AOSIS

SPEAKING OF SATAN IN ZAMBIA

Making cultural and personal sense of narratives about Satanism

Johanneke Kroesbergen-Kamps

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Research justification

In this book, I argue that narratives about Satanism, which have become popular in the Christian context of Zambia from the 1990s onwards, make cultural sense because of their links to traditional African notions as well as contemporary Christian theologies. These narratives also resonate with unease regarding the cultural change, which is connected by Zambians to modernity. Narratives about Satanism further make personal sense to their narrators, the pastors who provide a platform for them and their audiences.

These arguments contribute to the academic study of religion in Africa, in particular of African Christianity and of witchcraft-related phenomena, as well as to the global study of discourses on Satanism and other conspiracy theories. All of these disciplines are related to the topic of Satanism in Zambia, but the phenomenon itself has not been discussed at length, which makes the existing academic literature incomplete and inadequate. My comprehensive focus on the case of narratives about Satanism in Zambia offers new insights and enhances current theoretical reflection.

The research presented in this book is original, carried out by myself during fieldwork spanning from 2012 to 2017 in Zambia and literature study in the years after that. Methodologically, the research is based on participant observation in churches in which testimonies of ex-Satanists were presented, as well as participation in the Fingers of Thomas, a Roman Catholic group that investigates rumours about Satanism. Furthermore, it is based on interviews with pastors and students of theology active in the deliverance ministry from Pentecostal as well as mainline churches and also on interviews with people who have had experiences of Satanism. Finally, the research is based on an analysis of collected testimonies of ex-Satanists as they were presented in these interviews, in churches, on radio programmes, in newspapers and other sources.

I have carried out my research in Zambia in order to obtain a PhD degree in 2018 at the University of Utrecht, the Netherlands. This book is a more than 50% substantial reworking of the original PhD dissertation. In particular, it contains new literature on and analysis of African traditions, the history of the devil in (missionary) Christianity, modernity and change in African societies and the mediation of supernatural presences. I declare that I have not plagiarised any part of this work. The target audience consists of academics. The book was written by a scholar for specialists in the field of African studies from the perspective of religious studies and cultural anthropology. The argumentation in the book is adequately substantiated by interactional dialogue and references to the most recent scholarly literature in the field.

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Abbreviations and acronyms and tables appearing in the text and notes

List of abbreviations and acronyms

AIC	African Independent Churches
ATRs	African traditional religions
CK	Calvin Klein
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FENZA	Faith and Encounter Centre Zambia
JMU	Justo Mwale University
PF	Patriotic Front
RCZ	Reformed Church in Zambia
SIM	subscriber identification module
STI	sexually transmitted illness
UCKG	Universal Church of the Kingdom of God
UCZ	United Church of Zambia
UK	United Kingdom
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPND	United Party for National Development
USA	United States of America
ZCC	Zion Christian Church

Table list

Biographical note

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Johanneke Kroesbergen-Kamps is an anthropologist of religion with an interest in beliefs about forces of evil as well as the development or religious identities and the use of photography as an ethnographic method. She studied religious studies at the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (the Netherlands), specialising in new religious movements and spirituality.

From 2011 to 2017, she introduced theology students at Justo Mwale University in Lusaka, Zambia, to an anthropological and sociological perspective on religion, as well as familiarising them with study techniques and research methods. During this time, she studied narratives about Satanism in Zambia, on which she has published several research articles in scientific journals and edited volumes. Through this research, she obtained her PhD degree at Utrecht University with Prof. Dr Birgit Meyer in 2018.

In 2020 and 2021, Johanneke Kroesbergen-Kamps was a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Pretoria in South Africa, investigating how Zambian pastors in the Reformed Church in Zambia gave meaning to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. She published academic articles on this topic as well as on the concept of nature in Africa, urban imaginaries and conspiracy theories in Africa. She is currently a research associate at the University of Pretoria and works as a lecturer at the University of Amsterdam (the Netherlands). She teaches in the fields of religious studies, anthropology of religion and human rights.

Acknowledgements

'… and we have just one world, but we live in different ones …' – (Dire Straits 1985)

As the British rock band Dire Straits notes in their classic anti-war song *Brothers in Arms*, there is one world, and yet we seem to live in different worlds. In the past years, I have been grappling with this notion. In 2011, my husband and I moved to Zambia to start teaching at Justo Mwale University (JMU). Compared to the Netherlands, Zambia is a different world, with new rules for interactions, a different dress code and particular ideas about what behaviour is expected from a married woman. With time, I discovered more differences between my world and the world of my students and colleagues. And yet, part of my job has been communicating about the lives of Zambian Christians to their brothers and sisters in the Netherlands as part of one worldwide church. One world and different worlds, both at the same time. My husband and I reflected on this duality in a book that was published in Dutch, *Alles Anders, Alles Hetzelfde*, which translated means something like *Everything Different, Everything the Same*.

One particular example of something different was the phenomenon of Satanism that we encountered soon after we arrived in Zambia. This current book is an attempt to understand the different world of Zambian ex-Satanists and their audiences. This world is largely unheard of outside of Africa, but I think that a non-Zambian public can understand it and even see similarities with elements of their own world. A central adage of anthropology has been to make the strange familiar and the familiar strange. In this book, I try to do the former for a Western audience, while I hope to challenge a Zambian audience with the latter. Satanism in Zambia is not quite the exotic alternate world that it may seem at first glance, but at the same time, those who are well-versed in its discourse may still be able to learn something new about it.

In 2018, I defended my PhD thesis on the topic of Satanism in Zambia at Utrecht University in the Netherlands. In the years after that, I kept returning to the topic, finding more and better interpretations and explanations of the phenomenon. This book is a result of my ongoing involvement. It is an expanded and rewritten version of my original dissertation. Chapter 1 of this book, which introduces the phenomenon of Satanism and how it has been studied in academia, contains elements of the Introduction and Chapter 1 of my dissertation. Chapter 2 of my dissertation has become two vastly expanded and improved chapters in this book on the place of Satanism in an African worldview and on the Christian background of the idea of Satan and Satanism. Chapter 4 of this book, on the modern context of narratives about Satanism, is likewise a substantially revised version of Chapters 5 and 6 in my dissertation.

Chapter 5 in this book, about the role of Satanism in the life story of the ex-Satanist, is an updated version of Chapter 3 in my dissertation. Chapter 6, about the context of performed testimonies, contains parts of Chapter 4 of my dissertation, as well as new reflections about what testimonies mean for an audience.

Many guides have helped me to become familiar with the world of ex-Satanists and their audiences. I thank the ex-Satanists who found the courage to be open about their experiences. I have spoken to many pastors and intercessors in Pentecostal ministries as well as the Reformed Church in Zambia about the phenomenon of Satanism. For reasons of their anonymity as well as that of the ex-Satanists I have met through them, I cannot mention their names or the churches where we met, but I am forever grateful for their guidance and help.

The Fingers of Thomas, a Lusaka-based Roman Catholic group investigating the phenomenon of Satanism in Zambia, became a family far away from home. Father Bernhard Udelhoven has become a dear friend and has graced me with his extensive knowledge about Satanism, witchcraft and possession in Zambia. Thank you so much for your company.

Justo Mwale University provided a nurturing environment for this research. I learned a lot from the conversations with staff members and students. Some students even found testimonies for me to use in my research. One of them, Tabitha Moyo, acted as my research assistant, and I am thankful for her contributions.

In addition to these guides into the world of Satanism in Zambia, I have a debt of gratitude to my academic friends and colleagues. First of all, I am grateful for the help and continuing support of my supervisor, Birgit Meyer. Her questions and comments were always stimulating and helped me to improve my work. I also thank the University of Pretoria and especially Jaco Beyers and Andries G. van Aarde for making this publication possible. I am also grateful for the kind comments of the reviewers of this manuscript.

Finally, I thank Hermen, who always believes in what I do and whose companionship and critical discussions are invaluable. Thanks for taking this journey with me!

Satanism in Zambia

■ Background

It is 02:00 in a provincial town in Zambia.[1] The residents are sleeping, and all is dark. Far away, there is the sound of some stray dogs barking. But at the church, the lights are on and the sound of a public announcement system resounds in the quiet night. Inside, people are singing and praying, and pastors and evangelists take their turns preaching from the pulpit. All-night prayer meetings like this are popular in Zambia, especially among the youth.

Suddenly a girl – she cannot be more than 12-years-old – gets up and starts walking towards the doors of the church. 'Where are you going at this time of the night?' someone asks. The girl seems upset. 'I can't continue this kind of life,' she replies. What does she mean? In church, she is known as an active Christian, full of faith. More questions are asked, but the girl collapses. The visiting pastor is called. He kneels beside her and orders the devil to let her go.

The girl regains consciousness and starts to tell a stunning story. 'I am a Satanist, sent here to this all-night prayer to bring confusion,' she confesses:

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1. I thank Rev. Abbishai Mponda Phiri – who was among the attendants of the overnight prayer – for sharing this account with me. I have rephrased his words without altering the meaning.

> 'I have been tormenting the resident minister, making him fail to pray and making his sermons dull so that his listeners will not become born again, and those who have demons will not be delivered.' (Mponda Phiri pers. comm., 2015)

A crowd of eager listeners forms around the girl. 'Remember the big accident on the road from Ndola to Kitwe?' she continues. 'It was me who caused it.' The audience gasps. Several onlookers lost relatives in this accident. Some start to cry. The girl goes on:

> 'The devil promised me that if I manage to kill 1 000 people, I will become a queen under the Indian Ocean. And in the physical world, I will be a famous singer, like Nicki Minaj or Wiz Khalifa. Or I will get married to the president of any nation of my choice.' (Mponda Phiri pers. comm., 2015)

The visiting pastor starts praying for her again, trying to break the influence of the devil over her. It takes hours, but at 05:00, the pastor declares her delivered and the girl repents for her past as a Satanist. She is now, once more, a good Christian.

For me, coming from the very secularised Netherlands, such happenings in Zambia were bewildering. How can people believe a girl who says she has caused an accident while she was not even near the place where it happened? How is it possible that this girl believes this about herself? How can people take stories about Satanism seriously? So seriously even that sometimes riots erupt and services at schools and hospitals are disrupted? Why do ministers give space to these stories in their religious services? It is this bewilderment that was the first inspiration for this book.

Occurrences like the confession of the girl at a prayer meeting are not new in African churches. As Donal Cruise O'Brien (2000:520) wrote in a review article, 'thought and talk about the devil seem to be on the increase in Africa'. Several scholars have written about confessions of Satanism. Birgit Meyer describes the confession of a man who can '"convert" goods to Satan's realm' as well as make people fall off their bikes (1999:200), and she also mentions similar stories visualised in movies and reported on in newspapers (1995). Comaroff and Comaroff (1999:286) describe how two repentant ex-Satanists share their stories on a local television network. Many scholars have referred to one of the first widely published confessions, namely that of the Nigerian Emmanuel Eni, who wrote a pamphlet about his experiences called *Delivered from the Powers of Darkness* ([1987] 1996) (see, e.g. Gifford 2008; Meyer 1995, 1998a; Shaw 2007; Sunday 2011). Stephen Ellis and Gerrie ter Haar (2004:49–51) mention a similar pamphlet written by the Congolese Evangelist Mukendi, in which he writes about an underground world where diabolical objects are manufactured and misfortune is plotted.

