had any beliefs at all, he professed a “natural religion,” which in Farīd’s view more or less equated with atheism. Furthermore, he never became a true Muslim, as many years later, he attended a mass for his father in Lyons (61–62). Essentially, this statement too is based on Vingtrinier (105–06). In summary, Muḥammad Bey Farīd describes Süleyman Sève as a great man whose services and talents seem to have been indispensable in the dynastic endeavors of Mehmed Ali and his son İbrahim. He perceives him as one of their men despite the fact that he became a Muslim in only a superficial or feigned manner.

Muḥammad Farīd’s account remained exceptional for his times, however.<sup>30</sup> Other books continued to treat Sève as one among several foreign military instructors and officers. Such is the case in the 1896 history of the maritime powers by the naval officer Ismā‘īl Sarhank (c. 1854–1924).<sup>31</sup> Though Sarhank’s focus is on the navy, he also deals with the wars of the Egyptian land army, and in a section on the formation of the *niḏām-ı cedīd* he touches on Sève and his change of name; yet Sarhank does not make clear that he accepted Islam (436–37).<sup>32</sup> In contrast, Sève’s role is rendered in a more nuanced way by the Copt

29 Only at the very end of the book does Farīd acknowledge that he received a piece of information, which has neither to do with Sève nor the army, from “the book of Monsieur Vingtrinier” (Farīd, *Bahja* 194).

30 In his *History of the Ottoman Empire* (1894), which is not primarily focused on Egyptian history, Muḥammad Farīd also mentions him twice, first as Mehmed Ali’s aide in creating a European army, second as İbrahim Paşa’s lieutenant (*qā’immaqām*) in the Syrian campaign (Farīd, *Tārīkh* 205, 233).

31 Cf. Crabbs 136–43.

32 In the section on the Greek war we do not find Sève, and in the narration of the Syrian campaign he is noted only as one among several officers of İbrahim Paşa’s general staff (Sarhank 454–55). There is a final brief reference to his post as commander-in-chief (*serdār*) in the 1850s (Sarhank 508 f.).

judge Mīkhā'īl Shārūbīm Bey (1861–1920)<sup>33</sup> who mentions him several times in the fourth volume of his *Concise History of Ancient and Modern Egypt* (1900). Sève shows up twice in connection with the new army as “one of the glorious French” who trained soldiers in 1820 (39) and as the successful head of military schools and industries (40–41). Shārūbīm also refers to Süleyman when dealing with the Greek war (45–46) and the Syrian campaigns (49, 64, 67, 71). Similar to Farīd, Shārūbīm does not treat Sève as one Egyptian officer among many; rather, he is virtually the only one mentioned by name who fought at the side of the commander-in-chief İbrahim Paşa. Shārūbīm depicts him as an important figure, pointing to his role before and during the battle of Nizip, where he was responsible for the battle formation (67, 71). To further stress his importance, Shārūbīm relates a conversation between Süleyman and İbrahim (64) that emphasizes his closeness to the commander-in-chief. Shārūbīm makes no additional elaborations on Sève’s military role and he does not comment on his conversion (which might be due to the fact that he himself was a Christian), yet it seems that by the turn of the twentieth century, Sulaymān Bāshā al-Faransāwī came to be acknowledged as one of the key figures in the entourages of Mehmed Ali and İbrahim.

It is also at this time that accounts of Sève’s life appeared in biographical dictionaries. The first such entry, in a biographical handbook, was penned by Jurjī Zaydān who included it in his 1902 *Celebrities of the East* but who had probably published it previously in his journal *al-Hilāl*.<sup>34</sup> Like in other texts discussed above, Zaydān mentions only very briefly that Sève converted to Islam and does not comment on it. He writes that Mehmed Ali had founded a military school, factories for cannons and so on; then “he transferred all these to colonel Sève who, in the meantime, had accepted Islam, called himself Sulaymān and became known as Sulaymān Bey al-Faransāwī. And the Egyptians loved and obeyed him and he formed an organized army” (Zaydān, *Tarājim* 167).<sup>35</sup> Throughout the text, however, he presents him not only as an important figure with specialized skills but also one with large areas of responsibility. Zaydān’s biography became a kind of prototype for later Arab biographers. ‘Umar Tūsūn Paşa (1872–1944), a member of the Egyptian dynasty, presents more or less the same narrative, although he adds details from other sources. Khalīl Mardam Bey (1895–1959) even copied whole passages verbatim from Zaydān’s text (Mardam 296–99). When examining the Arabic biographical texts more closely, and especially Zaydān’s, it becomes obvious that they rely on French sources. We find a comparable assessment of

33 Cf. Crabbs 133–36.

34 Arabic historiography has a long tradition of compiling biographical reference works. The earliest biographical handbook that has characteristics of an Egyptian ‘national biography’ is Zakhkhūra’s *Epoch’s Mirror of the History and Portraits of Egypt’s Greatest Men* (1897); Zakhkhūra does not include Sulaymān al-Faransāwī, though he mentions him briefly in Mehmed Ali’s biography when he deals with the early military reforms (23). The same is true for Fu’ād’s *Precious Treasure of the Grand Egyptians* (1917), which includes a picture of him (38–41).

35 The same statement is made by Shārūbīm (40–41).

Süleyman's military abilities and similar stories of his early life as in Aimé Vingtrinier's biography. Of course, it is possible that Vingtrinier's information was communicated via Muḥammad Farīd's account.

In summary, it may be argued that beginning in the 1890s, Süleyman Sève must have become known to the Egyptian reading public. Some authors described him as one among many others who had helped Mehmed Ali create a new army and who had served as high-ranking officers in İbrahim's campaigns. In these books, Sève was barely noticeable among other *beys* and *paşas* of his time; at most, he was a supporter of Mehmed Ali's dynastic and state-building project to whom no outstanding characteristics were attributed. Other authors who provided biographical accounts styled Sulaymān Bāshā al-Faransāwī as one of the more important personalities at the side of Mehmed Ali and İbrahim, someone who made a significant contribution to the formation of the modern Egyptian army and its successful campaigns. These, of course, were described as crucial elements in the establishment of the Egyptian dynastic state and, eventually, the Egyptian nation-state. Thus, Sève's talents and achievements became clearly embedded in the emerging narrative of nineteenth-century Egyptian national history.

The fact that late nineteenth-century Egyptians knew Sève by the surname "al-Faransāwī" was not meant to exclude him from their imagined nation. "Al-Faransāwī" was not a 'family name' either, but rather a *laqab* indicating a person's origins. Yet, his son-in-law, Mehmed Şerif Paşa, was also known as "al-Faransāwī." Şerif's father was an Ottoman judge, and it is not entirely clear whether Şerif got this name because he became the head of Süleyman's household after his death (Cannon 164–68) or because he spent several years training in France (cf. Zakhkhūra 126; Zaydān, *Tarājim* 241). At any rate, Şerif's letters to different family members suggest that the family was bilingual Turkish/French (Cannon) as was the household, in which Süleyman employed locals as well as Europeans (Gisquet 279).

Sulaymān Bāshā al-Faransāwī's presence in Egypt was not confined to historical books. In Cairo at least, he was recalled in a more tangible way: his palace compound on the banks of the Nile was still stood in the first half of the twentieth century. There, in its garden, was and still is his mausoleum, commissioned in 1862 by his son-in-law Mehmed Şerif. And there is also a mosque in the vicinity that bears his name (Pflugradt-Abdel Aziz; Guémard 71–76). In the early 1870s, a boulevard in Cairo's new urban quarter al-İsmā'īliyya was named Shāri' Sulaymān Bāshā and, later, a square was named Mīdān Sulaymān Bāshā in which a life-sized bronze statue of him by the French sculptor Henry-Alfred Jacquemart (dated 1874) was erected (Lami 191–94). Both boulevard and monument were part of the urban modernization and 'beautification' project of the Khedive İsmail Paşa (r. 1863–1879), who also commissioned several other bronzes, that formed part of a representational dynastic ensemble: two equestrian statues, one of Mehmed Ali Paşa in Alexandria, also by Jacquemart, and another of İbrahim Paşa. Both were inaugurated in 1873 (Kreiser 106–08), when weeks-long festivi-

ties on the occasion of four weddings in the dynasty took place in Cairo. With the overthrow of King Fārūq in 1952 and the establishment of the republic, Süleyman's bronze was removed and relegated to the entrance of the military museum at the citadel, and his street and square were renamed.<sup>36</sup> There is no doubt that Süleyman Sève's 'downfall' was due to his association with the dynasty on the one hand, and to his being a "Faransāwī" on the other: the Nasserist regime of the early Republic condemned the dynasty and its foreign supporters as equally alien to the 'Arab Egyptian nation' as had been the European colonial interference of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

## Conclusion

In the early 1820s, Sève became a Muslim in order to strengthen his allegiance to Mehmed Ali and his state. At that time, it seems to have been a requirement for a man in a high military command to embrace the ruler's religion since it was not until the 1870s and 1880s that Christian *beys* and *paşas* were found in the Egyptian army. In France, Sève's conversion was interpreted as a defection to a foreign 'nationality', which seemed to deprive him of his French identity. This perception must be seen in the light of the prevailing philhellenism of the time: Europeans perceived Sève as assisting a despotic power in suppressing the Christian Greeks striving for freedom.

From the 1830s on, Süleyman Sève's being a Muslim did not prevent the French from accepting him as one of their own. This change of perception does not so much reflect changing attitudes to conversion in France; rather, it was due to the French-Egyptian political alliance during the Egyptian-Ottoman wars. It was in the course of these wars that Süleyman Sève became famous as a military hero; for the French, he was "le colonel Sève," who brought the glory of French art of warfare to the Levant. This not only made it easier for him to be accepted as a Muslim Frenchman back in France, but it could also be used in French national discourses: twenty-five years after his death, Aimé Vingtrinier presented Sève as an exemplary Frenchman and reinterpreted the Egyptian victory over the Ottomans at Nizip as a French triumph over the Prussians, alleging that Sève defeated Helmut von Moltke, principal adviser to the Ottoman commander (Vingtrinier 100–01). This, of course, was balm to the aching French national soul, because it was Moltke who surrounded and defeated the French at Sedan in 1870. Perhaps what is of more importance is that while Sève was still alive, the French public already perceived Egypt as an 'Oriental country' that experienced a "regeneration" under its "enlightened" ruler Mehmed Ali Paşa. The

36 The names were changed to Shāri' Tal'at Ḥarb and Mīdān Tal'at Ḥarb, to commemorate Tal'at Bāshā Ḥarb (1867–1941), a prominent economist and founder of one of the largest banking houses in Egypt. On the square, a bronze of Tal'at Ḥarb was erected. There is now a small Sulaymān Bāshā Street close to his mausoleum.



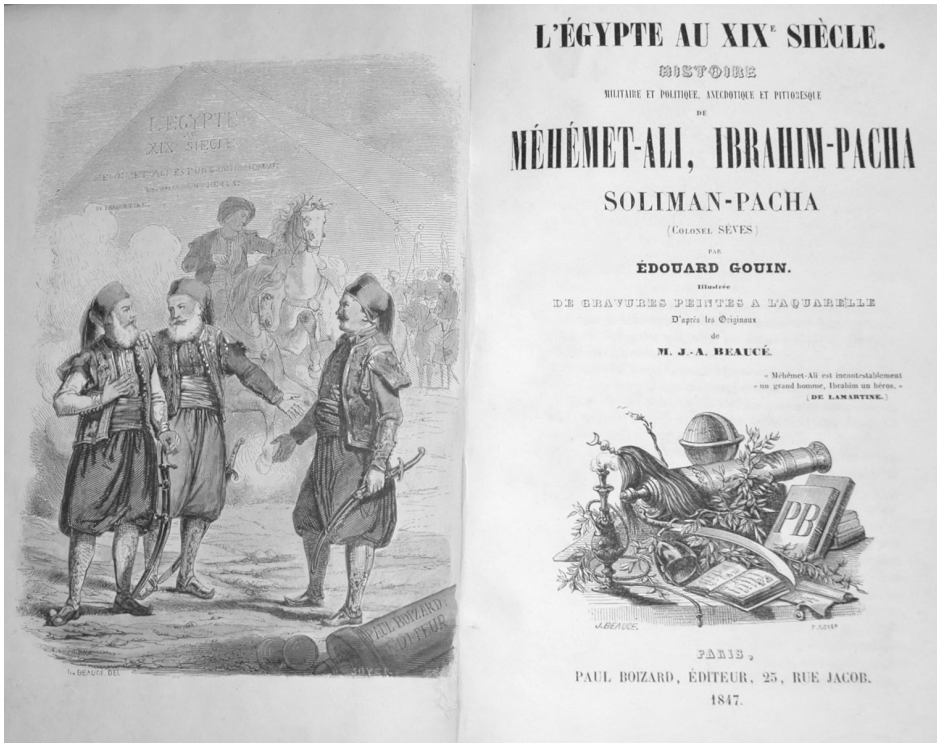


Figure 2: *Mehmed Ali Paşa and İbrahim Paşa talking to Süleyman Paşa Sève (right).* (Source: Gouin, frontispiece and title page.)

beginning of this regeneration was dated back to the French occupation of Egypt by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1798. Mehmed Ali was styled as the heir of Bonaparte who realized Egypt's regeneration with the help of the Frenchmen he employed.<sup>37</sup> Süleyman Sève was considered the most prominent of these, and already during his lifetime he was put on almost the same level as Mehmed Ali and İbrahim (cf. Gouin 1-2 and Fig. 2).

The late-nineteenth-century Egyptian perception of Süleyman Sève suggests that his participation in Mehmed Ali's endeavor to create a dynastic state was sufficient to make him an important figure in Egyptian national history. Here, his loyalty and his role as a military man seem to be of more import than his change of religion. The Egyptian historians of the late nineteenth century, who were often linked to the state or the ruling family, also saw Mehmed Ali's dynastic project as part and parcel of a 'national regeneration'; thus, it was easy to integrate Sève into the emerging narrative of the Egyptian nation-state. In the first half of the twentieth century, and especially in the interwar period, the 'royalist school' dominated historical discourse in Egypt. The Egyptian and foreign historians of this

<sup>37</sup> The discourse on Egypt's "regeneration" under the "enlightened" rule of Mehmed Ali is prevalent in French books of that time. For an example, see Planat.

school, sponsored by King Fu'ād, wrote from an elitist point of view and stressed the importance of the dynasty, and especially the part played by Mehmed Ali, in the Egyptian regeneration (Gorman 15–22). In this narrative, Süleyman Sève and the other Frenchmen in the viceroy's service found their place too.

Aided by changing attitudes in France and by his acceptance as a member of the elite in Egypt, Süleyman Sève was able to maintain a double or maybe even multiple identity during his lifetime in Egypt, being considered Ottoman-Egyptian, Muslim and French simultaneously. He saw no need to hide but instead flaunted it in his coat of arms displayed in the *selamlık* of his Cairo palace. The coat of arms bore several devices: on top, a windmill refers to his childhood spent with a kinsman who owned a mill, and an anchor crossed by two cannons indicates his service in the French fleet; an imperial eagle in the center represents his military service under Napoleon; at the bottom is the badge of a *paşa* (a crescent and three stars), the emblem of the general staff (a compass, a protractor, and two swords), and the insignia of the French *Légion d'honneur*. The whole is surmounted by a mamluk helmet, and the cross of the *Légion d'honneur* is suspended below (Guémard 75–77).

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# **Pirate Science, Coastal Knowledge: Chorographies of the American Isthmus in the Late Seventeenth Century<sup>1</sup>**

ALEXANDRA GANSER

## **Introduction**

In the late seventeenth century, the American isthmus – its Caribbean as well as Pacific coasts – could be characterized as colonial, transatlantic contact zones in Mary Louise Pratt’s understanding of the term as “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination” (7). Indigenous populations, Spanish colonizers, and their Creole descendants, enslaved and free or runaway African(-Americans), ‘mestizo/as’, ‘mulatto/as’, Protestant adventurers (mainly from France, the Netherlands, England, and Scotland), traders, and missionaries created a dynamic space of commercial and cultural interaction, a frontier of rising colonialisms. For England, the significance of the West Indies in this period is evidenced by the abundance of travel and exploration narratives about the area. Travel and migration created the Caribbean as a zone of cultural contact, a “first American frontier” (Mackie 125). The publication of a large number of accounts written by Anglophone, Dutch, and French participants in plundering expeditions against the Spaniards on the American isthmus and further along the Caribbean and Pacific coasts, which were not or only partly officially backed by a European crown (and thus were legally piratical in nature), articulates epistemological insecurities triggered by cultural contact experiences.

The fact that *de facto* piracy (if often, and often barely, disguised) was an important theme in the literature of this period, with the pirate representing the ultimate criminal, the “Enemy of All” (Heller-Roazen), on the one hand, and a heroic model for a risk-taking, masculine, upwardly mobile colonial subjectivity on the other, is emblematic of the precariousness and criticality of colonial legitimacy: in these narratives, the colonial agent is articulated as a figure of contact and coastality, in limbo between the performance of legitimacy and *de facto* illegitimacy, between Europe and America, wilderness and civilization, ethnic and

1 I thank Gesa Mackenthun for her editorial comments and advice.

national allegiances. As I have argued elsewhere, the figure of the pirate can be characterized as a *coastal* figuration, a hybrid and fluid sign of agency; because of its liminal and paradoxical qualities, it carried the potential of both questioning and affirming a fledgling, yet highly parlous colonial order (see Ganser, “Coastal Figuration”). The metaphor of the coast, spatially structured by acts of departure and arrival and by cultural encounter, refers to the point where semiotic systems become unstable and difference is negotiated anew, given that territorial orders are in suspension. While the project of European empire building in the Americas in its various national versions attempted to transfer territorial legal and political orders to and beyond the Atlantic ocean, the coastal figure of the pirate embodied not the vanguard, as Carl Schmitt famously argued in 1942 (*Land und Meer*), but the tensions and fault lines of this project: adrift in the mobile contact zone of the Caribbean and Pacific Seas, on their islands and coasts, where maritime fluidity and territorial mappability meet, the coastal sign of the pirate emerges as a textual figure whose illegitimacy called into question dominant colonial practices as well as the scientific epistemology of a coloniality based on concepts of legitimacy, right and reason, truth and authenticity, and increasingly, scientific authority.

Pirates, defined *ex negativo* via a lack of any national backing and thus by an implicit political heterogeneity, have always represented a threat to political and economic categorization. They were described in contemporaneous accounts as unfathomable and unreliable, monstrous, uncivilized, ‘barbarous’, cruel, prone to gluttony and squander, idle, and resistant to notions of industry and labor, endangering the consolidation of empire, particularly in times of peace when they could no longer be validly contained as privateers and disrupted international agreements with their ongoing raiding activities (see Exquemelin’s descriptions of the most famous pirates in the seventeenth century in the second half of his landmark *De Americaensche Zee-Roovers*, 1678). Economically, they represented a non-accumulative ethics that was at odds with the principles of mercantilism and proto-capitalism. Hostile to labor, frugality, and rational economic behavior – instead, the buccaneer-pirate was represented as similar to profligate “Indians,” savage cannibals, and uncontrollable maroons. The American buccaneer-pirate highlighted both the political and economic contest over the possession of the Americas and the political as well as cultural uncontrollability of its agents.

The most famous and widely circulated pirate narratives of this period bring to the fore the increasing need to discursively control this fluidity and to symbolically incorporate the transgressive figuration of the buccaneer-pirate into the imperial project. Starting with Alexander Olivier Exquemelin’s *Rovers* (Engl. *The Bucaniers of America*, 1684), texts published during the two decades that followed, such as Lionel Wafer’s *A New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America* (1699), and the more famous *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697) by William Dampier, with their detailed portrayals of environments and inhabitants, coastlines, and seafaring conditions, also voiced the complexity of cultural contact and *translatio imperii et studii* (the transfer of empire and learning).



Within the period between Exquemelin and Wafer, the pirate narrative increasingly turned to early modern natural science and thus came to serve a major function in epistemological empire building, contributing to what has been called the “second conquest” of the Americas (Bauer 3).

The works under consideration here are marked by what French historian Paul Hazard called *La Crise de la conscience européenne* (1935, engl. *The European Mind (1680–1715)*, 1953; see Ouellet 56). In this seminal study in cultural history, Hazard diagnoses an intellectual and moral crisis (xx) in a period of “revolution” (xv) between 1680 and 1715, in which various forms of “heresy” (xvii) articulated all the main ideas that would set the scene for the French Revolution. The moral crisis, in other words, consisted of the emergence of discourses of reason and right that would eventually replace those of religion and fate as the leading hermeneutic paradigms of European (especially French, English, and Dutch) worldviews. It is no coincidence that these countries were also the maritime powers dominating the Caribbean at the time; in the same vein, it is noteworthy that Hazard starts his account by discussing the growing taste for travel and travel literature – he explicitly mentions English Barbary captivity narratives and Dampier’s travel books – as the seed of the new order in the early 1700s. It brought forth a shift from stability to movement, which correlates with a change from the ‘classical’ to the ‘modern’ mind, and with the influx of new ideas, “[t]he exploration of the globe having resulted in discoveries that have destroyed many of the *data* on which ancient philosophy reposed, a new conception of things will inevitably be called for” (8). As perspectives changed with travel, so relativity was introduced as one of the “lessons derived from the idea of space” (11). In this “sea-change” (10),

[...] all the fundamental concepts, such as Property, Freedom, Justice and so on, were brought under discussion again as a result of the conditions in which they were seen to operate in far-off countries, in the first place because, instead of all differences being referred to one universal archetype, the emphasis was now on the particular, the irreducible, the individual; in the second, because notions hitherto taken for granted could now be checked in the light of facts ascertained by actual experience. (10)

An obsession with fact and experience, garnished with doubt (as the beginning of science) and evaluations of probability, resulted in a new, Lockean empiricism that historians of science such as Barbara Shapiro and philosophers such as Edmund Husserl have seen as a response, even outcome, of this crisis, even though few have emphasized the role of imperial travel as much as Hazard. Both Shapiro and Hazard draw a parallel between this epistemological crisis, with its scientific consequences, and the increasing predilection for a plain, prose style in the literary market (see Shapiro 240–41). Poetry for instance, was no longer considered to be the appropriate genre for historiography; metaphor was out of

vogue, while factual, experiential, and testimonial discourses were the reaction to doubt and skepticism, promising the highest possible point of certainty in the realm of science.<sup>2</sup> Simplicity and clarity were associated with truth (247), and new literary forms such as the travel account “readily adopted the impartial presentation of matters of fact as their standard” (261): in this way, England developed *A Culture of Fact* (Shapiro) which is transatlantically framed and entangled with England’s imperial projects in the Caribbean to a much greater extent than Shapiro’s work suggests.

In the same period, the transatlantic pirate narrative undergoes a similar discursive transformation – from the presentation of spectacular buccaneers in Exquemelin, mentioned by Hazard as counterdiscursive, antirational, and speaking to the readers’ appetites for pleasure and fancy (361–64), to the scientific, reasonable pirate-privateer whose works are published under the aegis of the Royal Society (such as William Dampier’s). This is a gradual change, as pirate narratives continued in their attempts to straddle the tension of their age between truth and pleasure, scientific and literary values (see Shapiro 250). The genre of chorography, in which these texts can be located, offered a model that combined spectacular (travel) narrative and scientific observation, natural and human history, geography and ethnography.<sup>3</sup> Located primarily in the coastal zones of the American isthmus, the pirate chorography is thus conditioned by a critical moment in the coloniality of English and European knowledge-formation that the genre sought to resolve.

## Coastal Voices

Narrative articulations of Atlantic piracy before 1700 share a characteristic polyphony and inner narrative tension as they negotiate various forms of epistemological crisis: a crisis of religious and moral authority,<sup>4</sup> of political legitimacy, and/or of hermeneutic understanding and ordering. The method of contrapuntal reading, proposed by Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), concentrates on the voices hidden and suppressed by the main narrative. In the context of my essay, the consolidation of crisis for the sake of an optimistic portrayal of colonialism, and similar methods of critical reading have been proposed by scholars like Peter Hulme (*Colonial Encounters*). Said’s analyses mostly refer to the canonical prose writing of the British empire in its heyday in the nineteenth cen-

2 See Shapiro 29. Absolute certainty was only possible in “God’s knowledge,” and “compelled assent,” the second best, was a prerogative of logic and mathematics only.

3 Shapiro references Dampier in her discussion of this genre: 301 n41.

4 See also the New England anti-piracy sermon in the early 1700s in this context (Ganser, “Enchantments”).

ture, a fact that has often been criticized as Occidental (see Clark 6).<sup>5</sup> If his method is applied to late seventeenth-century literature, the “empire” is of course a fundamentally different one than that of the nineteenth century, and thus also affects writing in a different way: seventeenth-century European imperialism is in the very process of constructing and legitimizing its own identity vis-à-vis the Spanish predecessor via an articulation of difference. Protestant England was to emerge as a benevolent alternative to Catholic Spain and her genocidal activities with respect to the autochthonous populations in the Americas, made popular through the Black Legend, *la leyenda negra*.<sup>6</sup> Emphasizing difference between the Spanish and the English had been a discursive practice since the reign of Elizabeth I and continued in the representation of cultural contact with non-Western populations in piratical chorographies. The literature of piracy, with its promise of economic dividends in the form of profitable sales, the mapping of certain American landscapes as Edenic, and an emphasis on ‘prizes’ of gold and silver, participated in the best-selling genre of travel writing and chorography.<sup>7</sup> The textual dissemination of the *leyenda negra*, rendering the Spanish nation the stereotypical embodiment of repression, degradation, brutality, religious and political intolerance, and intellectual and scientific backwardness (see Powell), was a strategy to authorize and spur patriotic support of the English colonial project, which also motivated piratical ventures. In early English travel writing, the defeat of the Spaniards promised a “commonwealth” of harmonious relations and prosperity (see Motohashi 94).

A contrapuntal reading of late seventeenth-century accounts of piratical ventures, therefore, needs to take heed of the fact that the imperial subjects represented by their authors and narrators were themselves fragmented and fluid border crossers on the margins of an empire in the making, of empires in transition. In the process of discursively solidifying colonial subjectivities, these publications strive to create and authenticate indigenous voices as pro-English, while the presence of African Americans in these texts hints at the traces of colonial vio-

5 Further points of criticism relate to the term contrapuntal itself, derived from Western classical music; to Said’s under-theorization of the process and method of contrapuntal reading; and to his arguably naïve idea of oppositional acts (see Kennedy 107, 110; also Mackenthun). I retain the concept despite its problems because it enables readings of uncanonized texts whose polyphonic qualities have hardly been addressed, much less understood, so far.

6 The Black Legend refers to historical writing that demonizes and thus disqualifies the Spanish Empire in its colonial authority and legitimacy; the term was coined by Julián Juderías in his 1914 book *La leyenda negra y la verdad histórica*. It dramatizes Spanish cruelties during the Inquisition, but especially toward the natives of America (based on the reports of Bartolomé de Las Casas and others), and was used in England to justify its attacks on the Spanish Empire. Its reception in England has been an object of debate, however. See Maltby, and part IV of Greer, Mignolo, and Quilligan.

7 The early modern genre of chorography has been discussed by Barbara Shapiro as a combination of scientific writing and social history. In the narratives discussed here, this equals the interweaving of natural and moral history and the historiography of the expedition.

lence in the form of Atlantic slavery.<sup>8</sup> The texts themselves are permeated by narrative voices full of doubt about and mistrust of their American environments (both natural and cultural), voices unsteady and unreliable in their alliances (e.g., with indigenous and Spanish populations; with the English imperial design, and a proto-Creole alternative). Multiple voices disappear behind chorographic description and reemerge as disturbances in a linear patriotic narration. The multiplicity of these often contradictory voices, and of silences, renders the text liminal, or rather ‘coastal’, in a metaphorical sense, for its characteristics are polyphony, transgressivity, instability, and fluidity. From a contrapuntal perspective that reads colonial texts against the grain and focuses on where such texts begin to stutter, pirate narratives both hide and reveal the fragility of colonial economies, symbolical and political.

The figure of the buccaneer is coastal in these narratives not only or predominantly in terms of its localization, but also in terms of cultural contact, as it articulates a coloniality beyond essential ethnic or national identities, a continuum between “savage” autochthonous populations, Spanish colonizers, and Protestant settlers through the emphatic representation of acts of violence among all of these actors:<sup>9</sup> in this scenario, the pirates are the quintessential embodiment of the contact zone rather than an anomaly (see Frohock, “Exquemelin’s *Buccaneers*” 66). Exquemelin’s model text, for example, relativizes the construction of the pirate as Other, contesting the dominant construction of a binary opposition between legitimate and illegitimate Caribbean agents, and instead constructs the Americas as a colonial arena of violence. The violent colonial continuum is extended beyond the Caribbean coast toward the Pacific via the isthmus, but it also reaches back to Europe and Africa in the triangular relations represented in the pirate book. In this way, the narratives propose that the Caribbean, as a space of all kinds of imperial struggles, turns everyone into a ‘savage’. Such colonial contact zone literature is unable to discursively control or credibly pin down coastal subjects, chaotic American identities-in-transculturation.

8 Of course, the African American presence in colonial texts cannot simply be reduced to representations of slavery. In the accounts discussed here, African Americans are usually enslaved, but their agency is visible in the numerous reports of black mutiny, escape, and *cimarronaje* (marooning). On the role of African American seamen in the Atlantic arena, see Bolster, and in particular, Julius Scott, “Common Wind,” to which Bolster is indebted.

9 The pirate narratives also negotiate social mobility, highlighting the coastality of class difference: reaching the Caribbean coast entails the opening-up of a rigid European social system governed by birth and inheritance and the beginning of the myth of American freedom. On the emergence of class consciousness among maritime populations, see Hill; Rediker; Linebaugh/Rediker.

## The Sharp Expedition Published: Pirate ‘Scientists’, Native Informants

By the mid-1680s, Exquemelin’s chorographic book had achieved “the acceleration of a public dialogue about buccaneers and others who fabricated discourse to conceal imperial plundering” (Frohock, “Exquemelin’s *Buccaneers*” 69). The pirate could not officially be hailed as a patriotic hero, especially not in times of peace with Spain. Authorial and editorial attempts to dissociate the text from the activities of the outlaw-pirate were thus necessary in order not to endanger the writer’s legal position and undermine narrative authority (which a pirate was certainly not granted), but also to make former pirates acceptable as national *Heroes of Empire* (Frohock; see also his “Exquemelin’s *Buccaneers*” 58). Hence, the narrators, though part of the piratical crews themselves (for example, as ship surgeons), frequently obliterate or downplay their presence and role in plundering and other violent events, often creating the impression of being passive and objective observers, concomitant with the seventeenth-century ‘invention’ of the concepts of truth, objectivity, and rationality (see Shapiro, *Probability*). In a number of Anglophone pirate narratives published in the wake of Exquemelin’s success, the narrative voices representing Protestant pirates in the Caribbean are stabilized and consolidated as the pirate disappears and is replaced by the term ‘privateer’ as a strategy of legitimization. These texts stopped using the word ‘pirate’ so that they could dedicate their writings to officials in England, publish their accounts as part of collections of travel writing or under the auspices of the Royal Society, and present their actions as an increasingly benign Protestant reconquest of Spanish territory in the Caribbean and along the coasts of mid- and northern South America in the service of English imperialism. Former pirates like Henry Morgan contested representations of themselves as brutal criminals, also justifying themselves as important agents in the context of a symbolic empire building that rested on gaining the authority of knowledge over the Americas. As Sarah Irving has argued in the context of the epistemological shift (proclaimed by Foucault) from allegorical, ‘pre-modern,’ to taxonomic, modern science, “America was *conceptually* significant, as it gave shape to a tradition of empire as dominion over knowledge” (28).<sup>10</sup>

In the 1680s and 1690s, a pentology of pirate narratives was published in the context of Captain Bartholomew Sharp’s plundering expeditions from the Caribbean to the “South Sea,”<sup>11</sup> the most successful written by William Dampier. In chronologic progression, they develop into travel narratives that increasingly hide their piratical context, as their titles demonstrate: Basil Ringrose’s *The Voy-*

10 In this context, Bauer emphasizes the diverging histories of Europe and colonial America in the development of their literatures as “uneven and co-dependent literary evolutions” (11). Both Irving and Bauer position their work in an Atlantic framework.

11 For a historical overview of the beginnings, course, major events, and conclusion of the Sharp expedition, see Joyce.

*ages and Adventures of Capt. Barth. Sharp and Others, in the South Sea: Being a Journal of the Same* (1684)<sup>12</sup> and *The Dangerous Voyage and Bold Attempts of Captain Bartholomew Sharp* (1685), published as the second volume of Crooke's 1684 English edition of Exquemelin's *Bucaniers of America*; Dampier's *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), Wafer's *A New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America* (1699), and *Captain Sharp's Journal of His Expedition; Written by Himself* of the same year. In England, the seventeenth century "saw an ever more successful attempt to bring the pirate into the fold of [...] imperial aspirations" along with the textual strategies representing him (Sherman 28); Crooke's English 1684 edition of Exquemelin, now dedicated to the rehabilitated Henry Morgan, had prepared the ground for this development (28). Yet while Exquemelin's transnational narrative voices ambivalence and ambiguity in terms of the narrator's positioning and the articulation of the Caribbean buccaneer-pirate, the patriotic historical contexts of English adventurers such as Ringrose, Dampier, and Wafer, reminiscent of the tradition of semi-legal piracy since the reign of Elizabeth I, largely obliterate cruelty and exploitation, whitewashing their expeditions into heroic acts of patriotism and exploration by attempting to consolidate the crisis of authority and knowing (see Joyce xxviii). Accordingly, the use of the word 'pirate' and 'buccaneer' steadily decreases in these books, and the plundering recedes "behind increasingly inflated characterizations of the conqueror's generosity and benevolent intent" (Frohock, *Heroes* 25).

The context for these narratives is fundamentally that of British empire building and the tradition of privateering. After the successful destruction of Spanish hegemony in the Caribbean under Queen Elizabeth I – achieved by the destruction of the Spanish Armada under the leadership of Drake in 1588 – English plans to increase its powers in the Americas were not always successful in the course of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Oliver Cromwell's "Western Design" (1654) had been another epochal moment in English expansion, "the imperial moment of the English republic" (Armitage qtd. in Latimer 118) as it abandoned the more peaceful approach of the Stuarts.<sup>13</sup> Yet as a campaign, despite the seizure of Jamaica, the Western Design was by no means a success (118; see also Frohock, *Heroes* 29–35). In the wake of such failed endeavors during the Restoration, England increasingly called upon its tradition of 'gentlemen pirates' à la Sir Francis Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh in order to weaken the Spanish trading monopoly, but her privateers frequently turned into true pirates, going 'on the account' without valid letters of marque or operating in times of official peace with Spain, France, and Holland, when the English crown all but backed piracy.

12 The earlier text was published by Philip Ayres, together with four additional travel and adventure narratives. Ringrose's account is presented as an anonymous journal "writ by a Seaman," "the first that came to my [i.e., Ayres'] Hands" (n.p./A3). On Ringrose's authorship, see Joyce xxviii.

13 Armitage, in Latimer's words, "also highlighted the eschatological motivations for conquest of Spain's American empire: a belief among Puritans in England and New England that the downfall of Spain would hasten the millennium" (118).

These pirate-privateers collaborated with various European settlers, with the buccaneer-pirates on Hispaniola, Tortuga, and other fringe zones, with indigenous groups, and with Maroons/*cimarrones*, as witness Francis Drake with the Maroon Diego (see Castillo 31–43, Campbell 32–33).

‘Pirates’ and other masterless men were both essential to and a nuisance for the expanding empire; with respect to their cultural meaning, they could be narrativized as vehicles for Protestant providentialism and superiority, but they also introduced a textual energy of resistance. The accounts by late seventeenth-century English adventurers proudly espouse the collaboration of the pirate-plunderers with figures of alterity and (potential) resistance, such as autochthonous populations in the Darién like the Kuna and Miskite, who had been known for their successful opposition against a supposedly shared Spanish enemy.<sup>14</sup> As a major theme related with great self-confidence, the representation of such collaborations as mutually beneficent propagated the idea of a Protestant mission in the New World that legitimized English (and French) imperial ventures by constructing a universal rationale of Protestant superiority. Here, piratical action is for the greater good of empire building: the pirates become privateers not because they really possessed commissions (or any other form of official support) for their raids, but through the representation of their ventures as patriotic derring-do.

In Ringrose, for example, the buccaneers not only become part of the indigenous struggle against Spanish rule (and vice versa), the Spanish colonizers/settlers are also presented as readily acknowledging English superiority (22, 32): English/Protestant imperialism is represented as a project for the benefit of the greater good in the Americas, another “Western Design” to replace the earlier, Spanish enterprise. Two Spaniards, Exquemelin had similarly reported, convinced they had changed to the right side, were shot dead for supporting English pirates and taking up arms against their King (125). Dampier, in his account of the first crossing of the isthmus into the South Seas (the “New Voyage”) asserts that the Miskite “acknowledge the King of England as their Sovereign” and “take the Governor of Jamaica to be one of the greatest Princes in the World” (11). The Kuna, likewise, are portrayed as eagerly inviting his company as allies against the Spanish:

[T]he Indians of Darien [...] were a little before this become our Friends, and had lately fallen out with the Spaniards [...] and upon calling to mind the frequent Invitations we had from these Indians [...] to pass through their Country, and fall upon the Spaniards in the South Seas, we from henceforward began to entertain such thoughts in earnest, and soon came to a Resolution to make those Attempts which we afterwards did. (180–81)

14 For a brief overview of the history of buccaneering in the Darién region, see, e.g., Muth; for a brilliant critical anthropological study of the relations between European colonialisms and the Darién Kuna, see Taussig.

As Ringrose reports, a mixed buccaneer-Kuna troop sought revenge for the alleged rape and impregnation of their leader's (called the "King of Darien" in Ringrose 12, and "Emperor" in Sharp, e.g., 2–4, and Ayres) oldest daughter by a Spaniard. The buccaneer-pirates' heroism takes on almost romantic proportions as dutiful and just avengers of the maltreated Indians. Ringrose's journal urges sympathy for the "miserable Natives [...] kept in great subjection":

[they] do not generate as formerly, though they are a stout people, and have amongst them good comely Women: the reason of it, as we conjecture, is, the depressure of their Spirits, by the tyranny of the Spaniards [...]; the means of Propagation not taking its natural effect upon people so absolutely dejected with oppression, as they most certainly are. (Ayres 69)

But while Dampier constructs a commonwealth in which "Indians" participate, acknowledging Charles II as their sovereign, the titles of "King" and "Emperor" in Ringrose and Sharp suggest otherwise;<sup>15</sup> Ringrose's first account even turns around the power relations in his preface, claiming that Sharp's exploits were made "in service of the Emperour of Darien" (n.p./A2).<sup>16</sup>

Perhaps the best known and significant document in the context of "scientific" piracy, Dampier's *New Voyage Round the World*, is emblematic for the domestication of the buccaneer. "The most celebrated seaman between Drake and Cook" (Sherman 29), Dampier, born into a farming family, became a 'New World Upstart,' helped manage a plantation in Jamaica, worked with log cutters in Campeche, Mexico, plundered as a buccaneer, and, after his return to England in 1691, published the *New Voyage*, whose "clear prose and keen ethnographic eye placed [Dampier] squarely among those Restoration scientists who valued direct experience [...]" (Sherman 29).<sup>17</sup> Dampier dedicated his book to the Royal Society's 1695–98 president, Charles Montagu, Earl of Halifax, emphasizing his own "hearty Zeal for the promoting of useful knowledge, and of any thing that may never so remotely tend to my Countries advantage" (n.p./A3). In his dedication, which today reads like a job application, Dampier expresses his hope that he

15 Ringrose includes a paragraph in which he suggests that the King of Darién is "the true Lord of Panama and all the Country thereabouts," and the "Indians" are "the true and natural Lords of the Country" (37), whose reign needs to be restored against the Spanish usurpers.

16 This claim is based on the journal Ayres published, which is perhaps the most humorous and least polished and scientific text of the pentalogy; it does not mask the prime incentive for Sharp's expedition: "That which often Spurs men on to the undertaking of the most difficult Adventures, is the sacred hunger of Gold; and 'twas Gold was the bait that tempted a Pack of merry Boys of us, [...] being all Souldiers of Fortune [...] to list our selves in the Service of one of the Rich West Indian Monarchs, the Emperour of Darien" (1–2). Throughout this text, it is the Darién "Emperour" who commands the troop (e.g., 74). Sharp himself, in contrast, implies that his expedition's only motivation is the discovery of the South Seas (4); the other accounts name justice (against Spanish abuse) and patriotism as their primary inspiration.

17 For detailed biographies of Dampier, see, e.g., Bonner and Preston.





Figure 1: *Dampier's Map of the Darien Isthmus*; published in his *New Voyage Round the World*, 1697. (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

will be judged “capable of serving his Country, either immediately, or by serving you” (n.p./A3); he includes drawings of maps (Figure 1) and lengthy nautical and hydrographical descriptions in subsequent editions of his *Voyage*, all of which eventually rewarded him with the command of a South Sea expedition and selection by Woodes Rogers as navigator for his circumnavigation under Queen Anne.

Dampier had fought with the Royal Navy in 1673, but after a battle wound and further turbulences joined the buccaneer Captain Sharp in 1679. The discourse of his narrative is the most scientific of the texts considered, thereby also evading the sign of piracy: “As for the Actions of the Company, among whom I made the greatest part of this Voyage, a Thread of which I have carried on thro’ it, ‘tis not to divert the Reader with them that I mention them, much less that I take any pleasure in relating them” (n.p./A4). The pirates are reduced to a “Company” here, and sensationalist appetites of spectacular battles and tortures are quenched in favor of scientific description; this metatext clearly positions the intended audience as interested in science, not sensation. (Still, the book became highly popular, as Willard Bonner has shown, and made Dampier famous; see 34–36). In such a manner, Dampier also adds that this shift of focus, however, “would not prejudice the Truth and Sincerity of my Relation, tho’ by Omissions only” (Dampier n.p./A4). Thus, Dampier “fashions himself as the scientific imperial protagonist,” dissociating himself from the buccaneers, presenting himself as

a man of letters, distinguishing between “Actions” (perpetrated by his traveling companions), and limiting his own role to the task of “Chorographical Description” (n.p./A4): Dampier says that he reluctantly writes about piratical adventure and assures his readers in his Preface that pleasure (his own or the reader’s) is not at issue here, distancing himself from the scandalous taste for pirate stories of his day.

Numerous revisions and editions have more and more turned the text in this direction of science writing (Frohock, *Heroes* 93–94, see also Lane, n.p.). Dampier’s (and the entire Sharp pentalogy’s) various efforts at silencing criminal agency (the prime context of the narrative) are highly problematic, e.g. considering the fact that this editorial policy leads to the concealment of the rape of a multitude of enslaved African women on a Danish slaver they had taken as a prize and renamed *Batchelor’s Delight* (sic; see Lane, n.p.). Scholarship has tended to ignore Dampier’s involvement in the slave trade, or, for that matter, the fate of the “painted Indian” he brought to England and planned to display for profit (see Munter/Grose 423). Instead, as Dampier became famous overnight after the publication of *Voyage*, and was lionized by Samuel Pepys and Sir Hans Sloane, he is remembered today as a national hero; his portrait is part of the National Portrait Gallery holdings (Figure 2), and his “discoveries” have remained part of national lore: “From the start Dampier was known, not as just another Esquemeling [sic] [...] but as a man of dependable knowledge gained from varied experience” (Bonner 32).

Despite these imperial efforts, even these texts cannot entirely subjugate the dissonant voices of piracy as a coastal phenomenon of the Caribbean contact zone. Read contrapuntally, such efforts at consolidation of a coastal figuration are always already haunted by the voices they try to suppress; the ghost of the Other, *pace* Derrida, can be found as traces in the text if we read it against the grain. The pirates’ discordant voices do not disappear. Dampier’s silences are ruptured because he needs context and circumstance to authenticate his narrative; the coastal sign of the pirate troubles the slick account of the *Voyage*. Especially in the first edition, similar to Ringrose and Wafer, the sheer amount of African and indigenous exploitation (e.g., 2), references to blank or fraudulent Commissions (e.g., 39, 45, 68, 192), and the suspicion that autochthonous groups had interests different from the buccaneers’ (arising in the context of the narrator’s obligation to explain either their collaboration or hostility, e.g., 11, 13) evoke epistemological insecurity, a consciousness of difference, and a crisis of trust and comprehensibility. Dampier and his peers present a mixture of science and colonial propaganda – and with it, vexing the main discourse, colonial horror and aversion. Fear of rain, of mutinous slaves, of starvation; the feeling of being “at a loss” (e.g., 13, 163, 252, 309); reports of drowning, hanging, mutiny, and abandonment pervade the text.

An ethnographic anecdote from Lionel Wafer’s *New Voyage* highlights the limits to the ethnographic/scientific curiosity that increasingly shaped the pirate

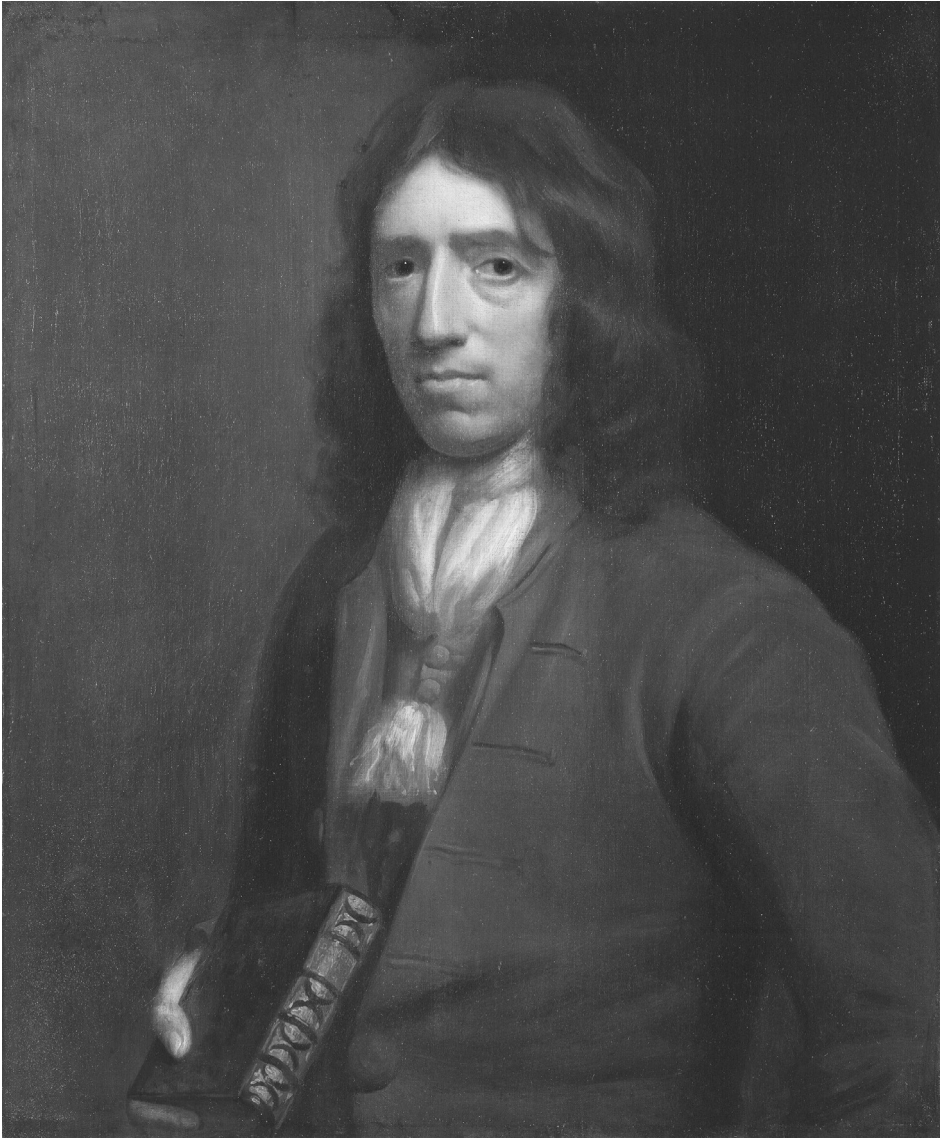


Fig. 2: *William Dampier*, by *Thomas Murray*, *Oil on Canvas*, circa 1697/98. (Courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery London)

literature discourse about cultural contact on the Caribbean coast and the American isthmus, with its “legendary aura as flowing with gold and silver” (Latimer 210). While “Indians” in Exquemelin are represented in many subject positions – savages, Spanish collaborators, friends, allies, useful workers, informants, and “authenticators” for the buccaneers, autochthonous culture is described by Wafer in extenso in a discourse of “scientific exoticism” (Barnes/Mitchell). Prominently placed in the middle of his narrative, Wafer describes the phenomenon of the high number of albinos among the Kuna:

There is one Complexion so singular, among a sort of People of this Country, that I never saw nor heard of any like them in any part of the World. The Account will seem strange, but any Privateers who have gone over the Isthmus must have seen them, and can attest the main of what I am going to relate; tho' few have had the opportunity of so particular an Information about these People as I have had. (134)

Apart from its symbolic act of legitimization (using the designation of “privateers” and thus legalizing their actions post festum so as to produce a favorable public opinion), the quote shows how ethnographic description at the end of the seventeenth century had to bridge discourses of sensational discovery – most attractive for a metropolitan readership – and scientific credibility. There was a paradox between a desire for auctorial self-marketing as rare eyewitnesses of often spectacular events and facts (like the ‘white men’ among the Kuna), and the necessity of supplying supporting testimonials in order not to be discredited as delirious or fantastical. As Steve Clark points out:

The travel narrative is addressed to the home culture; by its very nature, however, that to which it refers cannot be verified, hence the ready and habitual equation of traveller and liar. This in turn requires the production of counterbalancing stratagems of sensory corroboration and complex decorums of witnessing, whose innovative plain style prefigures and is assimilated into the early novel. (1)

Readers were indeed inclined to discount those travel narratives that reported exotic or spectacular matters (see Frohock, “*Buccaneers*” 59), a fact that travel writers had to counter. Among the narrative strategies developed in this context, Clark mentions hyper-empiricism, the illusion of an experiential present, and gestures of trustworthiness (2); the authority of experience is often present in exaggerated ways. Consider, for instance, Exquemelin’s report on the caiman: “[...] this I have seen for myself. I shall set down a few more of the observations I have made on the cayman, for I doubt if any of the authors who have written of these reptiles have ever had such experience of them as I have” (45); a few lines later, he repeats “[t]his I have seen myself” (46); again, on the very next page, the narrator proclaims that “[a] hunter was once the cause of my seeing something so amazing I’d have been unable to believe it if anyone else had told me the tale” (47). Invoking the authority of eyewitness presence and experience is, however, only one strategy of creating credibility.

In the context of the need for supporting testimonials, native inhabitants had already been utilized by Exquemelin because they were often the only available witnesses or authorities. In the case of Wafer’s account of the period he spent as the only European among the Kuna (who helped him cure his battle wounds and allowed him into their society), this is even more pertinent, as he is the sole

white person to “give an account.”<sup>18</sup> Such native groups are of course constructed discursively as noble rather than as ignoble savages: the Kuna are emphatically nobilized (they have “Emperors,” “Kings,” and “Princes”) so as to enhance their credibility as the narrator’s principal witnesses. Authorial credibility was thus dependent on a representation of indigenous people that was strategic rather than scientifically ‘objective’.

As we have seen, this strategy ultimately cannot contain dissonance or hermeneutic gaps. For an explanation of the albino phenomenon, for instance, Wafer inserts the voice of the Kuna Lacenta, one of his native informants, in reported speech: children who were born white came to be so “through the force of the Mother’s Imagination, looking on the Moon at the time of Conception” (*Voyage* 138). Wafer offers no further commentary, neither affirming nor deriding this explanation, but instead explicitly asking the reader to decide. The representation and translation of cultural difference is halted by the coastality of knowledge – indigenous belief systems and a European science mediated by an in-between agent struggling for a narrative authority he does not have in this scenario. In such coastal moments of cultural contact, neither here nor there, Eurocentric scientific categorization is necessarily suspended, as the narrative is entirely dependent on his Kuna informant, whose account is beyond the control of authorial calculations.

Such native knowledge constituted the actual basis for the mapping and categorizing of the Americas, its populations and environments, all in the service of imperial/colonial interests. In a contrapuntal reading, both the incorporation of native voices like Lacenta’s and the suppression of cognitive dissonance can never be complete, never fully purge irreducible difference from the narrative. That being the case, ennobling the Kuna leaders through the use of Western titles of nobility is only a narrative crutch: the European narrator-protagonists cannot look inside the indigenous mind, can never ‘know’ whether the “information” was correct or whether their informant had some other motive, such as deceiving or mocking the European adventurer.<sup>19</sup> Compared to Exquemelin, the discourse of cultural contact is less violent in Wafer’s *New Voyage*, but rather full of speechlessness and awe, evoking Stephen Greenblatt’s overall argument in *Marvelous Possessions* of an ethical surplus in the reaction of wonder; after all, the colonizers’ speechlessness implies a linguistic disempowerment of those who believe themselves to be culturally superior, and an unsettling of mental categories of difference, at least for brief moments. This unsettling can be further explained by the fact that Wafer is the only one of these authors who actually ‘went native’ and lived with the Kuna: thus the narrative voice struggles with divided loyalties

18 Wafer’s going native is also mentioned by Dampier: “Mr. Wafer wore a Clout about him, and was painted like an *Indian*; and he was some time aboard before I knew him” (40).

19 On the topic of indigenous resistance through deception, tricksterism, and other tactics of creating unreliability, see, e.g., Vizenor, *Manifest Manners* 88–89.

and cultural affiliations.<sup>20</sup> Even more cultural hybridity was produced by the intermarriage of indigenous women with (esp. French) buccaneers (e.g., Exquemelin's report on how such men are buried in accordance with native customs, 224).

Moments of doubt are pivotal for a contrapuntal reading of colonial relations and cultural contact. According to Exquemelin, suspicion had been introduced into an allegedly harmonious society in the Americas by the Spaniards – his interpretation of the “Indians”’ distrust of strangers:

In my opinion, the reason why the Indians shun all contact with strangers is that when the Spaniards first came to this country they subjected the inhabitants to such cruelty they looked on the conquerors with terror. [...] After their experiences they dare trust no white men, looking on them all as Spaniards. Indeed they could not trust the other Indians even, for some tribes had taken sides with the Spanish, and cruelly tormented their fellow country-men. (214)

In all the narratives I have mentioned, doubt about the trustworthiness, predictability, and calculability of autochthonous subjects, and of secondhand information in general, plays an important role in moments of crisis – in the deliberation of further action, but also in narrating. The “Barbary ape” episode in Exquemelin is symptomatic here: a Spaniard, the author-narrator reports, had told him “of a sort of people who live in these mountains, of the same stature as the Indians, but with short curly hair and with long claws on their feet, like apes. Their skin resists arrows and all sharp instruments” (97); apparently, they captured Spanish women as slaves and had never been heard to speak. Exquemelin calls them “wild men” following several Spaniards who “assured [him] that these creatures are human, and that they have seen them frequently: I give it here for what it’s worth. Truly, God’s works are great, and these things may well be” (97). Perplexed, skeptical, and incredulous, the narrator returns to a mythic, religious worldview incompatible with his empiricism of knowable and believable facts.<sup>21</sup> The pirates themselves are also shown to play with the colonial crisis of epistemological reliability, for example, in their freewheeling use and barter of letters of marque and of national symbols such as flags, both of which they usually had a multiplicity in store. The repetitive performance of mock battles, acts of treachery and deception, and what I call national cross-dressing (the variable use of national flags to the pirates’ advantage) in Exquemelin and his successors, disturb

20 Notably, Wafer became an important informant in his own right after his rehabilitation (he spent months in the Jamestown, Virginia jail, awaiting trial as a pirate, charges of which he was eventually acquitted) and return to England. His ambivalent function in the planning of a Scottish plantation on the isthmus, and English anxieties about his role as an advisor for the Scots, is explored in detail in Joyce I-lxii. See also in this context, Wafer’s “Secret Report” to the Duke of Leeds.

21 See also Exquemelin’s refrain from authorial commentary after the recounting of a Spaniard’s story about an indigenous woman’s intercourse with a lion-like animal (111).

the signifier/signified connection, exposing its conventionality and thus upsetting categorizations on which economic and military relations in the Americas relied.

## Conclusion

Coastality is not only a metaphor. Coasts are also literal topics in the pirate books – they are described geographically and with respect to navigational practice, and images of coastlines drawn by their respective authors were used as instructive illustrations for future expeditions, regardless of whether these were official or piratical. Many of these coastlines (e.g., Dampier’s portrayal of the Darién isthmus) had never been described before in such detail and formed important additions to a colonial empire of knowledge. Such amateur maps and descriptions testify to a coastal contact with the unknown, which is thereby brought into the printed realm of imperial knowledge. Yet the question of reliability remained, as succeeding navigators were often confronted with contradictory or erroneous maps and instructions. Such and similar moments of doubt indicate the recurrent epistemological crisis at a time when traditional trust systems had come under fire by way of an “inflation of empirical knowledge, accelerated by mechanical reproduction through print” (Bauer 4). The turn to the eighteenth century also marked the turn from an earlier, naïve empiricism to an extreme skepticism (10, in reference to Michael McKeon) – hence, the great cultural investment in “modern” science as the building of an empire of truth, an “epistemic mercantilism” in Bauer’s phrasing (10):

The poetics of this mercantilist production of knowledge demanded a division of intellectual labor between imperial peripheries and centers, the effacement of colonial subjects, and the transparency of colonial texts as the providers of raw “facts.” [...] In theory, these imperial economies of knowledge production thus resembled the mercantilist economies of material production, based as they were on a regulated and protected balance of exchange [...]. In practice, however, these imperial epistemic economies [...] existed but as logocentric utopias that engendered their own modes of geo-political resistance and were frequently undermined by colonial subjects. (4)

Science, Richard Frohock and others have shown, was a new path for representing British engagement with the Americas, having considerable power in displacing, but in many ways also replicating, the image of the conqueror (*Heroes* 81–82). It is in this context that we have to view the argument that the buccaneers grew increasingly domesticated as scientific agents in the narratives succeeding Exquemelin’s (see Neill); the ethnographic, geographic, and nautical texts far outweigh violent episodes of combat, and the pirate becomes a scientist on an expedition out in ‘the field’: as Anna Neill states, “the increasingly direct inter-

est of the state in scientific discovery in the last third of the seventeenth century had the effect of bringing [the buccaneers] more closely into the fold of civilized statehood – either as objects of its disciplinary control, or [...] as reformed, re-civilized sovereign subjects and men of science” (166).

Still, the contrapuntal sign in the coastal figuration of piracy, entailing uncontrollability, (ab)errancy, and unreliability, returns even in the imperial travel narrative based on buccaneering expeditions (such as Captain Sharp’s) and can be seen as indicative of a proto-Creole discourse<sup>22</sup> that voiced resistance to metropolitan colonial epistemologies of order in response to the unequal power relations between New and Old World economies of knowledge. In this sense, the sign of the pirate also entailed a piracy of knowledge (see Bauer 160) – indeed, often the most valuable piratical booty were letters, notes, accounts, charts, maps, and oral information (171). However, this is a coastal form of knowledge, information in the process of becoming established knowledge, and it is called into question by the deconstructive energies of the proto-Creole piratical text, which unveils the very process of metropolitan claims to a legitimate monopoly over knowledge by the agents of the new sciences.

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22 See also Silvio Torres-Saillant’s *Intellectual History of the Caribbean*, in which he claims that creolization was fully engaged in Caribbean textualities as early as Francisco Balboa’s *Espejo de paciencia* in 1608, countering Simon Gikandi and supporting Kamau Brathwaite’s argument that the West Indies formed a “counter-renaissance” (149).



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**CROSS-CULTURAL AGENCY  
AND AMBIVALENT IDENTITY IN  
THE NINETEENTH CENTURY**



## **“The Greatest Genius that I Had Met in Europe”: The Strange Case of Joseph Jenkins**

ALASDAIR PETTINGER

### I

If there is a hero of William Wells Brown's travelogue *The American Fugitive in Europe* (1855), it would have to be the protean figure Joseph Jenkins, a fellow “coloured man” Brown encounters on numerous occasions in London in different guises, perhaps most significantly as a Shakespearean actor who impressed him in the title role in *Othello* at the Eagle Saloon, under the name of Prince Selim. When he finally obtains an introduction to Jenkins, after chancing upon him yet again, this time as a preacher, he learns that he came from a region “between Darfour and Abyssinia,” was seized by slave traders, taken to Cairo and eventually sold to an “English gentleman” who brought him home and put him in school. As for his current situation, Jenkins tells Brown:

‘I have been employed for some years in distributing hand-bills for a barber in Cheapside in the morning, go to Chelsea and sweep a crossing in the afternoon, and sing psalms and sell religious tracts in the evening. Sometimes I have an engagement to perform at some of the small theatres, as I had when you saw me at the Eagle. I preach for this little congregation over here, and charge them nothing; for I want that the poor should have the Gospel without money and without price. I have now given up distributing bills; I have settled my son in that office. My eldest daughter was married about three months ago; and I have presented her husband with the Chelsea crossing, as my daughter's wedding portion.’ ‘Can he make a living at it?’ I eagerly inquired. ‘O, yes! that crossing at Chelsea is worth thirty shillings a week, if it is well swept,’ said he. ‘But what do you do for a living for yourself?’ I asked. ‘I am the leader of a band,’ he continued; ‘and we play for balls and parties, and three times a week at the Holborn Casino.’

By this time we had reached a point where we had to part; and I left Joseph Jenkins, impressed with the idea that he was the greatest genius that I had met in Europe. (Brown, *Fugitive* 274–75)

## II

Willam Wells Brown has languished somewhat in the shadow of other authors of transatlantic slave narratives such as Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs, who have attracted a good deal more critical attention. His life, I think, has always been thought more interesting than his writing. And, for a long time, scholars who did recognize the merits of his two travelogues – *Three Years in Europe*, published in London in 1852, and *The American Fugitive*, which appeared in the United States three years later – have had little to say about Jenkins.<sup>1</sup> The first commentary to dwell on what it calls this “memorable and amusing” episode is Paul Jefferson’s introduction to his abridged edition of *American Fugitive*, which appeared in 1991, but only in order to suggest that Brown’s admiration for Jenkins’s education and self-reliance are symptoms of a social conservatism that “looks to individual transformations rather than institutional ones [for] social remedies” (13).

In the last decade or so, however, Jenkins seems to have emerged from the twilight. In three recent studies, he takes pride of place, appearing at the very beginning of extended discussions of race, performativity, and cultural displacement, although he is not the main subject of the texts in which they appear. Two of them are articles, devoted, respectively, to Brown’s play *The Escape* and to David Dorr’s *A Colored Man Travels the World*. The third is an introduction to a collection of essays entitled *Black Cultural Traffic: Crossroads in Global Performance and Popular Culture*.

In Malini Schueller’s essay on Dorr’s narrative, the closing sentence of the passage from Brown I quoted above – the one that declares Jenkins to be “the greatest genius that I had met in Europe” – provides one of the two epigraphs of the piece, which illustrate her opening premise: that “ideas of race as performance have been central to the thinking of and about African-Americans in antebellum America” (233).

The other two examples bear no epigraph and yet deploy Jenkins as if he were the subject of one. John Ernest bookends his discussion of Brown’s play with a reference to this “genius” whose remarkable talent allowed him to juggle so many different “social roles” to the extent that he “expos[ed] roles as roles,” and thereby challenged “the conventions of the cultural drama of race” (1119). Kennell Jackson’s introduction to *Black Cultural Traffic* similarly begins and ends with Jenkins, a figure who – usefully, vividly – “highlights three core issues” at the heart of the volume as a whole, namely that “black cultural traffic” is not new but in the 1850s was already an established practice, overdetermined by conflict-

1 Farrison’s 1969 biography of Brown makes only passing reference to Jenkins (though he does point out an important difference in the almost identical copy of this chapter that appears in Brown’s later *The Black Man*) (253, 371–2); the discussions of Brown’s travelogues by Andrews (171–2) and Stowe (67–72) make no mention of Jenkins.



ing expectations; that (public) “performance is a key element in such traffic,” and that this traffic is decidedly transnational (4).

A fourth essay – Stephen Knadler’s examination of African American accounts of the Great Exhibition of 1851 – assigns Jenkins a pivotal role in its argument, which treats the Crystal Palace less as an imperial collection of objects than a rhetorical space in which slaves and ex-slaves used their presence at the World’s Fair to contest prevailing norms of political and aesthetic representation. Drawing on texts by David Dorr, Josiah Henson, and William Wells Brown, which exemplify this strategy with increasing clarity, Knadler’s discussion works towards its climax:

We can see Brown’s attempt to exhibit this new aesthetic representative citizen most clearly in his lengthy depiction of the actor, preacher, musician, pamphlet distributor, entrepreneur, and confidence man Joseph Jenkins [...] With his appeal to his audience’s emotions and love for the aesthetic, the shape-shifting Jenkins converts more followers to an emergent alternative democratic world than many another more politically intentional orator in the abolitionist movement. (354–45)

In some ways these essays may themselves illustrate moves characteristic of the ‘performative turn’ taken by black history and the cultural study of race in the 1990s. Typically this involved not merely an increasing interest in music and theater (and the refinement of interpretive techniques required to understand them as live events rather than consumed texts); it was also often accompanied by the use of performance as a metaphor that contributed to a rethinking, a reconceptualization of subjectivity or identity. ‘Race’ would no longer be a singular, fixed essence, but rather a network of multiple, changing relationships, constantly reinvented.

Clearly such arguments would be served particularly well by studies that focused on individuals of mixed or indeterminate race (Jenkins is first described by Brown as being “neither black nor white”), and/or who moved between cultures (as did Jenkins, who traveled from Africa to Britain, and moved between a variety of occupations in London itself). Such individuals – at first seeming rather unusual, even exceptional – end up allegorizing a universal human condition. All our identities are fragmented, mobile, performed – the argument goes – even if we are not always conscious of it.

These critics’ attraction to Jenkins, then, seems clear. But what of Brown? The four examples I have chosen all assume that Brown admires Jenkins because he sees in him a reflection of himself, not least because of their similarly polymorphously perverse curriculum vitae. Ernest, Jackson, and Schueller make their admiration explicit; Knadler (from the way in which Jenkins is made to epitomize Brown’s own critique) signals his by implication. This is, I would argue, an inevitable side effect of the deployment of Jenkins in a general argument about ‘identity’: some people may serve as better examples than others, but in theory any-

one could substitute for anyone else. There is no motivation to analyze, let alone question, the relation *between* Brown and Jenkins if they are conceived monadologically.

In this paper I want to resist this temptation to fuse the protagonist and one of his more engaging minor characters and to consider more closely what role Jenkins plays in the overall rhetorical strategies of Brown's book. His travel narratives may have had their origin in letters, written over several years (many of them first published in abolitionist newspapers) and thus may seem more radically episodic than a through-written narrative, but they still have overarching themes and a persistent polemical purpose. In my reading of Brown's account of their meeting, I submit that the text offers not one, but two contrasting models of border-crossing reinvention. In doing so, I hope to shed some light on the tensions inherent in 'transculturation', the organizing concept of this volume.

### III

Brown spent five years in Europe (1849–54) and traveled in Britain, Ireland, and France partly as a conference delegate and public speaker, and partly as a tourist, visiting the Palace of Versailles, the Louvre, Westminster Abbey, Shakespeare's birthplace, Edinburgh Castle, and so on. In some respects his narratives resemble other travel books of visitors from the United States during the antebellum period, figuring the journey across the Atlantic as a transition from new to old, from republic to monarchy, from ex-colony to mother country. Indeed, as Gustavus Stadler has suggested (74), Brown owes a particular debt to the writings of Nathaniel Parker Willis, especially his European travelogue *Pencilings by the Way* (1835) and the fictionalized portraits drawn from his travels and collected in *People I Have Met* (1850), whose title Brown borrows for the subtitle of his 1852 narrative – a fact alluded to in a notice from the *Literary Gazette* appended to the 1855 edition (*Fugitive* 131). But in Brown's case, a new contrast takes precedence over the others: the contrast between oppression and freedom.

'Travel' (or perhaps more specifically the crossing of borders) figures in this distinction in more ways than one. Firstly, the journey across the Atlantic is a journey from oppression to freedom, marking a crucial stage in Brown's self-transformation from chattel to human being.

The prejudice which I have experienced on all and every occasion in the United States, and to some extent on board the *Canada*, vanished as soon as I set foot on the soil of Britain. In America I had been bought and sold as a slave, in the Southern States. In the so-called free States, I had been treated as one born to occupy an inferior position [...] But no sooner was I on British soil, than I was recognised as a man, and an equal. The very dogs in the streets appeared conscious of my manhood. Such is the difference, and such is the change that is brought about by

a trip of nine days in an Atlantic steamer [...] For the first time in my life, I can say 'I am truly free'. My old master may make his appearance here, with the Constitution of the United States in his pocket, the Fugitive Slave Law in one hand, and the chains in the other, and claim me as his property, but all will avail him nothing. I can stand here and look the tyrant in the face, and tell him that I am his equal! England is, indeed, the 'land of the free, and the home of the brave'. (*Three Years* 7–9)

But secondly, and more interestingly, 'travel' provides the terms by which 'oppression' and 'freedom' themselves are defined.

For Brown, his oppression in America is most readily symbolized not by the threat of kidnappers, or the laws preventing him from voting or holding public office, or the difficulty of getting a job or furthering his education, but by the restrictions on his movement in public places. In the passage just quoted, he conveys his "inferior position":

[...] in steamers, compelled to take my fare on the deck; in hotels, to take my meals in the kitchen; in coaches, to ride on the outside; in railways, to ride in the 'negro car;' and in churches, to sit in the 'negro pew'. (*Three Years* 7)

And writing of his return to Philadelphia at the end of *American Fugitive*, the single scene he chooses to encapsulate what he has come home to involves his first attempt to board an omnibus alongside two white men who had disembarked from the same steamer: "'We don't allow niggers to ride in here,'" he is told (312).

Conversely, his freedom in Europe is signified by his ability to go where he likes. He felt, he says, "at home wherever I went" (*Fugitive* 303), moving effortlessly from place to place, welcome everywhere, barred from nowhere. His narrative often pauses at those (many) points where he describes the democracy of public spaces, as if to emphasize the pleasure of the difference. He revels in the crowding and jostling on the streets of Dublin (*Three Years* 13–14). At a sidewalk cafe in Paris he drinks "in sight of hundreds who were passing up and down" as the whole city "appeared to be on the Boulevards" (70). In the British Library he observes "old men with grey hairs, young men with mustaches – some in cloth, others in fustian, indicating that men of different rank can meet here" (109). In Edinburgh he sees "a gentleman with a coloured lady on each arm" – something unthinkable, he notes, in New York or Philadelphia (167). The walls of Shakespeare's birthplace he finds "covered with names, inscriptions and hieroglyphics, in every language, by people of all nations, ranks and conditions, from the highest to the lowest, who have made their pilgrimage there" (*Fugitive* 223–24).

At the Great Exhibition, what impresses him most of all is that "there is a great deal of freedom":

The servant who walks behind his mistress through the Park feels that he can crowd against her in the Exhibition. The Queen and the day labourer, the Prince and the merchant, the peer and the pauper, the Celt and the Saxon, the Greek and the Frank, the Hebrew and the Russ, all meet here upon terms of perfect equality. This amalgamation of rank, this kindly blending of interests, and forgetfulness of the cold formalities of ranks and grades, cannot but be attended with the very best results. I was pleased to see such a goodly sprinkling of my own countrymen in the Exhibition – I mean coloured men and women – well-dressed, and moving about with their fairer brethren. This, some of our pro-slavery Americans did not seem to relish very well. There was no help for it. As I walked through the American part of the Crystal Palace, some of our Virginian neighbours eyed me closely and with jealous looks, especially as an English lady was leaning on my arm. But their sneering looks did not disturb me in the least. I remained the longer in their department, and criticised the bad appearance of their goods the more. Indeed, the Americans, as far as appearance goes, are behind every other country in the Exhibition. The “Greek Slave” [the sculpture by Hiram Powers] is the only production of Art which the United States has sent. And it would have been more to their credit had they kept that at home. (*Three Years* 210–12)

If Brown modeled his travel narratives on those of Nathaniel Parker Willis, he departed from their example in at least one important respect. While Willis unfavorably compared the extravagant and remote figureheads of royal Europe with the modest and accessible president of the republican United States (*Pencillings* I, 208–09), Brown – and other abolitionists – found ‘American’ democratic principles more effectively and consistently applied in aristocratic England and its neighbors. This Anglophilia, to be sure, conveniently overlooked a good deal of evidence to the contrary, but as their aim was to flatter their British readers and shame those in the United States we might – like Alan Rice – describe it as “strategic” (172–87), enabling them to “create transatlantic counter-cultures of resistance that helped to radicalise political opinion on both sides of the ocean” (187).

On the other hand, as Elisa Tamarkin has argued, this partiality to all things British far exceeded any abolitionist rationale; it can only be fully explained by an obsession with Englishness that is found in many contemporary white American writers. There may be a certain twist in articulating this Anglophilia as a black writer or abolitionist, pointedly exposing the failings of their supposedly more democratic homeland, but perhaps not as much as we might like. England (more properly Britain, as this discourse embraces a fascination with Scottish, Welsh, and Irish as well as English history) is admired for its decorum and refinement; in other words it is a certain upper-class Britain that is at stake here, one which is, as it were, too posh, rather than too principled, to give expression to racist views.

## IV

Brown's travel narratives are, in one sense, extended indictments of the racial order of the United States, and to this end he tends to offer himself – his own freedom to mingle with people of all classes – as his chief evidence. It is exhibit A, as it were, in his case for the prosecution. But not exclusively. Other people of color are portrayed in his account as enjoying the pleasures of integration – the “coloured ladies” he encounters on the streets of Edinburgh, his well-dressed countrymen at the Crystal Palace.

Jenkins too appears to enjoy this freedom, considering the way he seems to slip easily from one locale to another (Cheapside, Holborn, Kensington, Chelsea, City Road) and appears to be at ease with a wide cross section of Londoners. There is a formal symmetry in the way Brown presents their encounters, too. Brown happens upon Jenkins on numerous occasions, often not recognizing him at first, unaware for a long time of his unusual history. When they are finally introduced, Jenkins says: “I have seen you so often, sir, that I seem to know you” (*Fugitive* 272). They are the subject and object of each other's curious gaze. And the parallels are, as it were, acted out, when Jenkins “invited me to walk with him towards his home, which was in the direction of my own residence” (272), during which the mysterious figure reveals his life story.

But the symmetry hides some important differences or, perhaps, by being placed so prominently side by side, it draws attention to them. Those critics who point to the similarity of Jenkins's and Brown's checkered careers tend to draw on the way Brown described his life in the United States rather than in Britain. In the United States Brown was a slave, or fugitive slave, on the run, scraping out an anonymous living. In Britain – while working tirelessly as a writer and lecturer – he tends to represent himself as primarily a man of leisure and substance.

The persona he adopts to narrate his experiences resembles that of Willis – someone who freely crosses borders, is welcomed everywhere, a cosmopolitan at ease amid crowds of all nations, with apparently limitless time to wander and visit places and people of renown. Perhaps the most striking aspect of this confident cosmopolitanism is a refusal to be overawed by these places and famous people. We might say that this marks the limits of, even compensates for, Brown's Anglophilia. Descriptions of most venerated sites often (intentionally) end bathetically,<sup>2</sup> and the exalted personages are rarely accorded the respect they might be expected to command.

Compare Willis's description of Pope Gregory VI with Brown's response to Queen Victoria on her arrival in Dublin. Writes Willis:

2 For example, Willis's raptures before Correggio's paintings in the Liechtenstein Palace in Vienna give way to remarks on the ubiquitous stench of tobacco smoke into which he emerges (*Pencilings* II, 130–31), while Brown's admiration of Dublin's Custom House is immediately followed by the “heart-sickening view of the poorest of the poor” as the next thing that greeted him (*Three Years*, 12–13).

He blessed the crowd, right and left, with his three fingers, (precisely as a Parisian dandy salutes his friend across the street,) and, descending from his carriage, (which is like a good-sized glass boudoir upon wheels,) he was received in the papal sedan, and carried into the church by his Swiss bearers. (*People* 162–63)

Brown's description of Queen Victoria is not as insulting but is hardly suggestive of deference:

a lady rather small in stature, with auburn or reddish hair, attired in a plain dress, and wearing a sky-blue bonnet, standing on the larboard paddle-box, by the side of a tall good-looking man with mustaches. (*Three Years*, 16)

Jenkins, on the other hand, would appear to have little time to spare fashioning such unflattering portraits. He is too busy trying to make ends meet. This disjuncture is evident in the very first paragraph of the chapter:

While strolling through Cheapside, one morning, I saw, for the fiftieth time, Joseph Jenkins, the subject of this chapter, handing out his bills to all who would take them as he thrust them into their hands. I confess that I was not a little amused, and stood for some moments watching and admiring his energy in distributing his papers. (268)

While Brown *strolls* or *stands* as he *watches*, Jenkins is the subject of more active verbs (*handing out* bills, *thrusting* them into people's hands, *distributing* them with remarkable *energy*). Indeed, throughout the chapter Brown depicts himself aimlessly wandering the streets of London at a leisurely pace, expressing mild curiosity in the scenes around him; whereas every time he encounters Jenkins, that man is hard at work, consumed in his labors, perspiring profusely (271, 272). Brown's attitude tends to be rather flippant – his confession that he was “not a little amused” is followed later with an admission that he “could scarcely keep from laughing right out” (272) when he discovers that a preacher turns out to be Jenkins – , whereas Jenkins is decidedly earnest. ““You think me rather an odd fish, I presume’,” he says. ““You are not the only one who thinks so’,” he continues, before recounting his tragic story, featuring enslavement, separation from his family, and finally abandonment by the man who had freed and educated him (273–74). Coming from a Shakespearian actor, this “odd fish” is surely meant to echo that “strange fish” in *The Tempest* (II.ii,27–8), thus casting Jenkins as Caliban and Brown as Trinculo, a richly suggestive pairing of coconspirators, who at once parody the relation between master and slave and allude to the (im)possibility of grounding a common cause in their shared subordination.

Now settled, if precariously, in London with a family of his own – with children he conspicuously and patriarchally provides for (handing over the bill distribution concession to his son, and the crossing to his son-in-law), Jenkins offers another contrast with Brown, whose sexual conduct was subject to rumors dur-

ing his sojourn in Britain – he was accused of abandoning his wife and children and of succumbing to the charms of his female supporters and companions (Farrison 168–71). Although this is to introduce a strictly extratextual consideration, we might note his textually documented “preoccupation with both spectacular femininity and its bodily charged psychic effects on audiences” that Stadler (91) finds in Brown’s (and Willis’s) writings, particularly in Brown’s description of the “beautiful slave-girl” in his 1849 *Narrative* (33).

“I am fond of patronizing genius,” writes Brown, “and therefore took one of his tracts and paid him for a dozen” (269). The *Oxford English Dictionary* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1989) dates the use of “patronize,” in the sense of “to treat with a manner or air of condescending notice,” from 1797. In applying the term to himself, Brown teeters on the edge between an older aristocratic meaning (hoping to win respect for his largesse) and a newer democratic one (which makes him seem smug and overbearing). No word illustrates more convincingly the relationship of power between the two men. Brown is not a desperate consumer, a victim in a sellers’ market, but one who conspicuously supports Jenkins with a generous gift, reminding its recipient – perhaps uncomfortably – of their relative social and economic standing. And the distance is reinforced when the chapter ends – after the two of them walk together as Jenkins tells Brown his life story – with them reaching “a point where we had to part” (275). Which they must, because while their lodgings lie in the same direction, their Londons differ greatly from one another.

By counterposing Brown’s and Jenkins’s experiences, the very different ways in which they were able to inhabit London’s streets – one strolling and observing, the other absorbed in his work – we might reflect that the chameleonlike existence of Jenkins is a symptom not of freedom but of constraint. It is financial insecurity that requires him to juggle so many different activities in different parts of the city. Few people who are forced to do this to make a living would prefer it to a life of leisure supported by an independent income (which is the impression Brown mostly prefers to convey about himself).

The critics I discussed earlier, the ones who privilege the example of Jenkins, tend to overlook this point, except Schueller, who warns that the performative turn has led to an overemphasis on choice and the celebration of agency, ignoring other aspects of performance (such as “who performs, for whom, for what ends, and who benefits?”), which might prompt us to think of “the pains and problems” of racial identities rather than their creative possibilities. It is now time, perhaps, to address those “questions of access and power” that she says “have often been overlooked” (234).

## V

Rather than reinforcing Brown's "strategic Anglophilia" (Rice 172), Jenkins, then, might represent a muted *criticism* of British society, one that hints that it might not be a Promised Land for (all) people of color. And if this is a moment where this ideological motif begins to strain, it is not the only one.

In a previous chapter (also included in *Three Years in Europe*, in a letter dated 24 September, 1849), Brown comes across a "beggar-boy" near Temple Bar who turns out to have been a slave in Maryland. He had escaped

and reached New York; but not feeling himself secure there, he had, through the kindness of the captain of an English ship, made his way to Liverpool; and not being able to get employment there, he had come up to London. Here he had met with no better success, and having been employed in the growing of tobacco, and being unaccustomed to any other work, he could not get labor in England. I told him he had better try to get to the West Indies, but he informed me that he had not a single penny, and that he had had nothing to eat that day. (119)

In fact, at this stage in the narrative, Brown himself (uncharacteristically) admits to being hard up and can only spare half of his one remaining shilling. A recognition that his own relatively privileged position cannot be taken for granted may have fuelled the passion that lies behind two letters he wrote in the summer of 1851 that were not included in his travel books.

One of these, addressed to African American readers of *Frederick Douglass's Paper*, and reprinted in the *Liberator*, warned fugitive slaves, "Don't Come to England." Although careful not to accuse the British people of any racial prejudice, he underscores the fact that the economic situation is not favorable and that jobs are scarce. In the other, originally published in *The Times* (but also reprinted in the *Liberator*), he seems to draw a lesson from his encounter with the "beggar-boy" near Temple Bar and calls on the West Indian planters to provide employment for fugitive American slaves.

Another way the figure of Jenkins alludes to the obstacles faced by black people in Victorian Britain – rather than the freedoms celebrated by the Anglophile – is via the most assertive epithet Brown applies to him. Recall the flourish with which he ends the chapter: "I left Joseph Jenkins, impressed with the idea that he was the greatest genius that I had met in Europe" (*Fugitive*, 275).

Brown uses the term *genius* liberally in his travel narratives, applying it to all the usual suspects, many of them memorialized in the tourist destinations he visits: Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, Burns, Byron, Scott, Napoleon. He meets at least one *living* genius, too. In Dundee he is paid a visit by the scientist and theologian, Rev. Thomas Dick:

I could scarcely believe that I was in the presence of the "Christian Philosopher." Dr. Dick is one of the men to whom the age is indebted. I



never find myself in the presence of one to whom the world owes so much, without feeling a thrilling emotion, as if I were in the land of spirits. Dr. Dick had come to our lodgings to see and congratulate William and Ellen Craft upon their escape from the republican Christians of the United States; and as he pressed the hand of the “white slave,” and bid her “welcome to British soil,” I saw the silent tear stealing down the cheek of this man of genius (*Fugitive*170).

To pronounce Jenkins – an African-born farmer turned streetwise Londoner – the “greatest” of them all is in one sense simply a provocation that aligns with Brown’s refusal to show deference to the rich and famous more generally. There is, I think, a parallel move in the passage where he speaks of his visit to the British Museum – noting several portraits of named famous subjects (Cromwell, Baxter) before telling us that the portrait that moved him most was an anonymous “modern portrait” of a person (of unspecified gender) “so much like one whom I had seen and on whom my affections were placed in my younger days” (114).

We might also place Brown’s encounter with Jenkins alongside one that occurred with another, more illustrious resident of the capital, this time on his return from a visit to the Crystal Palace:

On my return home I was more fortunate than in the morning, inasmuch as I found a seat for my friend and myself in an omnibus. And even my ride in the close omnibus was not without interest. For I had scarcely taken my seat, when my friend, who was seated opposite me, with looks and gesture informed me that we were in the presence of some distinguished person. I eyed the countenances of the different persons, but in vain, to see if I could find any one who by his appearance showed signs of superiority over his fellow-passengers. I had given up the hope of selecting the person of note, when another look from my friend directed my attention to a gentleman seated in the corner of the omnibus. He was a tall man, with strongly-marked features, hair dark and coarse. There was a slight stoop of the shoulder – that bend which is almost always a characteristic of studious men. But he wore upon his countenance a forbidding and disdainful frown, that seemed to tell one that he thought himself better than those about him. His dress did not indicate a man of high rank; and had we been in America, I would have taken him for an Ohio farmer.

While I was scanning the features and general appearance of the gentleman, the omnibus stopped and put down three or four of the passengers, which gave me an opportunity of getting a seat by the side of my friend, who, in a low whisper, informed me that the gentleman whom I had been eying so closely was no less a person than Thomas Carlyle. (199–200)

Though Brown is impressed by his “literary abilities,” he found little to admire in Carlyle’s anti-abolitionist sentiments, and almost regrets having shared the

same conveyance. He goes on to demonstrate knowledge of his work and criticize his attitudes: “He holds no communion with his kind, but stands alone, without mate or fellow. He is like a solitary peak, all access to which is cut off” (200), writes Brown, man of the crowd, craftily lifting a few lines from Hazlitt’s essay on Byron (160). And while he admits to finding his *Sartor Resartus* impossible to read, he nevertheless knows enough of its playful exploration of the “philosophy of clothes” to score one over its author, by pretending to mistake him for an Ohio farmer because of the way he is dressed.

But what is most significant, perhaps, is that Brown, face to face with the author of *On Heroes and Hero Worship* and eminent Victorian theorist of “genius,” withholds that very title from him, while pointedly lavishing it on our crossing sweeper, tract seller, and stage entertainer.

In *Troubling Minds*, Gustavus Stadler has argued that the notion of *genius* was undergoing a transformation in mid-century US culture. Previously a sign of romantic transcendence, it became worldly and embodied and was increasingly deployed in everyday, practical contexts. The association of genius with the great and the good (and dead white men) began to be shaken as it began to be used to describe fugitive slaves, female performers, and queer flâneurs. Stadler charts how the term was applied to Frederick Douglass, the fugitive slave, and Jenny Lind, the Swedish soprano. But he also devotes a chapter to William Wells Brown (73–104), including several pages on Joseph Jenkins (98–102), an exemplary figure who marks a crucial stage in the cultural shift he is trying to map. In particular, he draws attention to the way in which Brown, in his portrayal of Jenkins, refuses to separate genius from commerce. Jenkins’s genius indeed does seem to reside in his ability to somehow – miraculously – make a living in such unpropitious circumstances, ones that thankfully, the well-connected Brown does not appear to share.

Brown is, Stadler suggests, a genius too. And while Brown allows William Farmer’s “Memoir of the Author,” which prefaced the first narrative, to refer to him as such (Brown, *Three Years*, xxix), we should be wary of merging Brown and Jenkins too comfortably. If we can call Brown a genius, the field in which he exercises this genius is a different one. Shall we say that the author of *The American Fugitive* is a genius of the pen rather than of the street?

## VI

One of the ways Brown has proven himself to be a genius of the pen is by persuading his readers that Jenkins really existed. In fact, there is no independent evidence that he did, as Stadler (99) and Greenspan (153–54, 160) have pointed out – even while most of his other admirers seem happy to be taken in. He is certainly not mentioned in the standard histories of the Victorian stage or black

Londoners. All references to Jenkins point back to Brown's *American Fugitive in Europe*.

Jenkins would seem to be an amalgam of several individuals. He may embody several members of the laboring poor whom Brown encountered on the streets of London, and whom we may never identify. But his life also echoes, in parts, that of Ira Aldridge, the African American actor whose renditions of Othello made him famous on the London stage in the 1830s and 1840s, and Selim Aga, a native of Sudan, enslaved in 1837, subsequently purchased by the family of the British consul in Egypt, and later educated in Scotland (Greenspan 154). Indeed, Brown liberally plagiarized the early pages of Aga's narrative in constructing his hero Jenkins's biography (Aga 11, 17–18, 20; Brown, *Fugitive* 273–74). And it is possible that his name was inspired by Joseph Jenkins Roberts, president of Liberia from 1848 to 1856. In allowing Jenkins to accumulate so much (conflicting) detail, Brown creates an implausible – or at least eccentric – minor character who begins to challenge the protagonist for narrative supremacy, not a 'type', nor even a collection of types, but a complex splicing of historical persons.

While one may allow Brown a certain poetic licence here – after all, his picaresque narrator would go against type if he wasn't unreliable to some degree – one must pause at Brown's audacity when he included Jenkins in the biographical dictionary he published in 1863 under the title *The Black Man, His Antecedents, His Genius, and His Achievements*. Alongside entries on the likes of Toussaint Louverture, Nat Turner, and Frederick Douglass, is an almost identical reprint of the chapter in *American Fugitive in Europe* published eight years earlier. The one change is the use of "African Talma" to describe Jenkins rather than "African Roscius," a phrase he employs elsewhere in the volume (and in line with popular usage) to refer to Ira Aldridge.

I intimated near the beginning of this paper that Jenkins makes good 'epigraph material': he has been seized on as a convenient emblem of a certain kind of self-fashioning, an improvisatory skill that exploits the opportunities offered to those who cross borders of various kinds. For the same reason, he might be called upon to endorse the wisdom of Fernando Ortiz who, frustrated with existing models of cross-cultural contact, introduced the term 'transculturation' in his 1940 study *Cuban Counterpoint*.

Although anthropological orthodoxy was already retreating from this position at the time, "acculturation" as a key term in its lexicon retained the suggestion that colonial encounters lead inevitably to one culture (tagged as weaker, even inferior) giving way to another (deemed stronger and superior). The process it designates, wrote Bronislaw Malinowski in his introduction to Ortiz's book, is "the passive adaptation to a clear and determined standard of culture" (lviii). But in practice this relationship is never so one-sided; influence works both ways. There is always an element of negotiation, "something is always given in return for what one receives, a system of give and take" (lviii-lix).

Jenkins came from lands south of Egypt, and adapted to the ways of the British imperial capital – and took an English name – but in doing so did not ‘become white’. The discrimination that no doubt forced him to cobble together a living from so many different sources is testimony to that; and his foreignness was something he traded on, at least in his work in the theater, playing Othello as “Prince Selim,” billed as the “African Roscius.” Clearly he engaged with his new homeland in numerous different ways in order to survive rather than passively assimilating its values and customs.

But not all border crossers are alike. In this context the epigraph Brown himself chooses to head his chapter on Jenkins may be of more than passing interest. It is from *Hamlet* (III, iv, 51): “Look here, upon this picture, and on this” (268). Keith Botelho, in his discussion of Brown’s use of the same epigraph in his play *The Escape* (1858), understands “this” and “this” as indicating the first two of an extended series: “the reader must also look upon the pictures of racial identity that Brown frames for his reader” (194). And we might read its insertion in *The American Fugitive in Europe* similarly, as pointing to the many different “characters” Jenkins plays, on and off stage.

But, as Botelho himself reminds us, in the original Shakespeare, Hamlet is drawing his mother’s attention to just two portraits – of his father and his uncle, her previous and current husbands: the innocent, beloved king and the brother who murdered and usurped him. In an illuminating footnote on uses of this line from *Hamlet* in African American newspapers of the period, what is interesting is that the three examples Botelho gives all seem to imply that “this” and “this” refer to two opposing viewpoints (such as abolitionism and pro-slavery) or strikingly unequal treatment (for instance, double standards when treating blacks and whites for similar crimes) (203n4).

Ezra Greenspan ponders the significance of this epigraph and concludes that Brown is inviting us to compare Jenkins and himself but does not enlarge on what this might mean (154n41). Could it be that William Wells Brown could have foreseen that one day he and Jenkins may have become confused with each other? That Jenkins may even eclipse him? At any rate, I like to think that the epigraph alerts us to the striking *difference* between them.

After Malinowski’s introduction, Ortiz begins his book not with a discussion of transculturation but with a long essay (3–93) that uses the word only once and instead stages a kind of verbal contest between tobacco and sugar, in an antiphonal exploration that stresses how they contrast with each other in almost every way – their taste and appearance, mode of cultivation, manufacture, consumption, and so on. “Look here, upon this picture, and on this,” he might be saying. And if (as in *Hamlet*) there is no doubting where his sympathies lie (tobacco is associated with nationalist rebellion, sugar with colonial domination), the contrasts do not line up in two neat columns but overlap, nest inside (and sometimes contradict) each other. Furthermore, the physical transformations that these plants themselves undergo and the social and economic relationships they give rise to (or

which are formed around them) vary so much that generalizations are unlikely to be very helpful.

By the time Ortiz introduces the term “transculturation” in the second part of *Cuban Counterpoint* (97–103), we may begin to realize that if he is asking us to abandon one model of intercultural contact, he is not (as Malinowski implies) proposing to replace it with another. For if the story of unidirectional acculturation is always the same, transculturation is many stories, which can be as different from each other as those of tobacco and sugar. Transculturation is not a template for making sense of what happens when something or someone moves from one culture to another; it is more usefully thought of as a guiding principle, one that insists on the range of possibilities, demanding that we attend to specific configurations and power relations that cannot be known in advance. They are certainly not always as cozy and reciprocal as Malinowski and – at times – Ortiz himself seem to suggest. Cultures clash, compete, coexist as well as merge. How easily and quickly people move between them – and with what effect – depends on a multitude of factors.

The portrait of Jenkins in *The American Fugitive in Europe* presents us with two contrasting agents of transculturation. First, the narrator and protagonist Brown, based on the author, yet depicted as a man of leisure rather than the hard-working itinerant writer and lecturer that he actually was. Second, Jenkins, who is a fictional creation, but – as someone struggling to earn a living and support a family by taking any badly paid and low-status job he could get – is in some ways a more realistic, certainly more typical, black Victorian. The one dines at the Whittington Club (*Fugitive*, 123), is welcomed at the home of MP George Thompson (*Three Years*, 85–86), and enjoys hospitality at the country seat of “Lord C \_\_\_” (*Fugitive*, 240–43). The other, a barely noticed figure on the streets of Chelsea, Kensington, and the City of London. If Brown is privileged to address a large international audience through his publications, Jenkins entertains enthusiastic but relatively small crowds at the Eagle Saloon and Holborn Casino.

Despite the similarities, as former slaves, who must negotiate and confront racial prejudice and discrimination in the colonial metropolis, these characters command widely varying degrees of cultural authority and creative freedom. We might think of Brown and Jenkins – as they emerge from the page, at least – as prototypes, respectively, of the tourist and the refugee, agents of transculturation whose coexistence highlights the stark inequalities that continue to govern the movement of people across international borders. Some breeze through without inspection and are invited to the high table; others struggle, without papers, perhaps, working illegally, for pay well below the national minimum, constantly living with the threat of detention and deportation. For each one who travels first class, another takes her chances in a flimsy raft or sealed truck.

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***Ka Hoku o Osiania:***  
**Promoting the Hawaiian Kingdom as a**  
**Model for Political Transformation in**  
**Nineteenth-Century Oceania**

LORENZ GONSCHOR

**Introduction**

While most of the world was colonized by Western powers in the nineteenth century, a few non-Western societies remained independent and formed hybrid states, meaning states that were grounded in traditional polities and led by native rulers while adapting forms and styles of a modern Western nation-state. This enabled them to achieve recognition by the Western powers as coequals in a pattern of parity, and thus saved them from becoming subject to colonization. The most widely known examples of such hybrid States are Japan, Siam (Thailand), and Ethiopia, which due to their political modernization efforts never became colonies. One other non-Western country, however, preceded these three by several decades: the Hawaiian Kingdom. From the 1840s onward, merely six decades after its initial contact with the West during Captain Cook's last expedition in 1778, Hawai'i was universally recognized as a sovereign state and had diplomatic relationships with all major powers of the world.

This remarkable political transformation of the Hawaiian Islands (Figure 1) within the span of only slightly more than half a century, from what anthropologists have termed either 'complex chiefdoms' or 'archaic states' to the most advanced 'modern state' outside of Europe and the Americas, is virtually unique in world history. It represents the first case of a new category of state formation, namely, the transformation of a traditional non-Western polity into a nation-state and its official recognition by and inclusion in the Family of Nations. Representing such an extraordinary position in the history of state formation, the Hawaiian Kingdom merits special attention from historians and political scientists. However, because the Islands have been under a prolonged occupation by the United States since 1898, this history has been deliberately obscured and all but erased from historiography. Recovering and understanding this history is thus essential for assessing the current status of the islands in relationship to the United States

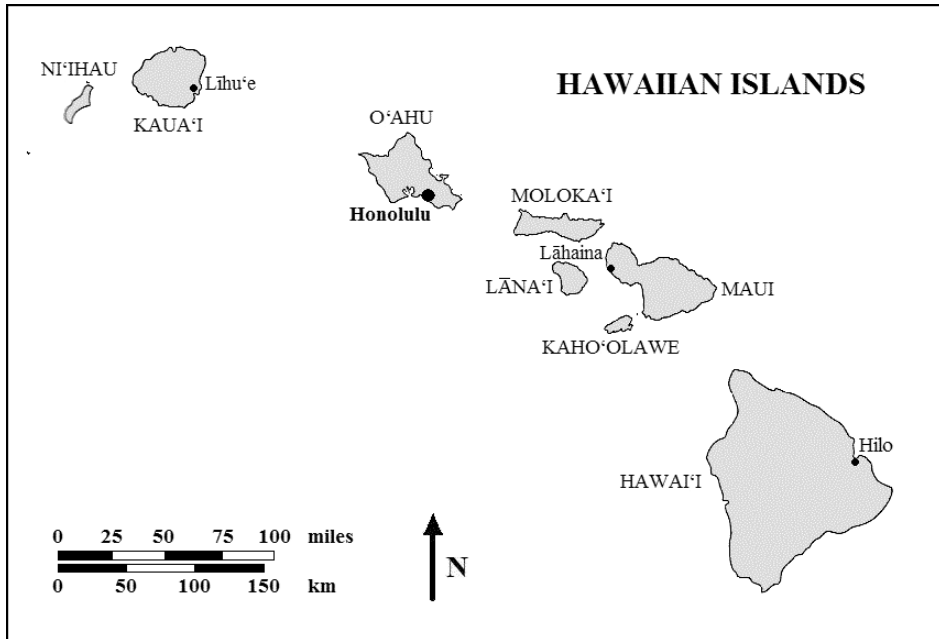


Figure 1: *Map of the Hawaiian Islands* (drawn by the author).

and resolving the problems inherent in it, as has been pointed out recently by political scientist Keanu Sai (“Beginning the Transition”).

Once Hawai‘i was firmly established as a recognized nation-state in the 1840s, its successful political modernization was later emulated by the rulers of other Pacific Islands in the later part of the nineteenth century, and actively promoted among them by Hawaiian diplomats. Closely following the Hawaiian model, other Polynesian archipelagos thus became engaged in similar processes of creating nation-states and striving for recognition, even though none of them achieved the level of international standing of the Hawaiian Kingdom. While most archipelagos of Oceania succumbed to Western imperialism around the turn of the twentieth century, the Hawaiian model proved most durable in the kingdom of Tonga; today a modified version of the nineteenth-century Hawaiian constitution still serves as the fundamental legal framework of that country.

In the present article, through the archipelago’s unique historical context, I will first explore the question of how and why Hawai‘i became the first non-Western entity to be recognized by the West as a nation-state. I will then focus on Hawaiian international diplomacy and its spreading of the Hawaiian model among the other archipelagos of Oceania by examining the roles of three selected Hawaiian political leaders and diplomats who played major roles therein. In conclusion, I will argue that the historiography of nineteenth-century Oceania needs to be critically reexamined, and challenge the notions of “colonial preludes” and “missionary kingdoms” common in Pacific historiography, while addressing instead the agency of Polynesian leaders in transforming and modernizing their countries.

## The Hawaiian Kingdom as the model of State formation in Oceania

### *Building the Hawaiian Nation-State*

The Hawaiian Kingdom was internationally recognized in a joint declaration by Britain and France, signed in London on November 28, 1843, due to a successful diplomatic mission of Hawaiian envoy Timoteo Ha'alilio, his interpreter and assistant, former missionary William Richards, and British official George Simpson (Kuykendall, 1: 202–03; Sai, "Beginning the Transition" 72–73; Beamer, "Na Wai" 193). The date of the declaration thereafter became known as the Hawaiian national holiday *Lā Kū'oko'a* (Independence Day). Hawai'i thereby became the first non-Western polity to position itself in a new category of state recognition: previously, the family of recognized nations consisted only of European States and their colonial offshoots in the Americas. This fact was implicitly acknowledged by international law scholar John Westlake, who wrote in 1894 (prior to the recognition of any other country in the new category):

The international society to which we belong, and of which what we know as international law is the body of rules, comprises – First, all European States...Secondly, all American States...Thirdly, a few Christian States in other parts of the world, as the **Hawaiian Islands**, Liberia and the Orange Free State [...] (Westlake 81–82. Emphasis added).<sup>1</sup>

Even earlier, in 1859, geographer A. Petermann of Gotha, Germany, produced a map of the Pacific area showing the possessions of the seven major powers in the region by color-coding, and prominently displaying the Hawaiian Kingdom, termed *Reich Kamehameha's* ("Kamehameha's Empire," referring to the then reigning monarch, Kamehameha IV) in its own color, equal to the colonial dominions of the great European powers, a distinction not given to either China or Japan, clearly indicating Hawai'i's particular status as a recognized independent state (Figure 2).<sup>2</sup>

The Hawaiian Kingdom thus represents a major step in the history of state formation, namely, the extension of the nation-state system to states outside of the European tradition and its overseas subsidiaries. Because most other non-Western polities of the world were colonized by Western powers before they could be transformed by their leaders into nation-states, only a handful of other countries joined this category later. A closer look at the internal workings of Hawaiian statecraft and society reveals how both the political apparatus of government

- 1 The latter two were offshoots of the European state system like those in the Americas, having been established either by European or Westernized African settlers on African soil, and therefore cannot be considered native African polities.
- 2 Petermann, A, Karte von Polynesien und dem Litoral des Grossen Oceans zur Übersicht der politischen Verhältnisse im Jahre 1859. *Petermanns Geographische Mittheilungen (Mittheilungen aus Justus Perthes' Geographischer Anstalt über wichtige Neue Erforschungen auf dem Gesamtgebiete der Geographie von A. Petermann)*, Jahrgang 1859, Tafel 9.