In most academic publications, Satanism is mentioned in passing as one of the examples of what is going on in contemporary African churches and Africa in general. Often, in these publications, it is unclear whether Satanism is

conceptually different from a range of rejected practices within Christianity, such as witchcraft and holding on to traditional practices. This book seeks to help close that gap by focusing attention on this phenomenon that is relevant in the lives of many African Christians through an in-depth exploration of interviews, testimonies and newspaper reports. What makes Satanism such a popular topic in Zambia, and where does all this speaking of Satan originate from? These questions have not yet been comprehensively addressed in the academic literature.[2] In this chapter, I will introduce the Zambian context and the phenomenon of Satanism in Zambia, followed by a discussion of how this type of Satanism differs from the religious Satanism that is known in the West.

■ The discourse of Satanism in the Zambian context

Zambia is a landlocked country situated in southern Africa, with an estimated population of around 22 million (CIA World Fact Book 2022). It is the size of – on a European scale – Poland, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg together. From 1911, the territory was known as Northern Rhodesia; it took the name Zambia upon independence from British colonial rule in 1964. Economically, Zambia is heavily reliant on its natural resources, especially copper. The worldwide decline in copper prices that started in the 1970s proved to be a severe challenge.

Until 1991, Zambia was a single-party state ruled by President Kenneth Kaunda. In 1990, the opposition against the ruling party grew stronger, inspired by food shortages and general economic decline. In 1991, Zambia became a multiparty democracy, and after peaceful elections, a new political party came into power. Government-led economic reforms and an increase in the price of copper have boosted economic growth since the 1990s. For a decade, from 2004 to 2014, Zambia was one of the world's fastest-growing economies (CIA World Fact Book 2022). However, only a limited segment of the population, located in urban areas, benefited from this growth. Poverty is still widespread, with 57.5% of the population living under the international poverty line of $1.90 per person per day, a situation that is worse in rural areas (The World Bank 2020). After 2014, between

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2. There are two lesser-known authors who have written on Satanism in Zambia. Bernhard Udelhoven, a social scientist and missionary for the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers), has published extensively on Satanism in Zambia, mostly from a pastoral perspective. His book *Unseen worlds: Dealing with spirits, witchcraft and Satanism* (2021) encourages those who work in the church to take local understandings of evil seriously, without letting these understandings take over theology and pastoral practice in a neo-Pentecostal way. I will refer to Udelhoven's publications throughout the book because his long-term involvement with everything related to Satanism makes him invaluably knowledgeable on this subject. The second author, Joseph Hachintu, wrote his PhD thesis in religious studies on the prevalence of Satanism in Zambia's Kabwe district (2013). Hachintu tries to establish how many real Satanists there are in Kabwe. While that is an interesting question, it is also quite limited and carries with it some methodological difficulties, as we shall see.

slumping copper prices and power shortages, the economy again came under intense pressure (IMF 2016).

The population of Zambia is ethnically diverse. Over 70 different languages or dialects are spoken by distinct ethnic groups. In urban areas, the diversity of language is transcended by the use of a lingua franca: the main language for the capital, Lusaka, is Chinyanja, and Chibemba is spoken in the industrial Copperbelt. English is the official language, used predominantly in newspapers and as one of the media of instruction in schools.

Ethnic groups in Zambia have been studied by several renowned anthropologists – for example, Audrey Richards, Max Gluckman and Victor Turner – mainly from the Manchester School and working through the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute. In their ethnographies, they mainly focused on a specific ethnic group: Gluckman wrote about the Barotse (1955), Richards about the Bemba ([1956] 1982b), Elizabeth Colson about the Tonga (1962) and Max Marwick about the Chewa (1965).[3] They discussed the social organisation of these groups as well as their religious beliefs, which fall under the umbrella of African traditional religions (ATRs). In a later chapter, I will discuss to what extent these beliefs are related to contemporary narratives about Satanism. Meanwhile, other anthropologists in Zambia, such as Arnold Epstein, did pioneering work in urban anthropology (cf. Englund 2013:670).[4] In more recent years, anthropologists in Zambia have investigated aspects of life in ethnically diverse urban areas (see e.g. Ferguson 1999; Hansen 2000; Haynes 2017a; Mildnerová 2015), and others have emphasised the diversity within rural ethnic identities (e.g. Kirsch 2014). Stories, experiences and events connected to Satanism most often occur in urban areas and are not related to a specific ethnic background.

Satanism is, however, strongly related to Christianity in Zambia, as we will see later in this book in more detail. The girl at the beginning of this introduction confessed her affiliation as a Satanist during an overnight prayer. Many narratives about Satanism originate in such Christian settings. The Pew Research Center reported that, in 2010, 97.6% of the Zambian population was Christian (2015:244).[5] While 75.3% of Christians are Protestant, Roman Catholic believers form the largest single denomination (20.2%) (Central Statistical Office 2012:19). Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh-day Adventists are significant

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3. For a concise overview of anthropological and historical research in Zambia see Harri Englund's article 'Zambia at 50: The rediscovery of liberalism' (2013).

4. For a discussion of urban anthropology on the Copperbelt in Zambia, see James Ferguson's *Expectations of modernity: Myths and meaning of urban life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (1999).

5. Statistics on religion in Zambia vary. The CIA World Factbook (2022) gives the same numbers as the Pew Research Center, which originate from the 2010 census, while Paul Gifford in 1998 gave an estimate of '75% Christian, 1% Muslim and 24% traditional believers' (1998:183). Gifford, unfortunately, does not give a source on these data.

Christian minorities (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life 2010:153). In Zambia, ATRs are hardly seen as a viable alternative kind of religious belonging. In the past decades, there has been a marked shift towards neo-Pentecostal Christianity in Zambia, epitomised by the 1991 declaration of the republic's second president, Frederick Chiluba, that Zambia is a Christian nation (Phiri 2003).

◼ The history of Satanism in Zambia

It was in this context of a growing but uncertain economy and a shift towards neo-Pentecostal theology that stories about Satanism started to spread. Satanism in Africa refers to a complex of ideas about the threat of evil, harm, misfortune and unfair success. It is part of an imaginary of evil, and this imaginary presents an opportunity to study the transformations in Zambian society (cf. De Boeck & Plissart 2004:157).

The concept of imaginary refers to the way individuals and societies in a certain place and time see and understand the world. It does not refer to something that exists only in the imagination, something unreal or illusory, as some dictionaries state. The imaginary is what gives things and practices their value and meaning. As Andrew Strathern and Pamela Steward write (2006:6–7), 'people's thoughts about the world often run far beyond its obvious empirical manifestations'. The contents of this 'beyond' come from people's imaginaries. If we hesitate to walk underneath a ladder, it is because we share the cultural convention that doing so brings about bad luck. The world we know is constructed in our minds through the ideas, beliefs, experiences, stories and images that we hear and share with others (Meyer 2015:14–16). Satanism belongs to a Zambian imaginary of how the world works and what can befall one in this world.

But what is this imaginary of Satanism? In this book, I will use the definition that I coined in my dissertation on this topic (Kamps 2018):

> Satanism in Zambia refers to a supposed organization, commanded by Satan, dedicated to bringing evil and harm, especially to Christians. Ex-Satanists claim and/or experience a previous allegiance to this organization. (p. 41)

Satanism is a relatively new phenomenon in the African context, although there are some precursors in American literature, which I will discuss in a later chapter. Early testimonies like Emmanuel Eni's *Delivered from the Powers of Darkness* from 1987 started to appear in the 1980s. Eni describes how he grew up in poverty as an orphan. A former school friend, who was by that time living in Lagos, Nigeria, introduces him to an 'occult' society that promises to make him rich. He makes covenants and is initiated through rituals involving secret altars and human blood, which allows him to travel to a hidden world under the sea, filled with riches and under the dominion of a queen.

This 'Queen of the Coast' commands him to sacrifice relatives and fulfil other assignments. Soon it becomes clear that Eni is serving an even higher lord, namely Lucifer himself.

As Satan's agent, he takes pride in destroying the lives of innocent people, especially Christians. However, he runs into trouble when he meets a prayerful Christian who can counter his powers. It takes a long time, but in the end, Eni is delivered and starts his new life as a born-again Christian, ready to spread the gospel and warn others of the powers of darkness. *Delivered from the Powers of Darkness* became a popular published testimony and can nowadays be downloaded from several websites. Around the same time that Eni wrote his testimony, Evangelist Mukendi, an ex-Satanist from Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo), gave his testimony in churches across central Africa. It was published as *Snatched from Satan's claws* by a Kenyan publisher in 1991 (Koech 2002).

These early examples of testimonies about Satanism found their way to Zambia through the religious channels of international ministries. One Zambian pastor remembers that the first time he heard about Satanism was when Evangelist Mukendi came to tell his story in Zambia in the 1980s. In Zambia, the number of rumours and stories about Satanism started to grow in the 1990s. The testimony of a group of girls from the Copperbelt Province was the first to receive attention from the press in 1997 (Zambia News Online 1997). They confessed that, before they were delivered by a Pentecostal pastor, they had been initiated into Satanism (Udelhoven 2008a:1). It did not take long before testimonies, rumours and accusations became abundant in churches and newspapers.

The most famous Zambian testimony is a privately published tract by Gideon Mulenga Kabila, probably written around 2005. Gideon Kabila writes about his initiation into Satanism and witchcraft by his mother. He gives extensive descriptions of another world, Satan's kingdom. This world is full of factories and universities, where human sacrifices are transformed into consumer goods like clothes and food, and agents of the devil are trained and sent on assignments. Kabila is sent to cause accidents, deaths in hospitals and to disturb church services. Like Emmanuel Eni, in the end, he rejects Satan and becomes a born-again Christian. Kabila was well-known not only for his published testimony but also for his performance at overnight prayers, where he shared his testimony. Kabila passed away in 2017.

Kabila's testimony is not the only account of Satanism in contemporary Zambia, but testimonies are the most important source of information about Satanism in Zambia. In testimonies, people who claim to have been Satanists describe what they did and saw when they were still Satanists, and they also explain how they were delivered and became born-again Christians. Testimonies about Satanism are usually shared in a Christian setting, during a

church service, an all-night prayer meeting or in the Christian media. Testimonies can be anything from a few sentences long to narratives that take several hours or pages to share. Because they are sometimes very extensive, testimonies form the most detailed type of narrative about Satanism. Pamphlets, audio recordings and videos containing testimonies can be bought in churches, purchased in the market or shared with friends. This makes testimonies a widespread source, and details from testimonies seep into other types of narratives as well. However, not every experience of Satanism becomes a testimony. Pastors, Pentecostal as well as mainline, know of many more cases of people struggling with dreams and experiences they understand as satanic.

In contemporary Zambia, one is confronted with the threat of Satan and Satanism everywhere: in schools, hospitals, marketplaces, on the streets and even in churches. Satanism is portrayed as an organisation of evil in which people can be initiated knowingly and unknowingly, willingly and unwillingly. This organisation is believed to operate from an underwater or underground world, which can be accessed in the night through dreams. Once initiated, the Satanists are assigned to cause chaos and sacrifice people. Satanists supposedly sacrifice people through road accidents, fatal diseases like AIDS and unexplained deaths in hospitals. They may also sell you seemingly innocent products that cause harm to health, relationships and business success. For a Satanist, being successful in sacrificing people brings alleged rewards like money, success in business, a house or a car and advancement in the ranks of evil.

◼ Testimonies about Satanism

I started this chapter with a brief vignette of a girl confessing to being a Satanist at an overnight prayer. Many confessions or testimonies of Satanism are much more extensive than the few sentences uttered by the girl. To get a feeling of what is understood as Satanism in Zambia, it is helpful to have a closer look at a slightly longer testimony.[6] In 2013, Grace confessed that she was once a Satanist. Her testimony is one of the many narratives about Satanism shared in contemporary Zambia. Grace is a young woman, perhaps 22 years old. Her father died when she was very young, and in her youth, she lived alternately with her mother in a provincial town and with relatives in the Zambian capital, Lusaka. Like many young adults in Zambia, Grace does not have a job, and things sometimes 'get rough' – meaning that it is hard for her to make ends meet. But Grace looks stylish when I meet her, with a black skirt, a red blouse and matching red earrings. Although her mother does not

6. This testimony was first published in my dissertation (Kamps 2018:32–34).

like her speaking about it, for fear of public opinion, Grace agrees to tell me her story:

> 'I went to live in Lusaka, and when I was there, I had really changed. I became rude to other people. I was not who I used to be. While I was there, I had a dream that I was at a party with friends. They offered me a drink, and I took it. When I drank it, I realised that it was blood. I knew then that I had joined Satanism. After I became a Satanist, they told me I had to kill someone. I tried to kill my aunt, the sister of my mum, but I failed. So instead, I took her child by sending a sickness. At night, they showed me a mirror with the image of the person I wanted to kill. I would stab that image. The next day, after eating, the child started vomiting through the nose. She was taken to hospital, but she died.
>
> 'After that, I advanced in rank. I received control over Eastern Province as a queen. I used to rule over people who have small businesses here, and we would sell satanic products there and at the supermarket. For example, we used foetuses and put them in the half-chicken that is sold there. For the fish, we used babies' hands, and the rice was maggots from the brain of a dead person. We put blood in drinks like Coke. When people would drink it, they would become possessed by demons. We also used symbols in clothing, for example, CK [*i.e. the fashion brand Calvin Klein*]. In the underworld, there are monitors, and everyone who wears these clothes can be observed, so we could tell who is strong in faith and who is weak. In church, we used to send ghost members who would steal the message that the minister is preaching so that the church members cannot remember it, and we used to make people fall asleep.
>
> 'We used to meet at a graveyard, where we would arrive in many cars. Some of these cars were not even cars but coffins or hyenas. If I saw the other Satanists during the day, in the physical, we couldn't talk. We also caused many accidents. We would stand in the middle of the road so that people would try to evade us. A drum nearby would collect the blood of the injured and dead.
>
> 'After some time, I had killed my aunt and her sister, and there were no more family members left to kill. So I took a boyfriend so that I would become pregnant. When the baby was born, I sacrificed that. Then they told me I had to kill my mother. But I failed because she was very prayerful. That was in 2011. Then I was sent to church where a Nigerian pastor was preaching. I was sent there to disturb the service, but I fell and became unconscious. It was late in the afternoon before I regained consciousness. I had 150 demons when I was delivered. Still, sometimes I feel that cars are following me because they are angry that I am delivered now.' (#43, interview with Grace, 08 July 2013)

The details of what Grace told me are horrifying: killing family members, using foetuses and maggots to prepare groceries, becoming pregnant just to sacrifice the baby and so on. And yet, these details are not uncommon in testimonies about Satanism. It is obvious that testimonies build upon each other. Echoes of Gideon Kabila's published testimony are apparent in many

later Zambian testimonies. Grace's remark that the fashion brand CK is somehow related to Satanism is unique to Zambian testimonies and can be traced to Gideon Kabila, who says that CK is an abbreviation for Christian Killer and is used as a symbol on clothes manufactured in the evil underworld kingdom.

Grace's narrative is still relatively short, but it follows the same format as longer testimonies, and it contains the types of imagery that all such testimonies share. This imagery is known from popular African movies and is used in sermons as well. The narrative format of the testimonies of ex-Satanists resembles that of a conversion story: it speaks of an evil past, a turning point and a newfound Christian life. In Grace's testimony, her evil past as a Satanist includes being responsible for the death and misfortune of relatives, innocent shoppers and victims of car accidents. Her deliverance is the turning point that leads her to a life in which she tries to help others avoid similar experiences.

In most of the Zambian testimonies, ex-Satanists narrate visiting an underwater or underground world. In some testimonies, the descriptions of this world are extensive, describing roads, factories and universities. Often a queen named Bella or Cinderella reigns over this alternate world. Most ex-Satanists have an experience of initiation that gives them access to this world. This initiation is seldom a voluntary choice. It often happens unconsciously or unintentionally by taking offered food or drink or by wearing certain clothes. Others say they are initiated by family members. As Satanists, they claim to be responsible for misfortunes like illness, accidents and poverty. They also say they diminish the Christian faith by inducing moral vices like prostitution and cheating and by seducing Christians to show behaviour that is not fitting for strong faith, like sleeping in church or failing to pray and tithe. Drinking or stealing blood is a trope that returns in almost every testimony. To obtain blood, Satanists have to sacrifice family members and strangers. For these actions, they are awarded titles and material rewards. In Grace's testimony, relatively short as it is, most of these common motifs and images are evident.

Between 2012 and 2017, I collected almost 50 testimonies from ex-Satanists. Some are very short, some in the form of hours of audio material. All of these testimonies have contributed to the analyses found in this book. Twelve of these testimonies were very extensive and will be used throughout the book. In the following table, I introduce the storyline of each of these testimonies briefly, both to give a more detailed impression of these narratives about Satanism and as an introduction to the names that will come back time and time again in the book. Two of the ex-Satanists published their testimony under their own names. The other names are pseudonyms.

TABLE 1.1: Overview of the most extensive testimonies.

Names	Overview
Gideon Mulenga Kabila (published testimony, see Kabila n.d. and *How I was set free from Voodoo and witchcraft* 2007)	Gideon is initiated by his mother. After suffering rejection at school, his mother tells him that he belongs to another world. In his sleep, he goes to a place where he makes a covenant with the devil. After this, Gideon receives a black gown and a knife and is told to use the knife for sacrifices. His mother teaches him how to kill, and Gideon advances in rank. After sacrificing 80 people, Gideon becomes the junior assistant to the master for the Eastern, Central and Southern regions. He also receives an education in the underworld. His testimony describes the workings of the underworld in extreme detail. The day after he dreams about Christ, Gideon is assigned to disrupt a religious conference, but when he drops his papers, his degree from the Voodoo School of Witchcraft is picked up by a pastor. He gets thrown out and the police are looking for him. Churches start to pray for Gideon and he starts to long for Jesus. It takes a long time before his deliverance is complete. During this process, he and the pastors who pray for him are attacked by evil forces.
Memory Tembo (#2, Memory Tembo's published testimony, 2010)	Memory is initiated by a friend at school who borrowed a skirt from her. In the night, she finds herself in the ocean, where she becomes a Satanist. Memory receives five powers (causing accidents, not entering a church, resisting, short temper and hiding) and causes much harm using them. After that, she receives jewellery to increase her beauty and to initiate others. She advances in rank and travels to other places. She sacrifices people and receives money for it. She also becomes a director in the department of the hair industry. Eventually, Memory is ordered to sacrifice her mother, but she cannot do it. Memory calls her mother, telling her that she wants to go to a different school because she has been initiated into Satanism here, and if she stays she will sacrifice her mother. Her mother gives her money to come home, where people start to pray for her. Other Satanists fight to get her back and pastors fail to deliver her completely until a prayer group from the Seventh-day Adventist church succeeds.
Grace (#43, interview with Grace, 08 July 2013)	Grace has a boyfriend whose family are Satanists and dreams about taking a drink that initiates her. She sacrifices her niece and becomes the queen of the Eastern Province and ruler over businesses there. She is also assigned to sleep with men, using her gifts of beauty, special walk and irregular periods. Grace is ordered to sacrifice her mother, but she cannot because her mother is prayerful and Grace feels pity for her. She goes to a church with a Nigerian pastor to disturb the service, but she fails and falls unconscious. Grace is delivered of 150 demons. Now she tries to warn, help and encourage others.
Ruth (#42, interview with Ruth, 08 July 2013)	Ruth is initiated by her sister, whom she did not know but who it turns out goes to the same school. She finds a note which says, 'Who will you sacrifice?' and cannot get rid of it. She refuses to sacrifice anyone, but she gets into a promiscuous lifestyle. She receives boots that can teleport her to different places. Ruth's deceased sister warns her not to become like her in a dream. She starts to pray and burns her clothes. It takes multiple pastors to deliver her of 216 demons. Ruth now feels free and clean. She can sleep normally again and experience love for other people.
Chileshe (#39, interview with Chileshe, 06 November 2013)	Chileshe's involvement with Satanism starts when she bumps into a girl at school. After that, she starts dreaming about going to the graveyard and drinking blood. Instead of undergoing deliverance, Chileshe is introduced to the Fingers of Thomas. The meetings encourage her and make her realise that life is important and that she can help others.
Tsitsi (#10a-f, testimony in church and on television, 8-26 February 2015)	One day, her mother takes Tsitsi to a stream to wash. She warns her not to get into the water, but Tsitsi jumps in the river anyway. This river is connected to spiritual beings, and Tsitsi sees it as her initiation. Tsitsi has dreams that she delivers babies. During deliverance, she realises that this is Satanism and that she had a higher rank than the Queen of the Coast. Now she sees that her brothers and sister are unsuccessful in life because of her, and she takes responsibility for deaths and accidents. Tsitsi has a lot of physical problems too and looks for deliverance for 15 years, searching out every new pastor in town. Finally, a pastor manages to deliver her. He becomes her husband.

TABLE 1.1 (cont.): Overview of the most extensive testimonies.

Names	Overview
Charles (#29a-c, Charles's recorded testimony, 2013)	Charles' father is a Satanist, and because he is close to his father, the father tries to sacrifice him. This fails. After his father's death, the father leaves him a stick that has powers. With his father's stick, Charles grows confrontational, bullying boys at school who bother him. Charles is invited to a prayer meeting and resolves to cause confusion there, but he feels out of place and unwelcome and does not manage to do anything. Pastors pray for Charles, and he stays with them for two weeks. All the time, he sees his father telling him not to listen to the pastors. Eventually, he tells one of the pastors, and pastors that are even more powerful are invited to pray for him. In the end, he is delivered and becomes born again.
David (#31a-j, David's recorded testimony, 2013)	David is a businessman who wants more success. He asks a friend how he became rich, and they go on a journey together. During this journey, they enter an underwater world where David is initiated. David is ordered to sacrifice his mother or his father. He has bad feelings surrounding his father and sacrifices him. After that, he receives money to improve his business and it becomes a success. He marries but is ordered to sacrifice his wife. He starts another business providing wedding supplies and disturbs many marriages that way. David marries again and is ordered again to sacrifice his wife. This time he refuses and starts to look for deliverance. Because he does not want to sacrifice his wife, he finds a pastor who delivers him.
Eve (#37a-c, Eve's recorded testimony, 2013)	Eve has strange dreams about eating human flesh but only realises this is Satanism when she undergoes deliverance. Later, she says that her mother was probably already initiated. Eve is convinced she has special powers that enable her to control people. Her task is to cast spells of lust, causing Christian men to sleep around, though not with her because she is already married to the devil in the underworld. Eve realises that she is a Satanist when people start praying for her. They pray for her because her behaviour is odd: she likes to be by herself and is too quiet. Her deliverance takes time and multiple pastors. Now, she feels free and at peace. She loves herself and loves working for God.
Naomi (#41a-e, Naomi's recorded testimony, 2011 and 2012)	Naomi is initiated at school through the food she receives. She sacrifices her friends and becomes a specialist in causing accidents with a set of buttons she receives in the underworld. As a reward, she receives the promise of wealth and is called a princess. Naomi is ordered to sacrifice her mother and sister, whom she loves very much. She cannot do it. For this, she is tortured in the underworld and things get difficult in the physical world. Pastors also start to pray for her, and they burn her clothes. Naomi is delivered of 272 demons.
Mphatso (#44i, Mphatso's recorded testimony, 2013)	Mphatso's grandmother takes him to a satanic church in Lilongwe (Malawi) and under the ocean. Mphatso sacrifices his father, mother and older sister and receives bags of money and a position as a director of companies in the underworld in return. Mphatso is ordered to sacrifice his younger sister, but he cannot because he loves her. He turns mad after this. Pentecostal pastors pray for him, but Mphatso keeps hearing the voices of his parents and grandmother. Finally, he travels to Zambia to find deliverance. Mphatso says that now he is free and happy and ready to start working for the Lord.