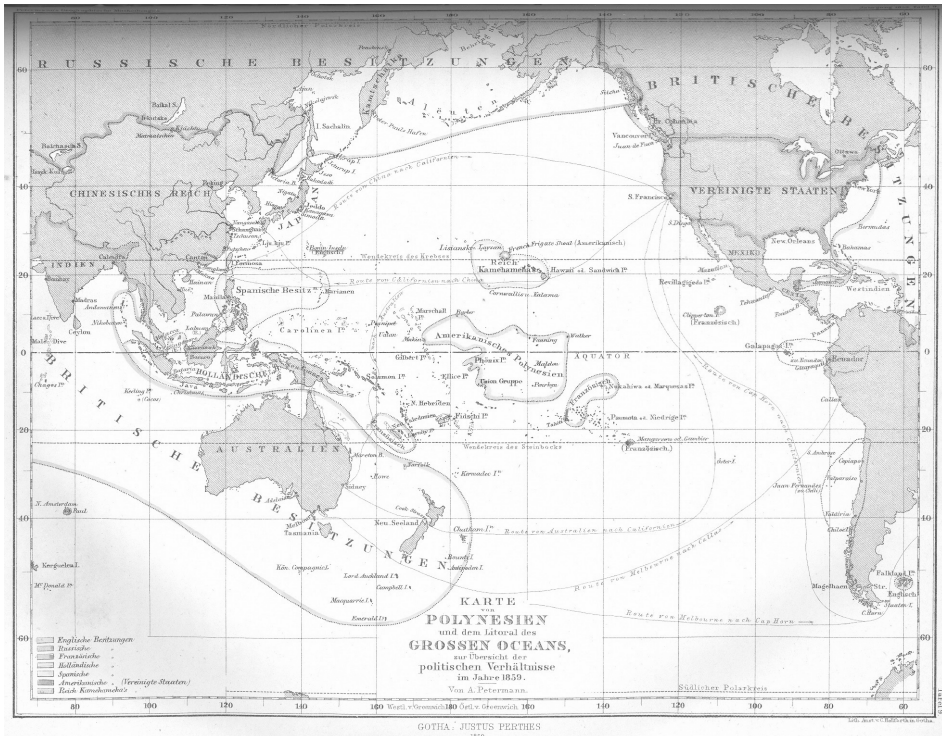


Figure 2: 1859 Map of Polynesia and the Pacific Ocean showing political boundaries, drawn by A. Petermann. (Source: Petermanns Geographische Mittheilungen [1859], Plate 9)

and the national consciousness of the population in the archipelago developed in a sense favorable to the creation of a nation-state very early on, and these developments were in turn facilitated through a unique evolution of Hawaiian culture and society in the previous centuries.

Through more than a millennium of inhabitation by Polynesians before Western contact, the Hawaiian Islands had evolved to become the most stratified of Polynesian societies (Kirch, *Evolution* 257; Cordy 48, 53). By the 1700s, the entire archipelago was divided into only four monarchical polities (Cachola-Abad; Cordy 7), which archaeologist Patrick Kirch considers to have been “archaic states,” comparable to those of ancient Egypt or pre-Columbian Mesoamerica (Kirch, *How Chiefs*).

Following Western influences in the 1770s and 1780s, the Hawai‘i Island *mō‘ī* (supreme ruler) Kamehameha the Great conquered all the islands except Kaua‘i between 1780 and 1795, finally obtaining Kaua‘i through a peaceful agreement in 1810.<sup>3</sup> Once unified at the high chief level, the creation of a permanent political system for the entire archipelago was aided by the preexisting centralized features

3 Suzerainty by the Hawaiian Kingdom, which was agreed upon by Kaua‘i’s ruler Kaumuali‘i in 1810 was later challenged by his son George Humeleme in 1825. In the ensuing battle, Humeleme was at last vanquished by Hawaiian forces and from that point the island became incorporated into the kingdom.

of each of the conquered kingdoms. As Kirch states, “Hawai‘i knew kingship well enough long before hearing of King George [...] and other European rulers” (*How Chiefs* x). When Kamehameha did learn of King George and styled his government a ‘kingdom’ on the British model, it was in fact merely a new designation and hybridization of an already existing political system (Beamer, “Na Wai” 102; 158–60). The office of *mō‘ī* was formally made equivalent to the Western concept of kingship, and other elements of traditional governance were similarly identified with aspects of the British system of government (Sai, “Beginning the Transition” 30–42). The process of hybridization was further continued by Kamehameha’s sons Liholiho (Kamehameha II) and Kauikeaouli (Kamehameha III) throughout the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s, culminating in the Constitution of 1840.<sup>4</sup>

After gaining international recognition in 1843, the Hawaiian Kingdom existed for fifty years under this hybrid political structure, which was further developed in the amended constitutions of 1852 and 1864 (Sai, “Beginning the Transition” 87–97). In addition to its initial recognition, Hawai‘i concluded international treaties with eighteen countries<sup>5</sup> and by the 1890s Hawai‘i had over ninety legations and consulates worldwide. The Kingdom also joined the Universal Postal Union, the second global international organization, in 1882 (Sai, “Beginning the Transition” 73). Hawai‘i was thus a functioning and stable state, with institutions that were modern but grounded in tradition, while at the same time firmly anchored in the international community.

While the centralized political tradition facilitated effective state-building, Hawai’s precontact situation also smoothed the process of building a Hawaiian Nation, i.e., the development of a national consciousness among the kingdom’s inhabitants. Due to the geographical remoteness of the archipelago, which determined that Polynesians would be the only people to settle it, there was a high degree of linguistic and cultural unity in the Hawaiian Islands long before their political unification. In addition, despite the political division of the Hawaiian archipelago into between three to five warring kingdoms, their ruling lineages were closely related by blood. As Hawaiian Historian Samuel Mānaiakalani Kamakau (“Ke Kuauhau” 52) wrote, “*O na ‘īī Oahu a me Kauai, o ko Hawaii a me Maui a me Molokai hookahi no kupuna*” (“The Chiefs of O‘ahu and Kaua‘i, of Hawai‘i, of Maui and of Molokai, have all one common ancestor”), a fact confirmed by modern Hawaiian anthropologist Kēhaunani Cachola-Abad’s detailed study of classical Hawaiian history, which reveals intermarriages between the chiefly lineages of the different islands in almost each of the twenty-three generations prior to Kamehameha (Cachola-Abad fig 7.1). While Hawai‘i’s relative

4 Government of the Hawaiian Kingdom, *Ke kumu kanawai a me na kanawai o ko Hawaii Pae Aina. Ua kauia i ke kau ia Kamehameha III*. Honolulu 1841. Partly reprinted, transcribed, and translated in *Ka Ho‘oilina/The Legacy: Puke Pa‘i ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i/Journal of Hawaiian Language Sources* 1.1 (2002): 35–49.

5 *Treaties and Conventions Concluded between the Hawaiian Kingdom and other Powers since 1825*. Honolulu: Elele Book, Card and Job Print, 1887.

degree of cultural homogeneity was shared by most other Polynesian archipelagos, Hawai‘i’s centralized polities, and the “complete absence of distinct, kin-based chiefdoms” (Routledge 137) further strengthened the kingdom’s national integration, and since the definitive conquest of Kaua‘i in 1825, none of the challenges to the Hawaiian government’s authority were regionally based.

The second crucial element in the formation of Hawaiian national consciousness was the creation and dissemination of a standardized written Hawaiian language. In the 1820s, Calvinist missionaries from the New England-based American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) created an alphabet for the Hawaiian language, and this had enormous social ramifications. Within a few decades, most Hawaiians were literate, and by the late nineteenth century Hawai‘i had one of the highest literacy rates in the world (Beamer, “Na Wai” 283). During the 1800s, hundreds of books in Hawaiian were printed. An incomplete bibliography lists 654 known volumes published between 1822 and 1899 (Judd et al.). Furthermore, seventy-five different Hawaiian-language newspapers, most of them weeklies, a few of them dailies, appeared between 1834 and the turn of the twentieth century (Mookini). Altogether, several hundred thousand pages were printed in Hawaiian, with between a few hundred and several thousand copies each. It not only appears that this corpus far exceeds anything printed during the same period in other Polynesian languages, as well as in all indigenous languages of the Americas (Nogelmeier 59), but, in my own estimate, it is likely to constitute the largest body of printing in any non-European language written in the Roman alphabet during the nineteenth century.

Benedict Anderson argues that newspapers and other printed matter in a standardized language play a central role in promoting the idea of an “imagined community” of readers and writers of the language of that particular nation. (Anderson 24–25, 33–46). There is ample evidence that this was indeed the case in Hawai‘i (Beamer, “Na Wai” 283; Silva, “Early Hawaiian”).

Unlike most other countries, however, the character of the Hawaiian Nation changed dramatically in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Because of the decline of the Hawaiian population due to introduced diseases, and the need for labor for the sugar plantations that became the main export industry of the country (Kuykendall, 1: 135–37), large numbers of Chinese, Japanese, and Portuguese migrated to Hawai‘i beginning in the 1850s. In addition to the slower but steady immigration of individual Europeans and Americans throughout the century, this mass immigration changed the ethnic makeup of the population, and thereby challenged the notion of the *Lāhui Hawai‘i* (Hawaiian People/Nation) – commonly defined as sharing a genealogy and connection to the land – as the sole citizenry of the *Aupuni Hawai‘i* (Hawaiian Kingdom/Government) (Basham 203–42). Instead of developing into a typical Andersonian “imagined community” of nationals sharing the same language and culture, Hawai‘i was progressively transforming itself in the direction of a multiethnic nation. The Kingdom’s last census report of 1890 lists 40,622 aboriginal Hawaiians among a total of 48,107

subjects of the Kingdom, and 41,873 resident aliens, primarily Chinese, Japanese, and Portuguese nationals (Sai, “A Century Unchecked” 63). The Hawaiian government thus undertook various efforts to incorporate the newcomers into the national body politic. Most Asian and European immigrants who decided to stay did indeed become loyal Hawaiian subjects. But a tiny but influential section of the American immigrant community constantly caused problems because they refused to assimilate and declare loyalty to the Hawaiian crown; their unruly behavior would eventually lead to the nation’s virtual destruction (Vann).

## **Hawai‘i as a partner and model for other emerging States in Asia and the Pacific**

As the first non-Western nation-state, the Hawaiian kingdom played an important role in world history that has often been neglected. Even though its economic and military clout was negligible on an international scale, Hawai‘i’s unique status as an international actor gave it a high standing among those non-Westerners who were aware of its existence.

Hawai‘i developed strong bonds with Japan, the other emerging non-Western nation-state in the north Pacific (Watanabe). In 1881, the Hawaiian King Kalākaua visited the Japanese Meiji Emperor. Aware of Hawai‘i’s international standing, which Japan lacked at the time, the Emperor asked for Hawai‘i to grant full recognition to Japan and thereby create a precedent for the Western powers to follow (Armstrong 47–51; Keene 347). In turn, Kalākaua suggested to Meiji that a confederation be formed of Asian-Pacific nations under Japanese and Hawaiian leadership, as well as that a marriage alliance be entered into between his niece, Princess Ka‘iulani, and Japanese Prince Sadamaro (Keene 347–50). Kalākaua developed a similar relationship with King Chulalongkorn of Siam (Thailand), another emerging non-Western state engaged in the modernization process and struggling for international recognition (Armstrong 114–36). In a similar way, the Hawaiian pattern might also have been an inspiration for the Republic of China in its struggle to achieve full parity in the early twentieth century. Its founder, Sun Yat-sen, had been educated in the Hawaiian Kingdom (Soong) and thus clearly understood the implications of a modernizing non-Western state having achieved parity, later stating that “it was here [i.e., in Hawai‘i] that I came to know what modern, civilized governments are like and what they mean” (Lum and Lum viii).

Most important, however, was the Hawaiian Kingdom’s role as a model for other Pacific Island nations. As the only island state having achieved international recognition, the Hawaiian Kingdom was a “nation for which Polynesians generally had enormous respect” (Gilson 192), a fact that can be confirmed by a contemporary statement by Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson, who in 1892 wrote from Samoa about Hawai‘i’s reputation:

[I]n the eyes of Polynesians the little kingdom occupies a place apart. It is here alone that men of their race enjoy most of the advantages and all the pomp of independence; news of Hawaii and descriptions of Honolulu are grateful topics in all parts of the South Seas; and there is no better introduction than a photograph in which the bearer shall be represented in company with Kalakaua. (33)

From the 1850s onward, the Hawaiian Kingdom pursued a policy of supporting the formation of nation-states in the rest of Oceania and fending off their colonization by Western powers – in a sense a Hawaiian “Monroe Doctrine” for Polynesia (Horn; Beamer, “Na Wai” 237–41; Cook 188–99). Within this framework, the Hawaiian model became essential for later state formation processes in Tonga, Fiji, and Samoa in the 1870s.

There were major differences between these three archipelagos, however. Tonga was most comparable to Hawai‘i since it shared a similar development into a highly stratified society in its classical period (Campbell; Kirch, *How Chiefs* 27–28), and which facilitated the formation of a centralized monarchy under the Tupou dynasty in the mid-1800s (Howe 177–97). Once the Tongan kingdom had been firmly established, its adaptation of a modified version of the Hawaiian Constitution in 1875 was a logical next step since Tongan leaders considered it to be best suited for their country (Untitled editorial in *Koe Boobooi*). On the other hand, the creation of two other constitutional monarchies in the 1870s based on the Hawaiian model, in Fiji and Samoa, was much more complicated to undertake and faced many challenges. The traditional societies of these two archipelagos had not formed centralized features at the same level as Hawai‘i and Tonga (Howe 230–77). Despite these differences, Hawaiian diplomats were heavily involved in the state-building processes in all three cases, as I will show in the following section.

### **Agents of Transculturation: Portraits of three Hawaiian leaders and diplomats**

The transformation of the Hawaiian Kingdom into a modern and globally connected state, and its promotion as a model for other Polynesian societies, was the collective work of many individuals. Each of the eight Hawaiian monarchs, Kamehameha I, II, III, IV and V, Lunalilo, Kalākaua, and Lili‘uokalani, was a remarkable statesman/woman in his/her own right. While leading the country, they were aided by various government officials, many of whom, besides faithfully serving their respective monarchs, were agents of transformation in their own particular ways. In the following, I will exemplify their work through portraits of three selected Hawaiian government leaders and diplomats.



The three have not been selected to be representative of the Kingdom and its population at-large, nor do I want to suggest that any of them held more actual power than their official government positions suggest. Rather, I have selected them because each played a major role as intermediary in establishing Hawai'i's international connections. In addition, I find the two who were not Hawaiian by birth particularly interesting as subjects of research for the very reason that they entered into the Kingdom's service as outsiders, and thereby underwent a significant change of identity. They were thus, in the fullest sense, 'agents of transculturation'. Hawaiian geographer Kamana Beamer refers to such figures as being of "complex-identity," arguing that "[w]hile their identity was still European, they may have become influenced or Hawaiian-ized through their interactions with Hawai'i and the ali'i [chiefs/nobles]" (Beamer, "Na Wai" 28).

### **Charles St. Julian: Envisioning a Hawai'i-centered Oceania.**

When the Hawaiian Kingdom, once its independence was secured, thanks to the work of Kamehameha III and his well-selected diplomatic team of Timoteo Ha'alilio, William Richards and George Simpson, turned its gaze toward the rest of Oceania in the 1850s, someone came to play a key role in Hawaiian foreign policy who would have been considered most unlikely to do so: an Australian journalist by the name of Charles St. Julian (Figure 3), who never set foot on Hawai'i.

St. Julian's earlier life is not well documented. He was born in 1818 or 1819, probably near London, of English and French ancestry, and baptized a Catholic. In the late 1830s he emigrated to South Australia and moved on to Sydney in 1839, where he married. Talented as a writer, as well as quick to understand law and politics, he became a leading journalist for the *Sydney Morning Herald*, writing mainly as a court reporter but also on a variety of social and political topics. Within the political spectrum of colonial New South Wales, he positioned himself as a liberal and moderate advocate of social reforms (Diamond 1–31). Later in his life, during the 1860s, he became actively involved in New South Wales local politics and served in various municipal governments in the suburbs of Sydney (Diamond 85–119).

As a journalist, St. Julian soon became interested in the insular Pacific, with which the Australian colonies had increasing commercial relations in the mid-nineteenth century. While this Australian trade was mainly with the islands of central Polynesia, and much less with the Hawaiian Islands, Hawai'i's position as the only island nation with an internationally recognized government, as well as its more developed capitalist economy compared to the rest of Oceania, was not lost on St. Julian. After exhaustive research, he wrote a series of articles for various Sydney newspapers, later publishing them in book form as *Notes on the Latent Resources of Polynesia*, in which he concluded, among other things, that

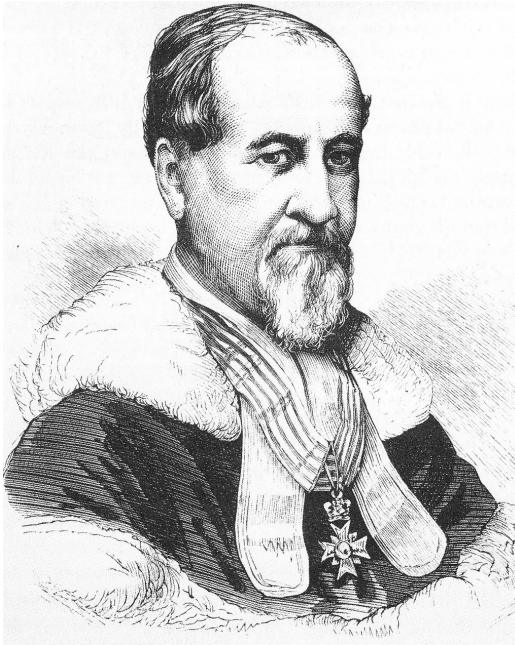


Figure 3:  
*Charles St. Julian (1818–1874)*. (Source:  
 Illustrated Sydney News, 16 Jan 1875)

“[t]he Hawaiian nation may, as a whole, be fairly appealed to as affording a proof of what the Polynesian race is capable of” (St. Julian, *Notes* 65).

After sending a copy of his book to the Hawaiian government and corresponding for a while with Robert Wyllie, who had been the Hawaiian minister of foreign affairs since 1846 (Kamakau, *Ke Aupuni* 247), the latter appointed St. Julian as “His Hawaiian Majesty’s Commissioner, and Political and Commercial Agent, to the Independent States and Tribes of Polynesia” in 1853 (Diamond 42). During the following years, St. Julian corresponded intensively with Wyllie and continued his research on the Pacific Islands. He soon developed the idea, apparently influenced by the contemporary national unification movements in Germany and Italy, that all of Polynesia should be united into a large political entity led by its most powerful state, the Hawaiian Kingdom (Diamond 2, 44).

In his new official capacity, St. Julian attempted to increase the Hawaiian Kingdom’s sphere of influence, disseminate knowledge about Hawai‘i among the other island rulers, and promote the Hawaiian Kingdom’s constitution as a model for them to follow. Between 1855 and 1857, he attempted to broker a deal with the Hawaiian Kingdom and a British adventurer in order to have Hawai‘i annex the Polynesian atoll of Sikaiana (then called “Stewart Is.” and today politically part of the Solomon Islands), and thereby extend the Hawaiian Kingdom’s domain south of the equator. The planned annexation deal also included a plebiscite of the islanders to obtain their approval, a progressive idea unheard of at the time. Ultimately, however, King Kamehamea IV declined to ratify the arrangement, worried about technical constraints in administrating such a far outlying

possession (Horn 24–32). In 1853, King George Tupou I of Tonga visited Sydney, and St. Julian subsequently communicated with him, sent him a copy of the Hawaiian constitution, and suggested modernizing the Tongan system of government along its lines, as well as establishing a close political relationship between Tonga and Hawai‘i (Lātūkefu, *Tongan Constitution* 30–32). During the same time, St. Julian also involved himself in the affairs of Samoa, which unlike Tonga had no centralized authority. After communication with Samoan chiefs, St. Julian drafted a constitution for a “Republic of Upolu [the main island of the archipelago]” for them in 1854 (Diamond 58–59).

In 1857, St. Julian published his second book as an *Official Report on Central Polynesia* to the Hawaiian Government, which contained a detailed gazetteer of all Central Polynesian islands and chiefdoms, compiled by St. Julian’s chancellor and later successor in office, Edward Reeve, which should be regarded as one of the most detailed compilations of knowledge of the islands available during the mid-nineteenth century (St. Julian, *Report*). In the report, St. Julian reiterated and refined his vision of a Polynesia modernized along Hawaiian lines and unified under Hawaiian primacy. In spite of a generally paternalistic tone typical for the time, he espoused some truly progressive ideas. For example, he suggested reforming marriage laws to include abuse of the wife by her husband as a legal reason for divorce (St. Julian, *Report* 70), and unlike most contemporary Anglo-Saxons, who considered ‘racial mixing’ abhorrent, St. Julian prophesized that “the Polynesians of the future will, in fact, be a mixed race,” but that in that case “the race of Polynesian islanders would still be a distinct one” (St. Julian, *Report* 7, 16), which has become the reality on many Polynesian archipelagos in the twenty-first century. He also urged white settlers to respect native Polynesian governments, postulating that “[a]ny effort, therefore, on the part of resident foreigners to destroy the authority of the native rulers is absolutely treasonable, and may lawfully be so dealt with” (St. Julian, *Report* 28). Once again he praised the Hawaiian government, which “will bear a comparison with those of the best-ruled states of Europe, and will be found greatly superior to most of them” (St. Julian, *Report* 2), and concluded his analysis of the colonial policies of the great European powers with the observation that:

[t]here is another country, which, though infinitely less powerful than Great Britain, France or the United States, could acquire and maintain such a supremacy in many of the countries of Central Polynesia, with greater ease than either of these powerful nations. This is the little Kingdom of the Hawaiian Islands. (St. Julian, *Report* 11)

After Wyllie passed away in 1865, the Hawaiian government became less wholehearted in its support for St. Julian. King Kamehameha V was deeply involved with domestic issues, and Wyllie’s successor as minister of foreign affairs, Charles de Varigny, while enthusiastic in his general support for Hawaiian primacy in the Pacific (Varigny 310) made few concrete moves to implement it.

Charles C. Harris, de Varigny's successor as Kamehameha V's foreign minister in 1869, however, renewed Honolulu's political support for St. Julian and sent him on a diplomatic mission to Fiji in 1871, his first actual voyage to any Pacific island. Fiji had recently formed a constitutional monarchy under King Cakobau based on the Hawaiian model, and St. Julian's mission was to assess the feasibility of a possible Hawaiian protectorate over Fiji (Diamond 129–38). While his efforts in that direction failed, the trip made him an ardent advocate of the new Fijian government, and on his return to Sydney he published a pamphlet urging Fiji's international recognition as a sovereign state (St. Julian, *International Status*). This endeared him to the Fijian government leaders, who offered him an appointment as Chief Justice and Chancellor of Cakobau's kingdom, which he gladly accepted (Diamond 140–41).

Unfortunately, because of internal instability, settler racism, and foreign power hostility, the Fijian Kingdom only endured for a few years, and ended up being annexed, with at least reluctant consent of most of its leaders, by Great Britain in October 1874 (Routledge 186–210). In ill health and lacking formal legal training, and possibly also because of his pro-native politics, St. Julian was not rehired as a judge in Fiji by the British colonial administration and passed away soon thereafter, on November 26, 1874, in Fiji's capital of Levuka. His most important legacy in Fiji was his firm stance, together with Cakobau's chief secretary John B. Thurston, on preserving Fijian land rights during the negotiations with the British (Diamond 149–151).

Even though much of St. Julian's initiatives at first glance could be dismissed as failed ventures (which they might have been in terms of his personal ambitions), their impact on Hawaiian and Pacific politics was far from negligible. The first constitutions of Fiji (1871/73), Samoa (1873/75), and Tonga (1875)<sup>6</sup> all bear strong resemblance to that of Hawai'i, and this similarity is ultimately traceable to St. Julian's efforts. Arguably, the most lasting impact he had was in Tonga. Dutch anthropologist Paul van der Grijp considers him one of the two most important foreign advisors to King George Tupou I, second only to Methodist-missionary-turned-Tongan-Prime-Minister Shirley Baker (662). Unlike in any other Pacific Island nation, St. Julian is officially remembered in Tonga today: the Tongan history textbook for secondary schools sympathetically mentions his role in the formation of the Tongan constitutional monarchy (Boutell and Campbell 16–17).

In the Hawaiian Kingdom, St. Julian was honored by being made an honorary member of the Royal Hawaiian Agricultural Society (Untitled news article in *Ka Hae*), and in 1872, he was appointed a Knights Commander of the Royal Order

6 Government of the Kingdom of Fiji, *Constitution of the Kingdom of Fiji*. Levuka: William Coe, Government Printer 1873. Copy in National Archives of Fiji, Suva; Government of the Kingdom of Sāmoa, *Translation of the Constitution adopted by the People of Samoa in 1875*, manuscript in Hawai'i State Archives, FO & Ex, miscellaneous foreign, June–Dec. 1875; Government of the Kingdom of Tonga, *Act of Constitution of Tonga*. Revised Edition 1988. Originally enacted and published 1875. For an overview of these constitutions and their development processes, see Lātūkefu, "Constitution-Making."

of Kamehameha I (Diamond 141). His ideas were eventually taken up, and their implementation attempted with more rigor than ever before, by King Kalākaua in the 1880s under the advice of Walter Murray Gibson, whose interesting career will be explored below.

### **Walter Murray Gibson & John E. Bush: Putting theory into practice.**

Walter Murray Gibson was born in Kearsley, a small village in Northumberland, England, in 1822 and lived an adventurous life beginning at a young age. At ten, he emigrated with his parents to Montréal, now in Canada, and from there moved on to New York, then to rural South Carolina, where he married in 1838 and spent his early adult life. His wife soon passed away, and as a young widower and single father of three, Gibson returned to New York and became a merchant. Gifted in foreign languages, he became acquainted with the diplomatic circles of Washington, DC and ended up being appointed Consul General for several Central American nations. From early on, he envisioned himself as a leading advisor or aide to the government of a small non-European state, which would actually become a pattern in his life. In his first such venture, in 1851, the government of Guatemala commissioned him to build a navy for the small republic and purchase arms and a ship for it in the United States. The project failed, however; the armaments were seized by the US Coast Guard before the vessel could sail because the shipment was in violation of US neutrality laws (Adler and Kamins 1–15; Bailey 1–36).

Possessing a ship but no arms, Gibson set out on an adventure that took him to the city of Palembang on the island of Sumatra in the Dutch East Indies (today's Indonesia), where he intended to offer his services to Sultan Abdulrahman Nazaruddin of Jambi, then still an independent realm but threatened with a possible Dutch colonial takeover (Locher-Scholten 101–14). His letter to the sultan was intercepted by the Dutch colonial authorities, who had Gibson arrested and jailed in Weltevreden, a suburb of the Dutch colonial capital of Batavia (now Jakarta) on Java, where he was charged with treason and faced execution. Due to US consular intervention, his trial dragged along, and after being incarcerated for more than a year, he finally escaped and fled the Dutch Indies aboard a US ship. During his long confinement as a prisoner, Gibson had studied the Dutch and Malay languages, and gathered a wide range of information on the Malay Archipelago. Back in America, he recounted his adventures in a best-selling book, *The Prison of Weltevreden* (Gibson, *Prison*), which, promoted at a series of lectures, guaranteed him an income for the next few years (Bailey 37–86).

Thirsty for more adventures, Gibson moved with his family to the Mormon settlement in Utah, joined the church, and received an appointment from Mormon leader Brigham Young as a Mormon missionary to Japan, the Malay Archipelago, and the Pacific Islands. It was in this capacity that Gibson arrived in the



Figure 4:  
*Walter Murray Gibson (1822–1888).*  
*Photo taken before 1888 by unknown*  
*photographer. (Source: Wikipedia.*  
 Original in Honolulu Advertiser  
 collection)

Hawaiian Kingdom in June of 1861. He immediately befriended Hawaiian Minister of Foreign Affairs Robert Wyllie, who took a great interest in Gibson's expertise on the Malay Archipelago, and who, in turn, introduced Gibson to Charles St. Julian's ideas of a Hawai'i-led independent Polynesia (Adler and Kamins 55–56). In an article published in a Honolulu newspaper shortly after his arrival, Gibson combined the two visions into a call for pan-Asia-Pacific independence: "Malaysia, (i.e. all Asia, Polynesia and all shades and qualities of races and nations,) has within itself, the qualities from which must be built up the outward and visible form of its institutions" ("Lectures" 2).

After leading the Hawaiian Mormon community for three years, and ending up being excommunicated by the Church leaders in Utah for disobeying church directives and teaching false doctrines 1864 (Adler and Kamins 69–76), Gibson, having gained full fluency in Hawaiian, decided to remain in the Kingdom and became a naturalized Hawaiian citizen on March 26, 1866 (Naturalization Index, Hawai'i State Archives). Now taking on the role of rancher on the island of Lāna'i, and residing part of the time in Lāhaina, Gibson (Figure 4) began a journalistic and political career in Honolulu in the 1870s.

In February of 1873, he started *Nuhou: The Hawaiian News*, a bilingual newspaper that strongly advocated for the protection of Hawai'i's independence and denounced schemes that might jeopardize this independence, such as the proposed lease of Pearl Harbor Lagoon to the United States as a naval base, which was being suggested by some local residents of American origin associated with the

“missionary party”<sup>7</sup> (Adler and Kamins 90–95). Most descendants of the ABCFM missionaries, it needs to be recalled here, were not fully assimilated into Hawaiian society and did not genuinely care for their new nation. Former missionary William Richards, the loyal and helpful assistant to the Hawaiian diplomatic mission of 1843 mentioned earlier, was rather an exception in that sense. Attitudes of white supremacy and contempt for all aspects of Hawaiian culture were prevalent among most of the other missionaries, and they aspired to political domination at the expense of both the Hawaiian monarchy and the Hawaiian people. Even though virtually all were Hawaiian subjects by birth or naturalization papers, many in fact had not abandoned their allegiance to America, and were secretly plotting the annexation of Hawai‘i by the United States (Vann). Gibson, in contrast, took his Hawaiian allegiance seriously and employed his newspaper to vehemently oppose this group of potential traitors, continuing the tradition of an earlier Hawaiian nationalist press of the 1860s such as *Ka Hoku o Ka Pakipika* and *Ke Au Okoa* (Mookini vii–viii; Silva, *Aloha Betrayed* 63–86).

Gibson’s assimilation into Hawaiian society included the naming of himself and his family members. He signed his editorials as “Kipikona,” a Hawaiianization of his last name, and preferred the Hawaiian spelling “Talula” for the name of his daughter Tallulah. Later, some of Gibson’s Hawaiian-born grandchildren, even though genetically fully European, would be given Hawaiian middle names, namely Hooulu (after King Kalākaua’s governing motto *Ho‘oulu Lāhui*, “to increase the Nation”), Kanaiaupuni (“the Conqueror,” an epithet of Kamehameha the Great), and Kuliakanuu (“Strive for the Summit,” the personal motto of Queen Kapi‘olani) (Gibson, *Diaries* 100).

Gibson also used his newspaper to familiarize Hawaiians with the Malay world, just as he had done with his book for English-speakers. For that purpose, he serialized *Ke Kaa o Lakamana. Ke Koa Nui o ka Poe Malae* (“The Story of Laksamana, the Great Warrior of the Malay people”), a Hawaiian rendering of the Malay epic story of Hang Tuah, and *Saipa (Sayeepa), Ke Kaikamahine Kaula o ka Mokupuni Sumatera* (“Sayeepa, the magician girl of the Island of Sumatra”), a romantic story of his own experiences in Sumatra and Java as recounted earlier in *The Prison of Weltevreden* (Gibson, “Lakamana”; Gibson “Saipa”). Unlike the ‘exoticism’ of those places he had presented to his Western audiences, in his Hawaiian writings he emphasized the linguistic, genetic, and cultural similarities between Hawaiians and Malays (Gibson, “No Hea Mai”; *Address* 4–5). This promotion of a pan-Austronesian orientation foreshadowed and might have influenced that of King Kalākaua, who discussed the same ideas with the Maharajah of Johor in present-day Malaysia when he visited him on his world tour in 1881 (Requilmán 164).

When King Lunalilo passed away in February 1873 without naming an heir, Gibson threw his full editorial support behind Kalākaua, one of the two candi-

7 Term after Liliuokalani 1990: 180–81.

dates contending for the kingship in a vote of the legislature mandated by the constitution in such cases. Kalākaua, albeit not without controversy, won, which brought Gibson one step closer to the center of political power. In 1878 he was elected a member of the House of Representatives for Maui, which marked the beginning of his career as a political officeholder. He was re-elected in 1880 and 1882, and in 1880 was also appointed to the King's Privy Council and the Board of Health, of which he became president in 1882 (Hawai'i State archives, Office record for Gibson, Walter Murray). In the latter capacity, he published a bilingual *Sanitary Instructions for Hawaiians*, the first book of its kind to systematically, and in a way sympathetic to the Hawaiians, tackle the prevalent problem of dramatic native population decrease due to introduced diseases and unfamiliar ways of life brought by the influx of Western culture (Gibson, *Sanitary Instructions*). In addition to concerning himself with the health of the Kingdom's subjects, as a legislator Gibson continued his support for Kalākaua's increasingly assertive nationalist projects, such as the King's 1881 tour around the world, the construction of a new royal palace, and the erection of a partially-gilded statue of Kamehameha the Great (Adler and Kamins 113, 122, 128). At the same time, Gibson remained active as a publisher and editor of Hawaiian patriotic newspapers *Ka Elele Poakolu* (1880–1881), *Ka Nupepa Elele Poakolu* (1882–1885), *Ka Elele Poaono* (1885), and *Ka Nupepa Elele* (1885–1887) (Mookini 49). Moreover, in 1880, Gibson had procured a government loan from Kalākaua's minister of the interior, John E. Bush, to purchase the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, Honolulu's leading English-language paper, hitherto a mouthpiece of the "missionary party," which he had converted into a loyal voice of the Kingdom to reach out to the Western immigrant community as well. This deal marked the beginning of the collaboration of Gibson and Bush, another talented politician and newspaperman, which would endure throughout the 1880s.

John Edward Bush (Figure 5), also known by his Hawaiianized name of Ailuene Buki, was born in 1842 in Honolulu of mixed Hawaiian and European descent. In his youth he learned the printing trade and spent many years working in the printing office of the early English-language Hawaiian newspaper *Polyne-sian*, which familiarized him with the newspaper business. He also took an early interest in travel and adventure, and he spent some time as a sailor on a whaling ship. Later he worked as a clerk in the Department of Interior and held other positions in the government bureaucracy. King Kalākaua appointed him governor of Kaua'i in 1877, a position he held until 1880, and one that was usually reserved for close relatives of the royal family ("John E. Bush Passes" 2). In 1880 he became a member of the House of Nobles and minister of the Interior, as well as president of the Board of Health.<sup>8</sup>

8 Office record for Bush, John Edward; Hawai'i State Archives.



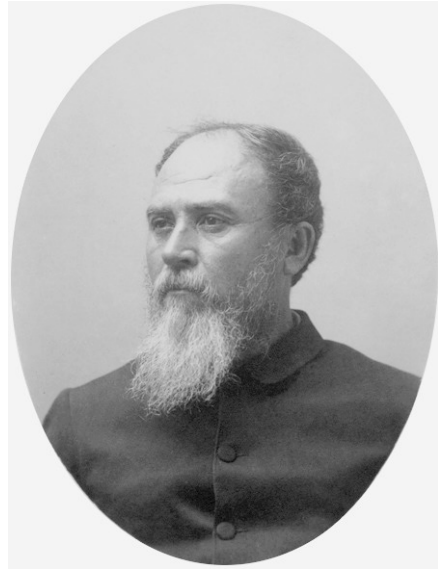


Figure 5:  
*John Edward Bush (1842–1906). Photo taken before 1906 by unknown photographer. (Source: Wikipedia. Original in Bishop Museum collection)*

In May 1882, Kalākaua appointed a new cabinet, with Gibson as Premier and minister of foreign affairs (the latter position, heading the cabinet, he would hold for the next five years), and Bush as minister of finance (Adler and Kamins 129). In 1883, Gibson was appointed President of the Board of Education, and between 1883 and 1887 also served for several short periods as minister of the interior and attorney-general.<sup>9</sup> Under Gibson’s premiership, Bush would play another major role in the government, albeit not without some controversies. He served as a cabinet minister until mid-1883, when he was fired for irregularities (“Ua Pau”), but was soon rehabilitated and subsequently became one of the Kingdom’s leading diplomats.

The period of the Gibson- and Bush-led cabinets, self-identified by Gibson as a “new departure in Hawaiian politics” (Kuykendall 3: 254), marked the heyday of King Kalākaua’s rule, which is often referred to as the Hawaiian ‘renaissance’ or ‘golden age’. Under the leadership of Kalākaua, Gibson, and their associates, the Kingdom pursued a policy of nationalist prestige and native cultural revival, culminating in 1883 in an elaborate coronation ceremony for the King that combined Western royal splendor with traditional Hawaiian displays and performances, and included the development of other activities initiated in a similar direction, for example, the formation of the *Hale Naua* society to study and promote Hawaiian cultural practices and the publication of the *Kumulipo*, an ancient epic chant of cosmic origin (Bailey 193–97; Silva, *Aloha Betrayed* 87–122). Part of this reassertion of Hawaiian identity was a policy of Hawaiian primacy in the

9 Office record for Gibson, Walter Murray; Hawai‘i State Archives.

Pacific, finally bringing to fruition and further developing the project conceptualized by Charles St. Julian three decades earlier.

### ***Ka Hoku o Osiania: The Star of Oceania***

In an editorial in August 1883, Gibson announced a new direction for Hawaiian foreign policy, arguing that “if anyone is to interfere to prevent further aggrandization of foreign and distant powers in the Pacific, Hawaii ought to do it” (“Islands” 2). In line with this stance, on August 23, 1883, Gibson wrote a formal diplomatic protest to the governments of twenty-six countries of the world (Horn 70–71) against the colonial partitioning of Oceania by Western powers, concluding that:

[h]is Hawaiian Majesty’s Government, Speaking for the Hawaiian people, so happily prospering through national independence, makes earnest appeal to the Governments of great and enlightened States, that they will recognize the inalienable rights of the several native communities of Polynesia to enjoy opportunities for progress and self-government, and will guarantee to them the same favorable opportunities which have made Hawaii prosperous and happy, and which incite her national spirit to lift up a voice among the Nations in behalf of sister islands and groups of Polynesia. (*Protest*)

Of all the countries addressed, ironically only Gibson’s former jailors, the Netherlands, expressed their explicit support for the Hawaiian position (Horn 72), while most other governments chose to ignore it, although this did not discourage Kalākaua and Gibson from further advancing their pan-Polynesian position.

Inspired by existing official orders of decoration of the Hawaiian Kingdom, such as the Royal Order of Kamehameha I, as well as the “Order of Arossi,” created semiprivately by Charles St. Julian in the 1850s (Diamond 81), on December 16, 1886, Kalākaua devised the *Oihana Kea Hoohanohano Alii o ka Hoku o Osiania*, or, in English, “Royal Order of the Star of Oceania,” in recognition of services “in advancing the good name and influence of Hawai’i in the Islands of Polynesia, and other groups of the surrounding Ocean in order to promote harmonious cooperation among kindred people and contiguous states and communities” (*Statutes* 1). Its insignia (Figure 6), featuring a beacon over the sea, probably symbolizing Hawai’i, radiating out to six stars, probably symbolizing the other archipelagos of Oceania, were designed by one of Kalākaua’s court artists, Isobel Strong, the daughter-in-law of Robert Louis Stevenson (Medcalf 46). A few days later, the King commissioned John Edward Bush as “Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the King of Samoa, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the King of Tonga, and High Commissioner to the Sovereign Chiefs and Peoples of Polynesia” (Horn 105). In that capacity, Bush outranked



Figure 6:  
*Insignia of the Grand Cross of  
 the Royal Order of the Star of  
 Oceania. Designed by Isobel  
 Strong. Manufactured c. 1887.  
 'Iolani Palace Galleries collec-  
 tion. (Source: Photo courtesy of  
 the Friends of 'Iolani Palace)*

any diplomatic representative of the Western powers in the region, none of whom had a higher rank than consul, and he would thus become *ex officio* dean of the diplomatic corps on every island he visited (Cook 273).

Bush's first diplomatic assignment was to Apia, the capital of Samoa. As related above, Hawaiian influence had been instrumental in the creation of the first Samoan constitutional government in the 1870s, but this scheme had quickly failed, due to both internal and external factors antagonistic to political centralization in Samoa. Kalākaua and Gibson looked at this with great regret, and thus launched a new attempt at state-building there, this time through direct Hawaiian intervention. Bush arrived in Apia in January of 1887 and built a permanent Hawaiian Legation there. A few months later, the Hawaiian government dispatched to Samoa its only warship, the HHMS *Kaimiloa*, which Gibson, now also secretary of war and the navy, had specifically procured for the mission, in order to defend Samoan independence against Western imperialist interference (Horn 97–170; Cook 201–76).

In February, Bush concluded a Treaty of Political Confederation between Hawai'i and Samoa with Malietoa Laupepa, the leading contender for the Samoan kingship.<sup>10</sup> In the treaty, Malietoa pledged that he would “conform to whatever measures may hereafter be adopted by His Majesty Kalakaua and be mutually agreed upon to promote and carry into effect this Political Confederation,” basically agreeing to Hawaiian suzerainty over Samoa. Following consultations with

10 Treaty between the Kingdom of Samoa and the Kingdom of the Hawaiian Islands, 17 February 1887. Original Samoan version and English translation in Folder 1887 Samoan Affairs, Hawn. Envoy to Samoa (Bush) Dispatches, March–May, FO&Ex, Hawai'i State Archives; Hawaiian version published in *Ka Nupepa Elele*, 2 April 1887: 3.

leading chiefs and European settlers, Bush drafted a “Temporary Scheme of Government for Samoa” in June 1887.<sup>11</sup> This would in fact have established a Hawaiian Protectorate over the archipelago. Roughly based on the 1875 Samoan constitution, the Bush draft strengthened Malietoa’s position but also placed key positions in the Samoan government under direct Hawaiian control, which, in Bush’s words, was “desirable until the government is well established.”

Since the 1875 Samoan constitution had not produced a permanent government, the Hawaiian Protectorate might have been the only way to establish a functioning state in Samoa. And since the foreign oversight was exercised not by Western imperialists but by fellow Polynesians, it would probably have been more acceptable to the Samoans than colonial rule by a Western power. Modern Hawaiian scholar Kealani Cook nevertheless points out that Bush, and his secretary, Henry Poor, even more so, displayed a similar degree of paternalism toward their Samoan “brethren,” as did most Europeans toward Polynesians in general (Cook 201–73).

Unfortunately, the Hawaiian initiative failed within only a few months, due to German gunboat diplomacy. The German Empire went as far as threatening war against the Hawaiian Kingdom for interfering in Samoa, while German military forces themselves intervened, kidnapped Malietoa Laupepa, and installed his main rival, Tupua Tamasese Titimaea, as a German puppet king. (Stevenson 36–44; Meleiseā 39). The Hawaiian Kingdom could not rescue Samoa and still accomplish its mission to save Oceania as a whole from Western imperialism since the Kingdom itself came under attack during the same time. Preoccupied with Oceania-focused foreign policy, Gibson “utterly neglected his first duty in protecting the king and his own government: to have more guns than the opposition” (Adler and Kamins 181). Unwilling to accept living in a multiethnic nation based on Hawaiian cultural values, and insisting on white supremacy, members of the “missionary party,” with the help of the Honolulu Rifles, an armed militia of ostensible ‘volunteers’ for the Hawaiian military, overthrew the Hawaiian government in late June 1887, chased Gibson out of the country after attempting to lynch him, and forced the fittingly called “Bayonet Constitution”<sup>12</sup> on King Kalākaua, which rendered him and his subjects virtually powerless (Liliuokalani 177–84). Hawai‘i subsequently fell into a decade of political instability and civilian unrest, with frequent changes in the composition of government and various attempted revolutionary acts (Young 18). The coup also “marked the beginning of a lengthy eclipse in Island internationalist activity,” (Hooper 65) and any pan-Oceanic projects were shut down by the new power holders.

11 Temporary Scheme of Government for Samoa. 21 June 1887. Folder 1887 Samoan Affairs, Hawn. Envoy to Samoa (Bush) Dispatches, June–August, FO&Ex, Hawai‘i State Archives.

12 *Kumukanawai o ko Hawai‘i Pae Aina, i kakau inoa ia e ka Moi Kalakaua, Iulai 7, a i kukalaia Iulai 7, 1887*. Honolulu 1887: Hawaiian Gazette Publishing Company. Reprinted and transcribed in *Ka Ho‘oilina/The Legacy: Puke Pa‘i ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i/Journal of Hawaiian Language Sources* 3 (2004): 22–63.

Forced out of the country he so deeply cared for, Gibson passed away in exile in San Francisco in February of 1888.<sup>13</sup> After his body was repatriated to Honolulu, his funeral was conducted in the style of a Hawaiian *ali'i*, including the display of *kahili* (feather standards), and hundreds of attendees, mainly aboriginal Hawaiians, attested to his continuing popularity after his ouster (“W. M. Kipikona” of 15 Feb.; “Gibson’s Funeral”).

Recalled from his aborted diplomatic mission in Samoa, Bush continued to play an important role in Hawaiian politics. As the editor of the nationalist newspapers *Ka Oiaio* (1889–1896) and *Ka Leo o ka Lahui* (1881, 1894–96), Bush was one of the leaders of the popular resistance not only against the “Bayonet Constitution,” but to the even more oppressive US-installed regime that followed, even though for a while he also became a bitter opponent of Queen Lili‘uokalani (Mookini xi), who succeeded King Kalākaua when the latter died in 1891. Besides politics, Bush was also active in religious matters. He played a major role in the syncretistic independent *Hoomana Naauao* church (Kekipi 22–23), and in Kalākaua’s work on documenting and perpetuating the ancient Hawaiian religion, as reported by Bush’s granddaughter, Leinani Melville (iii-xiii). Bush died in 1906.

## A century of distorted historical discourse

Having thus given an overview of the Hawaiian Kingdom’s role in nineteenth-century Pacific politics, to be understood as only a brief narrative of a few selective aspects of the Kingdom’s complex history, we should note that much of this is all but unknown to most scholars, and even less to the general public, both in and outside of Hawai‘i today. A condensed survey of Hawaiian history since the coup of 1887 might provide at least some explication of this collective loss of memory.

### *Oceania beheaded, drawn, and quartered*

When Hawaiian resistance to the 1887 coup proved successful, the Honolulu Rifles were disbanded in 1890 (Kuykendall 3: 465–66), and Queen Lili‘uokalani was planning to replace the “Bayonet Constitution” with one somewhat similar to that of 1864. However, members of the “missionary party,” unwilling to hand back their usurped power to a pluralistic Hawaiian government, conspired with the US diplomatic representative in January of 1893 to initiate a US military invasion of the Kingdom, which, without a declaration of war, was in blatant violation of the then valid rules of international law (Liliuokalani 229–42; Kuykendall, 3: 582–84). The details of what followed are beyond the scope of this paper, but the eventual result was that despite clearly expressed Hawaiian popular oppo-

13 See his Obituary “W.M. Kipikona” of 11 Feb. 1888.

sition, the United States began permanent occupation of the Islands in 1898, purportedly annexing them through a joint resolution of the US Congress, a procedure that both defied the US constitution and once more violated international law. Even though the illegality of both actions (1893 and 1898) was admitted by US government officials at the time, an admission reiterated in 1993, the United States government has yet to undo these actions and the Hawaiian Islands have been under prolonged US occupation ever since (Sai, “Beginning the Transition”).

The U.S. takeover of Hawai‘i virtually ‘beheaded’ Oceania, disabling its most developed nation-state, the only one with its own network of international diplomats, a fact which in turn facilitated the colonial takeover of the other archipelagos. As French royalist writer Frédéric Amaretti put it, “This is how some American sugar planters have destroyed the work of the Great Kamehameha,” whom he prized as “[...] a true Grand Man; he is the hero of the Kanaka race” (Amouretti).<sup>14</sup> By 1900, every single Pacific Island nation had in some way, directly or indirectly, become subject to Western imperial rule.

Within Hawai‘i, the consequences of US imperialism were no less devastating. A law of the US-created puppet regime prior to the official annexation virtually banned the use of the Hawaiian Language in schools in 1896, which, together with later US government policies brought it to the brink of extinction by the mid-twentieth century, and in consequence, the last Hawaiian-language newspaper closed down in 1948 (Silva, *Aloha Betrayed* 144; Nogelmeier 11–16, 64). In addition, US rule resulted in uncontrolled mass migration from the United States, turning Hawaiian nationals into a minority in their own country (Sai, “Beginning the Transition” 162–63). The local population was indoctrinated with US propaganda in schools, which included a twisted history and, disregarding all evidence to the contrary, claimed that Hawaiians actually desired US annexation, and that it was done legally through a treaty, even though no such document exists.<sup>15</sup>

### *Misrepresentations of the Hawaiian Kingdom as a prelude to US Empire*

As a result of more than a century of these policies, today fewer than one per cent of Hawai‘i’s residents speak Hawaiian, many are monolingual English-speakers – due to the neglect of foreign-language teaching in Anglo-Saxon education systems in general – and most have a very limited knowledge of Hawaiian history. In consequence, Hawaiian-language resources are largely inaccessible, if not unknown, to most people, and foreign sources about Hawai‘i and other parts of Oceania are equally inaccessible and obscure. This is even true for English-language materials published outside of Hawai‘i and the US, such as those by and about Charles St. Julian or on the subject of other Polynesian archipelagos.

<sup>14</sup> Translated from French by the author

<sup>15</sup> As examples, see for instance an 1899 history textbook (Alexander 1899) and the statue of US president William McKinley in front of McKinley High School in Honolulu, which displays a scroll inscribed “treaty of annexation.”

With so many source materials ignored, it is not surprising that the prevalent historiography of Hawai‘i has tended to regard the Islands as an outpost of North America, visually situated on most US maps as an insert somewhere to the southwest of California or even in the Gulf of Mexico, blurring its true geography as an Oceanic archipelago at the center of the Northern Pacific (as shown on Figure 2). Imperial rule by the United States has thus been seen as the Islands’ natural destiny, which then renders the Hawaiian Kingdom as a mere prelude to US annexation. While earlier writings that are outrightly racist against both Hawaiians and Asian immigrants and uninhibited in their display of US chauvinism are no longer considered accurate, except by some extremist right-wing fringe groups,<sup>16</sup> what replaced those writings at the end of the twentieth century in mainstream historiography was a ‘fatal-impact’ type of discourse, full of sympathy for the Hawaiian people, but still offering little acknowledgement of the nineteenth-century developments, and continuing to misinterpret them as preludes to US rule.