A great majority of those who give their testimonies are adolescents, between 15- and 25-years-old, and most of them are girls. Only two of the testimonies I have collected (including David's in Table 1.1) are from adult men who describe becoming involved with Satanism as adults. Tsitsi is an adult woman in her 30s when she starts sharing her testimony, but she mainly describes things that happened in her youth.

■ Rumours and gossip about Satanism

Like testimonies, which are presented as first-hand experiences, rumours and gossip about Satanism abound in Zambia. Rumours are second-hand accounts, shared as something that happened somewhere, maybe to a friend of a friend. Rumours are short and do not have a clear, chronologically constructed plot. A rumour can be one sentence long, something like, 'Have you heard that this is the house that Satanists are using?' Rumours are shared between friends in person or online, in private and public groups. They are known in a wide, often transnational geographical area. Like rumours, gossip generally consists of short accounts without a clear storyline. Unlike rumours, gossip refers to people known to those who are sharing it. Gossip is often malicious and can be analysed in terms of interpersonal conflict. 'Have you heard that our teacher is a Satanist?' is an example of gossip. The idea of an organisation of evil Satanists out to harm people also seems similar to conspiracy theories about nefarious groups.

The many rumours and stories about Satanism caused a moral panic in Zambia, which peaked around 2007. By this time, many new cases of Satanism were discovered on a regular basis. Some schools, especially boarding schools, experienced panics that caused concern amongst parents, teachers and pupils, sometimes leading to the suspension of classes and the dismissal of teachers (Udelhoven 2008a). Since the first decade of the 21st century, the intensity of the panic has abated, but pastors who are known for their involvement with these cases still find new incidences of Satanism.

Surprisingly, rumours about Satanism are often connected to adults rather than adolescents. Politicians, pastors and businessmen are often thought to have a connection to Satanism because Satanism is thought to make one wealthy and help to acquire status. Sporadically, accusations of involvement in Satanism made against new churches or local businessmen lead to violence (cf. Kroesbergen-Kamps 2014). For example, riots erupted in 2013 in the provincial town of Katete after a schoolgirl was found murdered. The mob quickly decided that an ethnic Indian businessman had sacrificed her in a satanic ritual, and rumours spread that the businessman was found with a cooler box holding her body parts. Angry villagers threw stones and looted shops in the town's business district. Although most rumours do not lead to violence, they can still disturb everyday life. A growing body of academic literature describes the unwillingness of Zambians to take part in medical trials because they fear that their blood will be used in rituals and that they will be initiated into Satanism by participating (see e.g. Geisler & Pool 2006; Kingori et al. 2010; Peeters Grietens et al. 2014; Schumaker & Bond 2008).

Testimonies, rumours and gossip may all become input for the media. Zambian newspapers publish extracts from testimonies and report about rumours and gossip if these concern famous persons or if they cause riots or

other unrest. In recent years, rumours about Satanism reported in the media have often been directed at politicians and government officials. Since a Member of Parliament in 2011 during a church service confessed to having been a Satanist – he was sacked shortly after that – stories about satanic politicians became quite common in the media. Both the then ruling party, the Patriotic Front (PF), and the most vocal opposition leader, Hakainde Hichilema from the United Party for National Development (UPND), have been associated with Satanism in the press by adherents of the opposing party, especially during the political struggles for power after President Michael Sata's death in 2014.

◼ The Fingers of Thomas

The narratives about Satanism in testimonies, rumours and gossip have led to concerns in many churches. Some churches are eager to give a platform for ex-Satanists to share their story, but others have been more hesitant. In 2007, the Roman Catholic Faith and Encounter Centre Zambia (FENZA in short) decided to establish a think tank to make investigations into the phenomenon of Satanism. Bernhard Udelhoven describes the development of this group (2008b). Priests, sisters and pastoral workers met to discuss this phenomenon. This think tank was soon joined by a group of youths from Lusaka's Regiment Parish, who had started to investigate the phenomenon when some of their friends had experiences with Satanism. When the youths and the clergy came together at a seminar, they decided to discuss and follow up on cases together. The group called itself the Fingers of Thomas, referring to the biblical story of the disciple Thomas who felt the need to touch the wounds of Christ when he appeared to him and the other disciples after his resurrection. Like the doubting Thomas, the Fingers want to find out for themselves if the stories they hear about Satanism are true or not and how they should be handled (Udelhoven 2008b).

The Fingers of Thomas collected many narratives about Satanism and developed, under the guidance of Bernhard Udelhoven, a pastoral approach to the issue (Udelhoven 2010a). Many Zambian Christians are afraid that they or their children may be affected by Satanism. These fears are enforced by the attention given to testimonies in certain churches and on radio and television programs. Christians expect the church to respond to their fears with spiritual help and liberation. The Fingers of Thomas are not part of the charismatic movement in the Catholic Church and wanted an approach that did not focus on the forces of the devil while not denying the experiences of Satanism that they encountered either. They see Satanism (as well as possession and witchcraft) as a cry for help that needs to be addressed pastorally.

In *Unseen worlds: Dealing with spirits, witchcraft, and Satanism*, Udelhoven (2021) extensively describes the approach of the Fingers of Thomas. A shorter

document, 'A ten-step pastoral approach to Satanism in Zambia' (2010a), can be found on the FENZA website. The approach of the Fingers of Thomas is to take people's experiences seriously (Kroesbergen-Kamps 2018). They listen to their stories without interpreting or judging them. Prayer forms an important part of the pastoral approach of Udelhoven and the Fingers. Udelhoven realises that some people may need dramatic forms of prayer like those provided by the charismatic priests, but he emphasises that other, more restrained ways of bringing fears before God are appropriate as well (2010a:4).

In their practice, the Fingers of Thomas make a distinction between the inner world and the outer world (Udelhoven 2010a, 2021:147–167). The outer world is the world that everyone can see and touch. Experiences of Satanism may go hand in hand with problems in the outer world, such as problems at home or school. When dealing with cases of Satanism, these problems should be addressed, for example, by helping youths to get back to school. The Fingers of Thomas also highlight the importance of working on relationships within the family and community. Experiences of Satanism often coincide with strained relationships, and the Fingers advise family therapy to deal with these issues. The inner world, on the other hand, is a world of dreams and personal experiences that others cannot share. Many experiences of Satanism occur in this inner world. This inner world can be addressed through prayer but also through other means of strengthening the Christian faith. Faith in God and God's goodness helps to overcome fears of other powers. For the Fingers of Thomas, the inner and the outer world are both real, but each needs to be addressed in its own way. Every year, the Fingers of Thomas give several workshops about their approach at Catholic parishes in both rural and urban areas and at educational institutions.

In my research, the Fingers of Thomas were an important source of narratives about Satanism. I joined their weekly meetings to discuss new cases and went with them to a workshop. Where the approach of the Fingers is pastoral, centred on helping those who have experiences of Satanism, my approach to the phenomenon of Satanism is more academic. I want to understand what makes people receptive to narratives about Satanism rather than help them with their fears of Satanism and anxious experiences of Satan's power in their lives.

■ Satanism in academic scholarship

There are academic studies that mention Satanism in Africa, but placing this Satanism within the global context of the study of Satanism is practically unheard of. Vice versa, within the upcoming field of the academic study of Satanism, Africa is not a topic that is given much, if any, attention. In this study, I fill these gaps by taking the academic study of Satanism as my starting point and important frame of reference.

This section starts with the distinction between Satanism and anti-Satanism made in the academic literature, which will then be applied to the narratives about Satanism in Zambia. Anti-Satanism forms a part of the wider genre of collective narratives about evil Others. The history of this genre, its characteristics and the relationship of these narratives to society will subsequently be introduced. If Satanism in Zambia is interpreted as a narrative about evil Others, what does that mean for the truth claims embedded in such narratives? This question is central in the final part of this section.

◼ Satanism and anti-Satanism

Satanism is and has long been a contested term. Since the early 2000s, scholars working in the field of Satanism studies have tried to find a proper way to use the term Satanism. In his social history of Satanism, Massimo Introvigne (2016) defines it as follows:

> Satanism is (1) the worship of the character identified with the name of Satan or Lucifer in the Bible, (2) by organized groups with at least a minimal organization and hierarchy, and (3) through ritual or liturgical practices. (p. 3)

This definition encompasses various forms of Satanism as an alternative religious or ideological movement, such as the well-known Church of Satan founded by Anton LaVey in the 1960s. Often, these religious Satanists emphasise individual freedom, hedonism and a non-conformist lifestyle.

The Satanism of these religious and ideological groups has little relation to the Christian image of the devil. In the history of Christianity, various groups have been labelled as devil worshipers, like the Cathars, a religious community that did not follow an orthodox interpretation of Christianity, and the witches who were persecuted in the 16th and 17th centuries in Europe. These groups did not see themselves as Satanists but were labelled as such from the Christian perspective of their persecutors.

To distinguish accusations of Satanism from Satanism as a religion or ideology, most academic writers make a distinction in different terms between Satanism according to those groups and individuals who see themselves as Satanists and Satanism as it is seen by outsiders. Satanism, used as a label by outsiders, is referred to as the 'discourse on the satanic' (Dyrendal, Lewis & Petersen 2016:3) or as 'discourses about Satanism' (Harvey 2009:27). These discourses attribute Satanism to individuals or groups (Van Luijk 2016:13), portraying them as subversive or dangerous Others (Petersen 2011:16–18) and demonising them (Dyrendal et al. 2016:3). Often the discourse on the satanic claims to discern the true and not immediately obvious nature of the groups labelled as satanic (Van Luijk 2016:2). When a Christian preacher in a sermon refers to certain people as 'satanic' or even 'Satanists', this is often an example of the discourse on the satanic. This discourse is generally negative in its tone

and evaluation of Satanism and can therefore also be called 'anti-Satanism' (Introvigne 2016:11–17).

On the other hand, the ideas of groups and individuals who see themselves as Satanists are referred to as 'satanic discourse' and seen as providing a positive, non-Christian identity (Dyrendal et al. 2016:3). Satanic discourse includes what is labelled as contemporary religious Satanism (Petersen 2016) and other forms of self-identified (Harvey 2009:27) or self-declared (Petersen 2011:73–74) Satanism.

Discourse on the satanic and satanic discourse or, in other words, anti-Satanism and Satanism, are in constant reciprocity. According to Introvigne (2016:12–17), Satanist movements emerge from an occult subculture and are subsequently rejected and demonised by the dominant religion and culture. This rejection becomes so exaggerated that it loses credibility, thereby creating space for new Satanist movements. In this way, the social history of Satanism swings like a pendulum from Satanism to anti-Satanism.

The Dutch historian of religion Ruben van Luijk has a slightly different perspective on this reciprocity, giving primacy to anti-Satanism instead of Satanism (2016:62). According to Van Luijk, the idea of Satanism has its roots in the imaginary of Satan, the Christian devil. Long before there were any self-proclaimed Satanist groups, Christians identified certain individuals or groups as playing on the devil's team. Therefore, in Van Luijk's words, 'the *concept* of Satanism predated the practice of venerating Satan itself' (2016:61; [*emphasis in original*]). This concept of Satanism, or this anti-Satanist discourse, did inspire later groups to practice religious Satanism, according to Van Luijk.

Making the distinction between Satanism and anti-Satanism, or satanic discourse and discourse on the satanic, is very useful as these two are confused in some discussions of Satanism in Africa. In his dissertation on the prevalence of Satanism in the Kabwe district, for example, Joseph Hachintu lists the following keywords (2013:vi): 'Black magic; Church of Satan; demonology; devil worship; [...] modern Satanism; occult religion; ritual murder; [...] Satanic Bible; satanic scare; Satanism; serial killer'. From this combination of keywords and their treatment in Hachintu's work, it is clear that no distinction is made between the discourse on the satanic and satanic discourse. Keywords like black magic, occult religion, ritual murder and serial killer are examples of ascriptions to groups and individuals, while the Church of Satan, Modern Satanism and the Satanic Bible form a part of the satanic discourse. Such an outright confusion of perspectives should be avoided.

Should Satanism in Zambia be classified as satanic discourse or discourse on the satanic? Ex-Satanists do identify themselves as Satanists, albeit in the past. So should they be labelled as Satanists because they self-identify as such or as anti-Satanists because the point of their testimony is showing how

they were delivered from the devil's hold? What is described in stories about Satanism in Zambia is far from the forms of religious Satanism known in Europe and the United States of America (USA). Testimonies like Grace's show no similarities to the practices and doctrines of groups like the Church of Satan. Although Grace feels dedicated to Satan, it is not clear from her testimony whether this is of her own volition and whether her relation to Satan can be described as worship. The Satanism that Grace describes in her testimony happens through dreams, and there is no evidence of an organised group of Satanists beyond this spiritual world. The fact that testimonies are predominantly given in Christian churches points to a discourse on the satanic, a form of anti-Satanism. Furthermore, Satanism in Zambian experiences is never a positive and affirming religious choice. Rather, the testimonies give a negative evaluation of Satanism, portraying it as dangerous and subversive. Even though the ex-Satanists self-identify as Satanists, their testimonies are of an anti-Satanist nature.[7]

There exists a long tradition of anti-Satanist narratives, which has been studied extensively by historians, sociologists and anthropologists. As this narrative perspective on anti-Satanism will be an important framework for analysing the stories about Satanism in Zambia, I will introduce this perspective here in more detail.

■ Collective narratives about evil others

There are many collective narratives, like the stories about Satanism, that are about an evil force, often personified as a specific individual or group, which affects the world and causes problems. Collective narratives are narratives that are shared by groups of people. Narratives about Satanism are an example of such collective narratives. They are shared as testimonies, rumours, legends and conspiracy theories, and they spread through the *radio trottoir*, literally 'pavement radio', the rumour mills that abound in African cities (Ellis 1989:321).

The genre of narratives about a group of people who are, often in secret, harming society and its values is very old. In his seminal work *Europe's Inner Demons*, historian Norman Cohn (1976) traces a strikingly similar story throughout Europe's history. The story claims that there is a group of people who secretly come together for debauched rituals that include sexual perversion, human sacrifice and the heretical worship of a deviant god.

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7. One could also say that during the process of deliverance, when a person had become aware of their allegiance to Satan, their experience should rightfully be called Satanism, even though it is a different kind of Satanism than is known in the West. However, for me, the Christian context of this experience is predominant. Since there already is so much confusion around the label Satanism, I think it is important to state clearly that the type of Satanism in Zambia that I discuss here forms part of an anti-Satanist discourse.

The first group to be connected to this narrative were the Christians of the early church in the first and second centuries CE. Cohn cites a Christian source that describes the pagan opinion about Christianity (1976:1). The Christians were believed to worship a god with the face of a donkey. New initiates had to stab a child covered in dough, who was then feasted upon. At these feasts, orgies would take place in which fathers and daughters, sisters and brothers and mothers and sons would have intercourse. All of these acts happened in secret, and the pagan commenter notes (in Cohn 1976:1), 'precisely the secrecy of this evil religion proves that all these things, or practically all, are true'.

A secret, evil religion that practices abominable rituals and threatens the wider society: this is a motif that recurs over and over again in rumours and narratives in Western society. When Christianity eventually became an accepted religion, medieval Christians started spreading the same story about other groups, like Jewish people or heretics such as the Cathars. The most enduring subjects of this narrative, however, were witches. Cohn describes how folkloric beliefs about the existence of people with special powers who could use these to harm were combined with more elitist theological notions of devil worship. Like the Christians, Jewish people and heretics before them, witches were accused of incestuous orgies, infanticide and cannibalism. The combination of rural fears with the bureaucratic organisation of the church formed the fertile ground for the witch hunts of the 16th and 17th centuries.

But even after the witch craze had died down, the narrative of an evil organisation did not disappear. In his social history of Satanism, Massimo Introvigne (2016) describes how the changes in society after the French Revolution were sometimes ascribed to a secret cabal of Satanists. In the colonies that later would become the United States, the idea that the indigenous inhabitants of North America worshiped Satan and possibly sacrificed children was widespread (Walker 2013:26–32). Early in the 19th century, Catholics were a favourite subject of the narrative of an evil organisation. Books like Maria Monk's *Awful Disclosures* (1836) portrayed nunneries as brothels where nuns participated in orgies and killed any offspring that might ensue from these activities (Walker 2013:32).

More well-known and far-reaching are the accusations of Satanism against Freemasons in Europe at the end of the 19th century. Introvigne (2016:158–226) describes how in *La Diable au 19e Siècle*, an exposé that was published in monthly installments, the author, later revealed to be Leo Taxil, presents himself as an eyewitness of a satanic conspiracy within European Freemasonry. Taxil recounts shocking rituals in which Satan is worshiped and gives almost pornographic descriptions of the orgies that coincide with these rituals in Freemasonry.

In the 20th century, similar accounts of an evil organisation that not only threatens to harm or overthrow society as we know it but also participates in

rituals that involve sexual perversities, cannibalism and infanticide were related to different groups. Testimonies of Satanism started to spring up in the USA in the 1970s. The biggest impact was made by the so-called 'Satanic panic' or 'Satanism scare' of the 1980s and 1990s, in which an important element was the organised ritual abuse of children in childcare and preschools, an idea that was combined with the notion of a satanic conspiracy. As contemporary narratives show – for example, the Pizzagate conspiracy, in which Hillary Clinton, amongst others, is thought to be part of a satanic organisation that ritually abuses children – the fear of the evil Other still lives on.

The broad strokes of the narrative are well-known in contemporary society. One does not have to be a survivor of satanic abuse to be able to describe what happens during a satanic ritual. In his book on the American fascination with the devil, W. Scott Poole writes (2009):

> Beliefs about the devil for the average American might come from sources as diverse as serious theological works, stories related by a Pentecostal grandmother, a viewing of *The Exorcist*, a stray passage heard from the Bible, or some well- and oft-told urban legend. (p. 5)

Especially Hollywood movies act as an important source of information about the activities of the evil organisation, for example, in productions like *The Exorcist* (1977), *The Omen* (1976) and *Rosemary's Baby* (1968).

☐ Characteristics of the narrative

In this brief and incomplete overview, narratives that involve organisations of evil Others are striking both in their similarities and their diversity. Many authors have noted the similarities between these historical narratives. Norman Cohn calls it a collective fantasy with a deeper meaning (1976:ix, 12). The word fantasy, however, implies that what is imagined is impossible or improbable, whereas to the people who share these narratives, the existence of the evil group is not at all improbable. Bill Ellis suggests using the term 'mythology' for global narratives accepted on faith (2000:5). More specifically centred on the narrative of an evil group, David Frankfurter prefers the concept of a myth of evil conspiracy, using the word myth to denote a master narrative rather than a false belief (2006:5). Phillips Stevens, Jr speaks about demonology or an 'ideology of evil, an elaborate body of belief about an evil force that is inexorably undermining society's most cherished values and institutions' (1991:21). As already mentioned in the introduction, I use the phrase 'collective narratives about evil Others' to refer to this body of beliefs and narratives.

Whatever we call this overarching narrative, it has some recurring characteristics over the centuries, a pattern that is continued throughout these narratives. Frankfurter (2006) sums up:

[S]omething' about abducted and abused or sacrificed children, 'something' about a secret counter-religion bent on corruption and atrocity, 'something' about people whose inclinations and habits show them to be not quite people. (p. 5)

The same characteristics are mentioned again and again: the secret organisation is out to harm the values of society, and its nefariousness is nowhere clearer than in the descriptions of the rituals ascribed to this organisation, which entails the worship of a deviant god (since the Middle Ages generally depicted as Satan), human sacrifice, often of children, cannibalism and sexual acts that are not condoned by society.

A striking feature of these collective narratives about evil forces is that they tend to make use of inversion to show the otherness of the evil described in the narrative (see e.g. Bromley 1991:58; Clark 1997:9; Frankfurter 2006:129–167). The narratives create the image of an Other who is an inversion of everything that we value as good and appropriate. From an analytical perspective, all these different Others are portrayed similarly: as inverted versions of the standards of our society. For these Others, everything is upside-down. For example, it is not a loving God who reigns, but the lord of evil, Satan. The rituals his followers perform are debased mirror images of common acts of worship. These Others do not look after children, but instead kill them, eating their flesh and drinking their blood.

Stories about Satanism show a similar kind of inversion. In Gideon Mulenga Kabila's video testimony, this is quite clear. He says (*How I was set free from Voodoo and witchcraft* 2007):

A Satanist is a person who worships Satan. Like Christianity means Christ-like, Satanism is a person who is like Satan. How can a person be like Satan? A person is like Satan when he begins to do things that Satan does: telling lies, gossiping, serial killers that kill people, adultery – a lot of sins that are happening. All those sins, when a person is doing that, he is representing Satan. He is helping Satan to do his assignment. (n.p.)

The Satanist, according to Gideon Mulenga Kabila, is an upside-down Christian, who does everything that a good Christian should not do. Instead of loving and worshipping God, the Satanist loves the devil. Instead of being filled with the Holy Spirit, the Satanist is filled with demons. Elsewhere, Gideon Mulenga Kabila (n.d.:37) writes that he was equipped with 10 000 demons, and others also mention being possessed by large numbers of demons. Stephen Ellis and Gerrie ter Haar (2004:52) also note this inversion of reality in stories about Satanism when they write, 'the invisible world is a mirror of the visible one, an accurate reflection except that everything is the wrong way around'.

The Satanists not only embody this inverted role model, but they also try to bring Christians to their side by causing contrary behaviour in them. Those who are under the influence of Satanists will show a lack of seriousness towards their faith. I will give some examples of this. 'People, when they come

at church, they'll be not listening to what the preacher is teaching. They will just be sharing stories where they are sitting at the back', one ex-Satanist says about the disturbance she caused in the church (#53c, Taiba's recorded testimony, 2013). Causing children to cry is a further cause of distraction. Making church members fall asleep during the service is another thing that several ex-Satanists claim to have caused. Even if the congregation is paying attention, the words of the preacher may still not reach them. Grace, the ex-Satanist introduced in this chapter, narrates how Satanists steal the message of the preacher so that his audience will not hear it (#43, interview with Grace, 08 July 2013). Causing confusion in the church is another common task for Satanists. In Zambia, confusion is a word with exceedingly negative connotations that is generally used as a synonym for conflict or strife (cf. Haynes 2015:282). In all of these ways, Satanists are making Christians less Christian.