American anthropologist Sally Merry, for instance, in her book *Colonizing Hawai‘i: The Cultural Power of Law*, tends to lump together the diverse foreign influences on Hawai‘i during the nineteenth century as “American,” dismisses Ha‘alilio’s and Richards’ achievement of international recognition for the Kingdom in 1843 as a “temporary postponement of colonial annexation by the United States” (13), and names the US-born Richards as the active agent in the diplomatic mission while relegating Ha‘alilio, the delegation’s head, to a secondary status (84–85). American Studies scholar Robert Stauffer, in his case study of land tenure in a land section on O‘ahu, goes even further in his dismissal, suggesting that the Hawaiian Kingdom was “little more than a *de facto* unincorporated territory of the United States,” since “[t]he kingdom’s government was often American-dominated if not American-run” (73). Rather than seeing naturalized foreigners in Hawaiian government service as people of complex identities, and evaluating individually whether they served their monarchs loyally or not, Stauffer makes the generalizing assumption that if they were not native-born, they must have been “foreigners,” thereby disregarding their Hawaiian citizenship, and furthermore that they must have acted only in the interest of themselves, of other foreigners, or even of the government of their country of origin.

While the distortion of Hawaiian history is the most extreme in Oceania, other nineteenth-century native states in the Pacific have been subjected to somewhat similar analyses. The titles of two recent books, *Les théocraties missionnaires en Polynésie au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (“The missionary theocracies in Polynesia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century”) (Laux) and *Prelude to Empire: Consuls, Missionary Kingdoms and the Pre-Colonial South Seas* (Robson), imply that Polynesian Kingdoms were in reality ruled by missionaries, and only existed in order to yield to eventual colonial rule. It is also telling that *The Fantastic Life of Walter Murray Gibson: Hawaii’s*

16 For a detailed discussion of the changing US hegemonic discourse on Hawai‘i, see Moore 2011: 65–126.

*Minister of Everything* (Adler and Kamins) and *Creative Meddler: The Life and Fantasies of Charles St Julian* (Diamond), biographies of two of the people portrayed in this article – the book on Gibson published in Hawai‘i and the one on St. Julian in Australia (and more completely researched than the former) – each to some extent belittle the role played by the subjects of their research by romanticizing or ironizing them.

*Reclaiming Hawai‘i’s place in the center of Oceania*

During the last six decades, the impacts of Western imperialism in the Pacific region have slowly been reversed. The people of Java and Sumatra (and other islands) were able to cast off the Dutch colonial yoke after World War II under the leadership of Sukarno, Mohammad Hatta, and Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX of Yogyakarta, among others, to form the Republic of Indonesia, an achievement Kalākaua and Gibson would certainly have been proud of. In the insular Pacific, decolonization started with the independence of Western Samoa in 1962, even though the Samoan archipelago remains incompletely decolonized, with its eastern islands still a US territory today. Tonga, under British protectorate since 1900, regained its independence and became a fully recognized independent state in 1970, continuing to operate under its Hawaiian-inspired constitution of 1875. Fiji gained its independence in 1970 as well, and many other Pacific archipelagos followed suit in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Places like New Caledonia, Tahiti, and Rapa Nui, on the other hand, have so far remained colonial dependencies of France and Chile, but movements to free them from foreign imperial rule are on the rise there as well.

Unfortunately, the formerly leading nation of Oceania, the Hawaiian Kingdom, has remained under US occupation. Thus, even though parts of Oceania’s body have been reassembled, its head is still missing, at least politically speaking, albeit in many other ways, Hawai‘i has already started taking a leading role in the restoration of Oceanian identity. For example, the modern revival of traditional Polynesian navigation began in Hawai‘i in the 1970s with the voyages of the double-hulled canoe *Hōkūle‘a* (Finney).

In 1993, Tongan anthropologist Epele Hau‘ofa, a former private secretary to King Tāufa‘āhau Tupou IV, wrote a pathbreaking visionary essay titled “Our Sea of Islands,” in which he argues that the people of the Pacific, rather than seeing themselves as vulnerable small island communities, should think of themselves as a vast maritime civilization that includes the modern diasporic communities of Pacific Islanders in Western metropolises on the Pacific rim. What is intriguing is that Hau‘ofa conceived of this vision not in Tonga, Fiji, or Papua New Guinea (the three countries he lived in for longer periods of time), but during a visit to the island of Hawai‘i (Hau‘ofa 5), as if the spirit of the Hawaiian Kingdom and its earlier visionary pan-Oceanic policy had somehow, unknowingly inspired him.

The renewed awareness of Hawai‘i’s place in the center of the Pacific has been paralleled in the emergence of a new orientation of Hawaiian historiogra-



phy, particularly since the turn of the twenty-first century, represented by such scholars as Kamanamaikalani Beamer (“Na Wai”; “Ali‘i Selective”), Keanu Sai (“A Century Unchecked”; “Beginning the Transition”), and Kalawai‘a Moore (“He Hawai‘i Kākou”). Unlike representatives of the earlier U.S. hegemonic and fatal-impact discourses, representatives of this new inclination do not look at the Hawaiian Kingdom as a prelude to US imperialism, but rather focus on the dynamics of nineteenth-century Hawaiian politics within a global context, emphasizing the creative agency of Hawaiian leaders and their Western supporters in shaping and navigating those dynamics. This historiography is imbedded in a wider political movement to reshape present Hawaiian resistance to US rule into a state-centered Hawaiian Kingdom nationalism (Moore 215–19), based on the legal argument that the Kingdom was never lawfully dissolved, leading to the conclusion by many Hawaiians, once multiple layers of propaganda are cast off, that “We Are Who We Were,” as a Hawaiian anthropologist has entitled her dissertation (Cruz). As the late Hawaiian historian Kanalu Young, an early proponent of these ideas and mentor to many of the scholars mentioned here, including myself, summarizes it, there is a need for the “development of a body of publishable research that gives life and structure to a Hawaiian national consciousness and connects thereby to the theory of State continuity” (Young 1).

Extending Young’s argument to Oceania at large, it becomes clear that the periods of nation-state building in the mid-nineteenth century were indeed crucial for the development of national consciousness, and that Western colonialism or occupation were not the logical outcomes of these eras, but were, to the contrary, disruptive events with an adverse impact on the process of national development. To the credit of Robson, whom I earlier criticized for the teleologically charged title of his book, it needs to be mentioned that he concludes his work with an almost diametrically opposed assessment, namely that:

[i]t is common to divide Pacific history into three periods: pre-contact, colonial, and independent or post-colonial. This, however, does little or no service to the decades immediately preceding the imposition of colonial rule. This period is distinctive, important, and fascinating, in part because it was a time relatively unburdened by the particular inequalities among people that colonial rule later imposed and assumed. [...] The relationships thus formed [i.e., between Europeans and Islanders] were based essentially on the assumption that the chiefs ruled [...]. It was a time of change when everything was in a state of flux. No one knew what the ultimate political fate of the islands would be [...]. (Robson 173)

Just as Beamer warns against a fatalistic, “colonial” analysis of the Hawaiian Kingdom from the vantage point of later US occupation (Beamer, “Na Wai” 47–49), Robson’s conclusion points out the importance of a nondeterministic, nonteleological approach. It has been a great mistake, I believe, to analyze the

issues Pacific Island nations faced during the nineteenth century only in reference to later occurring foreign occupation and colonization. Rather, these issues should be looked at in reference to similar ones confronted by other non-Western modernizing societies during the same time period, especially those that have remained independent and whose historiography consequently has not been compromised by foreign rule, Siam and Japan as just two examples.

Two theoretical concepts that are particularly useful in this context are those of “parity” and “hybridity.” According to Hawai‘i-based Swiss historian Niklaus Schweizer,

[p]arity signifies an effort to be taken seriously by the Western powers, to be accepted as an equal and to be accorded the civilities and privileges established by international law. [...] The preferred option in Polynesia was to achieve at least a degree of parity with the West. (Schweizer 177)

On the other hand, parity alone is not sufficient to explain the Hawaiian Kingdom since the simplest way of achieving parity with the West would have been complete Westernization. Instead, according to Beamer, who warns against a false dichotomy between traditional and modern (“Ali‘i Selective” 142), what the leaders of the Hawaiian Kingdom did was hybridize existing traditional structures through a selective appropriation of Western modernity (“Na Wai” 102–03, 244). Creating a structure of hybridity, rather than simple Westernization, was thus a strategy for Hawaiians to achieve parity without losing their identity. I believe that it was this aspect of the Hawaiian Kingdom that made it such a popular model for other Pacific Islands to emulate, and convinced Hawaiian leaders and diplomats that they were indeed involved in making world history.

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**AGENTS OF RELIGIOUS  
TRANSFORMATION**





## **Catalysts of Concealed Change: Channappa Uttangi and Theophil Opoku as Go-Betweens in Local Interaction with the ‘Exotic’ Basel Mission<sup>1</sup>**

PAUL JENKINS

### **Introduction**

By definition, the arrival of an exotic Christian mission<sup>2</sup> with the capacity to be a stable and innovative presence sets off processes in its surrounding indigenous societies. The mission’s effort to tell Christian stories, translate Christian concepts, offer Christian explanations of people’s experiences with the world around them, and demonstrate Christian patterns of ethics and social life, will all necessarily call forth processes in indigenous intellectual and social history as people set out to understand in their own terms what is being communicated, and evaluate it for themselves.

Caveats have to be registered here, of course. Not all Christian missions will have told the same stories or explained the same concepts in the same way. Some missions will have brought a scientific worldview with them, others not. And their patterns of social life will often have been stamped by distinctive patterns of social organization in their home cultures.

- 1 I am very grateful to the members of the Rostock graduate school “Cultural Encounters and the Discourses of Scholarship” for having invited me to take part in the Rostock conference and for the investment of editorial work that has been made in this essay. Both have caused me to think, I hope constructively. I would also like to explicitly thank Dr. Michelle Gilbert of Trinity College, Hartford, CT, and Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, for the many years of Ghana-orientated cooperation and friendship, out of which the discussion of Theophil Opoku in this essay has emerged. Yale Divinity School and the Overseas Ministries Study Center, both in New Haven, the Pew Charitable Trust, and the Freie Akademische Gesellschaft in Basel have all, at different times, supported the research we have done on Opoku; and Dr. Patricia Purtschert did vital work for us as research assistant in the German manuscripts from Akwapim housed in the Basel Mission archive. I would also like to thank the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society (CISRS) Bangalore, and its recent director, Dr. Godwin Shiri, for their diligence in making sure I was informed of and involved in the revival of the memory of Chinnappa Uttangi; Dr. S.R. Gunjal (Dharwad) for his enthusiasm and the quality of his work; and Bishop Prabhakar Rao, (also Dharwad), for his interest and support.
- 2 I am referring to the Basel Mission as “exotic” on the premise that it must have seemed strange to the members of the receiving societies or cultures.

Maybe missions will not everywhere meet or have met cultures articulate enough to demand dialogue and hold up their own end in discussion and interaction – though that is a caveat I prefer to mention as a possibility only. Some missions have a good track record for conducting the serious linguistic work necessary to communicate in indigenous languages. Others have tended to rely on the language of the colonial power. The quality of their relationship to environing cultures can, therefore, be very varied. Mission history in Africa has, after all, a long way to go in researching cultural interfaces. It has scarcely ever integrated into its analyses that final pragmatic exploration, in twentieth-century Anglophone colonial anthropology, of the contrast between the history and dynamics of cultures with powerful centralized monarchies, and those in less politically articulated “tribes without rulers” (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard; Bohannan). Where the courts of powerful kings and chiefs provide(d) a clear focus for dialogue and intellectual process, the more diffuse centers of segmentary societies may not have done, though Jan Vansina’s analysis of the intellectual history of the central African rain forests suggests that this would be a major underestimate of their functioning. And it seems to me, anyway, that an enlightened insight among missions with long experience should be that our common human inheritance makes every human culture potentially as complex and as intellectually rich as every other. And therefore, in the presence of exotic missions, interaction and dialogue may be expected to have happened everywhere, whether they have been documented or not.

Of course, the history of these intellectual and social interactions may well end with a receiving society building a blockade that at most allows exotic missions to exert influence through education focused on what is judged to be useful knowledge in local terms, with no particular religious reference. This is, in a sentence, the history of much of modern Christian missionizing among Islamicized peoples. At the other end of the continuum of power, in situations where there was a close hegemonial relationship linking missions and colonial governments, the ability of indigenous societies to enter into dialogue with missions may have been debilitated – in King Leopold’s Congo, for example (Vansina 239–48).

But there are many parts of the world where the indigenous processes initiated by impulses originating in the interaction with exotic missions in the fields of religion, general education, economic activities and social change have been complex, open-ended and an important part of the whole history of self-driven modernization, not to mention a basis on which indigenous communities have adjusted their own systems and values. These interactions, however, and the persons actively engaged in them, are not easy to define in specific local cases. One major problem is the missions’ own historic propaganda and identity historiography.<sup>3</sup> In the decades of their greatest overall power – i.e., the high colonial period,

3 Mission historiography – not least in celebration of missionary anniversaries (and this includes major works like their official histories, often published to mark the centenary of their founding) – was aimed at articulating the leadership’s policies and writing up the

from the mid-nineteenth century to the Second World War – their impact, (and potential as generators of archives), was supported by masses of donors who were united in a view of the world that gave their own detailed convictions and patterns of life unique authority. Literature about nonconforming ideas and attitudes in their “mission fields” scarcely existed – or reports about such things were used to emphasize how strong the powers of darkness were there. This means that work in mission archives, searching out indigenous, nonconforming elements in local Christian history, is difficult and onerous. In Basel it means trying to find documents in a large and relatively opaque archive that are capable of furthering more than impressionistic research, and of being integrally read “against the grain.”

Modern reassessments of the intellectual and social history of indigenous Christian movements are also hindered by more recent factors. There is the need, in principle, to be able to use one of the score or so of non-Western languages in which the interaction between local communities and Basel missionaries has been conducted.<sup>4</sup> Ironically, all Basel missionaries in the colonial period had to become fluent in one of these tongues, but as archivist in the Basel Mission House in the era of independence I rarely met a nonnative speaker who was competent in Twi or Kannada, the languages relevant to this paper.<sup>5</sup> In the present day successor churches, there is also a lack of sensitivity to the continuities of the patterns of intellectual and social life that existed before the arrival of missionaries. The U.S. Tea Party approach of implacable *Christian* conservatism is a factor in many non-Western churches and, for example, buries the history of interaction in which indigenous roots play an active and nonconforming role in the firm belief that since they were not part of the missionaries’ public description of what they were doing, they are not part of positive church history. Further, in many parts of the world, an anticolonial nationalism still exists that has no interest in formulating a balanced assessment of what is asserted to be a movement of promoting a colonizing ideology.<sup>6</sup> The Bharatiya Janata Party’s (BJP) insistence that

organization’s achievements in terms of its superior truth and morality, with its supporters as target readership. Heterodox contributions to the mission, in the view of the leadership, were understressed, and as long as a mission was operating according to the terms of a colonial paradigm the contribution of non-Westerners to the mission’s work was also underrepresented.

- 4 The Basel Mission is one of the classical Pietist-Protestant missions founded c.1800. Its main support was drawn from Switzerland and southwestern Germany. In the period up until 1914 it concentrated its overseas work in southeastern Ghana, Cameroon, southwestern India, and South China. Miller provides the best available introduction to the organization in English.
- 5 The main exception in relation to Kannada is the Tübingen cultural specialist Katrin Binder, who has learned to take part in *Yakshagana* performances, the popular theater of the coastal region of Karnataka, and has written a doctoral thesis on *Yakshagana*. She has also published on the history of the Basel Mission in Karnataka, for example, Binder, “The Ravana Digvijaya.”
- 6 The three substantial studies that have been carried out by non-native speakers able to communicate in the local language with populations living in areas where Basel Mission work has been important are Constable, a study of Hakka-speaking populations in the

all real Indians are Hindus is only a particularly persistent and powerful example of the wish in many parts of the world to squeeze Christianity out of regional and national histories as part of a continuing resistance to Western influence.<sup>7</sup>

In this general context the search for people who act as catalysts, “carrying” the indigenous intellectual and social processes initiated by the presence of an exotic mission, is important, but difficult. The term ‘go-between’, therefore, is very useful when it comes to helping us focus on this field. It is no theory-determined neologism but an old expression<sup>8</sup> and, as befitting a term from common speech, highly ambivalent, with significances ranging from ‘honorable negotiation’ to ‘betrayal’. Both may well have been applied, by different parties, to the individuals we are concerned with here. Moreover, it is clearly a term denoting concrete interaction between real existing entities, and thus draws scholarship’s attention to a deeper and more extensive consciousness of the nature and historical development of the non-Western entity (or entities) involved. One result of this is to make it more clear than it usually is that while missions tended to write history tracing the progress of their orthodoxy, there must be, everywhere where a missionary society had a substantial presence for some decades, a fascinating and ‘other’ history, with indigenous roots, of acceptance and rejection.

I have highlighted here two go-betweens for whom my own incapacity with the relevant languages is to a significant degree overcome. In the first case, Indian speakers of Kannada<sup>9</sup> have mounted a campaign to make Channappa Uttangi’s life history and writings available in English (Gunjal, *Life and Work*; Wesley).

In the case of Theophil Opoku, the second go-between under consideration, his reports to the Mission headquarters in Basel were in English, and I am involved in a project with Michelle Gilbert, an American anthropologist, which will publish these reports with commentaries. In Basel we supply knowledge of flanking archival material in German, and Gilbert brings to the project a quarter of a century of experience in social and intellectual research in the ambient lan-

New Territories of Hong Kong, Klein, and Heinrich Balz’s massive and innovative three-volume study of cultural change in and around Basel Mission work in the last century in an ethnic group in the rain forests of West Cameroon. Balz’s work was, however, facilitated by linguistic change in Cameroon in which Pidgin English has become a general medium of communication, much reducing the need to be able to conduct research in ancient ethnic languages like Duala or Bakossi.

7 The Hindu Nationalist attitude to Christian missions is pointedly documented in Arun Shourie’s publications on this theme. The fact that, on the other hand, a vigorous Indian reaction against the BJP “saffronization” of Indian history has prompted a strong interest in an innovative history of missions and churches there has, I suggest, not yet made an impact in Western circles, which should really be interested in the opportunities for bicultural research this offers.

8 According to the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, the term was first mentioned in 1598.

9 Kannada, Uttangi’s mother-tongue, is an Indian regional language spoken by about thirty-five million people in Karnataka, a state founded in 1966 (originally under the name of Mysore) to bring speakers of that language into one political unit. They had previously been divided up among three states of the Indian Union.

guages of the region of Africa concerned (see, e.g., Gilbert, “Christian Executioner,” “Sudden Death,” “Cimmerian Darkness”).<sup>10</sup>

I intend to show that in these specific cases, publicly accessible sources in English are strong enough to support nonorthodox presentations of the dynamics of change that are otherwise concealed by orthodoxy in our sources. Though it will also become clear that – not surprisingly, in view of the great differences between the regions of Africa and Asia where the Basel Mission worked in the colonial period – Uttangi’s and Opoku’s roles as go-betweens were rather different from one another.

### **Channappa Uttangi (Karnataka, 1881–1962), a Forgotten Intellectual Go-Between**

The potential that a mission’s identity historiography has to suppress unorthodox figures and reduce them to silence is well exemplified by the changing historical significance of Channappa Uttangi, who was, as far as we know at the moment, the earliest missionary of the Basel Mission – indigenous or expatriate – to articulate a dialogical approach to other religious communities.

Uttangi was born into the third generation of a Kannada-speaking Christian family in the last quarter of the nineteenth century in the region around the twin cities of Dharwad and Hubli in Northern Karnataka, India. He studied in the Basel Mission’s theological seminary in Mangalore (capital of the district Dakshina Kannada) in the early years of the twentieth century. He then became an

<sup>10</sup> In respect of Opoku this paper is a direct descendant of an essay published by Middleton in 1983, a liberating analysis for the present writer, written by a practising anthropologist, of relations between “Presbyterianism” and “Akropong tradition” in the late 1970s. Middleton’s study was the first one of which I was aware, in which a secular anthropologist took an unbiased, open-ended look at relations between a mission’s long-standing successor church and its environing culture, and communicated types of observation which were quite novel to the academic world. His paper, incidentally, was first presented as an academic lecture in Basel and Tübingen in December 1979 to mark the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the first Basel missionaries on the Ghanaian coast.

Middleton observed and analyzed complex interactions between the two entities which were overlooked by the then expatriate members of the church staff, and which were regarded, in the dominant Ghanaian intellectual discourse of the time, as separate, dichotomous and conflicted. His results emphasized the point – frequently not stressed enough in the academic literature – that traditional communities are often energetically inclusive by nature, while missions with a colonial paradigm tend to work by creating social dichotomies. At any rate from his basis in the then contemporary world Middleton hypothesized – unrolling history back into the past, as it were – that already in the nineteenth century there must have been the kind of substantial mutual adjustments between the two sides which are now confirmed in documentary fashion by the report of Theophil Opoku discussed here.

evangelist with some additional administrative duties in the Basel Mission's local schools and hostels, probably serving later as a pastor, and then retiring in 1942.<sup>11</sup>

In the substantial official history of the Basel Mission in the interwar years Uttangi is mentioned once, in the kind of short phrase devoted to a marginal figure, as having put out a Kannada publication on Saddhu Sundar Singh (Witschi 280).<sup>12</sup> In fact, he is probably the first member of the Basel Mission, at any level, to have formulated the principle of dialogical relationships with adherents of other religions. This first public statement of this intention about which we know occurred during a speech delivered in Ranebennur/Karnataka in 1918 to Hindu notables to celebrate Christmas. In it Uttangi cited an ironic Indian nickname for missionaries – “those-who-praise-only-their-own-religion-and-damn-all-the-others.”<sup>13</sup> His self-appointed task, he declared, was to abandon this dichotomizing discourse, and instead, to speak and write in appreciation of the other religions he was encountering, indeed to praise his own deity, Christ, not least in terms that could be derived from his hearers' existing values and patterns of thought. He went on to tell his audience in Ranebennur that:

I have been struggling to arrive at the truth concerning Christ [...] I would even be ready to follow Hindu philosophy and accept Christ as one of us, as a common man and not God incarnate if Hindu philosophy[,] which excels in its strides [sic], can unravel the mystery of Christ basing its conclusions thus on the Gospel accounts. (Uttangi, “Bethlehem” 37).

Later in that same lecture of 1918, after a critical review of some Western philosophical concepts applied to Christ, he undertook a dense exploration of the way a whole cluster of Hindu concepts like *Guna* (virtue) could be profitably applied to understanding the person of Christ (Uttangi “Bethlehem” 27–49, here 37–44).<sup>14</sup>

My attention was drawn to Uttangi in the early 2000s. In my thirty years of trying to promote, from my position as Basel Mission archivist, innovative research and writing on the history of the organization, I had never heard mention of him. But after I retired, a trenchant Indian colleague, Godwin Shiri, asked if I would be interested in joining an effort to revive Uttangi's memory among Indian Christians, providing an urgently needed nonconflictual model for their

11 The recent literature about Uttangi usually designates him as “Rev[erend]”– i.e., with the rank of an ordained pastor. I have, however, so far not seen any evidence that he was ordained above the rank of evangelist. This distinction says nothing about the quality of his work, but it is conventional in English to reserve the title “Reverend” for those with the rank of pastor.

12 Sadhu Sundar Singh (1888–1929?) was a Christian prophet with Sikh background, a famous promoter of Christianity in an Indian mode, who disappeared while on solitary retreat in the Himalayas in 1929.

13 Uttangi, “Bethlehem” 31.

14 At a more general level, Gunjal is also interested, for example, in Uttangi's unpublished exploration of the Lingayat ethical term *kayaka*, denoting on the one hand “occupation” or “profession,” but on the other an economic situation of communal adequacy in which there are neither beggars nor the compiling of wealth. Gunjal, *Life and Work* 136–37.

relations with adherents of Hinduism and Islam.<sup>15</sup> Shiri was the director of a leading Christian think tank in Bangalore that proposed to publish material on or by Uttangi, translated from Kannada into English, with this in mind. Even if I had not been interested in the idea in principle, the next thing he told me would have stopped me in my tracks: a good biography of Uttangi existed already, published in Kannada by a leading Lingayat – i.e., Hindu – intellectual, S.R. Gunjal. Shiri proposed having this work translated into English as the first step in his campaign to revive Uttangi’s memory and make material about his accomplishments more generally accessible.<sup>16</sup> And so it became clear for this European observer that someone who had been conveniently forgotten in the oral and written identity historiography of the old Basel Mission, and most of its successor congregations in India, was remembered with devotion in circles in Northern Karnataka that adhered to an ancient Hindu reform movement.<sup>17</sup>

Lingayatism in this part of India traces its history back to its founding there in the twelfth century. It is a reform movement in the sense that it arose from criticism of the worship of the many deities of orthodox Brahminism and teaches the worship of one deity (Shiva).<sup>18</sup> From the beginning it has also been committed, in principle, to the abolition of the caste system: Uttangi quotes a Lingayat saying

Whether a Brahmin or a Ksatriya or a Sudra or whatever caste one is born in – once, by the guru’s grace, he wears a Linga on his person, he becomes a man [sic] of virtuous conduct, and the Lord of the World, Oh Akhandesvara. (Uttangi, “Lingayatism and Christianity” 146)

Although in India it is easier to talk about abolition of caste than to carry it through, it is well understood on both sides that these two postulates generate a persistent potential state of conflict between Lingayats as reform movement and Brahmins as the custodians of Hindu orthodoxy. Currently, the Lingayats constitute a major segment of the population in Northern Karnataka, and as a result, exercise significant influence in the politics of the state.<sup>19</sup>

15 At the time I was working as a retired scholar with an official commission from Mission 21 to encourage Indian scholars to incorporate the Basel Mission archive in their research plans.

16 Gunjal, *Life and Work*, and Wesley, *Reader*, both appearing in 2007, are the published results of this effort.

17 I also learned that for many years – and probably still – the day of Uttangi’s death has been celebrated in Lingayat circles in Dharwad. Sebastian was one of the translators of the texts in the *Reader*.

18 Monotheistic, but in a Hindu mode, and with Hindu modes of worship.

19 For a summary article on Lingayatism in general, see Bowker 581. Gunjal, *Lingayat Bibliography*, includes interesting material in its introductory section and appendices, including a text by Uttangi, “Anubhava Mantapa. The heart of Lingayat Religion” (171–88). It seems from this text (182n) that Uttangi’s interpretations of St. Paul were discussed during his lifetime by – presumably – theologians at the universities of Zürich and Bern. The *Economist* (11 May, 2013, 51) has a report on the recent Karnataka state election in which the Lingayats feature as a group large enough to swing the result from the BJP to Congress.

There is no space here to try to describe in detail Uttangi's lifetime achievements in relation to Lingayatism. Indeed, since Godwin Shiri's aim was to revive his memory among *Christians*, little discussion of his actual impact on issues of daily life between Christians and Lingayats has emerged from the publications listed here. The general assumption is that an appreciative and supportive approach to Lingayatism will have contributed to creating a better climate for relations between the two religious communities, and indeed, considering the harsh 'attack' approaches of much traditional missionary evangelism in India – well remembered by the contemporary Indian public – this assumption is surely justified.

Gunjal's biography of Uttangi, however, adds a very important element to this general view of relations between Uttangi and Lingayats, especially for the Western reader, in that he writes in an only partially Westernized intellectual and social context. Rather, he utilizes a familiar Indian mode that takes care to promote and retain traditional cultural patterns alongside western patterns of thought. His *Life and Work* is shot through with references to a quality of contact between Uttangi and non-Christian intellectuals mediated through indigenous etiquette and patterns of emotion, which are in themselves evidence that Uttangi's go-between role was, socially, and in relation to matters of piety, a reality. Gunjal recalls, for instance, that in the late 1920s a Hindu literary intellectual, Devudu,<sup>20</sup> wanted to compliment Uttangi by inviting him to his home for a meal, and felt constrained to ask his own guru how one receives a Christian. "The Guru said 'Welcome him as you would welcome Christ'." "I was ready that day [Devudu wrote in his diary], after completing my morning rites and puja. As he came I moved to wash his feet. At first he drew back. Then I did it by force. Then we took food. He sat facing East and I facing North." The complexity of the surprise that Uttangi encountered on this occasion can be sensed when one remembers that, while the incident of Christ washing his disciples' feet is a well-known story in the gospels, in India, bending down to touch someone's feet is a traditional way of expressing reverence to a person of high caste – and in their attacks on Lingayatism, the missionaries had made much of the way devotees were allegedly expected to drink the water in which their personal guru's feet had been washed.<sup>21</sup>

So in the literature on Uttangi in English it is evident that the dialogical principles he had articulated in a general sense early in his career were then lived out by him, over the decades, in relations with this major presence in his environment around Dharwad and Hubli. And we know, because of the negative reactions of his more orthodox Christian fellows, that Uttangi was quite prepared to emphasize his devotion and reverence *both* to Christ *and* to Basava, the founder of Lin-

20 No further details are given on this man.

21 Gunjal, *Life and Work* 130–31. The biblical story is in John, chapter 13. Long passages in Gunjal's *Life and Work* are also interesting for the way they give us an approving Lingayat view of Uttangi's approach to being a missionary; see 14–33. In this passage Devudu and Uttangi face east and north, I presume, as a sign that Uttangi is open to truth from the east, Devudu to truth from the north, i.e. Jerusalem.



gayatism. Godwin Shiri summarizes this aspect of Uttangi's attitudes. Uttangi apostrophized Basava as light (*Jyothi*) "indeed as light of the world." And he castigated the Lingayats around him for having fallen away from Basava's teachings: "Go back to the fundamentals of Basava's religion' was Uttangi's oft-repeated appeal to Lingayats" (Shiri, "Dalits" 77–79).

Moreover, to this day many Lingayats remember that on occasion Uttangi wrote in the regional press defending Lingayatism against Brahmin attacks, one example being the Brahmin assertion that major parts of the Lingayat history of the movement's origins was, in fact, unhistorical (Gunjal, *Life and Work* 93–96; 105–11; Gunjal, "Bridge" 84–86). It was important in this connection that he was a scholar who could do this in terms of the excellent knowledge he had built up of the sources on Lingayat history, as well as being someone famous for his eloquence and style when speaking or writing in Kannada. In the culture of all speakers of Kannada, true scholarship and eloquence are admired and treasured.<sup>22</sup>

Uttangi's scholarship was also important in another field. Lingayat piety lives not least through a poetry of popular epigrams, the *vaçanas*. Working his way through palm leaf manuscripts, Uttangi recovered many lost poems by their most famous writer, Sarvajna.<sup>23</sup> Having established a much larger oeuvre than had previously been known, Gunjal reports that:

[Uttangi] would tour towns and villages and address people on Sarvajna[']s Vachanas explaining and interpreting them and then expounding on him as the man and saint that he was... [Another observer said that] 'if he started speaking about Sarvajna there was no sense of time – day into night, night into day...' (Gunjal, *Life and Work* 81)

Because of the complex involvement with Lingayat piety implied by his work with Sarvajna, his Lingayat biographer asserts that Uttangi came to have the status of a guru among Lingayats. It would be good to hear this claim expounded in detail one day since among Lingayats 'guru' is no vague honorific, but an indication of considerable authority: every believer has a guru and is committed to serious obedience to him.

It will be evident that Uttangi was in close contact with people firmly lodged in the Lingayat tradition, and the fact that I look at him with European eyes should not be allowed to divert our attention from deeply characteristic indigenous elements in historical Lingayatism that are opaque or difficult for me, but in which Uttangi could move, and from which he drew inspiration for his work. Basava, for instance, was a high administrator in a twelfth-century Deccan king-

22 As an indication of his general status in Kannada literary studies, it can be added that Uttangi was elected president of the Kannada Literary Conference when it met in Galburga in 1949 (Gunjal, *Life and Work* 150; see also 19, where Gunjal records that Uttangi was accorded the title of "Pandit" at a Bangalore Literary Congress in 1934).

23 The most accessible documentation on Sarvajna for those in the West is the Wikipedia article (accessed for this paper on September 10, 2012) and its links. Uttangi's first and basic publication on Sarvajna appeared in Kannada in 1924. There is no translation.

dom. His foundation of Lingayatism was linked to the *anubhaava mantapa* he set up, evidently in the context of the life of a provincial court and capital (though freely open to people of all castes, and to women), a point of assembly where Basava's critical religious dialogue and his socially progressive spirituality were developed. So in Lingayatism's background there is more than a hint of the features of the high Indian culture of royal courts and urban political centers. It is also clear that Uttangi could move sure-footedly through the complicated relationships, in Lingayatism, between what we would regard as the historical and the mythological, the latter often involving elements that are quite strange to foreign eyes. For instance, he found and published what now seems to be regarded as the most original text about the events that give the Lingayat opposition to the caste system its authority as a postulate derived from Basava himself. It is the story of a marriage that Basava encouraged between a Brahmin girl and the son of an outcaste leather-worker. It is exclusively the pious fathers who are named, *not* the bride and groom. And in one key episode early on, the outcaste leather worker and his wife, in an act of reverent abasement, are said to have made a pair of slippers for Basava out of the skin of their own thighs, a gift that Basava, driven by an emotional insistence on the equality of all devotees, is depicted as refusing to accept (Uttangi, "Basaveshwara" 50–88; the story itself is on 62–76).

Even if we can only point to a handful of concrete interactions or attitudes in which the forgotten figure of Uttangi took up a pro-Lingayat stance or demonstrated a deep understanding of Lingayat history and belief, there is a strong case for regarding him as a notable cultural broker between the Christian missionary presence and the powerful and extensive Lingayat movement in his immediate environment. This can be pointed out, moreover, by reference to the long and dense lecture text that he apparently put together for a further education session with other Kannadiga catechists – clearly the work of an intellectual go-between of high competence and with a far-reaching agenda (Uttangi, "Lingayatism and Christianity").

Are we to regard Uttangi, however, as completely unique in the Basel Mission in the South India of his time, or rather as an indicator of probable grass roots developments among other indigenous local leaders? Did perhaps Uttangi's uniqueness consist in his ability to articulate his knowledge and thought at a level that was of more than local importance? In other words, could we argue that the potential challenge of grass roots conflict between Christians and other religious communities, plus the impact of the growing nationalist movement and the influence of Gandhi, were leading to the development of some kind of dialogical relationship with local religious organizations and local pieties, which may have moved others in a direction similar to that of Uttangi? My conclusion is that we can. In view of the way Uttangi, as a very notable regional figure in the history of the Basel Mission in Northern Karnataka, could be forgotten by his coreligionists, it could very well be that, protecting themselves as far as possible from the negative judgements of the fathers of orthodoxy in the geographical centers of Chris-

tian authority in India and Europe – and ignored as much as possible by them – there could have been other grass roots pastors, teachers, catechists, and evangelists who may have developed as open a social and intellectual boundary with their non-Christian neighbors as Uttangi did, and were go-betweens in a similar dialogical sense.

### **Kofi Theophil Opoku (1842–1913), an Akwapim Pastor as Go-Between Part 1: The Interpenetration of ‘Church’ and ‘State’ in 1906**

Akropong is the capital of the small Akan kingdom of Akwapim, in southeastern Ghana, and the seat of its king. It is also the inland town where the Basel Mission first began work in Ghana, initially in the 1830s, and in a consolidated form from the mid-1840s. It came to be the center of the Basel Mission’s educational efforts, and its seminaries for pastors and for teachers were founded there in the middle of the nineteenth century.

One of the early graduates of the pastors’ seminary was Kofi Theophil Opoku, who was also born in Akropong. As a pastor he had the unusual gift of being not only famously eloquent in his mother tongue, Twi, but also possessed a command of English that allowed him to write long and vivid annual reports for the leaders of the Mission in Basel. Something like thirty-five of these documents exist, covering the years roughly between 1870 and 1910. Here, I will concentrate first on his Annual Report for 1906, which tells us a lot about the kind of issues in which Opoku was involved concerning relations between ‘church’ and ‘state’, but more strikingly, provides a picture of the intensive interpenetration of the two sides that had evolved in the preceding half-century.<sup>24</sup>

In his 1906 report, Opoku writes in detail about a conflict that had arisen between the Mission church and the King of Akwapim, Nana Kwasi Akuffo, concerning a close and influential servant of his, Kwasi Fianko. Fianko was a wealthy merchant who was also a “King’s Soul” (Twi: *okra*). “Souls” in this sense were named members of a court bound to the King by their birth on the same day of the week (indicated here by the day-name, *Kwasi*, Sunday-born, which they both held), and who were chosen for mystical protection and, if adults, potentially for intimate friendship and support. In the Akan world they were (and in some places still are) marked by the wearing of a pectoral ornament, a decorated circular gold plate. In Akropong they sat in formation with the King on formal occasions to

24 The first part of this examination of Opoku’s role as go-between is based on reports of developments in 1906, texts that were published in 2008 as transcripts, as a ‘taster’ to raise interest in the entire intended publication (Gilbert & Jenkins). This reference also includes our own critical introduction to Opoku’s text and the translated transcript of a supplementary report on the Kwasi Fianko case by the biracial missionary Wilhelm Rottmann.

defend him from evil, and they dined with him on their common weekday birthday.<sup>25</sup>

One of the important by-products of the reports we are sourcing here is that they give us a lot of flanking detail, in this case on the role of an okra, and on the biography of Kwasi Fianko as a successful but illiterate merchant who came of age around 1870. We know that he had been baptized in 1866, but his church membership had, for reasons that are not stated, lapsed soon after. In a severe personal crisis in Nigeria c. 1890, during which he was seriously ill and faced with big financial losses,<sup>26</sup> he had sworn to return to the Church if God brought him safely back to Akropong. But on arrival there he was tempted to forget this oath and instead joined the inner circle of Akwapim's newly elected king, Kwasi Akuffo. As Opoku put it:

Benjamin Fianko accepted and addicted himself to all worldly pleasures and ambition which human and depraved heart could dictate which connects to this [Okra] position, forgetting his prayer and his vow made years ago, until lately by the strong Arm of the Lord that brought another serious illness on him by which he thought his end had come....

In 1905–6, Fianko had once again fallen dangerously ill, and resolved to carry out his former promise to rejoin the church if he recovered.

This set off the conflict with Kwasi Akuffo (Gilbert and Jenkins 377–78). It had, in analytical terms, two levels. There was, obviously, the dissolution of his relationship as okra, a position which, traditionally, was for life (although there were evidently exceptions in which an okra had been allowed to resign from his office). This side of the conflict does not play a part in our analysis here. The aspect of the conflict that opens up an interesting insight into complex interrelations between 'church' and 'state' in Akropong is the resolution of Kwasi Fianko's marriage status. And behind that lay the question of the King's access to Fianko's wealth.

To take the question of Fianko's wealth first: Kwasi Akuffo was an ambitious king who was apparently interested in reviving the status of the Akwapim kingdom. We know, for instance, that he spent heavily on new regalia. Akwapim was small, with few of its own resources, and Kwasi Fianko was a significant source of financial backing for the King (he complained that loans to a King are basically *à fonds perdu*) (Gilbert and Jenkins 366, 387–88). Leaving the King's intimate circle and joining the Christian community would put Fianko at some real

25 The concept of "souls" in this sense is discussed both in the introductory material to Gilbert & Jenkins, and in the early twentieth-century texts published there (Opoku in Gilbert and Jenkins 376–77). See the same text for introductory material on 365 and material from Wilhelm Rottmann on 385–88.

26 He had attempted to profit as a merchant from the collection of wild rubber in the hinterland of Lagos, had fallen ill there, and was responsible for paying off his debt to the young men from Akwapim he had taken to work with him. He had been unable to pay the agreed upon daily wage (Gilbert and Jenkins 375–76, 383–85).

distance from the court and would seriously reduce the King's ability to persuade him to loan him money.

The marriage question came up because mainstream Protestant missions in the modern colonial period usually demanded that upon conversion, polygamous men enter the church as husbands of only one wife. Kwasi Fianko had marriage or quasi-marriage relations with three women (Gilbert and Jenkins 377–78, 389–95). The oldest relationship was with Akosua Ampoma, and was seemingly resolved with no difficulty; I will return to her briefly at the end of this discussion. Wife number two was the King's candidate to become Fianko's single Christian wife, Victoria Adwoa Obuo. Wife number three, Susanna Ayebea, was the legitimate candidate as far as the church's leadership was concerned, and apparently preferred by Fianko himself. The justification for rolling out this conflict – *sub conspectu aeternitate*, perhaps, a mere storm in a teacup – is that Opoku's report demonstrates in a specificity that we can rarely attain in African church history the way 'church' and 'state' can come to understand each other's organization in detail, and use their respective knowledge to reach into the other's system in order to manipulate the outcome of cases in which each have strong but conflicting interests.

The first key point in the arguments brought to bear on this case was that evidently, different grades of traditional marriage were recognized on both sides. A fully formal traditional marriage was finalized, after a series of interchanges between the families involved, when in front of witnesses 'drinkables' were brought and handed over to the King with the oral information that the marriage had taken place. On conversion of the husband, the church gave preferential recognition to the most formally concluded traditional marriage. Since Fianko's wife number three, Susanna Ayebea, had, according to the church, been formally married in this sense, she was the wife who had the *right* to be regarded as the proper Christian wife of the (now) reconvert. And no one seems to have asserted that wives number one and two had this status – they were part of more informal relationships, that is, from the church's point of view, quasi-marriages. While these liaisons may have been stable middle-term relationships based on agreements between individuals and their families (we have no information on this point in this case),<sup>27</sup> everyone seems to have agreed that they had not been given the final indigenous blessing of the highest formality.

The King tried to throw doubt on the formal status of the marriage with Susanne Ayebea, but what came to light at this point served instead to confirm the formality of marriage number three. When this matter was first discussed, Susanne Ayebea's matrilineal uncle tried to bear witness that the presentation of 'drinkables' either had not happened or had signified something other than his niece's marriage to Kwasi Fianko. But it seems the general opinion quickly came

27 There is a delightful Ghanaian phrase "I have resigned from marriage" – for example, when a woman is no longer capable of having children. This is to say that these partnerships are neither ephemeral nor necessarily eternal.

to be that he had been suborned by the King into making this declaration (Gilbert and Jenkins 392–93). And there was a powerful case for arguing this. Before the marriage, Susanne Ayebea's family had incurred a substantial debt. When her then husband was invited to contribute to covering this debt, as he would traditionally have been expected to do, he refused and instead dissolved their relationship. Kwasi Fianko then offered to cover the debt, taking the woman as pawn or collateral, a form of security that allowed him to use her labor while the debt remained unpaid. It had been the *King* who had advised his trusted okra to marry the woman instead. Under these circumstances, according to traditional rules, if a male creditor had sexual relations with the a female pawn, the debt was regarded as having been repaid. If he loaned the money and married her, he would enjoy both legitimate relations with her and maintain his claim on the repayment of the debt.

The King's motivation for casting doubt on the formality of that marriage was to press the case of wife number two to become Fianko's proper Christian wife. And this was intended to tie Fianko's wealth closely to the king himself, or at least to his extended family, his *abusua*. Wife number two was Victoria Adwoa Obuo. She is described as a sister of the King, which probably means a classificatory sister or, in simple English terms, a cousin on his mother's side. At any rate she was an *adehye*, a member of the royal family, and thus a member of the extended matrilineal royal family or clan – the *abusua* – which held significant amounts of property in common and exercised common control over family resources.<sup>28</sup>

The point at issue in 1906 concerned the King's attempt at an elegant combination, to his own advantage, of the provisions of the Basel Mission's congregational regulations applicable to the family, with the way an *abusua* conducted its affairs. According to the *Gemeindeordnung*:

Any form of wealth a [male] member of our congregations possesses at his death should be left to his widow and children. Each child should receive an equal part. The property should not be left to more distant relatives as is the case with the heathen. (*Ordnung für die evangelischen Gemeinden [...] Ostindien und Westafrika*; my translation)

This paragraph was aimed at the abolition of the *abusua* and matrilineal inheritance, an attempt to reorient family life to what the Basel Mission regarded as the proper biblical patrilineal-patriarchal form,<sup>29</sup> as opposed to the indigenous matrilineal systems. But in this case, if Kwasi Fianko was once again to be accepted into the Christian community and be joined there by his Christian wife Victo-

28 This whole complex issue is flagged by Opoku in Gilbert and Jenkins 378, with more flanking detail offered on 389–95.

29 The *Gemeindeordnung* cited here was in force from the 1860s not only for the Basel Mission congregations in West Africa, but for South India as well, where the Basel Mission also dealt with communities organized according to traditions of matrilineal descent.

ria Obuo, on his death his wealth would accrue to her, and thus to the common wealth of the royal abusua. And this was likely to happen soon, since he was an old man suffering from a severe illness. Moreover, no offspring, with whom she would have had to share the bequest, according to Basel Mission rules, are mentioned in these reports. And if, against all likelihood, he were to have future offspring with Victoria Obuo, they too would, as children of a mother of the royal clan, belong to the same abusua.

The struggle over the future of relations between Victoria Obuo and Kwasi Fianko, should the latter rejoin the church, has a further important feature. When it became clear to Kwasi Akuffo that he was not going to get his way in establishing the primacy of the marriage with Victoria Obuo he changed course very quickly, accepted that Susanne Ayebea would be the future wife, but insisted that Victoria Obuo be paid compensation for her lost marital status at a rate commensurate with her position in the royal family – £25, or even £50, should be handed to her (and therefore to the abusua). Opoku writes

*Considering that our Rule allows £5 in such cases in [i.e., of] unlawful marriages [which] are to be dissolved we thought and advised the £6 should be given for the separation; but this [the king] rejected with much disdain, urging that £25 at least ([if] not £50) should be given. But as we have to stick firmly to our Rule we could not yield to this wish or demand. This our consistency or unwillingness to yield [to] this wish or demand on the one hand and our approval to the marriage of the one who is more entitled to it by legal custom and ceremony incensed him highly and brought a very sharp dispute between himself and us. After all, (after this hot dispute) after much deliberation, for peace sake [we] concluded that £10 should be given to the sister and at any cost the one who is entitled to the marriage [...] should be reaccepted into the congregation with the husband. (Gilbert and Jenkins 378; emphasis added)<sup>30</sup>*

The £10 was their final offer, and it was ultimately accepted. Two general points are raised by this detailed account of a clash between ‘church’ and ‘state’ in Akropong in 1906.

The first point goes back to the passage in italics quoted above from Opoku’s Annual Report for 1906: “our Rule allows £5 in such cases.” He writes as if regular rules about financial compensation were applied to the resolution of marriage cases that came before the Akropong Presbytery, not least when marital status had to be resolved before baptism (Opoku, “Annual Report” n.p.). This is, so far, the only reference I have ever found to payment of compensation according to a fixed scale by the husband to a wife in a case of divorce involving the church. A parallel offer of compensation at Fianko’s separation from the first wife, Akosua

30 In presenting Opoku’s texts, insertions in square brackets have been made in order to clarify ambiguities and otherwise make for smoother reading. The frequent use of synonyms or parallel expressions is typical for Opoku, and this more than likely reflects the practice of eloquence in Twi among ‘Speakers’ (linguists, *akyeame*) in traditional courts.

Ampoma, is also mentioned, with no indication that something unusual was happening. It is stated specifically to have consisted of an offer of £2.50 and the gift of a piece of land, and was evidently unproblematic and "quickly agreed" (Gilbert and Jenkins 390). That the interpenetration of the two systems had developed to the point that compensation was part of the range of measures the church could take in this sort of case should not really surprise us – a monetarization of traditional court procedures through hearing fees, fines, and monetary compensation was very well established in this region by the end of the nineteenth century. Indeed, Gilbert believes that fees from fines and arbitration were a major part of the Akwapim state's income.<sup>31</sup> So it would actually be surprising if the church did not use this sort of customary mechanism to attempt to assuage any sense of injury there may have been when marriages were dissolved upon the conversion of the husband, and to ensure that the husband took proper care in the reorganizing of his marital status.<sup>32</sup>

So in 1906, the church was relying on established procedures that must have evolved some time before. The primary importance of Opoku's 1906 report for the investigation of his position as go-between lies in the way it indicates that an unknown corps of go-betweens had evidently established important and generally accepted guidelines for the way the Basel Mission's *Ordnung für die evangelischen Gemeinden* was applied in the town, as well as how the church handled the potential complexities of the traditional family situations that had to be arbitrated or resolved. Whether Opoku had been involved in the initial development of these rules is not clear. Apart from in his early autobiographical text – see below – he only starts reporting on or from Akropong when he is appointed as pastor there in 1899.<sup>33</sup>

Secondly, turning our attention back to the situation in 1906 we can see that there were potentially a number of go-betweens in Akropong. I am concentrating on the figure of Opoku partly because of our long-term interest in his life and reports, and partly because examining a key and well-known individual gives us

31 Michelle Gilbert, private communication. Furthermore sales of land in this area, involving the substantial export of palm oil as a cash crop, were already frequent long before the advent of cocoa as an export at the end of the nineteenth century. The region had also known two forms of currency – cowrie shells, and gold dust – before European *specie* began to be used.

32 Given the detailed reporting that went on between the Missionaries' Annual Conferences in Ghana and the Directorate of the Basel Mission in Basel, Opoku nevertheless opens up for us here what must surely be a very rich seam in case studies and discussions about the application of Basel regulations when a man in a polygamous marriage converted to Christianity and wanted to become a member of the Basel Mission church. *Ordnung [...]* *Ostindien und Westafrika* Pt.1 §§92–104 (43–5) covers this situation, as does *Ordnung [...]* *Goldküste* §97–100 (29–31), though not identically. Both sets of rules do refer to the compensation that must be paid to wives who are separated from their newly converted husbands (*Ordnung [...]* *Ostindien und Westafrika* § 95; *Ordnung [...]* *Goldküste* § 100). But seeing records of compensation being paid is a step closer to the grass roots than reading about it in regulations issued in Basel.

33 Gilbert, "Sudden Death," is a wonderful exemplar of the complexities of marriage systems and marriage politics within which the Basel Mission operated in Akropong and Akwapim.



a concrete basis for making sure Eurocentric theory (Christian or secular) does not gain too much of an upper hand in analyses of what happened. But clearly the whole presbytery (missionaries, pastor, church elders) was involved on the church side. Indeed, our published documents on the case also include an English translation of a long report by the supervising missionary Wilhelm Rottmann, who would himself be an interesting study as a go-between because of his mixed parentage, and who seems to have played a leading role in this situation generally, not least in standing up to the frightening anger of a sacral ruler. Unusual for the Basel Mission, Rottmann's mother, Regina Hesse, was effectively an African, descendant of a Danish-Mulatto trading dynasty based in the Shai Hills, north-east of Akropong. (His father was the missionary merchant, Samuel Rottmann).<sup>34</sup>

On the other side, the King had his formal advisors, his intimate friends, and the leading voices in his abusua (not least the "Queen Mother,"<sup>35</sup> the female head of the state), who will all have had their ideas about how to handle this particular case, as well as the church in general. The King had, moreover, grown up going to Basel Mission schools, so was both literate and had an insider's knowledge of the Basel Mission's presence in his kingdom. But as a symbol of the many potential but unknown go-betweens who may have been involved in the situation we can also cite the unknown voice of a man who, at the height of the bitter and angry discussion about the compensation to be paid to Victoria Adwoa Obuo, appealed to the King to be more moderate, more calm. The bearer of this voice is described as a "friend" of the King, and also a member of the congregation (Gilbert and Jenkins 394). He is another sign during this period of how closely intertwined church and tradition in Akwapim must have been – the product of a couple of generations of go-betweens seeking the levels of adjustment possible between the two sides. As with my conclusion in the case of Uttangi's position, it seems to me that people performing the go-between role at various levels were probably large in number – and that with his report for 1906 Opoku stands out primarily because of the extraordinary level of detail of his materials housed in the Basel Mission archive.