Another way in which Satanists try to worsen the behaviour of Christians is by attacking their marriages and encouraging promiscuity. Sometimes this is done by seducing Christian husbands, but more often by causing them to desire other women. Ex-Satanist Naomi narrates: 'I belonged to a group [whose] assignment was to cast spells of lust […] so that men can be sleeping around, not with me, but with other people' (#41a, Naomi's recorded interview, 2011). David, one of the few male ex-Satanists, says he became head of the department of destroying marriages in the underworld by setting up a business in wedding supplies. From wedding dresses and suits to rings and decorations, everything in his business was connected to the devil and dangerous for whoever used it. For example, the wedding rings:

> Those rings, once you put them on, you will find that they will change your behaviour. You start behaving badly, which both of them won't like. 'I hate the way my husband behaves; I hate the way […]' Just because of that same ring. They will put on a spell, a spirit of that you just start behaving badly. (#31b, David's recorded testimony, 2013)

The opposite of a Christian, loving marriage here is a promiscuous life combined with the disappearance of love within the marriage. By changing the behaviour of their victims, satanic products like wedding rings cause the inversion of Zambian Christians.

As inverted stories about evil Others, Zambian narratives about Satanism fit into a long tradition of similar narratives. For some, the similarities between these narratives are evidence that this evil organisation must exist and is very old and powerful. They speak about transgenerational satanic cults forming a tightly organised, international underground that may have existed over a long time (cf. Petersen 2005:441). However, in this history of narratives about organisations of evil Others, it is clear that it is not just one group or organisation that is accused. The accused range from Christians, Jewish people, witches and Catholics to Freemasons. This is not the history of one group that has

existed for centuries, working on their nefarious goals and practices. Rather, it is the history of one narrative with certain shared characteristics, which is attached to one group and then to another. Where such narratives appear, we should not only focus on the truth of the matter but, first and foremost, look for their meaning and function (cf. Verrips 1991:20).

To give an analogy, if children from several generations are afraid of a bogeyman, this is not evidence that this bogeyman exists. It is evidence of the fact that children are prone to be afraid of things that go bump in the night. In a similar vein, the recurrence of a story about devil worship, cannibalism, infanticide and sexual perversities does not mean that an organisation that practises these things truly exists. There must be other ways to explain the popularity of such a narrative. What are the bumps in the night that the narrators of such stories are afraid of?

◼ Evil Others and society

Scholars have given several interpretations of the meanings of collective narratives about evil Others, some of a more psychological nature and some more focused on the context of the society. An important approach is the role of the Other in the formation of identities. Narratives about an evil organisation have at their core the image of an Other. The Other is just that: not us and not like us. The Other in these narratives is an inversion of everything that we value as good and proper. How a particular society defines this Other depends on how they define themselves and how they see their identity. One could say that every society needs the Other to affirm its own identity. I will explain this process.

Imagine a society, community or group of people. We will call them group A. Group A has certain ideas, values and beliefs about what is proper. They have established what the right behaviour is, what is the right way to dress, what one can and cannot eat, how to perform religious rituals, etc. Protecting life and taking care of children are widely, maybe even universally, shared values. Rules about what to eat or how to dress, about proper sexual conduct and about how to believe may vary from one group to another. Our group A also knows that other groups exist. One of these groups is group B. From the perspective of group A, group B is everything that they are not. Group A knows what is right, and group B is all wrong. Instead of protecting life, they murder without care. Instead of caring for children, they harm them. They may indeed eat them. Their sexual acts are perversities. Instead of honouring God, they worship the devil. To group A, group B is inhumane, probably even inhuman.

Pairs of groups A and B are frequently found in history. For the Romans in the first and second centuries CE, the Christians were a group B. For Christians in the Middle Ages, heretics and witches formed group Bs. For early Protestant

colonists in North America, both the indigenous population of the land and Roman Catholics were examples of the evil group B. In contemporary Western society, an underground network of child-abusing Satanists is an example of group B.

Any group can be group A, and any group can become group B in the minds of others. As the Other exists mainly in the minds of group A, as an image of inversion of that society's standards, group B does not have to be an existing group. Some of the groups identified as the Other did exist, like Christians, Jews or Roman Catholics, but their way of life is so distorted in their casting as the Other that it has become unrecognisable. The actual existence of other groups, like witches and the satanic conspiracy, is doubted.

Imagining a clearly defined outgroup, a group that is different from one's own because of its religion, ethnicity or social position, may reinforce the identity and cohesion of a community (Koschorke 2012:243). The definitions of the community and the Other – group A and group B – are dependent on each other. Narratives about an evil Other bolster the identity of a group by making clear what the boundaries are between us and them, good and evil. Sketching a coherent picture of the Other reinforces the norms of the community itself (cf. Steward & Strathern 2004:37). Having a common enemy, furthermore, strengthens the ties within the community (cf. Campion-Vincent 2005:103).

Narratives about evil Others enhance the sense of common identity within the group in which these narratives are shared. Historians, anthropologists and sociologists have noted that these narratives often gain in popularity if the identity of a group is under threat. During times when people feel there is something wrong in society, that things are changing too fast, that they are frustrated with institutions and authority figures, the narratives about a conspiracy of evil Others start to gain traction.

This is a point of overlap between these stories about evil others, conspiracy theories and rumours in general. Rumours have been called 'improvised news' (Shibutani 1966). Often, rumours start after an event that disturbs the daily routine or something that may have far-reaching consequences. When such an event happens, there is a growing demand for news about the event. The more important, disturbing or consequential the event is perceived to be, the greater the demand for news concerning the event (Shibutani in Turner 1993:46, 80). If this demand for news exceeds the supply, rumours are bound to arise. In this situation where people want news but they do not receive it, they turn to each other to come up with theories about the event and about how to respond to it (Fine & Ellis 2010:7). In the absence of news, people improvise their own – and this is what we call rumour. In this process of improvisation, shared beliefs such as the images of outgroups are drawn upon.

If in the development of rumours, there is often a specific local event that acts as a catalyst, such an event is harder to pinpoint in the development of conspiracy theories and narratives of evil Others. Conspiracy theories deal with large-scale socio-political developments (Byford 2011:21), such as rapid social changes that make people question existing power structures and norms of conduct (Van Prooijen & Douglas 2017:324). Conspiracy theories explain these developments and thereby reduce their complexity. This has the effect of containing the uncertainty that changes in society generate and translating unspecified anxieties into focused fears (Franks, Bangerter & Bauer 2013:1). One could say that the development of conspiracy theories is a coping mechanism to deal with societal change (p. 2). Narratives about evil Others have a lot in common with conspiracy theories, and scholars have explained the rise of these narratives in a similar way. According to Phillips Stevens Jr. (1991), these narratives:

> [/]nvariably develop in times of intense, prolonged social anxiety, times when a significant proportion of people who share cultural values have come to feel that they are being let down or ignored by the social or governmental institutions that they have always supported and in which they have placed their trust. Something is seriously wrong in society, and they are feeling increasingly helpless. (p. 21)

When people feel that things are bad in society, stories about evil Others start to spring up.

According to some, these stories might bring some solace. In these narratives, the undefined anxiety that permeates society gets a name and often a face as well. This process has been called the 'Rumpelstiltskin principle' (Ellis 2000:xvii). Like the imp Rumpelstiltskin in the well-known fairy tale, a situation is disarmed when it is named and given a place in the web of stories that underlies our view of the world.

Others have argued that in collective narratives about evil forces, people are reminded of the norms of their society, and in this way, these norms are strengthened (cf. Clark 1997:27). By presenting audiences with a counter-narrative that presents a group that is everything that their society is not, these audiences are prompted to recall their values and once more embrace them.

A final theory on the relation between narratives about evil Others and society holds that imaging the inversions may also offer audiences a safe place to imagine and experience suppressed desires and feelings. Repressed desires and impulses can be experienced safely by hearing the narrative of someone who has embodied the evil Other, for example, through the testimony of an apostate or ex-member of this purported group (cf. Frankfurter 2006:136). According to David Frankfurter (2006):

> [R]epresentations of inversion […] provide opportunities to fantasise transgressive delights (or 'worst possible behaviour') in a form that is safely relegated to a realm

of evil: 'It is not me who has these thoughts; it is the demons who put in my mind what they do habitually' or 'it is the witches or Satanists who I saw really doing such things.' (p. 158)

It seems that each time deserves its own story. Sometimes Hollywood bombards us with superheroes and, at other times, serial killers, aliens or a vision of a post-apocalyptic future. A similar thing happens with the stories that people tell each other, in rumours, legends or conspiracy theories. Different times have different recurring plots. As I have argued, these narratives develop as a response to certain social circumstances. The plots of these stories resonate with the lived experience of their audiences. In this study, I investigate the lived experiences of Zambians that resonate with narratives about Satanism.

■ Satanism and reality

Collective narratives about evil forces like rumours, legends and conspiracy theories share some characteristics. Rumours are short, generalised statements, whereas legends are more detailed narrative accounts of events, and conspiracy theories focus on a hidden plot behind the events, but they all are narratives that people share. In most cases, these collective narratives entail truth claims, meaning that they claim that certain events did happen or were caused by a certain phenomenon. The truth claims of rumours, legends and conspiracy theories are equally highly debated. They are 'stories believed to be true' (Ellis 2003:xiii) rather than true stories.

In recent years, however, the focus has shifted from debunking these narratives to finding out what their meaning is in the settings in which they are shared. In an overview of the developments in the field of folklore studies since the 1970s, folklorist Bill Ellis, for example, describes how the interest changed from stories believed to be traditional and possibly even backwards, to the process of storytelling and its relevance (2003:xiii–xv). A similar development can be recognised in the study of conspiracy theories. For some, a central element of conspiracy theories is that they are spread because of crippled epistemology (Sustein & Vermeule 2009:211–212). But there is also a tendency to word this more cautiously, for example, by speaking of the 'special knowledge' of conspiracy theories (Asprem, Robertson & Dyrendal 2018:26–27) or 'stigmatized knowledge' (Barkun 2003:26–27), meaning that their truth claims are not necessarily wrong but marginalised by established institutions of knowledge.

In African narratives about witches, vampires, Satanists and similar figures, the question of whether these stories are true is hardly ever asked. Until the 1970s, it was clear to anthropologists that narratives about witches could not be true. Evans-Pritchard (1937:63), for example, writes, 'witches, as the Azande conceive them, clearly cannot exist', and Max Marwick (1952:216) labels the

belief in witchcraft as 'structurally related, standardized delusions'. Beyond the study of anthropology, stories about witches and other evil agents were disregarded. As Luise White (2000) states in her book about vampire beliefs in Eastern Africa:

> To European officials, these stories were proof of African superstition [...] It was yet another groundless African belief, the details of which were not worth the recall of officials and observers. (p. 14)

At the end of the 20th century, the interest in these stories grew again amongst anthropologists working in Africa. The new position was that witches may or may not be real, but for the study of witchcraft, this does not matter. In a collection of anthropological and philosophical reflections on witchcraft in Africa, George Clement Bond and Diane M. Ciekawy (2001:6) write, 'whether witches do or do not exist is unimportant, the relevant issue is that people believe that they do'. As, according to this position, it does not matter whether witches truly exist, the issue of reality is still rarely discussed in the contemporary anthropological literature on witchcraft and similar phenomena. The narratives and accusations related to these phenomena are taken as interesting topics for research in themselves, irrespective of whether they refer to an external reality or not. Stories like the stories about Satanism in Zambia are shared because they are seen to be relevant and address a social problem that urgently needs attention (cf. Ellis 2003:xiii–xiv).