I have focused on a specific situation documented in Akropong at the beginning of the twentieth century. But interaction between 'church' and 'state' at this level will have occurred in at least a score of other centers. Southern Ghana's dominant traditional model of organization is the Akan kingdom.<sup>36</sup> A particularly

34 For the significance of the marriage between Regina Hesse and Samuel Rottmann, see the many references in Sill and the well-researched short essay by Giorgio Miescher.

35 "Queen Mother" is the translation of the Twi word "Okuapehemaa," which means the Queen Mother of Akuapem. In southern Ghana, this is the expression for female heads of an ethnic group, a 'state', or its main divisions. See also Gilbert "Cimmerian Darkness" and Purtschert.

36 Obtaining a firm count of the number of Akropong-type centers in southern Ghana is difficult. To cite only one problem: in the Asante region, major chiefs are not 'kings', rather they are subordinate to the large centralized kingdom of Asante. But many of these major 'wing' chiefs in Asante will have ruled over populations substantially larger than that of Akwapim, even though Akwapim counted as independent when subsumed into the

important aspect of the kind of thorough exploration of relations between church and state in Akropong is that it gives us a standard for thinking about what must have happened in other less well documented areas. It is certainly profitable to investigate specific go-betweens like Opoku. But if the go-betweens in Akropong in 1906 were potentially many, in southern Ghana as a whole they were potentially legion.

## **Kofi Theophil Opoku, a pastor as Go-Between in Akwapim. Part 2: His Self-Representation, 1872**

To this detailed exposition of Opoku's report on a conflict in Akropong in 1906, it makes sense to add a reference to the autobiographical text he wrote in 1872, a task that was required of both missionaries and pastors of the Basel Mission, whether white or black, and to be carried out sometime near the beginning of their careers. This duty was fulfilled by Opoku when he was being proposed for full ordination as a Deacon. This meant he was moving from the rank of catechist to that of assistant pastor, deputed to administer the sacraments under missionary supervision, and set on a career track to become a full pastor and member of the professional leadership cadre of the coming indigenous church. If Opoku's reports on operations like that of the conflict of 1906 put him firmly on the Mission's side, his autobiographical text, especially when seen against the background of the dramatic events in his family history, which he does not mention, but which emerge clearly from missionary reports of the time, breathes an Akan discretion and tact toward his past, an effort to avoid the stigma of a problematical heritage, and, probably, a subtle wish to upgrade his background in the eyes of his superiors in Europe.<sup>37</sup>

The autobiographical document<sup>38</sup> is a short text – a four-page manuscript – emphasizing first of all his weak physique.<sup>39</sup> He probably did suffer from a con-

British Gold Coast Colony, and was treated as a separate unit, with no traditional superior, according to the system of indirect rule applied in this region of the Gold Coast.

37 It has been suggested that Opoku's motivation for failing to mention his father's fate in this text could have been a sense of shame acquired through his contact with the Basel Mission, but I prefer the 'indigenous' interpretation. One of the striking incongruencies in the documentation of the Ghana archive is the way that all the missionaries had written their own conversion histories (growing sense of sin, then sense of forgiveness and salvation) in their early autobiographies. But conversion histories in this strict evangelical sense are characteristically missing from the African autobiographies, as with Opoku, which seems to me to legitimate an 'indigenous' interpretation if we are looking for a more than superficial understanding of Opoku's nature. It is true that he does write of his remorse at disobeying Mader, but in what follows there is no theme of the release from a sense of sin.

38 The term in the Mission archive is "Lebenslauf" ("curriculum vitae") but obviously the text contains more information than captured by that generic term.

39 All references to Opoku's "Lebenslauf" refer to Opoku's MS in the Basel Mission Ghana archive, dated Akropong October 5, 1872.

genital metabolic illness, and argues that it was because of his weakness that his non-Christian father allowed him to go to school:

I was once dining, and having finished, when carrying the dish to its place, it fell down from my hands, and shattered to pieces, because I had no sufficient strength to hold it, my parents being present when this happened. My father then exclaimed: Oh, my dear son, Opoku! What could be the very work which thou canst perform in future? For there is no bone in your body to hold a bill [cutlass, bush-knife] to work with. I then exclaimed: My father, I could go to school. (Opoku, “Lebenslauf” 2)

We can understand that, as a boy, he seemed physically unfit for traditional male occupations like farming, trading, (which necessitated long journeys on foot), or soldiering. And we should note that this is a phase of Christian history in West Africa when almost the only effective medical treatment available was that provided by herbalists and other traditional doctors. It is worth noting that during his Basel Mission training Opoku spent two long periods in treatment with a “native doctor” in a remote hamlet, apparently with missionary approval (“Lebenslauf” 1–3). As a young adult in the second year of his training in the pastors’ seminary,

I was attacked with a very serious and dreadful malady [...] [and] was in a lingering state till [...] I was taken to a native doctor where I had to stay for 9 months[. Later] I had to return again to the same doctor, who took me away out of [his] village and confined me a in a very miserable compound [...] for half a year, taking medicine successively three times every day, drinking no water, but this medicine in lieu [...] (2)

In his autobiographical narrative, Opoku recounts how he passed through the Basel Mission’s educational system, living most of the time in what we might call a missionary extended family, headed by the Basel Mission’s Inspector of Schools in Ghana, Adam Mader.<sup>40</sup> He also reports that after being sent to his first posting in February 1868 in another Akwapim town, “I came back [to Akropong], and got married to Sophia Nyam, my father’s sister’s daughter [...] on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1868” – thus making it explicit that this was, in a strong Akropong tradition, a cross-cousin marriage (“Lebenslauf” 4).

One crucial passage from the point of view of our consideration of the emotional basis of Opoku’s stand as go-between comes right at the beginning of the narrative:

As you wish to know something of my person and life, I give you therefore a short sketch of my life-history as follows: I am a native of Akropong, being born in the year 1842, of noble parents, for my father Dako-

40 See Sill 215–41 on the importance of missionary extended family structures in creating social patterns that indigenous people could understand and manipulate at this early stage of the Basel Mission’s presence in Akropong.

Yao, who died on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July 1859, was the son of a once-renowned King of Akwapim called Adow Dankwa (Danqua), and my mother, Akua Korankma [...] was a cousin to that King. (“Lebenslauf” 1)

Opoku was writing for readers in Basel, so the implication is that he was deliberately gilding his origins and taking advantage of the distance between Basel and Akropong to do so. As we have seen, Akropong was a town where abusua (matrilineal clans) ruled. Maintaining a certain discretion ourselves, we can nevertheless assert with fair confidence that neither of his key female ancestors – neither his father’s mother, or his own mother – were members of recognized abusua, but outsiders brought in under one arrangement or another.<sup>41</sup> It is true that in the Akan world the children of Kings were recognized as a class having potentially an interesting pattern of gifts and very likely to make careers in the traditional offices open to them. But if their mothers were not members of the relevant abusua, their children were not themselves members of the royal family, or any other stool-holding family, and not electable to the stool to which they were claiming closeness. Rather they look like having had an ambivalent status as a subordinate category, but nevertheless with good connections.

Opoku makes only one more indirect reference to his father. After reporting that as a primary school pupil he had joined the family of the missionary Adam Mader, he writes:

I was very much puffed up and once [resenting some punishment] arrogantly stood before [the missionary] and said: Am I a slave of yours [...]? I am going to my father’s house. Not knowing that the world passeth away with all its vanities [...]. The house, which was the habitation of wives, sons, daughters etc etc has now become the habitation and den of snakes, lizard, spider [...] (“Lebenslauf” 2)

So in addition to appearing to claim a status he did not really have, Opoku mentions only very indirectly his father’s fate. From the reports of the Akropong missionaries, we know that in 1855 Opoku’s father was accused of poisoning a large number of people. (It seems likely that this was an accusation of witchcraft.) The anger of the young men – the young warriors of the town – forced him into exile. His opponents appear to have pursued and forced him to return to Akropong in 1859 to face a further charge of murder. He was condemned to commit suicide by shooting himself, which he did on the date Opoku gives, July 10, 1859.<sup>42</sup>

41 Michelle Gilbert has conducted fieldwork in Akropong complementing the documentary materials available for our Opoku publication project, and has found it extremely difficult to collect genealogical information, whether on Opoku or anyone else who does not belong unambiguously to an abusua in the town. The implication of this is that Opoku’s paternal grandmother, and/or his own mother, were war captives, and thus did not possess the full social profile of women born to an abusua.

42 The narrative of the fate of Opoku’s father has to be pasted together from a number of missionary reports between 1855 and 1859 by the missionaries Christaller, Mader, and Widmann. The news of the death was sent to Basel by G. Auer, in *Quarterly Report*.

The prohibition against mentioning disgraceful or catastrophic events in the Akan world is strong. The way to summon someone before a traditional court has been, since time immemorial, to make forbidden reference to a catastrophe – for instance by speaking the name of the place where a decisive defeat had taken place or at which a King had been killed. At this point, the speaker of the forbidden name and the person with whom he or she is in conflict are cited before the court of the relevant chief and have to pay the appropriate fine to enable the breach of taboo to be cancelled, after which the issue between them is itself discussed and judged. In the Akan world, this is what is known as “swearing an oath” (Rattray 205–15).

It is clear on the one side that a Pietist missionary wish to give an account of the fatal wickedness of heathenism might have motivated Opoku himself to tell the story of his father’s death in full dramatic detail. Instead, his account of his early life reflects his adherence to Akan values of avoidance, a desire to avoid stigmatizing his father’s descendants and maintaining his father’s reputation, at least in general terms.

Clearly, a go-between functions at different levels. He may be involved in negotiations, as we have seen. But he will also be involved on a much broader plane of communication with the people around him. Indeed, Opoku had a high reputation as a speaker and preacher – and although the first impression one is liable to have of him, when looked at from outside, is of an evangelist carrying out a lifelong attack on ‘heathenism’, we can sense, with his own autobiographical text in mind, that when he spoke, his construction of the world around him will have been, as here, in spite of all potential radicalism, recognizably similar to that of his audiences, and his emotions will often have been congruent with those they themselves have felt.

If I might be allowed to relay a piece of recent Basel oral tradition to underline this point: at a seminar involving analysis of this autobiographical text, an anthropologist colleague in Basel asked what the significance was of Opoku’s specific mention of his marriage to his father’s sister’s daughter. As was the case as often as I could arrange it, I had invited someone articulate from the region of Africa under consideration to have a privileged part in our discussions. This person was not necessarily an academic or an exponent of a social science discipline, but was there to offer a kind of reality check as to how modern people from the region involved would evaluate and understand the text we were analyzing. In this case it was a Ghanaian Presbyterian pastor, Peter Kodjo, who was present. I had worked with him on a number of occasions, knew he had a firm and independent-minded interest in the history of his church and the development of quality discussion about its background, and that he had been a student chaplain. He also spoke German. To the question about Opoku’s choice of wife, Kodjo intervened immediately. Entering a marriage relationship that was famil-

J.A.Mader, acting *in loco parentis* to Opoku, has a particularly moving account of the impact of this death on his relationship with Opoku; see Mader’s *Jahresbericht*.

iar in Akropong, he said, meant that when Opoku went with his wife to visit relatives (his mother, for example, who maintained her traditional religious identity until shortly before her death in the 1880s), he could feel relaxed, at least about his marriage – he had done what was considered in Akropong to be the right thing. And this insight, that he had and valued a certain emotional congruence with the people around him, seems to me to be one key to understanding the way in which he was able to operate as a go-between. Judging by this autobiographical text, in spite of an intensive Basel Mission education, he resolutely retained elements of his culture of origin. So that if, on the one hand, he was part of the mission church's broad campaign against essential components of the traditional culture, on the other he still possessed a good deal of that culture's conventions in terms of the way he thought and felt. This position frequently supplied him with a bridge to the sensibilities and thinking of non-Christians with whom he was in touch.<sup>43</sup>

### **Conclusion A: Opoku, then, a Go-Between?**

The term go-between challenges us to develop concrete statements about the activities of people like Uttangi and Opoku. But a final assessment of the analyses offered in this paper must be regarded as mixed. In the case of Uttangi we have probably gone as far as we can without moving into complex research using Kannada sources. But we do know with a fair degree of certainty that he pursued unorthodox, open-ended intellectual relations with Lingayats in his vicinity, and there is enough concrete information available to indicate that his total achievement in this field, seen from the Lingayat side, was substantial and that this will have contributed, albeit indirectly, to the surprisingly positive reputation the Basel Mission and its community enjoy in the minds of many leading Kannadiga non-Christians.

With Opoku the answer to the question about the nature of his go-between activities is, based on the material presented here, less clear. We have indicated elements of an essential 'indigenusness' in his emotional makeup. And his reporting in 1906 reflects his ability as an informed chronicler to present the result of go-betweens' activities in the interpenetration between Christian and 'traditional' communities in Akropong at that time. But as a general statement this demonstrates two serious limitations. Firstly, the degree to which Opoku himself served as a pivotal figure in developing that interpenetration or how he understood his own potential role as go-between is by no means clear. Secondly, the

43 Peter Kodjo passed away in the early weeks of 2012, and I am very happy to publish this memory of his role in making it clear that in Basel we could offer African Studies with unusual characteristics. He was a pastor – but the students often seem not to have registered this fact, finding him an urbane figure, with extensive knowledge of his regional past, and a preparedness to break taboos in his discussions with them. He apparently did not at all meet their expectations of what a pastor was like.

conflict in 1906 is mainly about social/political relations. It offers no reference to intellectual history, the reception of the Basel Mission's cosmological/religious message, and the concerns displayed by Uttangi. But it is real: in the Akan area of Ghana the Basel Mission had to constantly negotiate relations with centralized kingdoms which, even up to the present day, have in many cases remained strong.

Coordinating the analysis here with studies by Patricia Purtschert and Sonia Abunasr which are immediately or closely relevant to Opoku may help us to create both a more generalized and a more precise view of his go-between activities. Firstly, the Basel philosopher Patricia Purtschert has published an essay about another of Opoku's reports to Basel. It concerned a political crisis in Akropong in 1907 in which the Queen Mother – the female head of the royal line – spear-headed the 'destoolment' (deposition) of King Kwasi Akuffo and the election of one of her own sons to this office. From the point of view of the Basel Mission the explosiveness of this story must have been the fact that the woman involved was not only the "Queen Mother" of the kingdom, but also the wife of a Basel Mission pastor – she was both the *Okuapehema* Akua Oye and Rev. Mrs Amelia Koranteng.<sup>44</sup> Having any Christian – let alone a woman – playing any role in traditional politics was quite contrary to the Mission's ethos. Opoku takes the political events of that year as his main theme in the report. And Purtschert's assessment of his text is that, Opoku subtly but firmly took up a position as go-between between the Akropong congregation and its social and political environment on the one hand, and the fathers of orthodoxy in Basel on the other. Writing this report was his way of insisting that realities had to be acknowledged for what they were, without himself falling under missionary condemnation by being too adamantly on the 'traditional' side.<sup>45</sup>

This impression of Opoku as a diplomat who moved the pieces on his chess-board carefully and maintained links to both sides is strengthened when we compare him with his senior colleague, David Asante, as Asante appears in Sonia Abun-Nasr's biography. Asante came from the same social complex of palace life in Akwapim as Opoku, but was almost a generation older, and was the subject of an experiment in which three young Ghanaians were taken to Basel in 1857 to be put through the full course of missionary training there. He was the only one to return to Ghana in 1862 with the formal status of a full Basel missionary. But judging by Abun-Nasr's analysis, he then saw himself more as a principal in his relations with the surrounding society than as a go-between. The climax of his career was a clash in Akwapim's neighboring kingdom of Akyem Abuakwa in which he went head-to-head with the King not in a single case, but in recruiting for his band of followers (i.e., recruiting for the Christian community and assem-

44 I have seen no indication that Akua Oye played an important role in the crisis in 1906. That year she was presumably building up opposition to the King behind the scenes.

45 This summary is a fair application of Dr. Purtschert's paper to my argument, but it only barely does justice to her original and convincing pursuit of philosophical questions, pragmatically understood, which results in her reading of documents with an unusual degree of sensitivity to the position and intention of the actors involved.

bling in the Christian quarter of the town) a large number of the King's servants. They were 'slaves' who, through the Gold Coast abolition of slavery as a status recognized by the colonial courts (1874–5) (Haenger 113–32) had received increased social and personal mobility rights. The implications for the stability of the kingdom were so serious in the eyes of the colonial authorities that they insisted that Asante be posted away (132–40).

From this point on, Asante lived and worked far from the main Basel Mission centers. As one example, he reconstructed Basel Mission congregations among small Guan-speaking communities east of the Volta, which the Mission had been forced to abandon during the wars of 1869–74, and many of which were later given up to the Bremen Mission. Judging by Abun-Nasr's evaluation, Asante's post-1877 reports are comparatively banal. Opoku's career was, in contrast, one of steady advancement through pastoral responsibility in a number of large congregations, culminating in his time in Akropong, the place with probably the most complex relations between 'church' and 'state' in the Basel Mission's part of Ghana. His reports become increasingly significant in revealing interactions that would otherwise be difficult or impossible to research. This comparison suggests we see Opoku as a go-between type, though still one whose importance is as a reporter rather than as someone we can be sure independently exercised much of a go-between's creative diplomacy.

## **Conclusion B: Historical Sources and Currents of Concealed Change**

Once more: the value of the term 'go-between' lies not least in the way it demands that we consider both sides of the specific complex of relations in which a particular agent has operated. As argued in the introduction to this paper, mission archives tend not to be places that facilitate a view of 'the other side', other than in orthodox, negative, and old-fashioned mission terms. It is immediately clear in the case of Channappa Uttangi that Gunjal's biography 'from the other side' opened up the possibility of studying an almost revolutionary view of what was happening between local leaders of the Basel Mission church and their surrounding religious communities in Northern Karnataka.

Like Uttangi, Opoku was a Basel Mission employee, but in Opoku's case it is his reports to the ultimate source of authority in the organization that we are studying. So the question of how far they enable study of the non-Christian side of the situation in Akwapim during his lifetime is less straightforwardly answered. One useful point of comparison is provided by Koukou Azamede's assessment of the reports written for the neighboring Bremen Mission by twenty men who had been sent, while still very young, to a pastor's family in rural Württemberg for training as mission workers. This training exercise went on from 1872 to 1900. These reports are potentially of direct importance to this paper because the area



of the Bremen Mission's work was not only geographically close to that of the Basel Mission. Up to 1914, most (white) Bremen missionaries were trained in the Mission College in Basel, and many of them had been recruited from the same Pietist families in Württemberg in which the Basel Mission found roughly half its staff.

For this reason it is interesting to observe that while points of tension between mission Christianity and local culture are an important part of Azamede's analyses, one's impression is that his sources scarcely offer insight into indigenous patterns of behavior that form the context of these tensions. The emphasis is on the ways in which such behavior contravened that Mission's congregational regulations. Opoku's report for 1906 offers much more in terms of graphic descriptions of indigenous institutions and trains of thought, thus offering the basis for a 'binocular' view of what was happening. It is true that when he reports on acute conflicts between church and tradition, Opoku's active sympathy is usually, if not always, on the side of the church and mission. But he offers enough flanking material for it to be possible to often read his concrete descriptions against [this] grain, to visualize ways in which the development of the Christian and the traditional community did not correspond with mission orthodoxy, and to develop what in my experience are some unusually in-depth assessments of what was happening on the traditional side, as indeed is the case in his reporting on the conflict we have summarized in this essay.

Is the background to the quality of Opoku's reports only a matter of his personal gifts, or can we derive from his case a general guide for researchers seeking resources in mission archives that enable 'binocular vision'? Basel is the mission that trained and employed the first African to have written a substantial history of a region of Africa – Opoku's colleague, Pastor C.C. Reindorf (Reindorf; Jenkins, *Recovery*). Reindorf's 1895 *History of the Gold Coast and Asante* contains a quantity and a quality of information from oral sources so rich that in many ways it has not yet been properly integrated into modern historiography. It is clear that Reindorf was originally encouraged in his historical research partly by the key Basel Mission scholar of the Akan world, J.G. Christaller, who was also a close colleague of and source of encouragement for Opoku. By the end of the nineteenth century, it is true that the Mission's headquarters in Basel no longer seemed interested in Reindorf's efforts (apparently he had to put up the capital himself in order to get his *History* printed). Their response to what Opoku was writing was also feeble. But the ethos of being serious students of the language and culture of the communities in which they were working seems to have really taken root in the minds of at least some of those Ghanaians trained by the Basel Mission in the 1850s and 1860s.<sup>46</sup> Thus we have to say that probably not all missionary archives will offer materials of the same quality of Opoku's writings

46 There is also modern literature about the ambivalence that the nineteenth-century Basel directorate felt toward the broad research their missionaries were carrying out on the Kannada and Malayalam languages in South India. (e.g. Wendt, with an important

when it comes to searching for documents one can read against the grain. But the search for missionary societies that did encourage open-ended research and reporting, even if inconsistently, is obviously important.

One question underlying this whole paper has concerned the representative nature of Uttangi and Opoku. Were they unique as go-betweens in and of themselves? Or are they notable because they left substantial historical traces, some of which we have introduced here, and which can open up for inspection currents of concealed change in which many other people were also creatively involved? If we answer the last part of this question in the affirmative, we would be suggesting that there was, at least among progressive indigenous colleagues working in similar situations, a developing consensus about how to conduct relations between Christian and non-Christian communities. I am inclined to answer this question positively, although as a train of thought it obviously leads to complications that cannot be untangled in this paper.

This text has been devoted to establishing that concealed under the blanket of colonial missionary orthodoxy, people like Uttangi and Opoku lived and worked as independent-minded local intellectuals. With luck, open-ended analysis and a determination that all history must be anchored to the study of specific situations, such people can be brought more fully into the center of the contemplation of the history of the organization and movement to which they belonged.

The possible fruits of this approach are impressive. In the 1970s, John Middleton observed church elders in Akropong arbitrating in an open-handed way in many cases when property was to be divided on the death of its owner, between the claims of members of the modern patrilineal nuclear family and those of members of the traditional matrilineal clan (Middleton 14). Exploring the historical background of this observation takes us back to the Basel Mission's institution of church elders with the precise role of enforcing, from their strong position as linguistic and cultural insiders, the patrilineal inheritance rule we have quoted above.<sup>47</sup> In this key aspect of local life, radical change has occurred, concealed from the outside world by the weight of orthodoxy, past and present.<sup>48</sup> But through Opoku's 1906 report, informed by his go-between position, we can sense relations between the two sides in the process of change, change that Middleton thought, on the basis of his conversations in the 1970s, must have taken place, but for which he had no documentary evidence. The implication of a discovery like that is that the Basel Mission Church in Ghana, not to mention its successor

collection of documents). In Karnataka and Kerala their work is now, however, regarded by most of the population as an outstanding contribution to indigenous development.

47 See *Ordnung [...] Ostindien und Westafrika* 7–9 for the authoritative first Basel definition I have seen of the Church Elders' role.

48 Indeed, when I discussed Middleton's findings in Akropong soon after they were published, it was clear that while the church elders were flattered by his attention, clergy tended to follow the orthodox line and feel that lay people had no mandate to negotiate, and should strictly follow the church's rules, which still cleave to the notions of nuclear family and patrilineal inheritance.

church, the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, were and are indigenous institutions to a degree that neither the insider historiography nor the outsider studies written by nontheological academics have properly gauged or explored. Following the go-betweens who present themselves for our study leads us into not only a deeper understanding of the social environment in which the church operates, but to a new view of the profile of the church itself.

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## **Conflict Transformation with Religious Dimensions: Three Case Studies of Transcultural Mediation**

RICHARD FRIEDLI

The concept of globalization designs complex and moving realities in economic and political fields as well as in mass media, intercontinental migration movements, and the interreligious market (Beck, *Was ist Globalisierung?; Macht und Gegenmacht; Weltrisikogesellschaft*). This multiform dynamic, which characterizes the globalized world, is interpreted by the social and cultural sciences as one type of transculturation process.<sup>1</sup>

### **Research question**

In such a transitional context, this volume is focused on the theme of intercultural mediators. It contains impressive and well documented presentations of “border crossers, mediators and go-betweeners” in history and in recent times. The principal research question that remains is: Who can be labeled in the past as a mediator or “agent of transculturation”? The fields in which such academic research occurs are extremely varied, not only in historical and anthropological projects, but also in linguistic and theological thought (Hock, *Einführung*; Hock, “Transkulturation”). In many of these academic studies and documentations, the perspective is focused on the observation from outside and on the historical analysis of personalities and processes that can be labeled as different actors involved in transcultural processes.

1 In its original usage by the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz, the concept of “transculturation” designates past or current situations of “disadjustment and readjustment” (which we may call ‘cultural shock’) (98) sometimes also referred to as hybridity, mestizaje, or syncretism. The term “transculturation” is here used without any fixed semantic definition. Rather, the connotations of the term will be developed analogously with the respective anthropological usage as the essay proceeds. The theoretical and practical risks of the following approaches are that they may not be aware enough of the epistemological dangers emphasized by postcolonial studies. For the reason that the greatest part of my research field is linked with African situations, the following positions, largely deriving from postcolonial studies, are integrated: Appadurai, *Fears of Small Numbers*; Mbembe, *De la postcolonie*; and Mudimbe, “Inventer l’Autre.”

I would like to add to this sometimes more passive understanding of transculturation, observed in the historical and colonial memory, a complementary contribution centered on contemporary sociopolitical debates, in which I was or continue to be personally involved. So, my research question is a prospective one and practice orientated: What are the skills needed by intercultural mediators acting in contemporary conflictive contexts with religious dimensions?<sup>2</sup>

## A Tentative Typology

The research of intercultural religious studies on transitional and transcultural interactions presents an intermediary report on three types of conflicts, where the factor of ‘religion’ plays a key role.<sup>3</sup> And as stated above, they are a personal account in relation to ongoing theoretical discussions and concrete experiences in transculturation processes.<sup>4</sup> By choosing the three following situations, the primary intention is to present structurally different interfaces of transculturation: (a) on the *local (micro)level* – an individual experience of intercultural insight – leading to a deep value shift and to spiritual conversion; (b) on the *regional (meso)level* – an interethnic trauma coping with the transition from the genocide culture of death to a renewed culture of life, and (c) on the *international (macro) level* – geopolitical controversies between religious and secular fundamentalisms. So, three epistemological variations of transculturation will be presented: the individual acculturation model of Placide Tempels, who worked as a missionary in the Belgian colony in the eastern part of the Congo from 1945 to 1963; the interethnic trauma-healing processes in the postgenocide context of Rwandan society (1994–2011); and the interreligious clash at the UN population summit in Cairo in 1994.

- 2 My methodological option follows along the lines of the *practical and applied science of religions*. Combining the insights of the comparative history and sociology of religions, on the one hand, and the different challenges within the contemporary globalized society on the other, the applied science of religions adopts an interdisciplinary approach and is based on a future orientated anthropology. Some theoretical and practical aspects of the applied science of religions are developed in Klöcker/Tworuschka and Friedli, “Angewandte Religionswissenschaft.” Here the factor of “religion” is considered in relation to developmental policy projects related to peace research or intercultural pedagogy, and culturally sensitive judicial procedures.
- 3 The definition of ‘religion’ is neither internationally evident nor universally validated. In fact, the usual descriptions of ‘religion’ were Christian and European centered. Their monotheistic taxonomies are not respectful of the multiple patterns of Buddhist, Hindu, or Shamanic traditions. In my contribution, the concept of ‘religion’ encompasses the socially institutionalized guarantees of values and rites that differ from other public institutions, e.g., political, economic, juridical, and military. Individual ‘religiosity’ or personal spiritual concerns, open to ‘ultimate realities’, are not considered.
- 4 Concretely, the methodology follows the lines of *participatory action research*, whereby planning, theoretical options, realistic planning, executive actions, active observations, and practical readjustments are acting in a social field of constant reciprocal interactions.



I will highlight the religious dimensions in each of the three conflictive contexts, even when it is evident that theological, church-related, or religious options are not the principal reasons for the respective confrontations. For it is clear that in these three clashes, the publicly proclaimed religious arguments are just hiding behind the real sociopolitical and economic issues. And the ethnic, regional, or nationalistic references, linked with the glorified religious memory are the roots of the complicated mixture of economic powers and political interests. As a consequence, for each of these three examples of transculturation, a peace-building method is needed that openly formulates the religious options embedded in each of the respective economic and political conflicts.

### Case Study 1: The Transculturation Model

As an introduction to this first type of transcultural existence, some biographies of religious brokers acting in intercultural contexts can be referenced that are well rooted in their subjects' occidental cultural background and Christian religious traditions, but also deeply concerned with the different societal lifestyles and religious value systems they discovered in the so-called barbarian and pagan world. Through such personal experiences and unexpected challenges with non-Christian spiritual horizons, spiritual go-betweens (e.g., missionaries) were personally convinced of a kind of hidden Christ-presence in the midst of the powerful occidental colonization dynamics. Some of the outstanding historical personalities who took the risk of crossing the borders between cultures and religions are Beda Griffith (1906–1993), an American Benedictine monk who lived in India according to the Hindu ashram tradition; Henri Le Saux (1910–1973), who as Swami Abhishiktandanda, was a Christian-Hindu sanyassi in Bengal; Serge de Beaurecueil (1917–2003), a Christian priest who lived in Afghanistan within the Muslim tradition; and Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), an Italian Jesuit who adopted the lifestyle of a Confucian wise man in Beijing.

As a significant illustration of this kind of crosscultural and interreligious biography, I will present in a more detailed way Placide Tempels (1906–1977), a Belgian Franciscan missionary in the Congo.<sup>5</sup>

5 During my first teaching stint in the East-Congo region (1965–1971), I was involved in the philosophical and theological controversies between pro- and contra-Tempelsian groups. We debated the founding publications of Placide Tempels, *La Philosophie Bantoue* (1945) and *Notre Rencontre* (1962). I was introduced to the Tempelsian 'school' by the Rwandan philosopher and linguist Alexis Kagame (1912–1981). The main publications of Professor Kagame, in the field of Bantu philosophy, are: *La philosophie bantu-rwandaise de l'Être* (1956) and *La Philosophie Bantu comparée* (1976). Texts, contexts, and debates on "African Philosophy" in Sub-Saharan Africa (different from the "Black Philosophy" debates in South Africa) are presented by A.J. Smet's *Philosophie africaine* (1975).

### Placide Tempels and the *Bantu Philosophy*

Placide Tempels describes and interprets his personal development in the small booklet *Notre Rencontre* (35–40) – a kind of biographical review of his theological and intercultural reflections on the colonial and missionary surroundings in the Belgian Congo. During the period 1933–1963, Tempels underwent a fundamental transformation, a radical change in his self-understanding as a missionary. The initial basic understanding of his vocation was to bring modern civilization and spiritual salvation to the ‘barbarian’ and ‘pagan’ Baluba people in the Congo. But after several years pursuing his mission, he experienced an existential shock, realizing, as he writes, that “the machine doesn’t work” (37). For the first time, he began to be concretely aware of the black people around him. And in this encounter he discovered not objects for conversion to the Catholic Church, but human beings with their own worldviews, marked by a coherent system of moral rules, and members of a responsible community. *Bantu Philosophy* (1945) is the systematically organized synthesis of this discovery and of his new insight into the tradition of Baluba culture. According to his ‘philosophical’ intuition, but not as a result of systematic research on community structures or traditional wisdom, Tempels started to analyze in a more organized way the lifestyle of his African neighbors.

### Bantu Philosophy: Value System Shift

As a consequence of this reversed conversion, Placide Tempels elaborated a philosophical reconstruction of the Kiluba tradition in the Katanga region (currently known as Lubumbashi/Shaba). He understood and interpreted their African worldview as a dynamic network of interconnected physical and psychic forces. According to his intuition, he affirms that the Bantu philosophy is not based on the well-defined ontological essences of the beings (as Tempels learned it during his training in Thomistic philosophy and theology), but on the participation of all beings within the network of interrelated “vital forces” (*Bantu Philosophy* 30–43).

Within this ontology, the cosmos is to be understood as an energetic space, wherein ‘beings’ are located in a mutual relationship of interdependent and hierarchically organized forces. The cosmos (the things: sing.: *kintu*; pl.: *bintu*) and the human beings (sing.: *muntu*; pl.: *bantu*) are ‘holistically’ interconnected. In such a ‘vitalist vision’ the central reference for the theoretical understanding of the surrounding world, as well as of the practical actions in it, are not the rationally correct ‘definitions’ of what reality is, but the dynamic ‘relations’ between human beings (*kupatana*), cosmic ‘participation’ (*kuunga*), and ‘vital unity’ (*umoya*). And in this dynamic vision of the world, the transcendent divine space also belongs to this energetic field.<sup>6</sup>

6 The proposals of Placide Tempels prompted heated debates in and outside of Africa. Several significant African reactions are published in the text collection of Smet mentioned above: the philosopher Fabian Eboussi Boulaga from Cameroun, (348–381: on the

In such ‘relational’ contexts, the monotheistic doctrine proposed by Western Christian missionaries, which presupposes an ontological difference between creator and creatures, is a strange idea and opposes the everyday experiences of the Baluba. But in the colonial situation of the Congo, as analyzed by the French sociologist Georges Balandier,<sup>7</sup> such a sensitive understanding of African traditions cannot be seen as only an academic question. On the contrary, the ethnophilosophical approach of the missionary Placide Tempels was perceived by the colonial administration as a social provocation, public rebellion, or revolutionary aggression against colonial rule, and was interpreted as a sinful destruction of the Christian mission.

We can describe Tempels’s transformation, with the help of the terminology developed by Fernando Ortiz, as an actively induced process, a mutual transformation of cultures to form a new cultural field, which may be regarded as a ‘mediation space’. As Tempels’s example shows, transculturation is not a linear transition from culture A to culture B but leads to the “creation of new cultural phenomena, which could be called neoculturation” (Ortiz 103).

### **Practical Consequences of the “Bantu Philosophy”**

In fact, Placide Tempels was not a subversive or revolutionary personality. But the theological consequences of the “Bantu Philosophy” were, in the perception of both the missionary strategies and the colonial administrations, a dangerous act of social and political aggression. The following theological consequence of the philosophical insights made by Tempels illustrates two such risky theopolitical shifts.

A theological heresy: In the traditional Christian understanding of God, the divine reality is presented by the cognitive model of a trinity structure – formulated along the biblical tradition as “Father-Son-Holy Ghost.” But Tempels suggested – as a consequence of the Bantu perception of reality as an interconnected network of energies – that the theological “Trinity” could be apprehended as a valuable metaphorical model to express the “Divine” in the occidental philosophical tradition. But, in the African context, he proposed privileging a family (jamaa) relations analogy, rather than the Trinitarian dogma as a better means of

“problematic bantu”), and the teacher Paulin J. Hountondji from the Ivory Coast (410–430: on “ethnophilosophy”). See also Hountondji. The actual state of the philosophical and linguistic discussions of Tempels’s work is presented by Ruth Heckelsmüller.

- 7 Georges Balandier, French specialist in African sociology, gives a multidimensional description of what the concept of “colonial situation” signifies (3–38): (a) the political domination of a racially different population by a culturally different minority; (b) the feeling of one’s own superiority dogmatically affirmed; (c) the opposition between heterogeneous civilizations (small agriculture vs. modern technology); (d) the shock created between indigenous religious traditions and the Christian mission; (e) antagonistic interpersonal relationships; and (f) the scientific justification, by ethnological or theological arguments, of the right to dominate and to exploit the ‘others’.

explaining the spiritual dynamics of the Christian faith in “God” (*Notre Rencontre* 45–50).<sup>8</sup>

A moral scandal: As a social consequence of the Bantu understanding of reality as a relational network of life energies, Tempels pointed out that the polygamous family structure, as practiced in the Baluba tradition, is a social institution better adapted to the survival needs of the local population than that provided by the monogamous family model (84–89, see also Smet 80–89).<sup>9</sup>

A public disorder: However, the monogamous European family design has been normatively imposed on African societies, both by the Christian mission’s moral system and by the Belgian colonial administration. Consequently, the polygamous family institution, which guaranteed the social survival of the community, was declared by the missionaries as a sinful, heathen perversity. As a consequence, the colonial power declared the occidental family norm as the unique ‘civilized’ order, and the traditional family customs were eradicated by ‘public forces’.

This is an illustration of what a postcolonial perspective would describe as the total colonial system composed of administration, mission, and military (Rützi 25–37, 142–54). In the context of such an overwhelming organization, even to suggest, as Tempels did, that the different African value systems were justified in maintaining their different family structures, was unacceptable for both the church hierarchy and the colonial government. The consequences were immediate: Placide Tempels was forced by the bishop of Elisabethville, Jean-Felix de Hamptienne, to keep quiet and to return to his Belgian Franciscan monastery.

### Transculturation Skills

It can be concluded from Placide Tempels’s biography that a border crosser needs a set of intellectual and moral skills that enable him to practice an in-between lifestyle marked by the characteristics of what in psychology is called a “balancing identity.”<sup>10</sup>

8 Such interpretations are performed in the tradition of the constructivist methodology as utilized in *comprehensive sociology* and, more specifically, in the tradition that interprets the sociocultural realities as functional codes and dynamic structures learned by the members of a given society with the view of guaranteeing their survival. In this epistemological tradition, ‘cultures’ are understood as toolboxes containing instruments and instruction manuals employed to foster survival – materially (economics), socially (politics), and epistemologically (religions). The founding description of this anthropological view was developed by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966).

9 The social institution and the individual practice of ‘polygamy’ are not limited to the precolonial traditions in the Belgian Congo. In fact, different forms of polygamous practices also occurred among the Occidental colonial personnel: the successive polygamy (marriage-divorce-marriage) or the simultaneous form of polygamy (official monogamous family, but hidden extramarital relations). But the occidental polygamous model departs from the African one in that the former women and children were not socially, juridically, or religiously protected.

10 The psychological and communicative concept of “balancing identity” – projecting oneself into the other and openness to new processes of interaction – was elaborated by Lothar Krappmann in the therapeutic context of clinics (39, 58, 70–84). But the principles of

Skills acquired in the religious contact zone are relevant for the methodologies of social anthropology: go-betweens move and communicate using the lines of different cultural codes and religious grammars, so they need to be well aware of both the social construction of their own basic personality and of the valuable ‘strange’ construction of the world as well. The transcultural personality is marked by the cognitive and moral behaviors of his “balancing identity.” The core skill for functioning as mediator is a cultural plasticity that allows movement between such multicultural psychological and social structures. And this cultural plasticity must also be accompanied by the capacity to withstand the inevitable negative social sanctions.

## Case Study 2: Interethnic Postconflict Dialogue

The history of intercultural border crossers is helpful for the study of methodological attempts and for multicultural ‘trial and error’ experiences. During the Rostock Symposium “Agents of Transculturation,” we recalled different actors and contexts of inter- and transcultural experiences in relation to economics, migration movements, military projects, linguistics, and healing approaches. I would like to add some examples of transculturation taken from various fields of the history of religions. Such ‘in-between’ personalities as Bartolomé de Las Casas (1484–1566), who fought for the human rights of natives against the Spanish colonial slavery system in Latin America. In the British colony of India, the Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948) was deeply engaged in the struggle to achieve spiritual and political independence for his country. In the Jewish context, the philosopher Martin Buber (1878–1965) focused on interreligious dialogue. Furthermore, the current Dalai Lama’s Buddhist message offers a practical spirituality for inner and political freedom. And, last but not least, I would include on this list of intercultural mediators the Swiss Muslim Tariq Ramadan, who works internationally with both theoretical and practical transculturation processes in order to facilitate the lucid and responsible integration of Muslim communities into Western Europe.<sup>11</sup>

### Research methodology

This short commemoration of key personalities involved in the different spaces of intercultural and interreligious mediation illustrates, on the one hand, the manifold personal styles of border crossers, and it suggests, on the other hand, some characteristic variations on the different ways of being ‘agents of transcultura-

“balancing identity” can, I suggest, also be transferred to intercultural and transcultural mediators.

11 During the years 1987–2003, Tariq Ramadan was a teacher and partner at the Institute of Science of Religions at the University of Fribourg. The intercultural and interreligious principles of such programs for intercitizen conviviality are presented in: Ramadan, *Muslims in Europa and Islam: La Réforme radicale*.

tion'. The following second study on transculturation processes is focused on the postgenocide situation in Rwanda.

It is not easy to delineate a significant typology of the variety of spiritual experiences mentioned earlier and political transcultural responsibilities, and to propose a figure of mediation in the Rwandan context. But it could be helpful to do it referring to the systematic approach of interreligious dialogue practices proposed by the American Lutheran theologian George A. Lindbeck,<sup>12</sup> who divides them into three main types:

(1) The *experiential-expressive model*: an exchange of personal experiences (Lindbeck 17–18), as observed above with the existential shock, which Placide Tempels underwent and which he describes in his spiritual diary, *Notre Rencontre*. As a consequence of this intercultural experience, Tempels, the 'converted missionary', proposed a new interpretation of both the Christian tradition and of African spiritual narratives.

(2) The *propositional-doctrinal model*: a theological dogmatic discussion of key concepts of the doctrine (Lindbeck 90–94), for example, in the colonial situation in which Placide Tempels found himself, the disputes concerning the meaning of the concept 'God', or the understanding of 'family'. But mostly, this kind of doctrinal 'dialogue' takes on the form of a polite 'double monologue'. That kind of doctrinal 'duologue' can be illustrated by the dogmatic attitude and the rude canonistic judgment that the bishop of Lubumbashi lodged against the culturally sensitive propositions that Placide Tempels put forward, that is, interpreting God's Trinity as 'family' and validating the tradition of polygamy.

(3) The *cultural-linguistic approach*: The goal of the 'grammar of religion' is to visualize the concepts, lexical connections, and semantic fields of the manifest culture (Lindbeck 18–27, 66–70), and what we might call its latent, 'deep culture' configuration, which is composed of the respective basic narratives, traditional set of societal norms, and collective social memory. The latent deep culture legitimates the manifest social institutions and the behavior expected of the individual.

Lindbeck elaborated this methodology of interreligious and intercultural dialogue mainly in a theoretical way or with reference to intra-Christianity theological discussions. But the typology of his three levels is a workable device for approaching other intercultural or interethnic conflicts (Bitter, *Les dieux embusqués* 256–71). To take an example from my personal experience, the theoretical cultural-linguistic framework worked out by Lindbeck is considered by the members of the

12 The biographical and practical background of George A. Lindbeck's theoretical elaboration of intercultural communication (see *The Nature of Doctrine*) comprise the first seventeen years of his childhood (1923–1940), which he spent in Luyang/China, and his official ecumenical cooperation with theologians from the Catholic Church since the Vatican II Council (1962–1964). See Bitter, *Les dieux embusqués* 11–14, 256–302; and Boss, *Postlibéralisme?* 12–16.

*Religion-Politics-Conflict* (RPC) desk at the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs as one of its important theoretical instruments.<sup>13</sup>

In the same way, as far as the interethnic postgenocide context of Rwanda is concerned<sup>14</sup>, the *experiential-expressive dialogue model* is not helpful. In fact, for the average Rwandan citizen, the experiential dialogue is an inappropriate way to deal with past sufferings, crimes, and atrocities, or with the deeply rooted desire for revenge. On the other hand, the methodology of the *propositional doctrinal approach* also stands in opposition to any reconciliation proposal. In fact, the ideological gulf between, on the one hand, the doctrine of racial purity proclaimed in the “Bantu Manifesto” (1990) and, on the other hand, the strategic link solemnly made in 1949 by the Rwandan Catholic Church between the local Batutsi Mwami royal power and ‘Jesus Christ’, proclaimed by the missionaries as the ‘King of the universe’, is insurmountable. So what remains is the *cultural-linguistic alternative* as a unique method of dealing with the genocide of 1994. Effectively, this technical approach by the specific grammars of culture is more flexible and open to dialogue – or, in a more concrete way, to projects of “diapaxis.”<sup>15</sup> Thus, in the following transculturation study on the postgenocide situation in Rwanda, the cultural-linguistic methodology will be followed, but combined with the procedures of “transitional justice.”

### **The Transitional Justice and the Rwandan *Gacaca* Model**

This is neither the place nor the moment to open the debate on the origins of the atrocities committed during the genocide in Rwanda, or to propose an evaluation

13 The fieldwork of the RPC desk and the local application of the cultural-linguistic methodology have an international scope. The 2010 Conference Report *Transforming Conflicts with Religious Dimensions: Methodologies and Practical Experiences* (Mason and Kartas) summarizes projects in Nigeria (religion as bridge), Canada (pro-choice dialogue), and Tajikistan (schooling curricula combining state models and the Islamic Madrasa tradition). The special bulletin of the Direction of Swiss Political Affairs, *Politorbis No. 52 on Religion in Conflict Transformation* presents the cultural-linguistic model (Bitter, “Transforming Conflicts” 27–32) and its application in the Tajikistan school project (Bitter/von Blarer 85–87). A ‘transcultural’ working model is introduced by Mason/Kassam (69–74) in their contribution “Bridging Worlds: Culturally Balanced Co-Mediation.” The experiences are documents illustrating how forms of practical collaboration/teamwork can continue even when dialogues come to an end.

14 The interpretations of the political, social, economic, medial, and demographic factors that catalyzed the genocide in Rwanda (from April 8 to July 15, 1994) are extremely complex. The variety of interpretations also depends on the point of view, whether it is from inside or outside, from the perspective of the refugees in the diaspora or from that of the new citizens in the country. For an overview, see Alison Des Forges and Filip Reytdjens.

15 The Danish scholar Lissi Rasmussen indicates how “diapaxis” leads toward joint ownership and co-citizenship. So does the peace strategy of “working together among adversaries” elaborated by Dominique Pire, who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1958. Pire is the founder of the Peace University in Belgium (1960), where I was engaged as French-German translator and as a student (1959–1961). His team built Peace Villages in Alsace (1956 and 1958) and reconstructed Peace Islands in Chittagong (1963 and 1965) – two old forms of “diapaxis,” where German and French people or members of the Hindu and Muslim communities worked together.

of the traumas that ensued in the wake of the killings that took place during the three months from April to July 1994. The multiple hypotheses proposed and discussed suggest many-layered causes: the demographic increase, the end of the Cold War, the missionary politics of the Catholic Church, the ethnicity strategies of the Belgian colonial policy, and the economic tensions between urban and rural populations (Friedli, “Kirchlich-religiöse Faktoren,” “Strukturanalysen”). But in the context of my contribution to practical transculturation processes, the focus is oriented toward the skills needed to promote conflict mediation, interethnic dialogue, and intercultural diapraxis methodologies.

### **Transitional Justice Methodology**

In the postgenocide situation in Rwanda, the juridical procedures and reconciliation methodologies follow those of the Transitional Justice (TJ) approach, which condenses complex juridical procedures dealing with postdictatorial or post-genocidal situations. Examples are given for Argentina, Guatemala, Cambodia, and Ivory Coast. The most famous TJ exemplar is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa (1995 and 2002).<sup>16</sup> This relatively recent elaborated model of participative tribunals is organized into structural phases designed to guarantee justice and reestablish the conviviality of social and community life. There are approximately thirty tribunals operating under the TJ model worldwide. Four principal stages leading to this social healing can be distinguished: the right to know the truth; the right to receive justice; the right of reparation; and the assurance of non recurrence.

Each of these four stages include ‘ethnicity’ as well as religious elements, either out in the open or hidden away. In the case of Rwanda, the three following circumstances demonstrate how deeply the ‘religious’ element was implicated:

- (1) Thousands and thousands of members of the Batutsi community were killed and burned after taking refuge in a number of Catholic and Protestant church buildings (for example, Kaduha, Cyahinda, Kibeho, Karama) (Des Forges 390–400, 436–53, 560–63).
- (2) During the genocidal atrocities, certain ‘magic forces’ within the traditional belief system of Rwanda – marked by the presence of the *bazimu* (ancestors) and of the forces called *imaana* (Coupez 75–95) – were interpreted as destructive energies that reinforced the catastrophic events. This plural understanding of *imaana* as ambiguous, as being potentially helpful but also potentially dangerous, as proposed by the Belgian Africanist A. Coupez, based on Bantu-linguistic and anthropological analyses, is not accepted by the Rwandan scholar and Bantu philosopher Alexis Kagame, for whom *imaana* corresponds to the biblical notion of “God” (Kagame, *La philosophie bantu-rwandaise* 332–48; Kag-

<sup>16</sup> For an instructive summary of theoretical and practical TJ configurations, see Bleeker/Sisson and Buckley-Zistel/Kater.



ame, *La Philosophie Bantu comparée* 269–304). But in the midst of the dramatic genocide contexts, many of the psychically affected persons made the enraged imaana responsible for the catastrophic events – an act of mental translation which allowed them to integrate the traumatic experience into a metaphysical belief structure.

(3) The Muslim community was also involved in the dramatic events, positively, for the most part, offering the persecuted population hospitality and hiding places under the roofs or in the toilets of their houses and cottages (Viret).

These short references to the parts played by the three most important religious traditions – Christian interpretation, Shamanistic traditions, and Muslim relief endeavor – during a period of genocide make it comprehensible that ethnic, religious, and cultural factors were ubiquitous at each step of the Transitional Justice tribunals. In such contexts, the national and international “mediators” – members of local or expatriate humanitarian organizations, or religious NGO fieldworkers and Red Cross delegates – have the very difficult job of reconstructing a gravely wounded and violated community. It is obvious that the transitions are very risky processes. And it is also evident that projects of reconciliation cannot be achieved by political strategies of amnesty or by superficial invitations to amnesia. Moreover, sustainable personal and communitarian healing cannot result simply from short religious ceremonies that ask for forgiveness. The rites of sacramental penitence offered by the Catholic Church or the absolution offered by Evangelical Churches are too facile and emotional to heal unconscious wounds, eliminate omnipresent fears, or restore family honor.<sup>17</sup>

In fact, the ‘reconciliation’ rituals become accountable and trust-building initiatives only under the condition that the people concerned have already gone through the Transitional Justice program’s four preliminary phases, wherein the truth about the perpetrators was made publically known, the victims were legally recognized, the offer of a dignified reparation has been carried out, and the guarantee of nonrecurrence is credible. As a result, the social environment will become progressively purified of hate, aggressiveness, feelings of injustice, and the need for vengeance, allowing ‘reconciliation’ to become a practical option. After many such lucid and multilayered processes of transparency, trust-building measures, and acts of reparation, a new ‘social contract’ can be negotiated and celebrated between individuals and groups who were once adversaries (Ledrach). ‘Reconciliation without capitulation’ is one aim of the trust-building processes, facilitating and stabilizing the renewed social integration through nonviolent means. By doing so, the goal of reconciliation rituals is to manifest and to reinforce, solemnly and publically, the common will to reconstruct national unity (Friedli, “Versöhnung ohne Kapitulation”).

17 In the special issue on “Transitional Justice 2.0,” edited by the *Journal of International Peace and Organization* in 2011, different critical points mentioned above are presented and evaluated in detail. See Engert/Jetschke.

### **The Traditional Reconciliation *Gacaca* Model Revisited**

In order to better realize this aim of future civil reconciliation and collective transformation from a ‘culture of death and mistrust’ to a ‘culture of life and trust’, different proposals were made by the government of Rwanda that combined the modern Transitional Justice methodology with elements taken from the traditional Rwandan method of conflict resolution called *gacaca*.

The Kinyarwanda verb *gacaca* can mean “to sit on the grass under a tree and speak together.” Traditionally, the celebration of *gacaca* is a part of everyday community life, embracing both joyful and sorrowful events, such as births, marriages, and deaths. But the family and neighborhood practice of *gacaca* also serves as a tool for repairing social cohesion that has been damaged by criminal acts – theft, murder, rape – in order to restore societal harmony. With the help of a wise person who is respected by all members of the community, the representatives of the perpetrators and of the victim’s families negotiate together to find the conditions of a renewed life together. In fact – and different from the ‘occidental’ tradition of jurisdiction – the first goal of the *gacaca* proceedings is not to determine guilt and pronounce punishment, but to reestablish communitarian accord. Within Lindbeck’s epistemological framework (16–28, 66–70), this culturally sensitive understanding of tribunals is an illustration of divergent juridical rules reflected in different cultural grammars

In fact, in African traditional culture, the principal threat posed by crime is the destruction of social cohesion (Raynal 1994). And so in the Rwandan tradition, crimes are interpreted as being the causes of cosmic and social disorders in the energetic field of the ambiguous forces of *imaana*, which are considered to be, as mentioned above, omnipresent. In such a cultural context, the main goal of *gacaca* then is to restore and guarantee a new, well balanced social environment. And the primary function of the mediator is to help the perpetrators as well as the victims to recreate the world order. The conditions of punishment are often only determined during the second phase of the ritual.

### **Gacaca Tribunals and Postgenocide Transition**

The government of Rwanda decided to judge and punish the crimes perpetrated during the genocide of 1994, which involved millions of people. It proposed a hybrid model of tribunals in which three types of courts were to be combined: (a) the international courts; (b) the postcolonial national tribunals organized according to occidental standards; and (c) the precolonial *gacaca* model of conflict resolution. The attributions of the juridical competencies of each model were fundamentally elaborated in the postgenocide organic law No. 08/96 of 1996. The main juridical task was to distinguish and to describe four categories of crimes: (1) conceptual planning of the genocide by political and military leaders; (2) responsibility for mass killings; (3) carrying out of crimes by local killers, rapists, and bandits; and (4) the destruction of houses, banana plantations, and fields.

Judging thousands and thousands of potential criminals according to the different categories, bringing perpetrators and victims together in the presence of crowds of neighbors, is difficult and traumatizing work. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), located in Arusha (Tanzania), was to investigate the people involved in the first category, and the official national tribunals were to be in charge of the remaining three.

But very soon it became evident that the modern way of prosecuting several hundred thousand Rwandan citizens would require an unbearably long period of time. For that reason, the procedure was completed by organic law No. 16/2004 of 2004, stipulating that people accused under crime categories three and four would be judged under a modified gacaca process. One hundred fifty thousand popular judges (*inyangamugayo*: in English, “honest,” and in French, “intègres”) from all over the country were trained in a six-month program focused on juridical and humanitarian issues.

### **Gacaca: A Contribution to Transculturation Studies?**

The lessons learned during the revised form of gacaca are subject to internationally controversial discussions. Two points are relevant insofar as the evaluation of transculturation processes are concerned: (1) cultural, structural, and personal deficiencies; and (2) the need for a final, public reconciliation ritual.

The recently presented official evaluation of the gacaca process (1996–2011) offers a cogent and well documented report both on the positive results and on points of criticism observed during the gacaca work.<sup>18</sup> The evaluation group of eighteen members (mostly judges, lawyers, and historians) provided an overall analysis of the gacaca jurisdiction’s outcomes. Important criteria of the empirical survey were (a) the acceleration of the genocide courts issues; (b) the aim to diminish impunity; and (c) the contribution of the local communities to the reconciliation processes (Rutayisire 52–174). For this part of the inquiry, the average responses are positive. But the evaluation group also had to deal with critics, especially observers from abroad, who opposed the gacaca tribunals.<sup>19</sup> The members of the evaluation group of the gacaca tribunals agreed that the hope to pro-

18 The Hon. Domitilla Mukantagazwa, executive secretary of the National Gacaca Juridictions Office, was the chairwoman of the gacaca evaluation group. The report, *Evaluation finale du processus gacaca: Résultats atteints par objectif*, was submitted for publication at the end of 2012. The research coordinator and executive secretary of the evaluation project is Professor Paul Rutayisire, in charge of the Contemporary History program at the National University of Butare and director of the Centre for Conflict Resolution in Kigali. An exhaustive presentation and careful interpretation of the gacaca tribunals is made by Phil Clark in *The Gacaca Courts*. Clark presents the historical background, the juridical fundamentals, the modus operandi, the healing and forgiveness perspectives of gacaca, and highlights some negative issues reported by the international press in the Rwandan context. Clark’s research combines empirical and normative considerations concerning the Transitional Justice approach in general, and is the result of more than six years of fieldwork in each region of Rwanda and of nearly five hundred interviews.

19 For instance, the well-documented analysis done by Gerd Hankel. See also, Danielle Beswick.

mote a deep social healing between the different ethnic components of Rwandan society had not been fully realized (Rutayisire 175–80). The tribunals failed to achieve the goals of significant and enduring healing because: (a) the urban segments of society were not really involved; (b) thousands of judges and witnesses were corrupt (a quarter of the group of popular judges); (c) the Rwandan culture of silence and mistrust continued to be at work; (d) the presence of soldiers during the gacaca meetings could have been interpreted as political control; and (e) ecclesiastic members of the Catholic Church and of other religious congregations failed to take part in the tribunal (see Des Forges 290–93). But on the whole, the nationwide institution of the renewed gacaca form of tribunal, conducted publicly in six thousand locations across the country, and with the active participation of one hundred fifty thousand lay judges is seen as a globally unique model of participative and democratic justice.

### **Need of a Final Ritualization of the Postgenocide Transition**

The final phase of Transitional Justice processes involves, as acknowledged and confirmed by anthropological and sociological insights, more than the merely verbal expression of the tribunal's results given by the judges. In fact, inclusive and sensitive expressions of the newly reconciled communities need to be generated and deepened through community rituals, emotional expressions, and corporal group experiences transcending the verbal dealing with the past as well as surpassing the present, and anticipating the new community in progress. The ritual opens horizons for a future life together. Such rites of passage are a sign of transitioning from a 'culture of death' to a 'culture of life'.<sup>20</sup>

### **Conclusion: 'Transculturation' Rituals**

In the context of the Rostock symposium on "Agents of Transculturation" there remains the fundamental question: Where is the charismatic personality who has the social, political, and spiritual competence to invite, animate, and conduct such 'transcultural' reconciliation rituals? Possible leaders could be found in the group of local trustworthy personalities (among doctors, women leaders, and widows), leaders from other African areas, internationally respected religious personalities, social workers, or delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

### **Skills in Practical Ethics**

Mediators, favoring the transition from a 'culture of death' to a 'culture of life' are able to empathize with all involved parties. The well-known Swiss media-

<sup>20</sup> Some theoretical aspects of the role of reconciliation rituals are presented in: Friedli, "Versöhnung ohne Kapitulation" 154–58). Some reconciliation rituals practiced elsewhere are: Palestinian *sulha*, Korean *han-puri*, Colombian *minga*, and U.S. *quilt* (158–61). See furthermore: the *Sisterhood* ceremony between Korean and Japanese women (in the tradition of the international NGO Women's Federation for World Peace). At the Rostock Symposium on "Agents of Transculturation," Lorenz Gonschor shared valuable information with me on the Hawaiian problem-solving and healing process known as *Ho'oponopono*.

tor Julian Hottinger, who facilitated mediations in Nepal, Afghanistan, and Darfur in the Sudan, stated it thus: “Throw prejudices overboard and steadily listen.” Furthermore, it would be helpful for go-between teams to include real “collective personalities” who, because of living moral lives are trusted by all parties, and are skillful in creating ritual performances.

### Case Study 3: Basic Human Needs Approach

The two types of transculturation processes discussed so far – the personal evolution of Placide Tempels and the conflict solution in Rwanda – are not completely conclusive. Thus, more practical issues are addressed by a third approach: to elaborate convivial models and reciprocal agreements using conflict transformation methodologies based on the satisfaction of basic human needs (BHN).

#### Fields of Basic Human Needs

The intention of the BHN<sup>21</sup> approach is to deal with intercultural conflict situations in such a way that the risks of double one-way debates – the phenomenon that was labeled earlier as ‘duologue’ – are avoided. In fact, ‘double monologue’ meetings are useless because both parties repeat their rigid one-sided declarations of what they consider as nonnegotiable truths and as eternally given values. As already noted, George Lindbeck designed this approach as the propositional-doctrinal model, a model that deals with different doctrinal and moral systems. On the contrary, the BHN grammar intends to bypass the possible traps of approaches based on ahistorical and nonnegotiation-oriented dogmatic systems.

Yet, even though the BHN approach is considered ideologically neutral, for some critics of BHN, its guidelines are too materialistic and too day-to-day consumer-specific. Nevertheless, the BHN approach is, on the one hand, more concrete than both the transitional and the interethnic models presented above, and, on the other hand, includes the psychic, social, and spiritual aspects of the human

21 The Basic Human Needs approach is one of the main development theories discussed since the 1970s. A further vision is the Human Rights Based approach. An evaluation of the pros and cons for each methodology is not the subject of this paper, but in intercultural contexts, BHN seems to be more factual and pragmatic. The Human Rights Based approach, on the contrary, is potentially more affected by ideological dissensus because the philosophical and theological debate over what is “human” continues. In fact, the *Islamic declaration of human rights* (1981) and the *Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam* (1990) stipulate that Allah has exclusive rights, whereas human beings have only duties. Furthermore, the *African charter of human rights and people's rights* (1981) acknowledges the rights of human beings, but only in relation to society. The two sociopolitical conflicts in the cases of the Belgian Congo and Rwanda are two illustrations of such communitarian models of society. Finally, the Buddhist understanding of human rights gives priority to the ‘right of life’, within which ‘human rights’ are situated. See Bielefeldt 85–89; Galtung, *Le développement; Frieden mit friedlichen Mitteln* 243–48; and *Konflikte und Konfliktlösungen* 166–71 and 211–14. See also, Friedli, “Konfliktpotential” and Sen, *Development as Freedom*.

condition as essential aspects of the BHN field. More importantly, its methodology gives priority to operational issues. In order to further clarify this option, it is useful to explain, within the BHN concept, the following four application groups:

- (1) Need for *survival*: to guarantee fundamental human security, e.g., basic nutrition, clean water, healthy ecological living space, and social protection;
- (2) Need for *well-being*: to be ensured not just the minimum physical conditions to prevent death, but a dignified social environment that comprises hygienic living conditions, social networks, and adequate medical care;
- (3) Need for *freedom*: protection of one's personal and social identity, e.g., general literacy, schooling for girls as well as boys, professional and labor opportunities, reproductive rights, juridical guarantees;
- (4) Need for *identity*: opportunities to develop the basic motivations for life, a spirituality of hope, and a horizon for an honorable future; individual expression and creativity; respect for personal choices and lifestyles; the provision of cognitive and practical models for coming to terms with death, and thus escaping fundamental disorientation and existential anomie.

Each of the four BHN fields constitutes a very complex configuration of wants and desires: the material base of existence (needs for survival and well-being) as well as the psychological conditions necessary for human development (needs for freedom and a future). While individual aspirations are clearly shaped by personal needs, their effective fulfillment depends on structural conditions – on the economic context, the social environment, climatic development, and political power. The sociopolitical framework is frequently marked by multiple forms of institutionalized violence that obstruct the energy of individual efforts to create positive responses to these multilayered batteries of needs.

### **The Concrete Applications of BHN Contested**

With regard to the “Basic Human Needs” approach, the religious factor is very often one of the decisive components of the concerned reality. And religious interventions are – especially where issues of social deviance are concerned – a strong and even decisive social element. Religious traditions impose moral obligations and they exert control over social roles. They become, in multiple geographical and tribal contexts, radical public hindrances in the quest for need fulfillment (for instance the Hindu caste system, the Islamic family understanding, Shamanistic fears, the Confucian authority model). Especially in relation to women's aspirations to be liberated from patriarchal family control, religious institutions – Hindu, Christian, Muslim, Catholic, tribal, etc. – legitimize merciless sanctions of those who stray from traditional practices. They officially condemn all desire for personal need fulfillment. As a consequence, the incompatibility of

traditions and religious practices with the moral views of modernity becomes – especially in the context of secularizing and transitional societies – one of the main origins of social conflicts.

One of the most difficult positions for mediators and border crossers is to be placed in between groups representing radically opposed orthodoxies and traditional value systems. This is especially the case if the traditional models of need responses are nonnegotiable, if their cultural codes are understood as issuing directly from an eternally given, divine source of the world. Consequently, in those cases, the space within which go-betweens can operate is very limited.

### **BHN: Family Policy and Women's Rights**

The colonial context within which Placide Tempels worked in the Belgian Congo repeatedly evidenced this kind of intercultural clash in relation to different forms of understanding and everyday practice. So, in the colonial situation – as defined by Georges Balandier (34–38) – the public controversy was between the exclusivist claims of the occidental monogamous marriage and tribal polygamous family systems, which were rejected as an expression of sinful paganism. The BHN approach to this problem is to say that the two models of family institution are two different cultural answers to the same fundamental need: to guarantee the survival of the family group, which is in turn relevant for economic and social survival.

A similar confrontation between different sets of social and cultural values arises between, on the one hand, the religious traditions of the monotheistic orthodoxies, and, on the other hand, the understanding of women's personal responsibility independent of patriarchal family models. For women striving for autonomy, it is not the will of God as interpreted by patriarchal power that is decisive, but the health and security of mother and child. Thus, a deep and widening gap between religious traditions and modern worldviews is opened – both between and within societies.

Such a public conflict between different sets of values is not just an opportunity for academic observations of phenomena of transculturation undertaken by sociologists or anthropologists, but a global challenge for the future of humankind (Sen, *Identity and Violence*). Mediators intervene – politically as border crossers and socially as go-betweens – when such conflicts emerge. And it is evident that the ethical framework and the professional conditions of their 'social engineering' must be negotiated by the societies. On the international level, the specialized UN working groups formulate their agendas in this context: for example: International Organization for Migration (IOM), UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN World Food Programme (WFP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Health Organization (WHO).<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> A new and better coordination of their UN system issues could be carried out by a *council of sages* – elected by the civil society, rooted in NGO movements, trade unions, groups like

### **A United Nations Illustration: Cultural Clash Between Family Policies**

The United Nations “International Conference on Population and Development” in Cairo (September 1994) is a well known example of this kind of controversial dogmatic debate and intercultural clash. This summit on demographic issues was organized in order to formulate blueprints for providing the most optimal conditions for the lives of the world’s existing and future populations. However, the corresponding UN agendas on pragmatic health strategies and on sensitive family planning measures were rapidly confronted with different delegations engaged in discussions on the proposal-doctrinal level. They organized a radical opposition to the UN Population Fund delegation and its president, the Pakistani gynecologist Nafis Sadik, who were proposing a set of workable programs with relation to the responsibility of women and parents. The delegation’s arguments were based on local and global demographical statistics, for instance, fertility prognoses, maternal and infant mortality rates, developmental prognostics, and on pediatric health indicators. And their ethical and normative arguments were founded on the basic human right of women to plan their own pregnancies.

But many delegations from Islamic countries (especially from Iran and Saudi Arabia), as well as the Vatican State representatives, presented doctrinal views and arguments against such pragmatic proposals. Their theological approach insisted on the understanding of life as a gift of the Creator; it recalled the unconditional submission of all human beings to the eternal will of God; and it repeated the normative value of patriarchal traditions. In conclusion, the family planning measures proposed by UN agencies and feminist NGOs were, from the perspective of fundamentalist Christian and Muslim theologians, signs of the sinful rebellion of secularized women against the eternal will of God. And, worst of all, the leaders of the monotheistic religions interpreted the proposals of family planning and of contraception as equal to abortion practices and to crimes of murder.<sup>23</sup>

In short, at the UN population summit in Cairo, two totally different cultural proposals and grammars of social rules were in radical opposition to one another: on the one hand, the community-centered theological beliefs of both the monotheistic Islamic *sharia* vision and the Christian orthodoxies, and, on the other hand, the person-centered ethic of a women’s rights movements (see Ramadan, *Islam* 215–23; Bielefeldt 155–81). Between these two ideologies, the solution-orientated UN arguments for promoting the healthy survival of children, mothers, and families were crushed (Leisinger; see also Inglehart 1–20). The UN population sum-

Human Rights Watch, or in religious traditions. This is the objective of the Universal Peace Foundation proposal to create an Interreligious Council at the United Nations (New York 2010).

23 In the context of the UN population summit of 1994, the arguments for the NGOs’ positions are developed in “Wenig Kinder – viel Konsum?” edited by the Swiss NGO Erklärung von Bern. An engaged and abrasive description of the Vatican diplomacy and of the theological and personal opinions of Pope John Paul II, both before and during the Cairo summit, is presented by Christine Clerc (49–60). For an excellent demographic overview related to the debate after the UN population summit, see Leisinger.



mit was dead. It was not possible to construct a practical solution using methodologies that enabled different options to transcend themselves, and by so doing create a diapraxis in relation to the basic needs of all human beings (see LeBaron, in: Mason and Kartas 30–31).

### **Transculturation and ‘Deep Culture’ Archaeology**

The role and skills of mediators essentially revolve around initiating processes of reciprocal understanding between one person’s cultural grammar and that of another. But this process goes far beyond the semantic analysis of the respective statements and affirmations because the openly manifested verbal expressions derive their significance from the respective latent value systems. In social anthropology, this omnipresent but latent configuration is labeled ‘deep culture’. In fact, the concrete arguments, everyday formulations, and public proclamations are rooted in deep cultural interfaces constituted by the traditional narratives and religious myths of a given community, the norms and plausibilities of a group, and the collective memory of the respective society. From a ‘deep cultural’ point of view, each moral affirmation or duty gains its legitimacy from being regarded as ‘natural’.<sup>24</sup> The task of mediators is to understand and to interpret that functioning of both cultures. They must be able to communicate within both the relevant cultural grammars as well as the local languages. And by doing so, mediators are decipherers and archaeologists of the respective ‘deep cultures’ (Bielefeldt 189–97). These kinds of cultural and linguistic competencies are often labeled by the pedagogical category of ‘balancing identity’.

### **Conclusion: Statistical Data and Transculturation**

In the context of the 1994 Cairo UN population summit, some essential competencies for mediators, relevant to global multicultural issues, were identified. The cultural-linguistic approach avoids making rigid, religious, or secular descriptions of the world. A less ideological and more pragmatic methodology is focused on the search for sustainable livelihood systems as defined by the four basic human needs (BHN) fields of “survival,” “freedom,” “well being,” and “identity.” In this

24 The concept of ‘deep culture’ was precisely defined and concretely applied by Galtung, *Frieden* 368–85; Galtung, *Konflikte* 198–209; see also Friedli, “Versöhnung” 157–63. It is an analytical concept analogous to the psychoanalytic understanding of “collective unconscious” by Carl-Gustav Jung. But in the scientific tradition of comprehensive sociology, the concept of deep culture is not to be interpreted as an eternal reality or as a rigidly fixed essence. On the contrary, deep culture is a historical and changing interface, conditioned by the interconnected influences of the fundamental narrative of a society, the normative evidences of a group, and the social memory of a community. These three components of a given social configuration are conditioned by the environmental framework, including economic conditions, demographic density, demographic development, forms of political systems, influence of religious power, ecological (in-) security, mass media influence, etc. During the mediation processes, the task of intercultural mediators is, first, to interpret the existing sociopolitical frameworks, and, second, to cooperate in the sociopolitical field to change the environmental framework wherever it is marked by destructive cultural factors.

context, the understanding and the interpretation of concrete statistical data are an essential addition to the societal, cultural, and religious aspects of transculturation processes.<sup>25</sup>

Facilitators cooperate in view of practical and concrete answers to BHN, transcending conflictual cultural options and religious behaviors, such as introducing alternative issues, proposing comparisons with analogous contexts, or creating models for win-win solutions.

## **Intercultural Mediators 2.0**

In this paper, three types of controversial cases of transculturation were discussed: Case Study 1: reinforcing the given culture sensitive model: the missionary Placide Tempels versus Belgian colonial power; Case Study 2: regional interethnic negotiation model: postgenocide reconciliation processes in Rwanda; Case Study 3: international Basic Human Needs approach: religious orthodoxy versus women's rights at the UN population summit.

The general research question of this exploratory paper has been: *What are the skills needed by mediators acting in the context of contemporary conflicts that include religious dimensions?* The answers are not uniform. The necessary skills are diverse, depending on the respective historical, political, and religious circumstances. But in concluding, some valuable common denominators can be enumerated as consequences of the three sociopolitical phenomena analyzed:<sup>26</sup>

Skills 1: Intercultural personalities work with the tools offered by cultural anthropology, which enable them to express themselves within different cultural grammars and to move in the space of meditation between different cultures. Their internalized balancing identity patterns are strong enough to allow them to weather potentially negative social sanctions.

Skills 2: In the contexts of conflict and postwar situations, mediators are challenged on the practical ethics level to empathize, with all parties involved and to communicate within the respective mythic narratives and collective memories. Such behavior, rooted in the respective 'deep cultural' level, reinforces the interpersonal and structural networks of trust.

25 See some important practical guidelines in Baumgartner and Högger.

26 The different contexts discussed in this paper were situated on a macrosociological level, as if the groups concerned were homogeneous entities. By doing so, the respective conflicts were presented as confrontations between fundamentally different groups labeled as compact essences. But in reality, all these religious traditions, social denominations, and nongovernmental organizations are historically constructed, cognitive, and moral bodies. And their everyday expressions assume multiple shapes and nuances of the different processes of transculturation.

Skills 3: The aim of the Basic Human Needs approach is to propose concrete and factually supported solutions. With the help of the applied comparative sociology of religions, mediators cooperate to transform and transcend conflictual attitudes and behaviors with religious dimensions, for example, all partners imagining and creating together a new common space of compassion, conviviality, and human security, even in the midst of the conflict. Spiritualities and rituals with an eye to the future offer the motivating background.

Admittedly, as defined here, the profile of *mediators* is a vocational figure who is ideal-typical. And the concrete transcultural realities are invitations to create optimal, lucid, and culturally sensitive compromises.

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**NATIVE INFORMANTS,  
CLANDESTINE JOURNALISTS AND  
THE POLITICS OF DISCOURSE**





## CHAPTER ELEVEN

# Across the Tropic Line: Reporters and Spies in Cuba in Times of Strife

PETER HULME

Of all the possible kinds of border crossers and mediators, reporters are perhaps the most open, in that their *raison d'être* is to write, and so they leave records of their interpretations, whereas spies are perhaps the least open, in that their communications are by definition secret and limited. And of all the possible cultures between which communication and traffic can flow, the USA and Cuba have had the most intimate, but often the most difficult of relationships for almost two and a half centuries. So looking – as this essay will do – at the activities of US reporters and spies in Cuba will inevitably offer only one very particular angle on the topic of this volume, though I will touch on several terms from the original conference announcement, many of them reproduced in the Introduction to this collection, as well as offering some others that may be usefully transferable to different contexts.<sup>1</sup> The two key terms – since they form the title of the conference and of this volume – are *agents* and *transculturation*. I will return to both of these later, but to begin with it is worth noting that *transculturation* was a term originating with the Cuban scholar Fernando Ortiz, so it is in at least one sense appropriate to the book's theme that some attention should be given here to Cuba.

*Cuban Counterpoint [Contrapunteo cubano]* was published in Havana in 1940.<sup>2</sup> In it Ortiz offered the term *transculturation (transculturación)* as an improvement on the anthropological term 'acculturation', a suggestion that seemed to be validated by the approving words of one of the world's leading anthropologists, Bronislaw Malinowski, in his preface to Ortiz's book. Ortiz's principal concern was with Cuban culture. He was deeply aware that it had been formed by a mixture of at least three prior identifiable cultures – European, Afri-

1 These potentially transferable terms will appear in italics.

2 The publication history of Ortiz's book is quite complicated. The English translation published in 1947 (and reprinted in a new edition in 1995) is an abbreviated version of the 1940 first edition. A revised and augmented Spanish edition appeared in 1963 (with the same number of chapters but with 351 additional paragraphs of material). A further revised Spanish edition was published in 1999, based on Ortiz's corrections to the 1963 edition. Enrico Mario Santi's 2002 edition is to date the most authoritative in Spanish. My quotations and references come from the 1995 edition of the English translation. Some good studies of *Cuban Counterpoint* are Coronil, González Echeverría, Santi, and in Font and Quiroz.

can, and indigenous Caribbean – and that something new – Cuban culture – had been created out of the conflicted encounter between the three: “The real history of Cuba,” Ortiz wrote, “is the history of its intermeshed transculturations” (98). Some of the larger questions this obviously raises are: If transculturation is superior to the preceding term, acculturation, which was wedded to the notion of contact between supposedly pristine but unequal cultures, then where exactly are the borders between cultures? And if we can speak of *Cuban* culture, then are borders between cultures identical to borders between nations? Ortiz also made it clear that he offered the word *transculturation* as the description of “the different phases of the process of transition from one culture to another” (102–03), a process that involved loss of culture (*deculturation*) and the creation of new cultural phenomena (*neoculturation*). We don’t have to use the word *transculturation* in the same way as Ortiz, but it is useful to bear in mind his original definition, as well as the general ethnographic background to the consideration of cultural contact.

In this essay I’ll look at a number of case studies, trying to identify from them some of the variables that might be transferred to other contexts. The case studies are of seven individuals: Herbert Matthews, LeRoi Jones, Robert Taber, James J. O’Kelly, Andrew Summers Rowan, George Eugene Bryson, and Harry Scovel. They cluster around three moments of strife: the first war of Cuban independence (1868–1878), the second war of Cuban independence (1895–1898), which ended with the Spanish American War of 1898, and the early days of the Cuban Revolution (1957–1961), which – in terms of US-Cuban relationships – effectively ended with the Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961. All the case studies involve travelers from the USA who have gone, as it were, behind Cuban lines in order to interpret some element of Cuba for a US readership, either public or specialist. But I shall start with a brief historical overview of the relationship between Cuba and the USA.

The USA and Cuba are neighboring countries separated by a mere ninety miles of sea and by the line of the Northern tropic – although most of the writers discussed here actually traveled nearly two thousand miles from New York to eastern Cuba via Havana. The relationship has always been close, indeed intimate, if not always warm. President William McKinley spoke of “ties of singular intimacy” between the countries, but then he had just launched a military invasion of Cuba.<sup>3</sup> For the first century of US independence, Cuba was a Spanish colony. For the first half of the nineteenth century, both Cuba and the part of the USA closest to it – the South – were slave societies. During that period families from the two areas intermarried; large landowners had plantations in the US South and Cuba, moving back and forth between the two; and there were unsuccessful attempts – supported by military invasion – to take Cuba from Spain and incorporate it into a Southern slave federation. After the US Civil War, US com-

3 See Pérez, *Cuba and the United States* for the quotation, which he uses as an epigraph to his book.

mercial investment in Cuba grew rapidly; the USA offered, unsuccessfully, to buy Cuba from Spain; and it supported Cuban efforts to free the island from Spanish colonial rule – although it was also very concerned that other imperial powers not gain sovereignty over the island. To this end, when it looked as if Cuba might become truly independent in 1898, after three years of insurgency, the USA invaded, defeated the Spanish forces outside the eastern city of Santiago, and took control, granting Cuba a limited form of independence. In the early twentieth century there was substantial US settlement in Cuba; there was further commercial investment, especially in the sugar and banana industries; and – beginning in the 1940s – there was also the substantial involvement of the US Mafia, which came to dominate the leisure and gambling industries around Havana. All of this was swept away in the aftermath of the 1959 Revolution.<sup>4</sup>

Today, intimate contact continues, but of a different kind. A large number of Cubans left Cuba in a series of exoduses after 1959; most retain close connections – familial or nostalgic – with the island; some return regularly; and two new generations of Cuban Americans influence the cultural and political life of parts of the USA, especially in southern Florida. All that remains of the US presence on the island is the naval base at Guantánamo Bay, the first place where US marines landed in 1898. It's worth pausing there a moment because Guantánamo Bay provides one clue as to the reasons for the persistence of US interest in Cuba: the island's strategic position.

By 1898 Guantánamo Bay had been on the US agenda for many years because of its location in the Windward Passage, a strait between Cuba and Haiti. The immediate rationale for occupying it in 1898 was so it could serve as a coaling station for US ships, but the USA had no intention of letting the opportunity slip, especially since by 1898 it was obvious that a canal would soon be cut across Central America to connect the Atlantic and the Pacific: Guantánamo Bay would control the shipping lanes leading to and from that canal.<sup>5</sup> The importance of that strategic position has not changed. In 2010, the global intelligence company Stratfor, which advises several US government agencies, had this assessment, written by George Friedman, posted on its website:

Cuba occupies an extraordinarily important geographic position for the United States. It sits astride the access points from the Gulf of Mexico into the Atlantic Ocean, and therefore is in a position to impact the export of U.S. agricultural products via the Mississippi River complex and New Orleans (not to mention the modern-day energy industrial centers along the Gulf Coast). If New Orleans is the key to the American Midwest's access to the world, Cuba is the key to New Orleans.

4 Pérez's various works in the list of references offer the best historical introduction to the relationship.

5 On the acquisition of the base, see Strauss.

This brief sketch already brings up one pertinent variable: *distance*. Cuba and the USA do not share a physical border in the way that, say, the USA and Mexico do: physical borders inevitably lead to a *borderland* region of the kind where transculturation often flourishes. But Cuba and the USA are close enough for contact to be regular and for *agents of transculturation* to pass back and forth with considerable freedom, at least at certain moments, becoming – as it were – fluent in both cultures, or at least fluent enough to pass as interpreters of Cuban culture to a US readership. Despite travel restrictions of various kinds over the last fifty years, contact has remained surprisingly substantial.

## Revolutionary Journey

The seven case studies I offer have certain aspects in common. They all involve travel from the USA, usually from New York, usually to Havana and then eastward to sites of conflict. Interested here in genre and pattern rather than historical development, I start with the classic case of the reporter Herbert Matthews who, in the late 1950s became world-famous as the first journalist to interview Fidel Castro after his landing in Cuba at the end of 1956.<sup>6</sup>

At the beginning of 1957, the Cuban dictator, Fulgencio Batista, was trying to persuade the outside world that Castro was dead, but with insurgent assistance Matthews managed to travel to the mountains of eastern Cuba, interview Castro, get his notes back to New York, and publish a huge scoop in the *New York Times*. As a result, Matthews became one of the leading voices interpreting the significance of the Cuban Revolution to the outside world, and particularly to the US public, during the late 1950s and into the early 1960s, when the relationship between the two countries finally turned sour.

Two moments are particularly important here. The first one is the *encounter*: Matthews became an *agent* because of his access to Castro. The *New York Times* report was based on a long whispered conversation in the foothills of the Sierra Maestra in the early morning of February 17, 1957. The second moment is the *publication*, the written account that brought into the public realm the agent's interpretation of what to many in the USA was an alien, indeed incomprehensible reality – what might be thought of as revolutionary Cuban culture in the making.

It is clearly not always the case, but cultural contact may often be *clandestine*, for a number of reasons. Matthews was traveling into a militarily restricted area, so he had to operate undercover. And he also needed the secrecy to protect his journalistic primacy: he was the first journalist, the first agent, to have access to knowledge of this new 'culture'. Also crucial was his *authority*, which was based on three elements: his linguistic ability – he had a degree in Romance languages

6 Herbert Lionel Matthews (1900–1977) spent his entire career at the *New York Times*, covering the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War, as well as events in Latin America.

from Columbia University, so he could understand what was being said to him; his experience as a journalist – he had been reporting on Latin America for many years and so could contextualize what was being said to him; and his objectivity – he was a journalist for one of the most famous newspapers in the world and so could be supposed not to be biased: in other words, he possessed a reliable *professional identity* and authority. The claim to objectivity proved particularly contentious in the early 1960s when the rest of the US media became hostile to the direction the Cuban Revolution was taking. Matthews was widely – if unfairly – regarded as having, as it were, *gone native*, being so captivated by the ideology of the Revolution that he could supposedly no longer report on it ‘objectively’.<sup>7</sup>

After he had spoken to Castro, Matthews had the insurgent leader sign his notes and then had a photograph taken of the two of them smoking cigars together. Just as well, because Batista’s reaction to the *New York Times* article was to insist that Matthews could not possibly have got into the Sierra Maestra and that he had made the interview up; at which point the *New York Times* published the photograph of Matthews and Castro together.

In this case, Castro himself is the *native informant*. This seems to me an indispensable figure when speaking of transculturation in conjunction with agency. If the *agent* is the person who carries knowledge or information from one culture to another, then that agent will often have acquired that knowledge or information from an individual within the other culture. The term native informant comes from the discipline of anthropology, which quickly recognized the importance of that figure to its operation. Native informants come with different degrees of authority themselves and are variously positioned within the host culture. In speaking to Castro, Matthews was obviously getting his information from what might be regarded as *the horse’s mouth*. But not even the ‘horse’ is a simple conveyor of neutral information. Castro had his own agenda, which involved undermining Batista’s claims and exaggerating the strength of his own military position.

## Spreading the Word

As a journalist, Matthews had to maintain his objective stance. So, notionally, did Robert Taber, who a couple of months later followed in Matthews’s footsteps to conduct the first television interview with Castro, transmitted to a huge US audience in May 1957 on the CBS network: “Rebels of the Sierra Maestra: The Story of Cuba’s Jungle Fighters.”<sup>8</sup> Taber had no background of political involvement, but he was deeply affected by his close contact with Castro’s small guerrilla group and over the next few years turned himself into a key *go-between*,

7 See DePalma for a far from objective discussion of this issue. For Matthews’s own accounts, see *The Cuban Story* and *A World in Revolution*

8 Robert Taber (1918–1995), journalist.

attempting to liaise between the Revolution and his home country. *Go-between* already has a significant status in studies of cultural contact because of Stephen Greenblatt's use of the term in his book, *Marvelous Possessions*, to discuss the controversial figure in the conquest of Mexico whom the Spaniards called Doña Marina and the Indians Malintzin or La Malinche (141–45), and who has been seen by Octavio Paz (65–88) and Tzvetan Todorov (101), among others, as the first post-1492 example of transculturation, a portent of the whole subsequent history of the continent.

Taber's involvement took various forms. He interpreted the Revolution to a US readership through his book *M26: The Biography of a Revolution*. He made himself a very literal go-between, traveling back and forth incessantly between New York and Havana during the first two years of the Revolution, seemingly having Castro's trust. Much of this go-betweening was done in connection with the Fair Play for Cuba Committee (FPCC), an organization that Taber cofounded in April 1960 to try to counteract increasingly hostile US press coverage of the Revolution.

In "Rebels of the Sierra Maestra," Taber's voiceover completely buys into the geocultural discourse he has obviously learned from his hosts. Turquino, he says, is "a name and a place to strike a spark from the Cuban imagination." He compares it to Pike's Peak in Colorado, just as he compares the Cuban independence leader, José Martí, with George Washington as he strives to give his US viewers some cultural comparisons: "We are the first American reporters to reach Martí's towering statue atop Cuba's highest mountain and it is here that Fidel Castro chose to speak with us." *Comparison* is a critical element within the discourse of cultural brokerage, persuading one side of the exchange that, despite initial appearances, they did in fact have the necessary reference points to make sense of what might seem fundamentally alien.

Other writers went to Cuba to report even more subjectively, and inevitably what they found was influenced by their background and preoccupations as well as by the circumstances under which they traveled. The new Revolutionary government was certainly keen to bring writers to Cuba during the early 1960s, and many US writers often traveled there under the auspices of the FPCC. In the late 1950s LeRoi Jones, a bright young black writer, was living in Greenwich Village as part of a predominantly white avant-garde. Looking back on this time in his 1984 autobiography (*Baraka*), Jones recalled the romance of the Cuban Revolution and how he had initially understood it in terms drawn from Hollywood films with Errol Flynn as Robin Hood. Then, out of the blue he was invited in June 1960 to join a group of black writers and intellectuals who were traveling to Cuba to find out, in his own words, "what's *really* going on down there." The call came from Richard Gibson, CBS's first black journalist and a prominent member of the FPCC. The invitation gave Jones pause. "Being an American poet," he wrote, "it had never entered my mind that I might actually like to find out for once what was actually happening someplace else in the world" (12). He spent a

couple of weeks in Cuba in late July and early August, and wrote a travel essay called “Cuba Libre”.<sup>9</sup> The piece won a prize as the best essay of the year, and was reprinted as a pamphlet in 1961 by the FPCC, and appeared again in 1966 in a collection of Jones’s essays. By this time Malcolm X was dead and Jones had moved from Greenwich Village to Harlem to become Amiri Baraka, a leading figure in the Black Nationalist movement.<sup>10</sup>

One of the key variables here is whether the agent travels alone or not. Jones was part of a delegation of twelve who always traveled as a group. This means that his writing is almost as concerned with the dynamics of the group as it is with what they see and do in Cuba. Jones is dismissively rude about most of his companions, but makes an exception for Robert F. Williams, already a well-known figure in North Carolina for organizing rifle clubs for blacks affiliated with the National Rifle Association (NRA) to practice self-defense and who, not long after this trip, would take refuge in Cuba from trumped up kidnapping charges (Tyson). With Cuban assistance, Williams developed a weekly radio program that transmitted to the four corners of the USA in the early to mid 1960s. “Radio Free Dixie,” as it was called, was a perfect if unusual example of transculturation: revolutionary Cuban technology allied with US avant-garde jazz and radical Black politics.

Jones’s “Cuba Libre” offers a straight if breezy and largely sympathetic picture of Revolutionary society in Cuba through the group’s visits to significant institutions such as the Casa de las Américas, the Ministry of Education, and the National Agrarian Reform Institute, where Jones is particularly impressed by the figure of Antonio Núñez Jiménez, the guerrilla intellectual par excellence with his full black beard, wearing the uniform of the rebel army, carrying in his belt a square-handled .45, and with a copy of his latest book in his hand. It is possible to see some irony in the fact that the resulting reassessment of ‘home’ was going to lead Jones in the direction of a militant Black Nationalism, not the direction you would necessarily expect from his glowing accounts of meeting with such eminently white and bourgeois rebels as Núñez Jiménez and Fidel Castro. But the admiration for Castro among US African Americans in the early 1960s should not be underestimated. At a time when racial segregation still dominated the US South, Cuba’s *ideology* of racial equality – even if its practice fell short – had an enormous impact, and from the start the Revolutionary Cuban government had made great efforts to attract prominent African Americans to Cuba.

Jones’s journey south was personally transformative but its objective was clearly political, with Cuba soon standing in clear counterpoint to at least some of the realities and values that he left behind – and eventually returned to – in New York: values that were themselves alternative to the mainstream but which, after

9 Originally published in abbreviated form in the Beat journal, *Evergreen Review*, and then at greater length in another new radical journal, *Kulchur*.

10 Amiri Baraka (b. 1934) is a US writer of poetry, drama, and music criticism. For background, see Gosse and Tietchen.

Cuba, Jones saw as themselves deficient. However, the real highlight of Jones's trip was his journey east from Havana by train to the town of Yara, then by cattle truck and wagon to the Sierra Maestra for a celebration of the pivotal anniversary in the Revolutionary calendar, July 26, the day of Fidel Castro's 1953 attack on the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba. Jones is assailed on the train by delegates from a Latin American youth conference, especially two Mexicans, a woman economics student, Rubi Betancourt, and a poet, Jaime Shelley, who call him a "cowardly bourgeois individualist" for his attempt to separate his writing from politics. "I tried to defend myself," Jones writes: "Look, why jump on me? I understand what you're saying. I'm in complete agreement with you. I'm a poet [...] what can I do? I write, that's all, I'm not even interested in politics." "You want to cultivate your soul?", they respond. "In that ugliness you live in, you want to cultivate your soul?" (42–43). Jones seems to exult in recounting this ritual humiliation.

Exhausted by the extreme heat and lack of water, he then endures twenty-four hours out in the open. Havana, with its *cafecitos* and its conversations, contrasts with the harshness of the mountainous countryside that had provided the cradle for the Revolution. But in these mountains, on the platform, is Fidel, whose hand Jones touches, and whose speech dazzles him: "It was," he later wrote, "a rare moment in one's life and if the harangues of Rubi and Jaime and the others weren't enough, this final stroke was, my head spinning with recognition, revelation, and the hot-ass sun." The trip was, he says, "a turning point in my life" (Baraka 165, 163). This kind of experience, with its overtones of pilgrimage and its genuine hardships leading to a moment of transcendence, offers a kind of personal transculturation in which an individual is led to a *turning point*.

## Diplomatic Incident

Matthews, Taber, and Jones all listen entranced to Fidel Castro. Castro is perhaps a special case, and many others have been similarly captivated, but a pattern does emerge among US visitors to Cuba of the search for an individual who can speak authoritatively and whose words can be 'translated' and conveyed to a US public. As a term, *translation* is intended to convey the dual sense of 'turned from Spanish into English' and 'carried from one place to another', both transfers fraught with the dangers of lost meanings. The earliest of these journalistic case histories established the pattern of the desperate search for a hidden leader.

James J. O'Kelly was sent to Cuba by his newspaper, the *New York Herald*, in 1873, during the first – ultimately unsuccessful – Cuban war of independence, to interview the president of the insurgent republic, Carlos Manuel de Céspedes – the Castro of his day.<sup>11</sup> O'Kelly had a long and difficult trek into the eastern

11 James J. O'Kelly (1845–1916) was an Irish nationalist who worked as a journalist, traveled extensively, and spent most of the last thirty years of his life as a British MP. For more on



mountains; he interviewed Céspedes; he wrote accounts for the newspaper, which were later collected into a book. Robert Taber's sympathies were quite open – and became more so after his CBS program. Herbert Matthews was thought by his critics to be too sympathetic to the Cuban Revolution, but the only people who suspected him of being a spy were the FBI. O'Kelly was, however, accused by the Spanish authorities of being an actual *agent* of the insurgency. *Agent*, a key term in the title of this volume, carries an interesting ambiguity, one that is worth exploring. In one sense its opposite is *patient*: agent is active, patient is passive. But an agent's activity is on behalf of somebody or something else, as the *Oxford English Dictionary* definition suggests: "One who does the *actual work* of anything, as distinguished from the instigator or employer; hence, one who acts for another, a deputy, steward, factor, substitute, representative, or emissary." Now in one sense a journalist is obviously an agent – sent by his newspaper – but the charge made against O'Kelly by the Spanish authorities was that he had another 'instigator', the insurgent Cuban council based in New York which – they claimed – was using him as a messenger to and from Céspedes. Not perhaps strictly a spy, but certainly a *secret agent*, which brings back into play those connotations of the term 'agency' relating to disguise and camouflage and clandestinity.

O'Kelly may indeed have been a Cuban agent. He was certainly sympathetic to the cause of Cuban independence, a sympathy based on the analogy between the situations of Cuba and Ireland. O'Kelly was Irish, introducing a further variable, perhaps captured by the term *biographical trajectory*, indicating that agents are never simply neutral bearers of the ideology associated with their point of departure, but always carry a baggage of beliefs and commitments with them, often related to the places they have come from or passed through.

*Validation* is part of O'Kelly's story too. The previous *New York Herald* journalist who had been sent to interview Céspedes had balked at the idea of the dangerous journey into the mountains and had fabricated his interview, much to the embarrassment of the *New York Herald*. O'Kelly, therefore, walked out of insurgent territory and reported his presence to the British consul in the town of Manzanillo so that nobody could doubt that he was returning from the Cuban camp. But this gesture alerted the Spanish authorities to his presence and O'Kelly was arrested, imprisoned, and very nearly executed. His predicament became a *cause célèbre*. The *New York Herald* naturally launched a huge campaign for his release but, as an Irishman, O'Kelly was a British citizen and so the British government had to oversee the diplomatic efforts – ironically, in the sense that, since he was an active Irish nationalist, the British government would really have liked to have left O'Kelly in a Spanish prison, but they could not be seen as failing to attempt to protect a British subject in a foreign jail.

The agents in this case – in the strict sense of the word *agent* – were the British consuls. The closest term applicable to them, according to the list provided in the Introduction, is *diplomat*, but an explanation of the distinction between the two is in order. For many years consuls were not formally part of the diplomatic service. Diplomats will typically move around the world from one post to another, rarely serving more than five or six years in one place and moved by their governments precisely to forestall them succumbing to transculturation, going native. Consuls, particularly in the second half of the nineteenth century when British commerce was expanding exponentially, were often chosen to assist business ventures: local knowledge was more important than national belonging. So, for example, the British consul with whom O’Kelly made contact in Manzanillo, William Lauten, was a German citizen resident in the town, who acted as both British and US vice-consul, as well as vice-consul from Bremen – without perceived conflicts of interest between his three roles.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Britain had five hundred thirty-three consular staff around the world (Tuson). Whereas Consuls-General (located in capital cities) were of considerable diplomatic importance, in some cases acting in effect as ambassadors, vice-consuls (in provincial towns) were often unpaid and never full-time. (These are the positions now usually known as Honorary Consuls – whose often divided or at least complex loyalties are fictionalized in Graham Greene’s novel of that title.) Consular officials usually had commercial interests and were therefore closely connected with local businesses and businessmen, and in Cuba in the early 1870s that might mean participation in the still legal institution of slavery or with the illegal but still active slave trade. One prominent English businessman in Santiago called Brooks had been so involved with the slave trade during the 1850s that the British government refused to have him as British vice-consul, so he became US vice-consul instead. Often holding their positions for many years, vice-consuls would eventually *go native*. At some point – it’s difficult to specify when exactly – the originally English Brooks family in Santiago became transculturated as Anglo-Cuban and then simply became a Cuban family (see Curry-Machado). Transculturation is, as Ortiz noted, a stage that can be passed through (102–03).

## **In Time of War**

The remaining three case histories cluster around the key event in Cuba-US relationships: the US invasion of the island in 1898 during the Spanish-American War, which brought to an end the Cuban War of Independence. In 1895, when the Cuban insurgency broke out, the most important Cuban figure – the equivalent of Céspedes in the early 1870s and Castro in the late 1950s – was José Martí, Cuba’s greatest writer and intellectual, who had landed in eastern Cuba in April 1895 to lead the insurrection. Two weeks later, Martí and his companions reached

Los Ríos, O’Kelly’s first insurgent encampment – as Martí, with his highly developed sense of place and history, immediately recalls in his diary. Eugene Bryson, a reporter with the *New York Herald* – O’Kelly’s newspaper, which had remained supportive of the cause of Cuban independence – seems to have had less trouble finding Martí than O’Kelly had finding Céspedes over twenty years earlier. Bryson arrived on the evening of May 2, presumably by arrangement and bringing valuable information from New York.<sup>12</sup> Martí worked with Bryson until three in the morning and then all day the next day, Bryson leaving on the morning of May 4, carrying Martí’s open letter to the *Herald*. Martí had written his letter in Spanish. Back in New York it was translated and published on May 19, 1895 – the day of Martí’s death at the hands of Spanish troops – under the headline “Cuban Leaders to the Herald. Senor Marti and General Gomez Unite in an Exposition of the Revolutionary Cause.” Bryson presumably passed the original to the Spanish-language New York newspaper, *La Patria*, which published it on June 3, 1895. The *Herald* version was much shorter than the original, which means that some passages are more a paraphrase than a translation. Some, however, are neither, such as the assertion that “Cuba desires that the world may be able to carry its industries to the island, that the hidden treasures may be brought forth” – an irruption of classically imperial discourse that has no equivalent in the Spanish original (Toledo Sande). Transcultural moves can often be undermined – perhaps even sabotaged – in times of strife, and translation is often the means at hand to strike the blow.

In 1895 the USA was still on the sidelines of the Cuban conflict. By the middle of 1898 it was on the point of intervention, bringing added pressure to journalists and moving into action, and even prominence, the new professional class of espionage agents. Andrew Summers Rowan is the only one of the seven case histories whose actual job description was ‘spy’. Rowan was a career soldier, who in 1889 had been seconded to the small staff of the Military Information Bureau, the kernel from which the US intelligence services would grow. He was trained as a cartographer and spent several years drawing clandestine maps of the Canadian border and working on the Intercontinental Railway Survey in Central America before getting involved in US preparations for war in Cuba.

In April 1898, just before the USA declared war on Spain, Rowan was sent into Cuba undercover with a message from the War Department for the Cuban insurgent general in charge of eastern Cuba, Calixto García. This became a very famous message: a Hollywood film was made about it and a pamphlet was written about it, one of the most widely-distributed pieces of writing of all time.<sup>13</sup> So Rowan fits the pattern very well: he was a *go-between*, an agent conveying a message from one party to another across cultural lines, using his professional

12 George Eugene Bryson (1867–1912) worked for several New York newspapers in the 1890s. After the Spanish-American War, he established a press agency in Havana.

13 See, respectively, Marshall and Hubbard; and see Rowan for his own later account. For general background, see O’Toole and Bryan.

expertise to gather information about topography and troop deployment and taking it back to his point of origin in Washington DC.<sup>14</sup>

Yet Rowan's story also demonstrates some of the pitfalls of mediation. I will concentrate on just one of them – *language*, which might be considered a subset of *translation*. Despite the attention it has received, nobody actually knows what the 'message to García' consisted of because the US intelligence service had worked out that written messages might fall into enemy hands, so Rowan had to memorize the information and deliver it orally. No one even knows what language Rowan and García communicated in. Opinions as to the linguistic competence of the two vary widely. García is variously described as speaking English "perfectly" or "fairly well," but Rowan says that García spoke "very little English." On the other side, military reports about Rowan describe him speaking Spanish fluently, but Cuban officers who met him say he did not speak Spanish at all. It is of course entirely possible that Rowan, as a trained spy, spoke Spanish considerably better than he let on. It is also the case that many of the Cuban officers were functionally bilingual and that Rowan didn't need to speak Spanish. It's equally possible that García played down his own ability to speak and understand English.

Rowan's *authority* to speak was, however, written down – in a telegram from the Cuban junta in New York to its agent in Kingston, Jamaica, which was Rowan's transit point into Cuba. The one thing that Rowan says about the document he carried is that it gave rise to some brief misunderstanding because the phrase used to describe him – 'hombre de confianza' – had been translated by the Cubans in Jamaica into English as 'confidence man', a phrase which gave pause to García's bilingual staff officers. *Confianza* is perhaps best translated as 'trust', the most fundamental quality for go-betweens in time of war. 'Confidence' has the same etymology as *confianza*, but the solidity of the word began to be undermined in the middle of the nineteenth century: the *OED* records the first use of the phrase 'confidence man' in the modern sense of trickster in 1849. Melville's novel of that title was published in 1857. But the Spanish *hombre de confianza* has none of the negative associations of 'confidence man'. Translation can literally, in these circumstances, be a matter of life or death.

Sylvester (known as Harry) Scovel first went to Cuba to write for the *New York Herald* in 1895.<sup>15</sup> Despite having no journalistic experience, he showed great initiative in reaching the insurgent generals, Máximo Gómez and Antonio Maceo, before being captured at a Spanish sentry post and almost killed. Working for the *New York World*, he wrote a series of powerful pieces about Spanish atrocities and Cuban resistance, culminating in an exclusive interview with Gómez

14 Andrew Summers Rowan (1857–1943) worked for US military intelligence during the 1890s, carrying the 'message to García' in 1898. See Hulme 226–79.