Does that mean that Satanism in Zambia is no more than a mirage? In the literature on Satanism, a third form of Satanism is mentioned, namely folk Satanism. Loosely organised groups of criminals or adolescents take ideas about Satanism that are present in society and enact them. The result is 'a version of Satanism reduced to some hardly recognisable elements of it' (Introvigne 2016:8). Examples are criminal organisations, like 19th-century highway robbers in Sweden and a 20th-century criminal gang in Matamoros, Mexico, who find inspiration for their criminal activities in Satan's evil, and groups of rebellious youths who identify with the counter-cultural appeal of devil worship. Both have in the past been associated with actual murders. In folk Satanism, anti-Satanist narratives are embodied by real people.

A similar thing may happen in Zambia. Although organised religious Satanism seems to be absent in Zambia (Udelhoven 2017a), the ideas about Satanism that are spread in anti-Satanist testimonies and other narratives may give some individuals the idea to develop Satanism as a religious practice. People do seem to be interested in joining a Satanist group. The Fingers of Thomas, a Roman Catholic group that investigates accounts of Satanism in Zambia, writes (Udelhoven 2017a):

> We know of a few individuals in Zambia who dedicated themselves openly to Satan, some through the websites of satanic churches on the Internet and others through handwritten letters that family members eventually found. Some approached the Fingers of Thomas for advice how to join Satanism. (n.p.)

A contributing factor is that in Zambia, Satanists are believed to sacrifice people and receive riches or power in return. Those who want to become Satanists are probably looking for wealth and status.

In many countries in southern Africa, murder victims are found with some of their body parts – genitals, eyes, ears, heart, tongue – missing. These killings are known as ritual murders because the missing body parts are presumably used for medicines that are believed to make someone successful in business or politics. In the first quarter of 2016, eight victims of alleged ritual killings were found in Lusaka alone. But are the perpetrators of these crimes Satanists? Probably not. Criminals intent on earning money through trading in human body parts are not necessarily Satanists. But as many people believe that sacrifice is a way to acquire wealth and power, and as Zambia is a poverty-stricken country, it is conceivable that there are people who resolve that becoming a Satanist and committing murder is a way to achieve their goal.

While there may be Satanists of this kind in Zambia, I have only met and heard about Satanists like Grace and the girl at the overnight prayer, who give their testimonies when they no longer feel devoted to Satan – a group that I have labelled as anti-Satanists. However, there is a gap in the treatment of anti-Satanism in the academic literature. Anti-Satanism is described as a polemic device that is consciously utilised by a dominant group to discredit others. In this context, fake testimonies and fabricated stories are used as a means to vilify the alleged Satanist groups. Famous examples are the publications of Leo Taxil in the 19th century and the testimonies of Mark Warnke in the 1970s. Both were later proved to be intentionally forged. 'Yet,' according to Introvigne (2016:12), 'false information often generates true consequences'. He gives examples of people who ended up in jail and about the influence of the anti-Satanist discourse on politics and religion. For Introvigne, these real consequences are based on fraudulent narratives.

Some testimonies about Satanism in Zambia are later uncovered as fraudulent as well. Some ex-Satanists repeat almost verbatim what other ex-Satanists have published in their testimonies. But my conversations with self-proclaimed ex-Satanists have led me to reject the claim that testimonies are always intentionally providing false information. Grace was the first ex-Satanist that I interviewed, and she was not at all what I expected. I probably expected an ex-Satanist to be talkative, to be a person with a story to tell. Perhaps not proud of what had happened, but at least proud of what they had become as born-again Christians.

To meet Grace, my research assistant and I went to a small provincial town in Zambia. My research assistant knew there were a lot of stories about Satanism going around in that town, and she knew people who were active in bringing Satanists back to Christianity. Grace was willing to come and meet us to share her story. Except that 'willing' may not be the right word. It took us a

morning of calling and driving around to finally meet the young woman in a church building. There she sat: silent, reluctant to meet my gaze. Grace spoke hesitantly, in an unemotional tone, about her attempts to kill her relatives. This was not a girl with a sensational story to tell. Rather, she wanted to get the whole thing behind her and move on. She only accepted to be interviewed because she knew and trusted my research assistant. I noticed the same attitude in later interviews with other ex-Satanists. Without exception, this was a difficult topic for them to speak about. They spoke reluctantly, fidgeting uneasily in their chairs. After meeting these ex-Satanists, I became convinced that they were not frauds who intentionally made up a story to bring discredit to a certain group. While Zambian narratives about Satanism are part of an anti-Satanist discourse on the satanic, this book will show that this discourse is more complex than the literature on narratives about evil Others makes it out to be.

Even though I have argued that narratives about Satanism are not necessarily made up or fraudulent, this does not mean that my discussion of these narratives supports the metaphysical truth claims these narratives make. My academic discussion of Satanism in Zambia is written from the secular perspective of religious studies or anthropology of religion. This means that I will, except for this section in the first chapter and another section in the final chapter of the book, not discuss the reality of the phenomenon of Satanism, nor will I give helpful advice to those who deal with issues of Satanism. This is a work of description, interpretation and explanation rather than a defence of either the reality or the fictitious character of Satanism. Whatever the ontological status of Satanism may be, it is real in the minds of many Zambians and in its consequences, and this is what I will focus on.

■ Outline of the book

There is an English proverb saying, 'speak of the devil, and he appears'. It is certainly the case that many people are speaking about Satan and his human agents, the Satanists, in contemporary Zambia. People speak of things that matter to them, things they are invested in, as I have argued in the previous section. A remarkable discourse like that on Satanism probably reflects strong investments. So what struggles are addressed by speaking of Satanism, both in society and personal life?

To a wider public, stories about Satanism can be entertaining, with a thrilling hint of danger. They can be understood as evidence of the power of God to conquer evil or as a cautionary tale about the consequences of selfish behaviour. For ex-Satanists themselves, experiences of their allegiance with Satan form part of their life story and are a way to make sense of who they are in this world. These two levels – that of society and that of people who recognise something of Satanism in their personal life – stand in a dialectic

relationship to each other. Without the notions present in wider society, individuals would not be likely to interpret their own experiences as Satanism. At the same time, the stories of individual ex-Satanists play an important role in fueling all this speaking of Satan in Zambia, and these individual stories may help a wider public to come to terms with their circumstances. The book focuses on society first and then on Satanism and personal life.

What does the currently popular discourse of Satanism tell us about Zambian society? For a Westerner, stories about Satanism such as Grace's testimony sound improbable. In Zambia, however, these stories are taken very seriously. This is not because Zambians are more superstitious or less rational than people in Western Europe or the USA. The West has its share of improbable stories that are spread and believed – one need only think of the recent attention given to 'fake news'.

In their study of American urban legends, folklorist Bill Ellis and sociologist Gary Fine (2010) note that rumours and other improbable narratives are not shared because people necessarily believe they are true, in a strict sense, but because they are plausible:

> If we believe that a story or assertion makes intuitive and cultural sense, given how we conceive of our world, we are likely to accept the rumour as at least *potentially* true. (p. 5; [*emphasis in original*])

Ellis and Fine write about American legends, but the same is true for African narratives. There are other reasons why stories about Satanism have become so popular, especially in churches, and I will turn to those reasons in later chapters, but Chapters 2 and 3 aim to show how stories about Satanism make 'cultural sense'. In other words, taking, with Geertz (1973), culture as a 'web of significance', these chapters show how narratives about Satanism are connected to other local and shared meaningful rumours, stories, traditions, practices and beliefs. It is these connections with other stories that make stories about and experiences of Satanism plausible.

One major web of stories in which the narratives of Satanism find their place is connected to an African worldview and traditional notions of witchcraft, possession and especially of illicit accumulation. Chapter 2 investigates the relations between Satanism in Zambia and this traditional worldview. Like witches, Satanists spiritually harm others. Ex-Satanists often claim that they were able to do this harm because they were possessed. The clearest similarities between narratives about Satanism and traditional narratives can be found in ideas surrounding legitimate and illicit ways to acquire extraordinary power. According to the African perspective, one needs the support of the spirit world to acquire success. Traditionally, the professions of the chief, diviner and trader were especially rumoured to participate in rituals to acquire extraordinary powers. Narratives about Satanism and other new forms of witchcraft seem to tie into this notion.

However, Satanism is not only related to traditional African concepts. More than anything, stories about Satanism in Zambia are part of Christian discourse. Christian theology forms, after African ideas about witchcraft and illicit accumulation, the second web of stories in which narratives about Satanism make sense. From the early days of missionary activity, traditional notions have been reinterpreted from a Christian perspective by Western missionaries as well as African Christians themselves. Chapter 3 follows this process of reinterpretation, giving attention to influences from overseas as well as new formations from popular Nigerian pastors.

Like many African countries, Zambia is experiencing rapid growth of independent neo-Pentecostal churches. In some ways, these churches connect better to traditional African patterns of thought than the classical mission churches. One of the ways in which they do so is by offering ways to deal with external sources of evil. Two strands are particularly important in the conception of the discourse of Satanism in Zambia, namely the spiritual warfare theology that was developed in the third wave of Pentecostalism that originates in the USA and the development of those ideas by African Pentecostal pastors, often from Nigeria. In this theology, there is an ongoing struggle between good and evil – or, more specifically, God and Satan. Testimonies of ex-Satanists have been read in this context from the earliest instances of, for example, Emmanuel Eni and Evangelist Mukendi.

Narratives about Satanism in Zambia are linked to both traditional African notions and international Christian theology. These links with widely known webs of stories make narratives about Satanism plausible. The popularity of narratives about Satanism at this moment can, however, not just be explained by these ties. Changes in society that are in Zambia often described as the coming of 'modernity' have had a big impact on the way people, especially in cities, live together. These changes are welcomed to some extent, but they also give rise to specific tensions. Following the theory that stories about evil Others reflect anxieties about changes in society, Chapter 4 discusses how the discourse of Satanism is related to these changes.

From the onset, I am careful not to imply that narratives about Satanism are metaphors for change in society. Narratives say something about the society in which they are told, but they are rarely meant as allegories. Stories show the circumstances in which their narrators live. Elements from ordinary day-to-day life form the backdrop of the story a person shares. Stories are also shaped by conceptual frameworks, or in other words, by how their narrators assume the world operates (cf. Fine & Ellis 2010:175), which is related to conceptual frameworks discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. Narratives coincidentally show things about the society in which they are told. But when certain stories are popular, this also means that they resonate with specific circumstances and anxieties. In Chapter 4, I will not investigate the random

circumstances of everyday life that are reflected in narratives about Satanism (that people speak, eat, sleep, go to school, have families, etc.), but specifically, those that speak to contemporary challenges in society. I will argue that narratives about Satanism show how new tensions have arisen concerning to what extent one should adopt modernity.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 form the first part of the book. These chapters give insights into how narratives about Satanism are plausible in the eyes of a wider public and offer different contexts in which these stories are given meaning: as an explanation of the distribution of wealth and power from a traditional perspective, as religious narratives about a struggle between good and evil and as reflecting a concern surrounding the values of modernity. This perspective from society on the narratives seems quite distant, especially if compared to the experiences of those who call themselves Satanists. So what makes people adopt the discourse of Satanism in Zambia to say something about their personal life? This is the topic of the second part of the book.