15 Sylvester (Harry) Scovel (1869–1905) was one of the best known US journalists in the late 1890s, but lost his job after an altercation with US General Shafter in Santiago de Cuba at the end of the war.

that so infuriated the Spanish Captain General, Valeriano Weyler, that he posted a reward for Scovel's capture. When he was arrested in February 1897, there was a real fear that Scovel would be executed after the Spanish authorities claimed that he had forfeited his rights to protection as a US citizen by helping the insurgents, as indeed he was doing. This was O'Kelly's story all over again. Many US reporters openly aligned themselves with the insurgency, at least in part because they obtained better stories that way, though they would also often act as messengers. Franc Woodward, another correspondent for the *New York World*, was closely involved with Maceo after coming to an agreement with the Cuban junta in New York: "We finally agreed that I should act in concert with their leaders in the island of Cuba, ceiving [sic] in return their protection, the services of interpreters, guides, couriers and messengers" (12–13).

A huge campaign in the USA managed to achieve Scovel's release and, after several months on other assignments, he was back in Cuba in late 1897 under the more liberal Spanish regime – and so able to meet Gómez yet again, this time carrying a message from the State Department.<sup>16</sup> Scovel offers an interesting example of a journalist deeply sympathetic to the Cuban cause, who had spent much time in Cuba during the insurgency, who was known and trusted both by Máximo Gómez and by his own US government. From at least a political point of view he seemed completely transculturated, able to move fluidly back and forth between the liberated parts of Cuba and the USA, interpreting each to the other. However, everything changed on February 15, 1898, when the USS *Maine* was destroyed by a mysterious explosion in Havana harbor. Scovel, the first reporter on the scene, was so affected by the event that he filled his newspaper week after week with reports on the aftermath and the investigation, absolutely committed from the first to the idea that a Spanish mine had been responsible. Eventually he became more and more closely identified with the US war effort, so much so that Cubans quickly disappear from his dispatches once the invasion gets underway. At that point Scovel took a step back from front-line reporting. Instead he managed other reporters, who were effectively spies, sending them into Havana to collect information and using his dispatch boat to map the coastline. Having started out as an ardent supporter of Cuban independence, Scovel ended his life believing that Cuba would be best off becoming a state of the USA (Milton 368–69).

## The Trials of Transculturation

Let me return, in conclusion, to our title terms and to some of the questions raised by these case histories. According to Fernando Ortiz, *transculturation* is a process whereby new cultures come into being. Besides using the term this particular way

16 See Brown, Milton, and Andreu (from which the transcripts of Scovel's articles are taken).

we of course have the freedom to inflect it in different directions. Certainly a focus on US-Cuba relationships might suggest exercising some caution concerning the implications of the term: transculturation was a feature of the slave-holding elite in Louisiana and western Cuba in the first half of the nineteenth century – comfortably bilingual, moving easily between New Orleans and Havana. There is benefit, too, as I have indicated, in investigating *agent* as a term because we need to pay attention to who the mediating agent is acting *for*. Which is perhaps another way of saying that we always need to pay attention to the implicit politics of the mediating situation.

Against the tendency to romanticize transculturation and its agents, it is worth stressing that, at least in times of strife, being an *agent of transculturation* can be a deeply uncomfortable experience. Robert Taber's story illustrates some of the difficulties attendant on trying to occupy the go-between's position. His experience in the Sierra Maestra, sharing – if only briefly – the hardships of guerrilla life, and producing a television documentary, sympathetic to the Revolutionary struggle, which had a huge, worldwide impact, seems to have made him *un hombre de confianza* from the Cuban perspective. That was all very well until the rapid deterioration of US-Cuba relationships in 1960 when he quickly became a subject of suspicion for the US Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, which interviewed him at length. They wanted to know whether the Cuban government was financing the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, making Taber – its executive secretary – into a de facto agent of a hostile state; but he denied that it was. After a disaffected early member of the FPCC testified that Taber had received money from the Cuban representative to the United Nations in New York, Taber left the country in December 1960 and spent twelve months in Cuba, receiving mortar shell wounds while covering the Bay of Pigs invasion. On his return to the USA he was again required to testify before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, but was never charged with perjury, perhaps because he had offered to work for the CIA. Badly affected by John F. Kennedy's assassination, Taber seems to have withdrawn from political activity and started to drink heavily. He eventually moved to Maine where he lived quietly, working on local newspapers (Simpich, Albarelli).

From an anthropological perspective, a native informant is a valuable asset, offering an insider's insight into an alien culture; but once the discursive framework shifts toward espionage, terms like *informant* (and indeed *asset* and *agent*) take on a wholly different set of connotations, implying from one side a valuable source of unauthorized information, but from the other a potential traitor (informer) to the cause. Something of the shifting nature of these sands is indicated by the fact that Taber's last book, *The War of the Flea*, a ground-breaking study of guerrilla tactics based on his close acquaintance with veterans of the Cuban insurgency, was – after many years out of print – republished by Potomac Books, a leading publisher of books on military intelligence, and with an introduction by a counterinsurgency expert. As the endorsement from the mili-

tary in-house journal, *Army*, puts it, and which is quoted on the publisher's website: "Has new relevance as terrorist organizations inspired by new revolutionaries dominate the international security landscape. [...] Reading *The War of the Flea* is an excellent beginning to understanding the current problems facing the military."

LeRoi Jones's career offers a trajectory that resonates in a different way, this time with the musical metaphor in the title of Ortiz's book. One value of counterpoint as a term is that it keeps alive a sense of distinction. 'Cuban culture' is a result of a transculturated process, but the puncta of sugar and tobacco still have their distinctive contours. An individual might, as it were, contrapuntally hold two cultural melodies in his head at the same time. They might eventually be resolved (transculturated) into a new melody, but one might also drive out the other.<sup>17</sup> When, however, the antagonists are not partners in a dance or voices in a liturgy, there may be no resolution, no synthesis, no transculturation – as the case of the US-Cuban relationship demonstrates, at least at the official level (though Ortiz would no doubt focus attention on the outcome of the unofficial contacts). Jones might, in conclusion, be a good example of the transcultural process – as his new name suggests. But it should be remembered that his version of Black Nationalism could hardly have been anticipated by imagining the meeting of Beat radicalism with the Cuban Revolution: transculturation can take surprising turns. Jones/Baraka also demonstrates Ortiz's point about process. His new name indicates the end of transculturation: a new identity has now been achieved and will not readily be relinquished.

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17 Said's influential use of 'counterpoint' tends – as befits a musician – to emphasize the possibilities of a final harmony.

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**“Mínyin nyíní bíal piabúní whiteman?  
– Why don’t you [learn to] speak  
like a whiteman?”: The Politics of  
Remembering the Dawes/Patyegarang  
Encounter**

ANJA SCHWARZ

**Remembering Cultural Contact**

Australian society remains divided over the issue of the country’s colonial past and its implications for the present (Macintyre and Clark). In this context – and similar to other nations formed in the wake of settler colonialism – historical accounts of cultural contact and the biographies of border crossers and go-betweens continue to attract attention due to the potential insights they may provide concerning national beginnings and the orientation they appear to offer for the contemporary debate. Hence, the enduring Latin American interest in Malintzin’s role during the Spanish conquest of Mexico and the attention contemporary North Americans accord to the part played by Pocahontas in colonial Jamestown. In Australia, there are a number of such narratives of cultural contact whose growing popularity coincides with the country’s engagement with its colonial legacy, one that began in earnest in the 1980s with the lead-up to the bicentenary celebrations of European settlements on the continent.

The life of Trugernanner, a Palawa woman from Tasmania who would become known as Truganini, easily constitutes the most prominent example of such a cultural contact narrative, and her story offers some sense of the fate of ‘agents of transculturation’ and their commemoration in Australia. Born shortly after the establishment of a British settlement in Tasmania, Trugernanner had by the age of seventeen already lost her mother, sister, uncle, and partner to frontier violence, at which point (1829), she was detained and placed in the custody of Augustus Robinson, a government-backed conciliator who set out to capture and ‘settle’ all remaining Tasmanian Aborigines. For about ten years, Trugernanner acted as a guide and instructor in Aboriginal languages and customs for Robinson before the two of them fell out and she was imprisoned for the remaining years of her life (Ryan and Smith). In the period before her death in 1876, Trugernanner

came to be seen as Tasmania's last 'full-blooded' Aborigine, and she was repeatedly studied, measured, and photographed by anthropologists anxious to gather information about this last member of a dying race. Her skeleton was exhibited at the Hobart Museum until 1947. It was not until April 1976, approaching the centenary of her death, that her remains were finally cremated and scattered near her place of birth (Kühnast). In 1976 one also begins to find a wide range of historical writing, criticism, fiction, and film that engages with Trugernanner's life and legacy.<sup>1</sup> Given these multiple resurrections, Bernard Smith's 1980s Boyer Lectures on Australia's colonial history were aptly titled "The Spectre of Truganini." And similarly, the material remains of Trugernanner's life continue to haunt Australian and European postcolonial memory politics: in 1997 the Royal Albert Memorial Museum discovered in its collections a necklace and bracelet that had belonged to her, and as recently as 2002, some of her hair and skin were found in the archives of the Royal College of Surgeons of England and shipped to Tasmania for burial (Barkham and Finlayson).

The two historical agents of transculturation discussed in this article have for a long time escaped the kind of persistent attention that has been devoted to Trugernanner and Robinson. In fact, to this day very little is known about William Dawes and his relationship with Patyegarang, a young Indigenous woman, in the closing years of the eighteenth century. However with the revelation of archival material in the late 1970s that throws some light on their affiliation, and within the context of a current reassessment of Australia's colonial past, they have come to be seen as actors in the performance of cultural contact whose historical encounter is relevant to the present-day politics of reconciliation. One of many examples of such a reconciliatory framing of Australian narratives of first contact can be found in Inga Clendinnen's 2003 *Dancing with Strangers*, in which the historian includes a brief discussion of the Dawes/Patyegarang encounter. Putting forward the argument that "much of what mattered most in shaping the tone and temper of white-black relations in this country happened during those first few years of contact" (3),<sup>2</sup> Clendinnen treats these historical encounters as relevant to concerns of the present. Accordingly, they are understood to offer notions of "how we might achieve social justice between Australia's original immigrants, and those of us who came later" (5).

1 In 1976, her biography was retold in Vivienne Rae Ellis and Nancy Cato's *Trucanini: Queen or Traitor?* and in Gordon Glenn's film *Truganini: The Last of Her People*, while she appeared as a character in Robert Drewe's *The Savage Crows*. In 1977, Bill Reed wrote the three-play series *Truganini* and Gwen Harwood recalls an incident from her life in the 1981 poem "Looking towards Bruny." Truganini reappeared in Mudrooroo's 1983 novel *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription for Enduring the Ending of the World* and in Jan Roberts's *Jack of Cape Grim* from 1986.

2 In focusing exclusively on the time of first contact, Clendinnen's book is exemplary of what Greg Dening has critically labeled "zero point" histories (xi), narratives that represent an originary moment of beginning that is taken to hold within it, in crystallized form, the unmediated truth about the character of those involved in the encounter (see also Scherpe; Neumann).

Often, stories of cultural contact are taken up in this manner by writers and artists articulating the interests of particular decades or political agendas. In discussing some of the recent engagements with the Dawes/Patyegarang encounter, of which Clendinnen's book forms a part, this article seeks to tease out what kind of memory work the story of these go-betweens is currently being made to do. It opens with an abbreviated account of William Dawes's life and his role in the early years of the colony of New South Wales before looking at different present-day uses of the archival material that he left behind.

### **William Dawes in New South Wales, 1788–1791**

One reason William Dawes (1762–1836) has until recently not been remembered as a significant actor in European-Indigenous relations on the Australian continent might be the fact that his life cannot be pinned down to a single colonial setting. Dawes began his career in service to the British Empire when, in 1779, he was gazetted as a second lieutenant of the Royal Marines in the American War of Independence. In the late 1780s, he then volunteered to work as marine officer, astronomer, and surveyor with the First Fleet in New South Wales (Mander-Jones). Back in Britain, after being dismissed for insubordination in 1791, he made the acquaintance of William Wilberforce and the abolitionist movement. In 1792 he relocated to Sierra Leone to work first as an agent of the Sierra Leone Company, subsequently as councilor to the governor, and then governor himself for three terms. When Sierra Leone became a Crown Colony, Dawes took on the position of Commissioner of Inquiry, appointed by the British Crown. After a prolonged stay in Britain, where he helped to train missionaries for the Church Missionary Society, he moved on to Antigua in 1814. Here he worked as an attorney for the plantation of his wife's second cousin before becoming an agent of the Church Missionary Society, and, between 1820 and 1829, as director of its schools in the West Indies. In both Africa and the West Indies, his work was characterized by his involvement in various antislavery contexts (Thomas). With a career that spans four continents, Dawes thus fits the description given by Catherine Hall of "imperial men," whose lives were "mapped across the Empire." Their postings "provided the sites for the articulation of different relations of power, different subject positions, different cultural identities," and left these identities open to change and even ruptures according to constantly changing local conditions (72).

This article looks at an early chapter in William Dawes's imperial career when he joined the first group of Europeans – consisting of convicts, marines, and a small administrative elite – to establish the penal colony of New South Wales. He was employed ashore there as an engineer and surveyor and oversaw the construction of batteries at the entrance to Sydney Cove, laid out the government farm and the first streets, and also joined a number of surveying expedi-

tions that traveled into the adjoining territory. Simultaneously, he began to build an observatory on what is now Dawes Point, below the southern pillar of Sydney Harbour Bridge. On the recommendation of astronomer royal, Rev. Dr. Nevil Maskelyne, the Board of Longitude had supplied the emergent settlement with instruments and books and commissioned Dawes to watch for and record the passing of a comet that was expected to appear in the skies of the Southern Hemisphere. Dawes seems to have been content with his role in the settlement, and in October 1788, nine months after the First Fleet's arrival in New South Wales, he applied for an additional three years' service in the colony. At this stage, he even seems to have contemplated settling in New South Wales to further his scientific studies while supporting himself with farming (Mander-Jones).

Indigenous-European relations in these first months and possibly even years of the settlement at Sydney Cove were characterized by attempts to establish friendly relations. Governor Arthur Phillip had been instructed by the Crown "to endeavour by every possible means to open an Intercourse with the Natives and to conciliate their affections, enjoining all Our Subjects to live in amity and kindness with them" (King George III). In keeping with these instructions, six months into their time in New South Wales Phillip reported that:

the natives have ever been treated with the greatest humanity and attention, and every precaution that was possible has been taken to prevent their receiving any insults; and when I shall have time to mix more with them, every means shall be used to reconcile them to live amongst us, and to teach them the advantages they will reap from cultivating the land, which will enable them to support themselves at this season of the year, when fish are so scarce that many of them perish with hunger – at least I have strong reason to suppose that to be the case. (177)

Such statements expressed a wish, albeit naïve, for a peaceful coexistence that characterized Phillip's approach to settlement in the early years of the colony. According to Clendinnen, he "brought a determination verging on obstinacy to the business of persuading the local population to friendship," (25) and was convinced that given time, the Eora people of New South Wales "would inevitably come to recognize the benefits of the British presence among them, not only in material matters, but in the unique incomparable gift of British law" (29).

In retrospect, we know of course that Phillip's professed hopes for Indigenous-European conviviality under British law did not come true. It is in the light of the subsequent deterioration of the relationship between Indigenous people and European settlers that Dawes has come to occupy a special place in narratives about the early years of Australia's history. During his tenure at Sydney Cove, it seems that Dawes set himself apart from the convicts, marines, and administrators, and appears to have been an outsider of the settlement, a status that was at least in part also the result of the particular duties that he had to fulfill. Responsible for land surveying during the day, Dawes often traveled by himself or in

the company of a small party across what to the Europeans was unknown territory. And installed outside the settlement at the astronomer's observatory at night, Dawes worked alone, although – as we know now – increasingly in the company of Indigenous people (Gibson, “Event-Grammar” 92–93).

Today, Dawes is one of the very few figures from Australia's colonial beginnings who, as Cassandra Pybus has observed, “can inspire a universally good press from historians” (Pybus 12.1).<sup>3</sup> What allowed him to acquire this status was his role in a punitive expedition to Botany Bay following the spearing of the colony's gamekeeper (see, for instance, Jones 342; Clendinnen 156–57). In retribution for that death, Phillip had ordered several marines, including Dawes, to capture two Aborigines alive and to sever the heads of ten males. The order was eventually amended to capturing six men, or, if they could not be apprehended, then shooting them. Initially Dawes refused to participate, but after talking with the colony's chaplain, he eventually consented. The expedition failed, and Dawes subsequently declared publicly that he was sorry he had been persuaded to comply. Since he refused to apologize for this statement, as demanded by Phillip, he was eventually stripped of his rank and sent back to Britain in December 1791 despite petitioning to be allowed to remain in New South Wales (Mander-Jones).

For most of the following two centuries this episode was all that remained known about William Dawes's time in Sydney Cove. He was not subjected to closer historical attention because he spent the rest of his life in other colonial settings and because very little archival material survived that could document his life in New South Wales. His entry in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, written in 1966, still states that “[m]any of his papers were destroyed after the death of one his grandsons and others were lost in the hurricane of 1871” (Mander-Jones). In 1972, however, when his language notebooks were uncovered at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies (*The Notebooks*), the situation changed.

### **Dawes's Notebooks: Postmemory and the Colonial Archive**

The two notebooks were an amazing find, for they constitute the most comprehensive account of the Eora language spoken around Sydney Cove at the time of first settlement. The first book, entitled *Grammatical forms of the language of N.S. Wales, in the neighbourhood of Sydney*, lists twenty-one verb conjugations structured in the manner of textbooks on ancient Latin or Greek, thus reflecting Dawes's own classical training. It appears to have been compiled in conjunction with the second notebook, *Vocabulary of the language of N.S. Wales in the neighbourhood of Sydney: Native and English*, which opens with phonetic infor-

3 Pybus's comment has a sarcastic undertone, and her article questions “why historians have consistently overlooked Dawes' morally dubious and exploitative activities” during his time in New South Wales, Africa, and the West Indies (12.1).

mation and a large word list (Troy). What makes these notebooks so interesting for contemporary readers other than linguists, however, is the fact that Dawes appears to have lost his enthusiasm for this neat structure soon after he began keeping his records. The second half of the second notebook is filled with “dozens of narrative miniatures or event-fragments” that appear to document conversations between Dawes and Indigenous interlocutors (Gibson, “Event-Grammar” 95). Ross Gibson, who has recently published a book-length fictocritical study of the notebooks, suspects that Dawes was prompted to embrace this technique after realizing that “Eora verbs and their associated subjects and objects did not necessarily behave as consistent, singular entities referring to stable resources pre-existing in the world” (26 *Views* 78). Drawing on the work of linguist Robert Dixon, he argues that Eora speech acts were rather “specifically contextual [and] exactly environmental,” and could therefore only be recorded in a manner that furnished insights into the greater context of their enunciation. “Every utterance colludes with the world and with every utterance that has gone before it as the world keeps on breathing and rousing” (93).

These fragments now seem to afford contemporary readers a view into the daily lives of the speakers. The bits of conversation recorded by Dawes touch on living arrangements, a number of apparently good-humored misunderstandings, as well as fundamental points of intercultural conflict (Carter, “Public Space” 433); and they appear to document the unfolding of a relationship, since much of the information Dawes recorded came from dialogues with one particular young woman:

D[awes]: Mínyin nyíni bial piabúni whiteman?  
Why don't you [learn to] speak like a whiteman?

P[atyebarang]: Wianjabuníja bial

Not understanding this answer, I asked her to explain it, which she did very clearly, by giving me to understand it was because I gave her victuals, drink, and everything she wanted, without putting her through the trouble of asking for it. (Dawes, *Vocabulary* 33–34)

Very little is known about Patyebarang, Dawes's partner in this peculiar exchange. Most likely she belonged to the northern Cammeray people who had come to Sydney's southern harbor shore in November 1790, at a time when various groups of Eora decided to camp near the settlement for about a year. According to Gibson, it is evident that her elders must have permitted Patyebarang to associate with Dawes, not least to “investigate the motives and plans of the newcomer” (26 *Views* 81).

The conversations between Dawes and Patyebarang also broached far more serious topics. In fact, the dialogue cited above is immediately followed by a



brief exchange in which the young woman delivers a political message that foreshadows the impending deterioration of European-Indigenous relations.

I then told her that a whiteman had been wounded some days ago in coming from Kadi to Wáránj & asked her why the black men did it.

Ans[wer]: Gūlara  
(Because they are) angry.

D[awes]: Mínyin gūlara eóra?  
Why are the b[lack] m[en] angry?

P[atyeegarang]: Inyám ŋalwí w[hite] m[en]  
Because the white men are settled here.

P[atyeegarang]: Tyérun kamarigál  
The kamarigals are afraid.

D[awes]: Mínyin tyérun kamarigál?  
Why are the kamarigals afraid?

P[atyeegarang]: Gūnin  
Because of the Guns. (Dawes, *Vocabulary* 34)

Alongside their fascinating content, I think that what draws present-day commentators to the notebooks is the fact that they ended abruptly and unfinished when Dawes was sent home against his will. The fragmentary nature of the archival record entices contemporary Australians to engage with this material in attempts to imagine the greater context of these exchanges and to fill in the gaps.<sup>4</sup> I am interested in these adaptations for what these encounters with the colonial archive convey about the uses to which the past is put in contemporary Australia. And in conceptualizing these specific commemorations, I find it helpful to draw on the notion of ‘postmemory’ as it has emerged within the context of contemporary writing on memories of the Holocaust.

The concept unfolded when, with the shift from the original victims of the Shoah to subsequent generations, there emerged the need in the field of memory studies for terms that could adequately describe commemorative engagements with violent pasts that are removed by time from those remembering, and that reach beyond the bounds of family, ethnic group, or even nation. Geoffrey Hartman, for instance, introduced the notion of “witnesses by adoption” (9) to denote processes through which commemorating subjects introduce something that is not part of their lived experience into their own memory reserves. Drawing on the work of Hartman, Marianne Hirsch famously coined the term “postmemory” to

4 A list of such engagements, which is by no means comprehensive, includes Paul Carter’s 1995 sound installation *The Calling to Come*, novels by Jane Rogers (*Promised Lands*, 1995) and Kate Grenville (*The Lieutenant*, 2008), fictocritical writing by Ross Gibson (*26 Views of the Starburst World*, 2012), a theater performance (Shakthidharan, *The Migrant Project*, 2006), documentary television (Cole and Perkins, *The First Australians*, 2008) and, finally, an on-going revitalization project of the language spoken in the Sydney region prior to the nineteenth century (*The Notebooks*).

describe such commemorative engagements with the past and described them as “distinguished from memory by generational distance and from history by deep personal connection” (*Family Frames* 22).

Hirsch’s concept, as well as Alison Landsberg’s more recent description of “prosthetic memory,” are helpful for the analysis of recent reworkings of Dawes’s notebooks for the manner in which both authors conceive of memory as the result of an “engagement with a *mediated* representation” (Landsberg 20; my emphasis) that elicits a particular “living connection” (Hirsch, “Generation” 109) with the past. Comprehending postmemory as fundamentally dependent on acts of mediation, they draw attention to the archive – although often compiled by history’s perpetrators – as a site that also holds valuable information for the victims and their descendants; and they foreground the work of “imaginative investment, projection and creation” (Hirsch, “Generation” 107) that is required from contemporary commemorators so as to reestablish a sense of connection with this past (Hirsch, “Generation” 107; van Alphen 487). Using an approach that is highly suggestive of the kind of commemorative adaptations of the notebooks that are discussed here, Hirsch describes postmemorial work as a practice that does not offer community and connection as such, but that “strives to reactivate and reembody more distant social/national and archival/cultural memorial structures by reinvesting them with resonant individual and familial forms of mediation and aesthetic expression” (“Generation” 111).

Of course, despite the fact that Hirsch characterizes the concept of postmemory as “relevant to numerous other contexts of traumatic transfer” (“Generation” 108), its usefulness for a discussion of the ramifications of settler colonialism still needs to be established. Rosanne Kennedy has recently employed the term to describe creative preoccupations with the Australian colonial past by a new generation of Aboriginal artists, who seek to wrest their own past from state archives. Reviewing the work of Indigenous novelist Kim Scott and visual artist Judy Watson, she argues that “even perpetrator archives, however surprisingly, may function as sites of attachment and affective investment, especially in an oral culture in which written records are scarce. [...] [The artists perform] through the creative process, subversive acts of witness, commemoration and return” (91). Different from the Indigenous artistic practices described by Kennedy however, the encounters with the colonial archive discussed in this article are performed by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous commemorators, who affectively project a sense of a “living connection” onto Patyegarang *and/or* Dawes, respectively. In discussing these imaginative investments in their encounter, it therefore remains vital to keep in mind a set of questions proposed by Pascale Bos, which draw attention to the ethical dimension of all acts of postmemory. Reviewing different artistic commemorations of the Holocaust, Bos stresses the importance of querying the commemorating subject’s “positionality” (66) and motivation for remembering this past: “[W]hat [do] we gain personally from our choice to engage with this subject, this trauma, this loss. Why does one choose or feel compelled to

become a ‘secondhand’ witness?” (61) For Hirsch and Landsberg the work of postmemory and prosthetic memory, respectively, carries great potential, for they envision them as enabling “an ethical relation to the oppressed or persecuted other” (Hirsch, “Surviving Images” 211; see also Landsberg 21). Together with Bos’s critical probing, their emphatic claim will serve here as the backdrop against which different imaginative engagements with the Dawes-Patyegarang encounter are discussed.

### **Kate Grenville’s *The Lieutenant***

In a video clip available on her publisher’s web site, author Kate Grenville describes her novel *The Lieutenant* as “not just another historical novel”:

You know, in 2008, post Kevin Rudd’s apology, we are entering another kind of Australia and another kind of possibility for dialogue between black and white is opening up, I think for the first time in 200 years, for the first time since Dawes had his conversations with Patyegarang. So in a way, I am thinking that his story tells us something that might be useful for us going into the future. (*Grenville*)

Claiming that something “useful for the future” can be learned from the story of Dawes and Patyegarang’s historical encounter, Grenville invites readers to understand her novel as involved in the current process of reconciliation in Australia.<sup>5</sup> More specifically, she is not shy in aligning her book with the 2008 Apology to the Aboriginal People of Australia, which was passed as the first act of the then new Labor government under Kevin Rudd. In the Apology, the Prime Minister had stressed the need to reflect on the “past mistreatment” of Australia’s Indigenous peoples as a means of “turn[ing] a new page in Australia’s history” (Rudd).<sup>6</sup> And in a style that emulates Rudd’s allegorical description of Australian history as a book, of which the Apology constitutes “a new page” or “a new chapter” (Rudd), Grenville’s work of postmemory invites readings that treat it as a fictional exploration of the Apology’s imperative of societal change: *The Lieutenant* articulates commemorative positions vis-à-vis the colonial past for settler-descended Australians by projecting onto the protagonist the notions of reflection and eventual transformation outlined in the 2008 governmental act. The novel begins with the story of the boy Daniel Rooke (William Dawes), who, through hard experience, is shaped into an exemplary man of moral integrity. Through forming a friendship with the Indigenous girl Tagaran (Patyegarang) and learning her language, *The Lieutenant*’s main character is “replaced, syllable by syllable,

5 I discuss the relationship between Grenville’s novel and the political process of reconciliation in Australia in Schwarz 2011.

6 In fact, this mini-narrative of reflection and forward movement was reiterated no less than four times in the opening passage of his speech.

by another man” (280). Similar to the power invested in the Apology to transform the nation, Rooke begins, in Grenville’s words, “as one thing and ends as something entirely, unexpectedly different. [...] He learns how to become fully himself [...] fully human” (Grenville quoted in Sorensen).

What makes Grenville’s novel particularly relevant to the notion of “postmemory” is how the text links this transformation to the establishment of a sense of connection with the past. So Rooke is shown to be aware of the historical implications of his actions, and when he regrets his participation in the punitive expedition undertaken after the spearing of the gamekeeper, he nevertheless understands his own accountability for the violence of colonization:

It was the simplest thing in the world. If an action was wrong, it did not matter whether it succeeded or not, or how many clever steps you took to make sure it failed. If you were part of such an act you were part of its wrong. You did not have to take up the hatchet or even to walk along with the expedition. If you were part of that machine, you were part of its evil. (280)

Anachronistically, Rooke is shown to share the values integral to the contemporary project of reconciliation, and develops what appears to be historical hindsight, which enables Grenville to enunciate an ethically charged commemorative perspective on Australia’s colonial past. According to this view, contemporary Australians – although they themselves did not commit the historical acts of violence, like Rooke – nevertheless feel responsible for the wrongs committed in their name.

Repeatedly, Grenville stresses this sense of a connection with the colonial past, most explicitly in the novel’s closing lines, which see Rooke being sent back to Britain:

As the ship gathered away, he could see her [Tagaran] down on the very end of the point. [...] As the wind filled the sails and the Gorgon picked up speed down the harbour, he waved, and she answered straight away, her arm drawing one large shape through the air. Between them across the water a long thread stretched out, spinning out longer and longer as their figures grew small. (302)

There is more than one way in which these lines invoke a sense of connection. On one level, they affirm the ongoing friendship between Rooke and Tagaran. On another, this scene reads as a metafictional comment on the bond that readers have, by this stage, formed with the literary text, and the sense of loss they experience while reluctantly letting go of that fictional world. On yet another level, these lines are evocative of the kind of connection that Grenville, with her novels, seeks to establish between past and present and the commemorative position that she seeks to endorse in terms of that past: a melancholic looking back to a for-gone possibility of amicable encounter, which in the context of today’s Australia

is thought to convey “something that might be useful for us going into the future” (Grenville, *Kate*). The kind of postmemory work that is performed by *The Lieutenant* fully comes to the fore when the novel invokes the very historical sources – the notebooks from the colonial archive – upon which its plot is based. Fore-shadowing her protagonist’s death, the novel reveals Rooke’s dying thoughts of Tagaran and the question of what will remain of their friendship. “It was enough for him to know that they were there. When he and Tagaran were dead, when their children’s children were dead, the notebooks would tell the story of a friendship like no other” (298).

It is precisely her use of the notebooks, however, that makes Grenville’s imaginative investment in the past deeply troubling. There is, to begin with, her naïve belief in the truth value of the historical record. In interviews, Grenville has stated repeatedly that she feels that the notebooks have provided her with a means of directly accessing past interactions. Sticking to the “conversations which are simply recorded” (Koval and Grenville), she viewed her work as a writer consisting solely of adding context “out of which that particular exchange of words might have happened” (Koval and Grenville). Her belief in the capacity of historical documents to convey “exactly what they said to each other” (“Finding”), remains completely free from any critical discussion of the generic limits that might have shaped the notebooks, or the fact that it is Dawes’s version of the encounter, after all, that we are dealing with here. Moreover, and perhaps even more fundamentally, her use of the colonial archive does not do justice to the more disquieting aspects of the bits of conversations recorded in the notebooks (guns; land rights, etc.). Grenville restricts Patyegarang’s participation in the historical dialogue to signifying an Indigenous willingness to communicate that bridges the gap between Indigenous and European actors and constitutes a precursor to present-day efforts of reconciliation. Finally, it seems that Grenville remains utterly unaware of how her narrative of a “friendship like no other” between a young Indigenous woman and the white male colonizer itself participates in a popular colonial trope and has been prefigured, for instance, by the aforementioned life stories of Malintzin or Pocahontas.

So we are left wondering about alternative means of accessing the postmemory of the Dawes/Patyegarang encounter that do not restrict the notebooks’ content to readability and understanding and limit their relevance to the “positionality” (Bos 66) of settler-descended Australians trying to reconcile themselves to their past; about reworkings of the colonial archive that do not end up silencing Indigenous utterances that contradict the current desire for reconciliation, but enable “an ethical relation to the oppressed or persecuted other” (Hirsch, “Surviving Images” 221).

## Paul Carter's *The Calling to Come* and Ross Gibson's *26 Views of the Starburst World*

Paul Carter and Ross Gibson, two early protagonists of postcolonial theory in Australia, have each addressed the notebooks in their work. Interestingly, both chose formats outside the strict confines of academic writing for their engagement with the Dawes/Patyegarang encounter;<sup>7</sup> and both have done so in ways that seek to avoid any easy conversion of the historical go-betweens to the commemorative position of settler-descended Australians so characteristic of Grenville's approach. Instead of assuming similarity and the possibility of understanding across historical and cultural differences, their work foregrounds the degree to which the encounter will never be conclusively known.

For his sound installation, *The Calling to Come* (1995), commissioned by the Museum of Sydney, Paul Carter drew on the Dawes notebooks to produce a recording of ambiguous and curious word-sounds to render an auditory impression of the relationship between the historical actors. As they step into the entrance cube of the Museum of Sydney, located on the site of the city's former Government House, visitors listen to these mostly unintelligible pieces of dialogue delivered by a changing cast of speakers (Carter, *Calling*; Carter, "Pantomimes"). Like Grenville, Carter conceives of his work in ways that invite us to understand it as an instance of postmemory when he claims that the installation asks important questions about Australia's colonial past (Carter, "Pantomimes" 95). And like Grenville, his engagement with the colonial archive is motivated by the present-day concerns of a postcolonial society when he interprets Dawes's relationship with Patyegarang as an "opening" (Carter, "Speaking" 153) that enables "new schemes, new forms, new visions" (Carter, "Speaking" 154–55). His project is nevertheless diametrically opposed to Grenville's novel in the way it conceives of the relationship to the past. Rather than selecting fragments of successful communication from the notebooks and attempting to rescue moments of understanding that "might be useful for us going into the future" (Grenville, *Kate*), Carter drew on those terms recorded by Dawes "that sound alike in the indigenous language and the language of the English but whose significations are often, if not always, wholly unrelated" (Carter, "Speaking" 155). Thus, the underlying conceit of his work is precisely the *impossibility* of conversations across cultural boundaries and a sense of connection that traverses the abyss of time, as well as reactivating the resource of *misunderstanding*, hoping that such loose ends of historical dialogue might introduce a conversational space for "keeping the future open" (Carter, *Calling* 12–13).

Ross Gibson's writing shares with Carter's project a focus on the act of listening as the kind of postmemory work that might enable an ethical relation between

7 After publishing *The Road to Botany Bay* in 1987 (Carter) and *South of the West* in 1992 (Gibson), both authors have, in fact, repeatedly combined their academic writing with creative practices that foreshadow their engagements with Dawes's notebooks.

non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians: “[I]t might be a new start, at last, to listen through all the noise, to conduct a national conversation about what Dawes was learning” (Gibson, “Event-grammar” 98). His own *26 Views of the Starburst World* (2012), it seems, endeavors to straddle the two extremes constituted by Grenville’s and Carter’s examples, and begins with the search for a format and literary style “germane to Dawes’ experience” (16). On the one hand, Gibson is highly critical of Grenville’s novel. Biographical and psychologically focused, he argues, *The Lieutenant* encourages its readers to empathize with its protagonist while obscuring “some of the most puzzling and important elements in the notebooks [...] such as conundrum and incomprehensibility” (17). These, Gibson contends, “are not susceptible to representation through novelistic empathy and narrative conclusiveness, particularly through the smooth structures of the classically styled novel which [...] Grenville [...] deploy[s] with aplomb” (*26 Views* 17–18). Instead, he seeks a literary form that “avoids the lures of fellow feeling [...] [and that] works with rather than works away the estrangement that the notebooks show not only between two cultures but also between the present and the past” (17). While thus endorsing a sense of misunderstanding that was also central to Paul Carter’s installation, it seems that Gibson is equally reluctant to restrict himself to celebrating the loose ends that had informed the decidedly postmodern design of Carter’s work sixteen years earlier. Veering off from Carter, Gibson therefore aspires to a mode of writing, no matter how “roundabout [...] and unruly” that reaches out beyond misunderstanding and allows for insights into “some of the more ‘dispersed’ and ‘distributed’ versions of consciousness” which – he believes – marked Dawes’s experience in New South Wales (18). Accordingly, *26 Views of the Starburst World* is structured into twenty-six short chapters, described by Gibson as

a shape-shifting device [...] that revisit[s] its topic again and again from many different perspectives [...] until we can acknowledge that, even as we gather more interpretations, we will never smoothly encompass or conclusively know the full, shifting world that Dawes dropped into. (15–16)

As postmemory work, Gibson’s fictocritical engagement with the notebooks on the one hand invites us to glimpse the material reality of the world that Dawes and Patyegarang inhabited and with which Gibson, through his writing, strives to establish the sense of a “living connection” (Hirsch, “Generation” 109). On the other hand, he is always careful to remind us of the fact that the fragmented colonial archive can never be fully known, and therefore necessitates ongoing “imaginative investment, projection and creation” (Hirsch, “Generation” 107) that will continue to elicit new responses to this past.

With their focus on cultural and historical differences intrinsic to the archival material, Carter’s and Gibson’s work on the notebooks resists the reduction of Dawes and Patyegarang’s conversations to any facile demands of a present-

day politics of reconciliation. Emphasizing instead the act of listening as potentially enabling ethical relations between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians, their attending to the material remains alert to the potential emergence of new, unforeseen meanings from the encounter with the historical archive.

## Conclusion

The discussion of different reworkings of William Dawes's notebooks as acts of postmemory has led me to the question of which creative genres might be best suited for an ethical engagement with the fragmented colonial archive. Although I have been particularly critical of the mode in which Kate Grenville has adopted this material into her own commemorative project, I nevertheless want to argue for a nuanced appraisal of the current abundance of reinterpretations of Australia's colonial beginnings in which her novel participates. I think that it is exactly this diversity of creative reimaginings in which there is hope; the varied reiterations of Dawes's and Patyegarang's stories make it impossible, after all, to think of the past as fixed in memory to a single ideology, and as a result might be a fitting response to the perplexing character of the fragmented colonial archive with which we have been left.

Personally, what I find so extraordinary about the notebooks is the way in which they not only facilitate rewritings of the past, but how they also invite contemporary speakers to repeat Dawes and Patyegarang's conversations in new contexts. As bodily performances such speech acts are deeply connected to memory's affective dimension and linked to what Diane Taylor has called "the again-ness of performance" that links the past to the present while simultaneously making us aware of the futility of all attempts to recuperate history as it really happened (83). I want to end this paper with a recent example of such an affective speech act that must disturb any glib adjustment of Dawes's notebooks to a settler-descended perspective on Australia's past. It comes from a language revitalization project from the Sydney region where descendants of Patyegarang and her people continue to live. Recently, efforts to revive their language, with financial support from the NSW Department of Education and Training, have begun and the content of Dawes's notebooks has become part of this project. A web site dedicated to the notebooks that was set up as part of this endeavor features an audio recording in which Richard Green, an Indigenous teacher of the Eora language, tells a story of the Indigenous loss of Country in the words collected by Dawes. It is reproduced here in the English translation:

One day whitemen came across the ocean, in big canoes – big canoes. They sailed through the waves, onto the beach. In and around they put their feet, and took country. They walked together and took country, country. They looked and seen – earth. They looked and seen – trees.



They looked and seen – clouds. They looked and seen – water. They collected country. They collected country and earth. We gave to them our songs, singing. We gave to them our hearts, and our heads and minds. We gave to them, him and others, we gave to them. They took all the country, all the country. Look and seen whitemen. Tomorrow let's sing together. And sing. Please, thank you. Let's walk. (*The Notebooks*)

This is a new kind of postmemory work, where the thin traces that remain from the border-crossing conversations of Dawes and Patyegarang become a site of “attachment and affective investment” (Kennedy 91) for Indigenous Australians attempting to reembody the language of their ancestors. With Richard Green's story, the archival records of conversations between two Australian agents of transculturation now form part of a new narrative that is not necessarily about reconciliation but about loss, mourning, and Indigenous demands for justice.

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## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

# A “Tropical Papageno”: Claude Lévi-Strauss and Roberto Ipureu in Mato Grosso, Brazil

LUCIANA MARTINS

In 1935, the twenty-six-year-old Claude Lévi-Strauss, accompanied by his wife Dina, traveled to Mato Grosso in Brazil. Their purpose was to visit the Kadiwéu and Bororo Indians and to collect ethnographic objects for the Musée de l’Homme, scheduled to open in 1937 (Lévi-Strauss, *Saudades* 69; Wilcken 59; Passetti, *Lévi-Strauss* 59). As is well known, Claude Lévi-Strauss went to Brazil as part of a group of French academics in order to help establish the University of São Paulo.<sup>1</sup> His specific role was to teach sociology at the University, though he also hoped to develop his interest in anthropology by studying the Indians on the outskirts of the city on the weekends. However, by 1935 there were actually very few Indians left around São Paulo. The frontier region of Mato Grosso was far more promising: and so it was there that the Lévi-Strausses made their ethnographic debut as part of their Brazilian summer vacation of 1935–1936.

During this short but apparently remarkable fieldtrip (it lasted just four months), the couple, in the company of their French friend René Silz, were kept busy collecting artifacts, taking photographs, and shooting film.<sup>2</sup> Claude Lévi-Strauss’s reflections on the trip, published more than forty years later in his introduction to the third volume of *Enciclopédia Bororo*, is worth quoting here in full:

It is true that that brief encounter has marked the whole of my career, given that no beginner could have dreamed of a more exciting contact with an indigenous culture than that the Kejara village offered me in 1935: a nearly untouched material culture, an intensive ceremonial activity during both day and night, inhabitants occupied in making and displaying fantastic adornments, all contributed to awake in the visitor the sense of richness, complexity and grandeur of one of the last of the South American societies in which traditional customs and beliefs had still maintained their exuberance.

- 1 For a recent account of Claude Lévi-Strauss’s work in Brazil, see Wilcken, esp. chapter 2.
- 2 The trip took place between November 1935 and March 1936. They stayed in the Bororo village from January to February 1936 (Lévi-Strauss, “Contribution”).

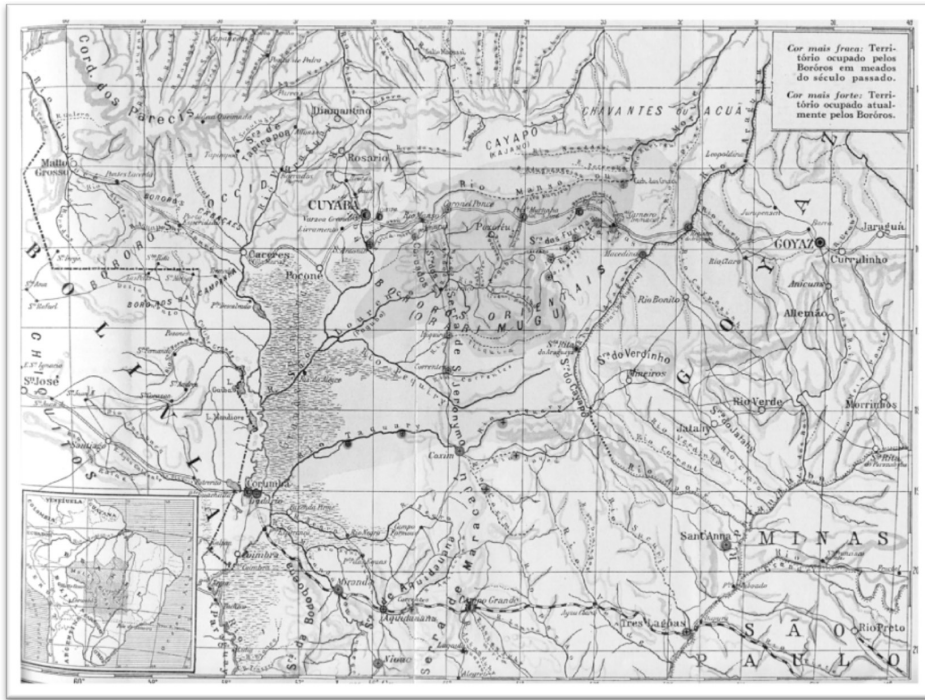


Figure 1: Localization of the Village Kejári Boróro in Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil. (Source: Colbacchini and Albisetti, *Os Boróros Orientais*; Barros and Bordignon, “Jarudóri”)

The Bororo offered me not only the contemplation of a wonderful spectacle. The entirety of my theoretical thinking, the way it has developed in the last thirty years, maintains the crux of what I seemed to have understood amongst them: the extent to which a human society could attempt to unify in a vast system – social and logical at the same time – the whole of the relations among their own members and those relations they keep, as a group, with the natural species and the world that surrounds them. (Lévi-Strauss, “Apresentação,” my translation).

It is useful to locate the scene of Lévi-Strauss’s epiphany a little more precisely. In the 1930s, Mato Grosso was a frontier region on the periphery of a consolidating nation-state and a rapidly developing market economy. The region was marked by violent conflict between incomers and indigenous groups – the Bororo in particular – over land and labor. The concurrent, albeit often contradictory, actions of government officials, missionaries, and settlers in the region were part of a broader frontier dynamic at work (Langfur 880). Lévi-Strauss actually encountered the Bororo in the village of “Kejara,” namely the village of Kejári Boróro, on the banks of Vermelho River, a settlement that no longer exists (Figure 1; Viertler, *As Aldeias* 20–21; Viertler, “Quadro”). Described by the Salesian missionaries César Albisetti and Angelo Jayme Venturelli as groups that “escape any control, living independently in small nuclei on the banks of Vermelho River,” these Bororo Indians were certainly accustomed to having contact with ‘civilized’ peoples (Vol. I: 293): their isolation was effectively a voluntary act of independence.

In his bestseller, *Tristes tropiques*, first published in 1955, Lévi-Strauss recalls his travels to Brazil in the 1930s. In this book, he singles out a particular Bororo man, pictured in a photograph in ceremonial dress and gazing directly at the camera, who was his interpreter and “best informant.” He is described as “a wonderful guide to Bororo sociology” (Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes tropiques* 216–17). In this essay, the iconic status of Lévi-Strauss’s guide is situated in the context of the history of the occupation of Bororo territory as well as other reports by earlier travelers, anthropologists, and missionaries of encounters with the Bororo, shedding light on the ways in which the ‘isolated primitive’ is constructed by the modern anthropological gaze. In gathering these pieces of information, we may also glimpse how a particular Bororo individual gained access to self-representation and cultural authority within this singular situation of cross-cultural contact.

## Modernizing Central Brazil

The photograph of the Lévi-Strausses’ “wonderful guide” first appeared in a short article Claude published in São Paulo soon after returning from the 1936 fieldtrip (Figure 2). In this article, entitled “The vastest horizons of the world,” Lévi-Strauss vividly describes his astonishment when confronted with the wide landscapes of Mato Grosso, which he readily associated with times past; indigenous peoples are imagined here as survivors of a “fabulous age,” evoking the eighteenth-century idyll of the noble savage:

Here, the roles of sky and land are inverted. Over the milky green of the fields the clouds create, incessantly, the most lavish constructions. The sky is the region of shapes and volumes: the land has the idleness of the beginnings of Creation.

These indigenous peoples, who still live in the concave of the plateau, are they truly the last survivors of a fabulous age? Covered with the shimmering feathers of forest birds, painted bright red from the feet to the top of their heads, and with the body sumptuously adorned with the white fluff of the parrot, they evoke, to those who ignore their misery and slow extinction, eighteenth-century idylls. In an environment of such impressive and austere size, what a surprise to stumble upon the ‘Papageno’ from the Magic Flute, with such touching solitude. (Lévi-Strauss “Os mais vastos” 69, my translation.)

For Lévi-Strauss, the figure of the “tropical Papageno” combines the solitude of the Brazilian landscape with the melancholy of Western culture (Passetti, “Papagenos tropicais” 112). However, the actual history of the occupation of this region tells a less romantic tale. As Renate Brigitte Viertler has shown, the ‘Bororo’ of twentieth-century ethnography were a rather heterogeneous group that had “established a *modus vivendi* with the nineteenth-century’s colonial world” (*As aldeias* 20). Viertler and others have critically examined the written accounts produced by missionaries, military officers, settlers, and ethnographers in order to reach a better understanding of the process of interethnic contact in the region. They have concluded that the various indigenous groups, confronted with the agents of colonization, were effectively faced with three choices, that is, to: (1) search for an independent life, detached as much as possible from any colonial contact; (2) establish an alliance with the colonials, whether the military or settlers; or (3) make their homes under the protection of the missionary system.<sup>3</sup>

One of the essential characteristics of the social organization of the Bororo Indians was their dispersion and intensive spatial mobility; they gathered only for special rituals, such as funeral ceremonies, going their different ways after the event’s conclusion. Historically, the Bororo people spread across an extensive area, from the western frontier with Bolivia to the banks of the River Araguaia in the east, from the sources of the Paraguay and Cuiabá Rivers, along the Rio das Mortes in the north to the headwaters of the Miranda, Taquari, Coxim e Aquidauana in the south (Barros and Bordignon 65–97).<sup>4</sup> In addition to the Bororo, from the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries this region of Mato Grosso was sparsely occupied by farmers, cattle ranchers, and declining numbers of miners.<sup>5</sup> Its strategic vulnerability became evident in the aftermath of the Paraguayan War (1864–70), which led the monarchy to extend the reach of the Brazilian telegraph system to the states in the interior.

3 In addition to Viertler, *As aldeias*, see Viertler, *A duras penas*; Montero; Langfur; Vangelista, *Politica Tribale*; and Novaes.

4 I am indebted to Mario Bordignon for providing me with a copy of this document.

5 In the early nineteenth century, there were two main Bororo groups in the Mato Grosso region: the western Bororo (‘Cabaçais’, or ‘da Campanha’), who occupied the lands in the Brazilian and Bolivian frontiers; and the eastern Bororo (‘Coroados’, or the ancient ‘Porruados’), spread around the São Lourenço River and along the ‘royal road’, south of Rio das Mortes. Viertler, *A duras penas*, 38 and Vangelista *Politica Tribale*, 21.





Figure 2: *The 'Tropical Papageno'* (Source: Lévi-Strauss' "Os mais vastos horizontes do mundo," 1936)

In 1889–92, under the new republican government, a telegraph line linking Cuiabá with the rest of the nation was established. Its route included three hundred sixty miles across the backlands, where the Bororo lived. Assigned to work on this project was the young military engineer, Cândido Mariano da Silva Rondon, a native of Mato Grosso who himself claimed Terena and Bororo ancestors. In 1900, the federal government appointed Rondon commander of a military commission charged with building a main north-south telegraph line between Cuiabá and Corumbá. By mid-1902, two intersecting lines had been cut through the heart of Bororo territory: the initial line, running east-west with the border between Bolivia and Paraguay. Between 1900 and 1906, the commission built sixteen telegraph stations and thirty-two bridges, exploring around twenty-five hundred miles of the territory of Mato Grosso and mapping much of the state's holdings (Diacon, *Stringing* 16–7; Langfur 883; Maciel 95–177). While conducting his work in the region, Rondon established a collaborative rapport with the Bororo, offering them food and other gifts in exchange for their assistance (Langfur 887). In 1910, Rondon became the first director of the Indian Protection Service – a federal agency entrusted with protecting indigenous survivors – and devised a plan inspired by the positivist doctrine for Indian-white relations in Brazil in the belief that he could 'protect' the indigenes through a policy of pacification through acculturation.<sup>6</sup> Though the documentation of this process was une-

6 For a comprehensive account of the controversy over Rondon's work, see Diakon, "Cândido."

ven, there is evidence that by 1915 Rondon had already demarcated three indigenous protection areas in the region: Poboré or Tadarimana, between the Vermelho River and Jorigi Creek; Teresa Cristina, at the São Lourenço valley; and São João do Jarudóri, along the Vermelho River and north up to Serra do Paraíso (Urquiza; Barros and Bordignon 165).

Rondon's attitude toward the Bororo was markedly different from that of settlers in central and eastern Mato Grosso, which historically had been the scene of violent confrontations. In the early 1820s, for example, a six-year battle against the western Bororo on the eastern side of the Paraguay River, led by João Carlos Pereira Leite, an influential landowner and military officer, left four hundred fifty Bororo dead and fifty imprisoned. These prisoners, who were later deemed to be 'pacified', were used as a labor force on Leite's own farm.<sup>7</sup> In the late nineteenth century, the provincial government of Mato Grosso had made an attempt to integrate the Bororo into the regional economy, founding two military settlements: Teresa Cristina, at the confluence of the Rivers Prata and São Lourenço, and Santa Isabel, between the São Lourenço and Piqueri Rivers. Lacking an effective integrative model, the settlements degenerated rapidly: drunkenness, sex, and violence between indigenous peoples and soldiers led to further clashes (Montero 53; Vangelista, *Política* 19–60). As Hal Langfur argues, in the light of their continuing conflicts with both settlers and soldiers, an alliance with Rondon might well have seemed attractive to the Bororo (886). However, in accelerating the incorporation of the frontier regions, the telegraph project ended up attracting further settlers, intensifying violent engagements with the indigenous peoples. It also exposed the Bororo to contagious diseases, which claimed many lives (Langfur 885).

Brazil's increasing participation in the expanding world trade as a supplier of agricultural products meant the extension of the export industry into lands located deeper in the interior – a process accelerated by foreign investment from Argentina, Belgium, Britain, France, and the United States. From 1889 to 1917, Mato Grosso became firmly lodged in the world market, participating in the rubber boom and expanding its cattle-ranching interests. In the 1920s, the exploitation of diamond mines also attracted migrants from the northeast of Brazil, who settled in the lands of the São João de Jarudóri reserve (98–166). The cattle expansion took place on the savannah plains of southern Mato Grosso, covering an area of about 135,330 square miles, where a relatively mild climate, plentiful water sources, and reputedly unlimited natural rolling grasslands made it an attractive area for ranching. With the construction of the ill-fated Madeira-Mamoré railroad in the rubber-tapping region (1913), and the Northwest Railroad connecting southern Mato Grosso with São Paulo (1912–1914), transport costs for the frontier's products were lowered, benefitting both the rubber and cattle sectors (Hardman). From 1918 to 1937, with the end of the First World War and the rub-

7 As stated by the French artist Hercules Florence (whose drawings are discussed in the following section), in his description of the process of 'pacifying' the Bororo.

ber bust, Mato Grosso's export markets and capital sources underwent significant decline. Nonetheless, through new railroad links and improvements in live cattle shipment, the state's economy became increasingly tied to coastal markets (Frank; Wilcox).

The economic integration of the region with both national and international markets generated new strife with indigenous peoples, as landowners sought more and more land and labor. The testimony of Richard Warde illustrates this well. Employed by Murdo Mackenzie, general manager of the Brazil Land, Cattle, and Packing Company, Warde traveled 1,350 miles across the southern Mato Grosso region in 1912–13 in order to determine a new route for marketing cattle and *charque* (jerked beef). In his report on this expedition, he mentions that he had two men with him, "both real men, one a Cuyabano, the other a Borora [sic] Indian, always cheerful, ready to do anything or go anywhere" (16). It is likely that it was through the latter that Warde learned something about the Bororo's "curious" customs – in particular, their method of treating their dead and "their liking for white-skin men": "If you fight" – writes Warde – "they kill you and give your head to their kids to use as a target for practicing to throw with a spear" (16). It is worth noting that the Brazil Land, Cattle, and Packing Company was owned by the US entrepreneur Percival Farquhar, already a major foreign investor backed by French and British capital, who sought to take advantage of cheap land and government initiatives in the region. In addition to the seven hundred sixty thousand hectares of the Descalvados Ranch, where jerked beef and hide operations had already been established by an Argentine businessman as early as 1873–74, Farquhar bought another four hundred eighty thousand hectares of land from local ranchers, anticipating the impact of the construction of the Northwest Railroad (Wilcox 371–72). The Descalvados Ranch was the one from which ex-President Theodore Roosevelt started off his own celebrated journey into the interior to explore the Rio da Dúvida in 1914, guided by Rondon (Wenworth 9).

In the opening decades of the twentieth century, international capital was thus a major factor in the economic exploitation of the southern Mato Grosso and somewhat instrumental in opening it up for explorers. At a provincial level, it became clear to state legislators that the modernity associated with the telegraph lines, the railway, and the expansion of export-oriented agriculture demanded the training of the indigenous peoples' bodies and minds. This training aimed to 'integrate' them into the new national order in an attempt to end ongoing hostilities between Bororo and settlers. To accomplish this, in 1894 the Salesian missionaries were invited by the provincial government to branch out their activities into Mato Grosso. Having arrived in Brazil in 1883 with the consent of the Brazilian Emperor, the Salesian congregation had first settled in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, founding schools devoted to moral instruction and training. In Mato Grosso, the missions – referred to by the Salesians as "agricultural settlements" – intended to offer the indigenous people a "well equipped agricultural school that made labour on the land the centre of their autonomy and prosperity, in addition

to nurturing their bodies and souls” (Montero 52). The Salesians were committed to a markedly civilizing ethos, in which Catholic principles were associated with the advantages of industrial society. The agricultural settlements were thus modeled on scientific principles of productivity and the most advanced technology available.

After a series of early setbacks, the first Salesian colony in Mato Grosso was founded in 1902. Named Colônia do Sagrado Coração de Jesus, it was located in Tachos, a settlement along the telegraph line on the right bank of the Barreiro River, two hundred sixty miles east of the capital of Cuiabá.<sup>8</sup> It took the Bororo eight months to make contact with the mission and another three to settle there; as the mission’s director Father Balzola would later learn, they had kept their distance in order to observe the missionaries’ actions, and eventually visited the mission to decide whether to annihilate them or let them remain (Novaes 75; Langfur 887). The missionaries offered protection from rival indigenous groups and ‘civilized’ settlers, as well as providing material goods and improved health care.

In 1905, a new settlement was established on the River das Garças, named Colônia Imaculada (this was closed in 1918); it was followed a year later by the founding of a third colony on a farm on the Sangradouro River, named São José. This last colony attracted several Bororo from the São Lourenço and Vermelho Rivers, along with a number of families transferred from the colony of Sagrado Coração de Jesus. The missionaries were keen to announce the success of their work to supporters and potential supporters in the major urban centers, and raise money there to continue and broaden their activities. In the wake of the Rio de Janeiro Exposition of 1908 to celebrate the centennial of the opening of Brazilian ports to international trade, twenty-one Bororo members of a band at the Sagrado Coração de Jesus colony were sent to perform in Rio de Janeiro (Novaes 87). This practice was not unusual among missionaries: in 1898, Father Balzola had traveled to Italy with three Bororo men, and introduced them to the Pope and the Brazilian president Campos Sales, who was then visiting Rome (Figure 3). In Turin, apparently responding to a provocation by local youths, the Bororo visitors removed their Western clothing and, in a symbolic declaration of war on the locals, seized indigenous arms on display at the Dom Bosco Museum of Natural History.<sup>9</sup> Far from being simply a colorful digression in the history of missionary effort, this episode reveals much about the Bororo’s strategy in dealing with missionary civilizing efforts. As Sylvia Caiuby Novaes aptly puts it:

As long as obedience did not challenge their own convictions, the Bororo agreed, for example, to attend mass, but did not eliminate their own chants and rituals: they accepted the medicine dispensed by the priests, but did not forgo the *bari* [shaman] or their beliefs in the *bope*

8 In the late 1920s, due to the depletion of its natural resources, this mission was transferred to the locality of Meruri, where it remains to the present day.

9 For an insightful account of the Bororo travel to Italy in 1898, see Vangelista, *Politica* 69–79 and Vangelista, “Tre giovani.”

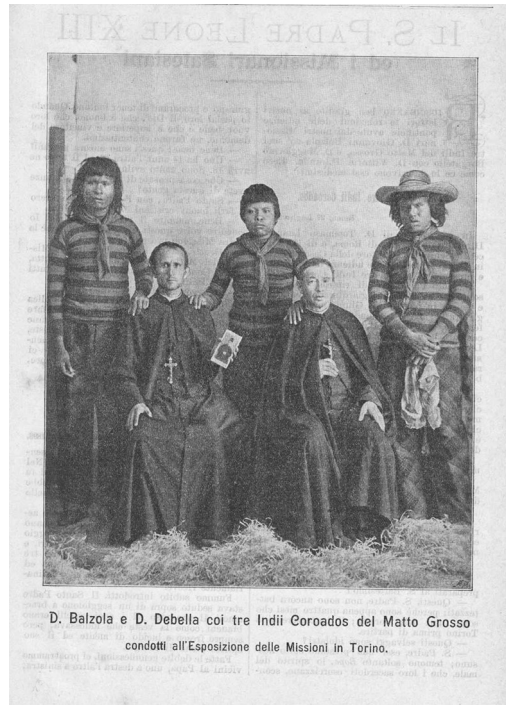


Figure 3.

Anon, "D. Balzola e D. Debella coi tre Indii Coroados del Matto Grosso condotti all'Esposizione delle Missioni di Torino" ["Father Balzola and Father Debella with the three Coroado Indians from Mato Grosso taken to the Turin Missionary Exhibition"]. (Source: *Bollettino Salesiano* 22 Sep 1898).

[evil spirits]; they took Christian names, but did not stop using their Indian ones. (85)

Rather than simply conforming to what the missionaries expected of them, the Bororo were constantly evaluating the costs and benefits of their actions, assessing the extent to which their acquiescence could jeopardize the most characteristic values of their own culture. This episode also sheds light on the different values attributed to 'ethnic' objects: while for the Salesians the items on display were intended as documents of a barbarous, savage past, which their mission was destined to eliminate, for the Bororo they were useful weapons within easy reach, ready to be employed in a threatening situation.

In sum, the strategic conduct of the Bororo was the result of decades of complex, more or less violent, interethnic encounters with those who sought in one way or another to subdue them. Recent scholarship has revealed numerous examples of Bororo adaptation to change, including attempts to engage with and participate in new forms of economic and social life. Their representation as 'isolated primitives', as Langfur points out (897), not only served the interests of those engaged in removing them from the land but was also "reproduced by an otherwise erudite ethnographic literature" (896–97).

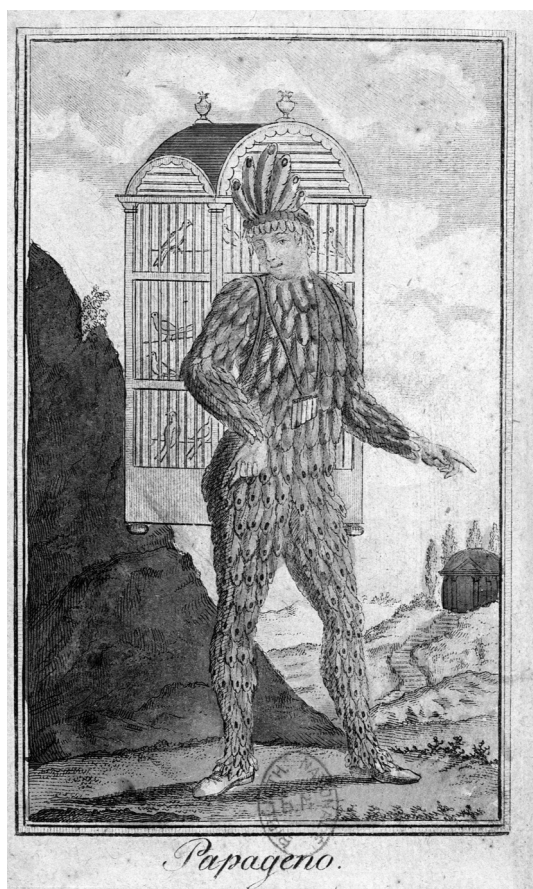


Fig. 4:  
*Papageno the bird-catcher, from  
 'The Magic Flute' by Wolfgang  
 Amadeus Mozart (1756–91); coloured  
 engraving, Italian School (eighteenth  
 century). (Source: Bibliothèque de  
 l'Opéra Garnier, Archives Charmet,  
 Paris)*

In this context, by evoking the figure of Papageno, Lévi-Strauss seems to be quite consciously turning a blind eye to the Bororo's recent history. As musicologist Rose Rosengard Subotnik remarks, in *The Magic Flute*, Papageno “is presented as existing outside of real time; his time is that of nature in its eternal aspect” (5); indeed, Papageno hardly distinguishes between nature and culture. As personified by Emanuel Schikaneder in the first libretto of *The Magic Flute* in 1791 (Figure 4), Papageno's body, covered with colorful feathers and adorned with a feather crown, represents a mixture of man and animal, a foil to the ideal embodiment of the Enlightenment (Bahr 250). Recalling sixteenth- and seventeenth-century allegorical depictions of America (Polleroß), its ‘ethnographic’ rendering also reflects the growing interest in exotic peoples in the wake of late eighteenth-century “spirit of curiosity” in Austria (Robertson 140). In other words, the visualization of the Bororo as ‘isolated primitives’ itself had a history.

## Envisioning the Bororo: a Brief Genealogy

Among the visual records of European expeditions to Mato Grosso before the late nineteenth century, the sketches by the French artists Aimé-Adrien Taunay and Hercules Florence stand out. Accompanying Baron von Langsdorff's expedition to the interior of Brazil in 1825, Taunay and Florence employed their brush and pencil to capture moments of indigenous life and its physical appearance, much as the naturalists sought to evoke the forms of plants and animals.<sup>10</sup>

The son of the well-known French painter Nicolas-Antoine Taunay, twenty-two-year-old Aimé-Adrien already had considerable experience in scientific observation, having joined Louis de Freycinet's expedition to the Pacific as assistant draughtsman from 1818 to 1820 (Costa, Diener and Strauss 13–14; Belluzzo 124–37; Costa). A perceptive artist, Taunay depicted scenes of the everyday life of the western Bororo in the village of Pau-Seco, between the Paraguay and Jaurú Rivers: people returning from hunting, listening to a storyteller's account of a jaguar hunt, performing daily activities. He also recorded a visit the Bororo paid to him and the botanist Ludwig Riedel in the house they occupied in Vila Bela, near Pau-Seco. In this watercolor sketch, Taunay conveys the encounter as a sociable affair in which four Bororo adults and one child exchange information with the two Europeans. Another portrait of a Bororo couple with a child testifies to Taunay's attention to detail: here he meticulously depicts their body painting and ornaments as well as their postures (Figure 5). Taunay clearly establishes a familiarity with the people he portrays. In the sketch of the interior of a Bororo hut (Figure 6), native buttocks in the foreground are displayed to the viewer, indicating a certain intimacy and prefiguring the voyeurism that would later be part of ethnographic displays of native villages in world fairs (Rony).

While Taunay's artistic sketches vividly delineate Bororo life and customs, Florence's pencil drawings work as auxiliary illustrations to his written descriptions, which he himself called "portraits" (Florence 244). More accomplished as a topographical artist than an ethnographic observer, Florence nevertheless produced drawings that reflect detailed scrutiny of figures through frontal views and profiles. Seeking to give his portrayals a visual 'objectivity', Florence detaches the bodies of the natives from their surroundings, as if they were specimens of natural history. His preoccupation with the objective rendition of visual phenomena eventually resulted in his claim to have been the first photographer in Brazil (Kossoy, *Hercule*).

The work of these early traveling artists provides an important context for the development of later visual technologies, including photography and film, not least because it reflected a commitment to the methodology of typification. As

10 Langsdorff initially hired the Bavarian Johann Moritz Rugendas as the expedition's artist in 1822. However, after their relationship deteriorated, Rugendas left for Europe at the beginning of 1825, taking with him most of the drawings he had made in Brazil (Costa, Diener and Strauss 13).

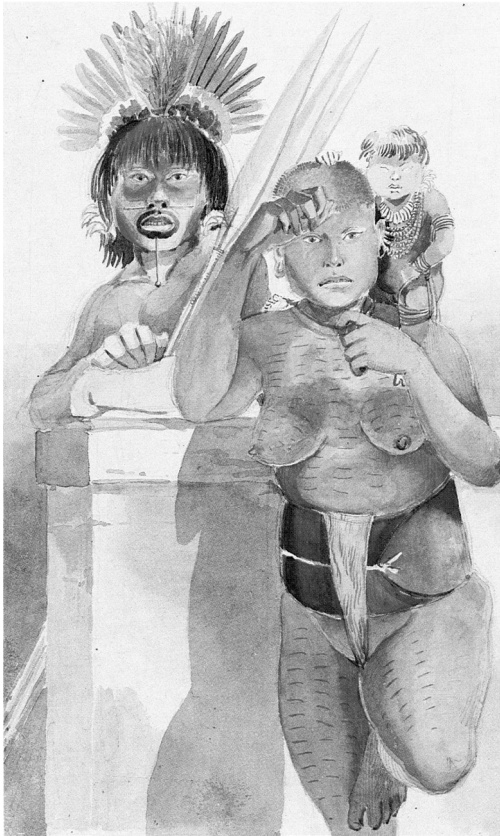


Figure 5:  
*Aimé-Adrien Taunay, "Femme et homme Bororós" ["Bororo man and woman"], December 1827. (Source: Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg)*



Figure 6: *Aimé-Adrien Taunay, "Intérieur d'une hutte des Indiens Bororós" ["Interior of a Bororo Indian hut"]*. (Source: Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg)



far as the Bororo were concerned, ethnographic image making had a long history well before the arrival of adventurers and anthropologists in the 1930s. In 1899, for example, the German ethnographer Karl von den Steinen reproduced Hercules Florence's drawings in the journal *Globus* (Steinen, "Indianerskizzen"). Steinen's own work on the Bororo would eventually have an enduring impact on the discipline of anthropology, as we shall see below.

In his article, Steinen compares and contrasts Florence's drawings with his own photographs of the eastern Bororo taken about sixty years later. Florence's representations were undeniably more reliable than others produced in the period. The French artist Jean-Baptiste Debret, in his *Voyage Pittoresque* (1835), for instance, depicts a Bororo head as just one among several indigenous 'types'. Debret's representations of indigenous peoples have often been criticized for being secondhand, using images produced by fellow travelers for inspiration or perusing the ethnographic collections of Brazil's Royal Museum of Natural History (later National Museum), since he never traveled further than the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro (Bandeira and Lago 49–51; Lima 252–64).

Fifty years after Debret, the most renowned photographer of nineteenth-century Brazil, Marc Ferrez, would follow the genre of the picturesque travel album in producing staged portraits of slaves and indigenous peoples as 'types' for the international market, where exotic figures were in demand (Dobal; Kossoy *Dicionário* 134–39).<sup>11</sup> Having visited the ethnographic displays of the 1882 Brazilian Anthropological Exhibition at the National Museum in Rio de Janeiro, Ferrez was likely to have been aware of interest in images of indigenous peoples from the interior of Brazil (Lucidio 33–34).<sup>12</sup> In this context, it is telling that the authorship of a photograph of a Bororo group, generally attributed to Ferrez, has recently been challenged (Domingos). The Moreira Salles Institute in Rio de Janeiro holds the glass plate negative, which belongs to the Gilberto Ferrez collection, where it is catalogued as being by Marc Ferrez, c. 1880 (Figure 7; *O Brasil* 232). However, the National Library has a nearly identical copy of the photograph, this time dated 1894, with the caption "Bororós em Rio Verde de Goyaz. Severino Photographo" (Figure 8). An itinerant photographer and salesman, José Severino Soares traveled across Minas Gerais, Goiás, and Mato Grosso, leaving a considerable photographic record of these regions, and it is known that in the late 1880s a Bororo group still wandered across the territories of eastern Mato Grosso and Goiás (Kosoy, *Dicionário* 298; Lucidio 34). Conversely, there is no evidence of Marc Ferrez ever visiting Goiás. Like his predecessor Debret, Ferrez was an avid collector of Brazilian imagery. Unable to capture the subject with his own camera, it is likely that Ferrez acquired the image from Soares, presumably for a price.

11 I would like to thank Susana Dobal for sending me a copy of this article.

12 For a detailed analysis of the Brazilian Anthropological Exhibition of 1882, see Andermann 128–70; Sánchez and Niño.

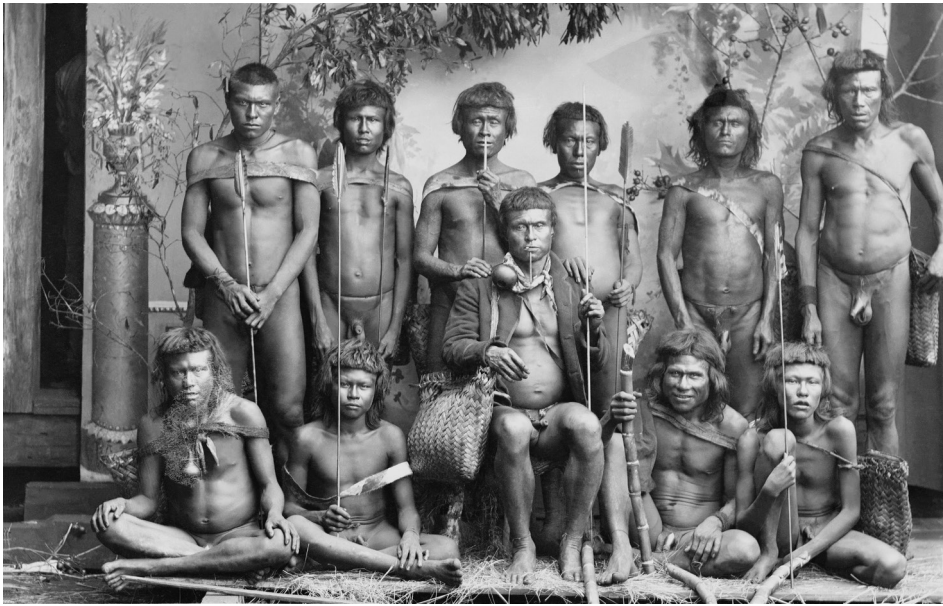


Figure 7: Marc Ferrez (?), *Índios Bororo*, c. 1880, Goiás. (Source: Gilberto Ferrez Collection, Instituto Moreira Salles, Rio de Janeiro)

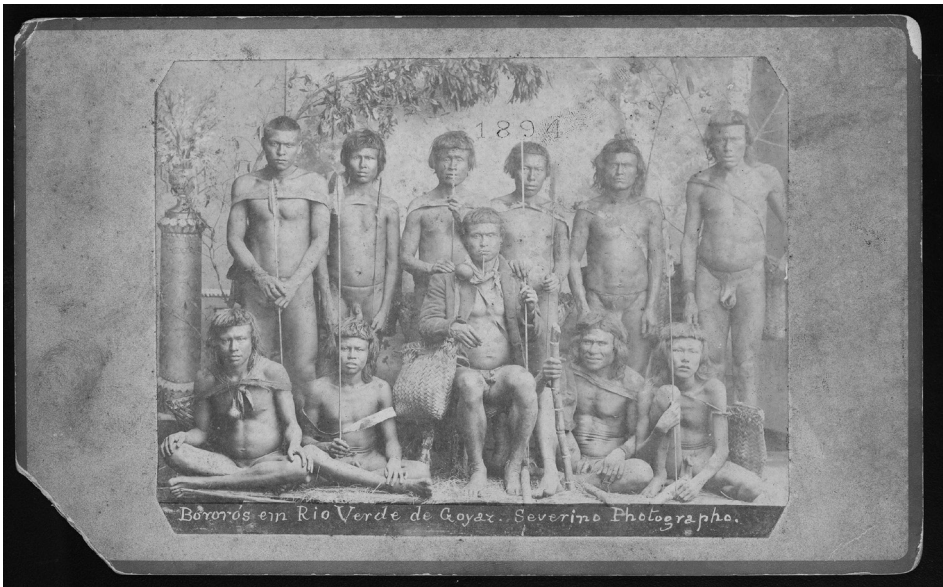


Figure 8: José Severino Soares, "*Bororós em Rio Verde de Goyaz*" [*Bororos in Rio Verde, Goiás*], 1894. (Source: Biblioteca Nacional do Rio de Janeiro)

Leaving the question of authorship aside, a comparison between these two images highlights the artificiality of their composition: posing in front of a painted backdrop of 'forest' scenery (a classical column to the left, with added palm leaves), the naked Bororo, wearing a few adornments, are represented as utterly uncivilized. The figure in the center, very likely the 'chief', is the only one wearing a jacket, perhaps denoting his leading role in dealings with the 'civilized'. Moreover, the mounting of the photograph held by the National Library shows an attempt to erase what Susana Dobal identifies as the 'noise' of nineteenth-century photography, that is, a trace left by the photographer of his own intervention – the view of the studio behind the backdrop on the left-hand side, which remains visible in the version of the scene purported to have been authored by Marc Ferrez (Dobal 67–86). Nevertheless, exposing the naked bodies of the Bororo, these photographs clearly cater to the popular, commercial taste for the exotic.

The first modern, 'scientific' anthropological study of the Bororo was contained in Karl von den Steinen's 1894 volume *Unter den Naturvölkern Zentral-Brasiliens* (*Among the Primitive Peoples of Central Brazil*), which included photographs and measurements taken by Paul Ehrenreich, and engravings based on drawings by Karl's cousin Wilhelm von den Steinen and finished by the illustrator Johannes Gehrts. While the photographs following the anthropometric model suggest 'scientific' rigor, showing frontal and profile images of the indigenous people, the carefully composed engravings, depicting scenes of the Bororo daily life and customs, were designed to attract a larger viewership.<sup>13</sup> However, the frontispiece photograph of a Bororo chief, fully ornamented, but with his penis clearly visible, proved to be controversial (Figure 9; Steinen, *Unter den Naturvölkern*, plate I). As Andrew Zimmerman points out, Steinen was criticized for the inclusion of this photograph, which was deemed obscene, and it was excised from the popular edition of the book, which was published in 1897 (Zimmerman 174; Hermannstädter). Be that as it may, addressing his readers in the preface to this latter volume, Steinen is keen to differentiate the anthropological way of seeing from the pornographic, advising them to "learn to grasp the naked body anthropologically and culture-historically, as in art they had learned to enjoy it aesthetically" (Steinen viii, quoted in Zimmerman 174).<sup>14</sup> Resorting to modernist formal theories of art (Torgovnick 116), Steinen invokes the value of what Johannes Fabian calls the "contemplative stance" in ethnographic discourse, which freezes the natives as if in a *tableau vivant* (67). In order to scientifically scrutinize other, 'primitive' cultures, the anthropological gaze required a disembodied observer. As Glenn Penny asserts, "professionalization is never limited to technical training; it also includes behavior" (252).<sup>15</sup>

13 For a study of the illustrations in Karl von den Steinen's publications on his Brazilian travels, see Löschner.

14 "[ich wünsche im Gegenteil,] dass jeder denkende Mensch den nackten Körper wie in der Kunst ästhetisch genießen, so in der Wissenschaft anthropologisch und kulturgeschichtlich begreifen lerne."

15 I thank Andrew Zimmermann for drawing my attention to this article.



Figure 9:  
*Karl von den Steinen, "Bororó  
 Häuptling" ["Bororo Chief"].*  
 (Source: Frontispice, *Unter den  
 Naturvölkern Zentral Brasiliens*, 1894)

Steinen's eyes and body were certainly disciplined. Having studied medicine in Zurich, Bonn, and Strasbourg, followed by further specialization in psychiatry in Vienna and Berlin, the twenty-four-year-old Steinen had departed in 1879 for a voyage around the world. His travels took him from the United States, Cuba, and Mexico, to the Pacific islands, China, Japan, India, and Egypt. It was Polynesia, however, that would have a lasting impact on Steinen's career (Thieme). In Hawaii he was introduced to the basics of anthropology by Adolf Bastian (Hemming), and in the Marquesas he encountered a place where "men and nature are consonant in beauty and happiness as anywhere else in the world," as he would later put it (Steinen, quoted in Thieme 42; my translation). In 1897, a year after writing the preface to the popular edition of his Bororo book, Steinen spent nine months in the Marquesas. During this trip, he studied the naked bodies of the islanders in detail, the result of which (more than twenty years later) would be a volume devoted solely to the art of tattooing, the first of his encyclopedic three-volume work on Marquesan art (Ulrich von den Steinen). This volume is illustrated with explicit photographs of tattooed, naked bodies, whose forms are emphasized by their contrast with the blank surroundings. In addition, punctiliously engraved line drawings, accompanied by a list of symbols, trans-

form the islanders' bodies into diagrammatic figures, maplike supporters of symbolic images. These bodies are treated here just as any other ethnographic artifact; indeed, in some of the illustrations they are supplemented with wooden limbs carved with the tattoos. These extraordinary illustrations of the Marquesan islanders surely deserve further critical attention in their own right: what is relevant for this chapter is what they reveal about the anthropological way of seeing that Steinen advocated.<sup>16</sup>

In 1887, under the influence of Adolf Bastian's evolutionary ideas (Ulrich von den Steinen 5–45) Steinen had visited Mato Grosso, in search of primitive indigenes. He found some of these 'primitives' in the military colony of Teresa Cristina, which in 1888 was already in decay. Highlighting the degenerate state in which he had found the 'catechized' Bororo, his account is mostly concerned with a description of the 'original' Bororo culture, understood as essentially prehistorical (Steinen, first edition 441–67; Viertler "Karl von den Steinen"). Establishing the contours of a markedly apolitical science, in his neglect of processes of cultural and political change, Steinen was already delimiting the division between colonial politics and the discipline of anthropology. This would later generate heated debates at the Sixteenth International Congress of Americanists in Vienna in 1908, framed by Vojtech Fric's accusations of German colonists' abuses of indigenous peoples in Southern Brazil (Penny 273–76).<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, it was Steinen's *Unter den Naturvölkern Zentral Brasiliens* (1894) that would define the 'primitive' mind of the Bororo as an exemplary object of knowledge for modern ethnography and anthropology, establishing a tradition of inquiry that culminated in the influential work of Claude Lévi-Strauss. In particular, Steinen's claim that "the Bororos boast of themselves that they are red parrots (Araras)" (first edition 512) instigated a lively discussion in both anthropology and philosophical hermeneutics. As Jonathan Smith shows in a fascinating paper entitled "I am a Parrot (Red)," published in the journal *History of Religions* in 1972, Steinen's suggestion that the Bororo cannot distinguish between animals and men became an exemplary illustration of the alleged inability of primitive man to make proper distinctions between nature and culture. It also signals the identification of distinctions between 'us' and 'them' that became a constitutive part of the modernist enterprise. Thus, the figure of the "tropical Papageno" evoked by Lévi-Strauss fits well within this nascent, modern discourse of primitivism. Before and after Lévi-Strauss, many notable scholars – including James Frazer, Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard, and Clifford Geertz – joined this long-running debate. As Smith concludes:

16 Although Alfred Gell has relied extensively on Steinen's diagrams to conduct a formal analysis of motifs in Marquesan tattooing, little critical work on Steinen's drawings has been conducted within anglophone scholarship (perhaps because so far it has not been translated into English).

17 In 1905, Fric also undertook fieldwork among the Bororo in Teresa Cristina and Kejari villages; his study of the Bororo, coauthored with Paul Radin, starts with a description of the conflicts in the region (Fric and Radin).

We have been engaged in tracing the history of an error – no less revealing for being a mistake. In the history of interpretation of the Bororo, there has been a noticeable shift from *surface* to *depth*, from the placing of the Bororo within a contextless catalogue of illustrations of a *general* theory of primitive mentality to a depth analysis of the underlying principles of a *particular* culture. In this process, the statement ‘I am a parrot’, has shifted from being an absurdity to be explained away or a puzzle to a serious statement, the truth of which might be empathetically entertained by a non-Bororo [...]. The statement, ‘I am a parrot’, has come to be seen as revealing a truth rather than being the result of a peculiar process of thought. By utilizing terminology such as ‘mode’ or ‘symbolic’, it has been possible to affirm both the humanness and the parrotness of the Bororo without allowing one to subsume the other. (408)<sup>18</sup>

Smith’s study of the Bororo and the red parrot leads in many different directions. For my purposes it draws attention to the specificity of an anthropology such as that of Steinen, which is very much concerned with surface appearances. Moreover, it points to the emergence of the epistemological link between the ‘primitive’ world and ‘otherness’ that became such a powerful fixture of Western modernity (Barkan and Bush 2–3).

## Locating the Guide

On January 21, 1937, an exhibition of the “results” of Claude and Dina’s ethnographic mission, entitled *Indiens du Matto-Grosso*, and organized by the Musée de l’Homme, opened at the Gazzette des Beaux-arts gallery in Paris. Among the eighty-four objects displayed, there were twenty-two from the Kadiwéu, sixty from the Bororo, and two from the Guarani, including drawings of facial paintings made by the Kadiwéu women, penis sheaths (in which Lévi-Strauss was particularly interested, reproducing images of them in several publications), baskets, hammocks, vases, toys, and colorful feathered adornments (one of which had been acquired in exchange for a gun after week-long negotiations, according to Lévi-Strauss), with their uses dutifully described in the exhibition catalogue (*Indiens*; Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes*, chapter 22; Lopez). The exhibition received a “polite appraisal,” as Lévi-Strauss reported much later (Lévi-Strauss and Eribon 21).<sup>19</sup> On the catalogue’s front cover was the same photograph of the “tropical Papageno” that first appeared in the short article mentioned earlier that Lévi-Strauss published in Brazil in 1936.

18 For a further discussion of this sentence, see Turner.

19 On the list of Bororo objects amassed by Dina and Claude for the Musée de l’Homme, Claude remarks that “les ouvrages des Bororo ne son guère faits pour les musées” (the Bororo artifacts are not made for museums), since the natural resins decompose upon the action of insecticides and disinfectants (Dreyfus and Lévi-Strauss).

The cover of a French edition of *Tristes tropiques*, first published in 1955, was illustrated with the portrait of an unnamed indigenous Nambikwara. In this best-seller, Lévi-Strauss recalls his travels to Brazil more than fifteen years earlier, including his return to the country's backlands to visit the Nambikwara, enabled by the success of the fruits of his first fieldtrip.<sup>20</sup> As he explains with gentle irony:

One year after my visit to the Bororo, all the required conditions for turning me into a fully fledged anthropologist had been fulfilled. Lévy-Bruhl, Mauss and Rivet had given me their retrospective blessing; my collections had been exhibited in a gallery in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré; I had delivered lectures and written articles. Thanks to Henri Laugier, who was in charge of the department of scientific research, then in its early stages, I obtained an adequate subsidy for a more ambitious undertaking. (249)

As if anticipating criticism, however, Lévi-Strauss begins *Tristes tropiques* vehemently expressing his distaste for travelers and explorers who assembled "lantern-slides and motion pictures" to illustrate their eyewitness accounts in popular lectures (18). Less concerned with the popularity or otherwise of travel accounts, the philosopher Jean Maugué, who accompanied Lévi-Strauss on a short trip to the interior of Brazil in 1937, singles out the remarkably sad image of the Nambikwara on the cover, "who seems crucified by this reversed cross" (123–24, my translation).<sup>21</sup> For him, this image communicated the very essence of the fate of the Brazilian Indians, although, as he points out, if Lévi-Strauss does acknowledge such melancholy in the title of his work, he goes no further than that.

Even so, it was the photograph of the "tropical Papageno" that would become ubiquitous in Lévi-Strauss's oeuvre: having also appeared in an article on the social organization of the Bororo in the *Journal de la Société des Américanistes* in 1936 (Planche X C), over the caption "Indien Ciba Cera en costume de fête" ("Ciba Cera Indian in party dress"), the same photograph was later reprinted in *Tristes tropiques*, and in his even more nostalgic work, *Saudades do Brasil: A Photographic Memoir* (94–95), first published in 1994, which also includes a less impressive full-body photograph of the same man (97). As Lévi-Strauss would report in *Tristes tropiques*, this "interpreter and chief informant," who "was to prove a wonderful guide to Bororo sociology," told him that he had been raised by missionaries and claimed to have been taken to Rome to be presented to the Pope (216–17).<sup>22</sup>

The "tropical Papageno" may have been a figment of Lévi-Strauss's imagination, but his Bororo guide most certainly was not. Herbert Baldus, the Ger-

20 Luiz de Castro Faria, who as a representative of the Museu Nacional accompanied Lévi-Strauss during his second fieldtrip, provides an alternative account of this expedition.

21 "cette figure d'Indien qui semble crucifiée par cette croix renversée".

22 This photograph has also been recently reproduced on the cover of the DVD collection entitled *Le siècle de Claude Lévi-Strauss*, by Jean-Claude Bringuier and Marcelo Fortaleza Flores.

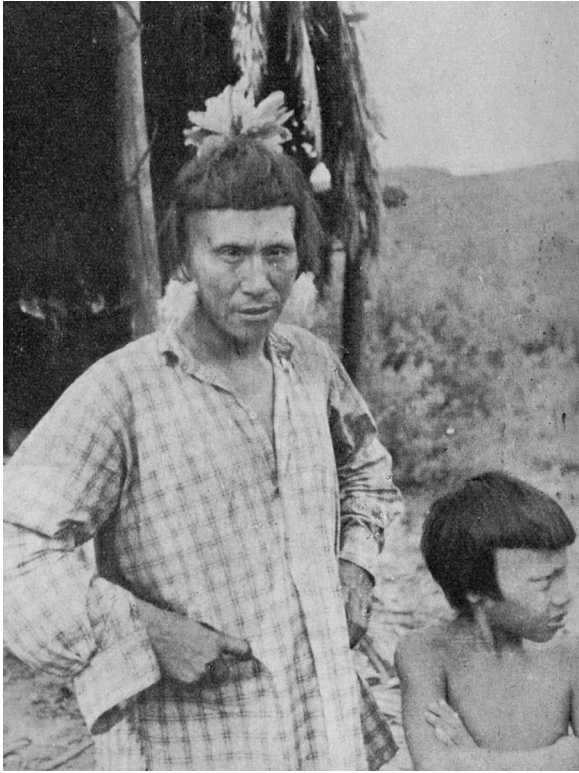


Figure 10:  
 Herbert Baldus, “Eastern  
 Bororo: my interpreter in  
 Tori-paru, Roberto Ipureu, and  
 a boy from the same village.”  
 (Source: *Ensaio de Etnologia  
 Brasileira* (1937), Plate 24)

man-Brazilian anthropologist who played an important role in the development of anthropological research in Brazil, establishing the foundations for the study of cultural change in Indian societies in contact situations, had relied on the very same man as an interpreter while visiting the Tori Paru village in 1935 (former Teresa Cristina colony; Viertler, *As aldeias* 20). In Baldus’s *Ensaio de etnologia brasileira* (*Essays on Brazilian ethnology*), first published in 1937, there is a photo of the interpreter, identified there as Roberto Ipureu (Figure 10; plate 24). Assuming a less imposing, ‘ethnic’ attitude than in Lévi-Strauss’s 1936 photograph (see Figure 2 above), this time he is portrayed more as a mediator between the two cultures than as the authentic primitive: arms akimbo, wearing a checkered shirt, he also sports a feather headdress. According to the Salesians, Roberto Ipureu was called *Pore Gudawu* by the Bororo, or “Spirit Found under the Rapids” (Albisetti and Venturelli, vol. II: 1256). Although deemed to be a “good member” of the musical group at the Mission of Tachos, his behavior did not leave a good impression among the missionaries: he resisted conforming to their rules, which led him to leave the Mission and settle in the villages of the Pogubo (Vermelho River) region, in the area around the São Lourenço River (Albisetti and Venturelli, vol. II: 1256).



Contrary to Lévi-Strauss's account, the Salesians were adamant that Roberto Ipureu had never set foot outside Brazil, perhaps not even outside Mato Grosso. In their comprehensive *Enciclopédia Bororo*, Albisetti and Venturelli suggest that Ipureu had simply appropriated the story of the nobler Akirio Bororo Kejewu, known as Tiago Marques Aipoburéu, who indeed had visited France and Italy in 1913 and worked as an 'informant' for the Salesians for many years (Vol. II: 1256–57).<sup>23</sup> They claimed that Ipureu's deceptions were no secret in his community, and may have been responsible for his later violent death; believing himself to be superior to his companions because of his rapport with the white men, Ipureu's behavior became unbearable to them, and they ended up throwing a pestle at his head, breaking his skull (Vol. II 1257). The line between informant and informer was a perilous one.

Rather than interpreting Ipureu's deception as evidence of either his bad character or of his unreliability as a credible informant, we should instead consider it in the context of the longer history of cross-cultural contact. As a "performative primitive," to use Amy Staples's expression (211), Roberto Ipureu was ready to impersonate Aipoburéu the character of his more famous fellow for the inquisitive anthropologist. He was well aware of the cultural capital to be traded in the field of modern anthropological enquiry. Lévi-Strauss, on his part, preoccupied with gathering all the available data about Bororo culture he could within the short period of his visit to the Kejári village, was pleased to find such an obliging interviewee, writing down in his notebook without hesitation all the information provided by Ipureu (Ipureu even performed the role of a rather unskilled weaver in the film *A vida de uma aldeia Bororo*; Figure 11). If Lévi-Strauss ever realized the dubious quality of his informant's data, he never admitted it. Furthermore, for the construction of his structuralist theory, which used the Bororo material for broader speculations on the epistemological basis of human cultural phenomena, the understanding of the behavior of a simple individual within specific historical circumstances had little significance (Viertler, *As aldeias* 27).

*Saudades do Brasil*, first published in 1994, includes one hundred eighty photographs taken during his travels to Brazil (only seventeen of which had been previously published). In this work, Lévi-Strauss reveals himself through the other; his attraction to the naked bodies of the indigenous people is here much in evidence.<sup>24</sup> As Jay Prosser points out, the "photographic proximity to his subjects revealed in these images undermines his theory's insistence that he viewed from afar" (73). The intimate photographs, excluded from his previous work, reveal

23 Aipobureu's lineage was said to be traced to the ruling elite of the Bororo chiefdom (Baldus 165). For a critical analysis of the life of Tiago Marques Aipobureu, see Fernandes.

24 The nakedness of some of the Brazilian Indians whom Lévi-Strauss encountered in his Brazilian travels is described in some detail in *Tristes tropiques*. In a letter to Mário de Andrade from the field, for example, Lévi-Strauss mentions the 'nudité la plus aggressive' (the most aggressive nakedness) of the Nambikwara: Claude Lévi-Strauss to Mário de Andrade, Jan. 1936, Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros (IEB) archives.



Figure 11: Dina and Claude Lévi-Strauss, ‘A Tecelagem’ [‘Weaving’], still from *A vida de uma aldeia Bororo*. 1935. Acervo Histórico da Discoteca Oneyda Alvarenga, Centro Cultural São Paulo.

a different aspect of anthropological vision: an embodied view in place of the mind’s eye.

Furnished with a Leica and an “oval-shaped miniature 8mm filming camera,” Dina and Claude Lévi-Strauss took numerous photographs and shot a few films during their fieldtrip into the Brazilian interior (Lévi-Strauss, *Saudades do Brasil* 22). While Dina found filming easier than photographing because of the fixed exposure of the film camera, Claude was less enthusiastic about its benefits for anthropological research (Dina Lévi-Strauss 25). “I hardly ever used it,” he would report sixty years later, “feeling guilty if I kept my eye glued to the viewfinder instead of observing and trying to understand what was going on around me” (Lévi-Strauss, *Saudades do Brasil* 22).<sup>25</sup> His impatience with the process of filming suggests that the majority of the footage for the films of their fieldtrip, now held by the Centro Cultural de São Paulo, was either produced by Dina or, more likely, by René Silz.<sup>26</sup> The flickering images produced with the handheld camera show an array of life scenes and close-up shots that evoke a rather anxious

25 Lévi-Strauss repeats this statement in the film by Marcelo Fortaleza Flores, *Auprès de l’Amazonie: le parcours de Claude Lévi-Strauss* (2008).

26 The collection of the Discoteca Oneyda Alvarenga, Centro Cultural São Paulo, holds the following titles: *Os trabalhos de gado no curral de uma fazenda do sul de Mato Grosso*; *Aldeia de Nalike I*; *Aldeia de Nalike II*; *A vida de uma aldeia Bororo*; and *Cerimonias funerais entre os índios Bororo*.

attempt at 'data gathering'. The focusing on hands at work – weaving, playing, clay modeling – goes in tandem with Dina's advice to anthropological fieldworkers that in collecting data for the study of techniques, "the hands of a potter shaping a block of clay are many times more instructive than a full body portrait of the same person" (Dina Lévi-Strauss 29).

The Lévi-Strausses' films concentrate most exclusively on observing people as if they were just carrying on their daily activities with no interference from the camera apparatus or the researchers behind it.<sup>27</sup> Although on a few brief occasions there are glimpses of the observers in action, it appears their aim was to reproduce, without mediation, the indigenous culture (Pinney 76). However, in portraying the 'primitive other' through the emblematic activities of their daily lives – such as ritual dances and making fires – scientific filming practices share with popular ones an essentialized idea of the 'primitive', detached from historical time (Staples 200–03). Claude's impatience with the business of filming, getting in the way of his own attempts to record what was going on around him, reveals a further epistemic standpoint, in which the researcher's personal encounter "is posited as a sort of pure channel through which ethnography passes into ethnology and anthropology," as Fabian puts it (67). It also exemplifies Christopher Pinney's contention that the anthropologist takes into his own person the functions of a strip of film: "having been prepared to receive and record messages in negative form during a moment of exposure in 'the field', [the anthropologist] is able, after suitable processing, to present them in a 'positive' state in an ethnographic monograph" (82). In the process, the historical and geographical particularities of the place where the cross-cultural encounter happened are gradually left behind. Likewise, the iconic photograph of the local informant – or better, its simulacrum – becomes an authentication of the fieldwork, validating the anthropologists' experience of having 'been there'.

## The Bororo Visual Economy

In 1949, the American world traveler and filmmaker Lewis Cotlow was in Mato Grosso shooting footage for 'first contact' scenes with the Bororo for his expeditionary film *Jungle Headhunters*, which was released in the United States in 1950 (Figure 12). As Amy Staples has pointed out, Cotlow's inspiration to film what he called these 'curious giants' originated from his knowledge of the photographs taken by Rondon in the wake of his earlier expedition with Theodore Roosevelt (205). Comparing and contrasting Cotlow's film and book, *Amazon Head-Hunters* (1953), Staples demonstrates the ways in which the film's image of the Bororo as cultural isolates is disrupted by the literary account, providing "insights into the networks of government sponsorship, cinematic representation, and transnational

27 For a comparison of the films about Bororo funeral rituals by Luiz Thomas Reis, Aloha Baker, the Lévi-Strauss couple, and others, see Cunha.



Figure 12:  
*Lewis Cotlow discusses the  
 filming of a funerary dance with  
 an unidentified Bororo elder  
 in the Mato Grosso region of  
 Brazil, 1949. (Source: Museum  
 of Natural History and Science,  
 Cincinnati Museum Center)*

exchange with which the Bororo were becoming actively engaged” (208). Traveling filmmakers like Cotlow, she concludes, were “early pioneers in the representation and commodification of ‘performative primitives’, forging the tourist circuits, networks, and exchange relations in which global cultures are now thoroughly mediated” (215).<sup>28</sup>

However, it is possible to exaggerate the novelty of this process. Photographic and cinematic practices in mid-twentieth-century Mato Grosso were part of a much longer history of colonial contact, image making, and circulation that dates back at least to the early nineteenth century. Throughout the period, travelers, missionaries, governmental officials, and anthropologists advancing into the region brought with them not only notebooks, bibles, telegraphic lines, and trinkets for exchange of information, but also sketchbooks, cameras, and film equipment. Over the decades, the exchange of visual images became part and parcel of the Bororo Indians’ barter with the ‘civilized’. Enmeshed in a global visual economy, the Bororo became rather active participants in the making of their own image as isolated primitives.

28 Significantly, in 1990 a bequest from the estate of Lewis Cotlow to George Washington University in Washington DC created the Lewis N. Cotlow Fund, which has supported over one hundred fifty anthropological research projects by George Washington students in nearly fifty countries.



Figure 13:  
 Diorama entitled  
 “Bororo body paint-  
 ing”, Museu de  
 História do Pantanal,  
 Corumbá, 2011.  
 (photo by the author)

Recent work bridging the supposedly binary divides between myth and history, myth and truth, and myth and knowledge, provides us with alternative ways of understanding the Bororo beyond the enduring image of the ‘noble savage’. Gordon Brotherston’s study of a painted jaguar skin collected by the Austrian naturalist Johann Natterer in the early nineteenth century is just one fascinating example of a new anthropology that refuses to understand the native ‘other’ as belonging to a premodern era (“The Legible Jaguar” and “Native Numeracy”).<sup>29</sup> Within the artifact lies a visual language that reveals the Bororo’s sophisticated understanding of the night sky, of mathematics, and astronomy.

In this chapter, I have offered another kind of ‘revisionist’ perspective, revisiting constructions of the Bororo as isolated primitives, as exemplified in the Lévi-Strausses’ academic work. For those who imagine this trope as a thing of the past, the Museu de História do Pantanal in Corumbá provides an intriguing counterpoint. In 2007, a new diorama entitled “Pintura corporal Bororo” (“Bororo body painting”) was put on display (Figure 13). Recalling nineteenth-century exhibits, it shows five plaster models of Bororo Indians: a couple on the left; in the center, a grandmother sitting on the ground telling stories to her grandchild; and a hunter on the right. In the background, a forest landscape sets the scene. As an explanatory museum label states, the painting and models were made by the artist Filipeli and sculptress Alejandra Conte, while two Bororo men from the Centro de Cultura Bororo in Meruri, Agostinho Eibajiwu and Leonida Akiri Ekureudo,

<sup>29</sup> See also Fabian, *Space-Time*. On the discussion about the split between myth and history, see Hill. For a critique of the sharp divide between nature and culture in modern anthropology, see Latour.

were commissioned by the museum to undertake the body painting, which “represents, simultaneously, the vision by nineteenth-century naturalists and by the twentieth-first century Bororo Indians.”<sup>30</sup> The ‘event’ of the painting was also registered by the Bororo filmmaker Paulinho Eceræ Kadojeba, from the same cultural center. As the museum’s architect Nivaldo Vitorino elucidates, the Bororo Indians were invited to contribute their own knowledge of cultural heritage and natural pigments in order to provide an image of body painting that was “closer to the truth” than that depicted in an early nineteenth-century sketch by Aimé-Adrien Taunay, which was in fact the original inspiration for the diorama. Given that the Bororo Indians are still fighting to secure rights to their land in Brazil today, this symbolic gesture reminds us that the visualization of the Bororo as essentialized primitives is – and perhaps has always been – the result of a collaborative venture between ‘civilized’ observers and those Bororo Indians who, like the “tropical Papageno” Roberto Ipureu, are inclined to act as mediators between the two cultures.

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30 See the sequence of the diorama construction on the MUHPAN Making off and MUHPAN websites.

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