Ex-Satanists themselves adopt the discourse of Satanism in the most intimate way. They not only see Satanism as a plausibility. Rather, for them, it is something they have experienced themselves. For ex-Satanists, Satanism is not merely a story but a personal experience that becomes a part of their identity. Chapter 5 traces the process in which an individual comes to receive and accept the diagnosis of Satanism and how this is reworked in one's life story. To understand the experience of ex-Satanists, affliction is a better frame than conversion. Ex-Satanists are not believers who have undergone subsequent conversions, first to Satanism and afterwards to Christianity. Rather, they feel that something is wrong in their lives; they feel afflicted by the forces of evil that have assimilated them. As the diagnosis of Satanism becomes part of their life story, some ex-Satanists can give positive meaning to this affliction. Understanding Satanism as an affliction and as a part of one's life story helps to stay in touch with the lived experiences of Zambians who feel affected by Satanism. Satanism helps people, in particular adolescents, to frame and deal with both disturbing personal experiences and with moral expectations from society.

Experiences of Satanism often remain personal narratives. But for some, their testimony becomes a public record of this experience. Chapter 6 discusses how testimonies are produced and who is involved in their performance, namely the ex-Satanists themselves, pastors who offer them a platform and the audience. Pastors are an important category of those who opt into the discourse of Satanism in Zambia. In churches that follow spiritual warfare theology, narratives about Satanism are often brought up in sermons of the preacher as well as in testimonies of ex-Satanists. Pastors not only give a platform to the presentation of testimonies, but they are often also closely involved in detecting Satanism and in the formation of a testimony. Chapter 6

argues that pastors, often referred to as men of God in Zambia, profit a great deal from the performance of testimonies in church services. These testimonies act as proof of their theology, and at the same time, they give evidence of the power of the pastor to fight in the spiritual war between God and Satan. For the audience of a testimony, the narrative makes the presence of God and Satan real and provides a space to play with ambiguous experiences, as well as providing a tool to learn to see the world differently.

Narratives about Satanism have a relatively short history in Zambia – the first instances are from the 1990s, and the narratives started to become widespread in the 2000s. Satanism in Africa as a whole and specifically in Zambia should be studied as a phenomenon that has some similarities to anti-Satanist discourses in the West, and it should not be confused with the contemporary religious Satanism of groups like the Church of Satan. The discourse of Satanism in Zambia is closely related to both traditional ideas about witchcraft and similar phenomena and the development of Christianity in Africa, in particular, the neo-Pentecostal theologies of spiritual warfare. Furthermore, the sudden rise in the occurrence of narratives about Satanism is a sign of changes and anxieties in Zambian society. In this study, I will discuss these narratives both concerning the wider society and as a personal experience. Together, these chapters give a comprehensive insight into the meaning of the discourse of Satanism in Zambia.

Satanism and the African worldview

■ Introduction

In 2012, two women disappeared from the small mining town of Chambishi on the Zambian Copperbelt. They were later found dead in what one news site called 'mysterious circumstances'.[8] What exactly those mysterious circumstances were was not mentioned. At the burial of one of the women, emotions ran high. In an African context, an important question after a sudden and unexpected death is often: who was responsible? In Chambishi, the residents decided that they knew exactly who was responsible, namely a local businessman. Two days of rioting followed. After the second day, the newspaper Lusaka Times reported (Lusaka Times 2012):

> A cloud of uncertainty continues to hang over Chambishi Town on the Copperbelt after irate residents went on rampage for the second time in two days, this time setting ablaze a market in Zambia Compound as part of the continued protest against alleged acts of Satanism by some local businesspersons. The rampaging residents, who on Friday left a trail of destruction when they rioted in the mining township where they set on fire a number of shops and burnt to death four people whom they suspected of involvement in ritual killings, on Saturday night mobilised again and destroyed more property. (n.p.)

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8. See https://www.zambiawatchdog.com/riots-break-out-in-chambishi/.

In the riots, a shop owner, his nephew, an attendant of his shop and another shop owner were burnt to death. The rioting residents also targeted mining installations and government property. According to one commenter on the Lusaka Times website, within a month, ten people had been killed by these businessmen, all with their hearts and private parts removed.[9]

The happenings in Chambishi were by no means the only riots sparked in Zambia by rumours of satanic killings. Between 2012 and 2016, riots took place in Chambishi (2012), Katete (2013), Ndola (2014), Shiwang'andu (2015), Luanshya (2015), Chingola (2015), Chipata (2015) and Mkushi (2015, 2016). Most of these provincial towns are commercial and industrial hubs within a largely rural area. In all of these cases, the riots erupted after the disappearance and often subsequent death, mostly of a local child. The underlying belief is that these children were murdered for their body parts, which are ritually used to attract wealth and power. In current Zambia, this practice is commonly labelled as Satanism.

Stories about Satanism make cultural sense in Zambia because they are connected to webs of stories that already exist in the Zambian imagination. According to the American psychologist Jerome Bruner, people understand the world not just through scientific hypotheses, experiential facts and evidence but also through a more narrative mode sustained by stories, intentions and plots (Bruner 1986). This narrative mode constitutes the cultural reality in which people live: which roles are deemed acceptable, which plots are seen as plausible and which actors are allowed to influence us. A businessman who sacrifices a child to become more successful is, in the Zambian imagination, a plausible plot.

Bruner's concept of cultural reality is close to the notion of the imaginary. An imaginary is a common understanding, an *a priori* assumption that is rarely rationally questioned and enables us to 'carry out the collective practices that make up our social life' (Taylor 2002:106). Imaginaries are shared by members of society; everybody 'has' it. Imaginaries are both collective and personal. They are shared, transmitted in institutions, through social interactions or media, and at the same time, an imaginary is a personal assemblage, reflecting the complexity and differentiation of society. According to Cornelius Castoriadis (1987), it is the shared imaginaries that determine what is considered real:

> 'Reality' is socially instituted, not only as reality in general, but as a specific reality, as the reality of this particular society. In this way the fecunding of a woman by a spirit is do-able – and hence real – for certain societies and undo-able, hence unreal, in our own. (p. 263)

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9. See https://www.lusakatimes.com/2012/09/03/tension-grips-chambishi-antisatanism-riots/ (comments section).

The stories that are told in society invite us to consider reality in a certain way. If people in a certain society speak about spirits that can impregnate a woman, this becomes a plausible plot. In another society, where people do not talk about this, it is unthinkable. In this way, stories bring our world into existence (cf. Koschorke 2012:40).

Over time, imaginaries change, and in that process, the material world acquires new meaning. As Charles Taylor (2002, 2004, 2007) has argued, in Europe, modernity has brought a profound change in the social imaginary. New developments, spread by contact between people and cultures, can be introduced or give earlier practices a new sense. For example, before the 1980s, Satanism was unknown in Zambia. Since then, through international contacts, it has become a meaningful notion. But its success, as I will argue in this chapter, depended on a close connection to an imaginary that already existed.

In this chapter, I will investigate the specifically African imaginaries that make Satanism in Zambia a plausible plot. Firstly, I will briefly touch on aspects of an African worldview, and then I will focus on traditional notions of possession and witchcraft. In the final part of the chapter, I will turn to so-called new forms of witchcraft or the occult in Africa and their relation to illicit accumulation.

One may ask how relevant it is to speak about traditional African worldviews. Christianity and Islam have been present on the African continent for many centuries and both have been growing rapidly in the 20th and 21st centuries. In official statistics, the percentages of adherents to ATRs have become very low, especially in southern Africa. According to data collated by the Pew Research Center (2015:244), only 0.3% of Zambians follow an ATR. Despite a celebration of ATRs across the continent in the 1960s when they symbolised the African identity of the newly independent countries, today ATRs have almost disappeared from many African countries. Christianity and Islam, as well as elites with a more secular worldview, speak ill of ATRs, calling them either demonic or backwards and superstitious (Olupona 2014:105–106).

However, ATRs and the African worldviews they encompass have not lost their relevance. Ideas about a spirit world still form an important interpretative framework to understand misfortune and bad luck. According to Gerrie ter Haar (2009):

> African notions of the spirit world and its operations; notions of evil, which include, for example, witchcraft beliefs; ideas concerning illness and healing; and notions of progress and prosperity all affect Christian thought and practices in Africa. (p. 25)

Although many Africans are now Christians or Muslims, they experience their religion through an African lens, and their holistic worldview remains the same. In the following sections, I discuss the holistic worldview in which the spirit world plays such an important role.

■ General characteristics of an African worldview

Speaking about an African worldview or ATRs implies that there is such a thing as a unified system of thought that is shared by the whole African continent. The multitude of ethnicities and languages on the continent and the diverse histories of African people make this assumption unlikely. Some, like the Ghanaian philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah, have argued that one should not speak of an African cultural unity. 'Whatever Africans share,' he writes, 'we do not have a common traditional culture, common languages, a common religious or conceptual vocabulary […] we do not even belong to a common race' (cited in Grinker, Lubkemann & Steiner 2010:12). In Zambia alone, there are nearly 70 different ethnicities, each with its language or dialect, rituals and belief systems.

While I acknowledge that speaking about 'the African worldview' oversimplifies complex realities, within the great diversity, there is some cultural unity, especially when one does not take the continent as a whole but looks at a smaller unit of comparison, like sub-Saharan Africa or southern Africa. In my description of the cultural notions in which narratives about Satanism are embedded, I will use sources from Zambia and neighbouring countries in southern Africa, but I will also use classical reference works that describe an African worldview as a whole, like the works of Laurenti Magesa (1997) and Jacob Olupona (2014).

■ A holistic worldview

An important characteristic of African worldviews is the existence of a spirit world, which will be discussed in the next section. Before I go into the spirit world and its inhabitants, another caveat needs to be made. In Western ears, the concept of a spirit world has religious connotations, and African worldviews could easily be interpreted as religious worldviews. In this section, I will discuss some problems related to that idea and argue that a characteristic of African worldviews is that they are holistic, without a clear boundary between the secular and the religious.

The category of religion emerged in Western thought out of a specific historical context of exposure to religious pluralism (Chidester 1996:xiii). Not only has religious studies a complex history in Europe, and not only is the subject matter of this discipline extremely hard to define, to make matters worse the history of the study of religion is entangled in colonial politics. This has consequences for the perspective on religion in Africa. The Western concept of religion does not always match non-Western practices. From Western Christian perspective, it is clear that the essence of religion is separated from the essence of other spheres of life, like science, health care,

economics or politics. Religion is a domain on its own. Another peculiarity of religion as seen from a Western angle is the focus on doctrines and theology. In their contact with other cultures and religions, belief became the primary element, the essence of religion that Europeans would look for. As the Canadian professor of comparative religion Wilfred Cantwell Smith (1991) noted in 1962:

> So characteristic has it been that unsuspecting Westerners have […] been liable to ask about a religious group other than their own, 'What do they believe?' as though this were the primary question, and certainly were a legitimate one. (p. 180)

Western, Christian, maybe even specifically Protestant, thought sees 'belief' or 'believing' as a major element of what religion is.

The Western angle on religion, which sees it as a separate domain and focuses on doctrine and theology, is problematic when one tries to export it to other parts of the world. In non-Western religious traditions, believing the right things may not be nearly as important as it is in the Western Christian tradition. Focusing on beliefs may also lead to a skewed perspective on religion. Religious leaders and elite believers may be able to explicitly verbalise their religious beliefs, but commoners often are not. Furthermore, a focus on belief does not take into account local and regional differences within traditions. Lastly, the division of life into different spheres, like religion, politics, economics and science, is a modern Western construct influenced by the history of the Reformation and the Enlightenment in Europe. In Muslim societies, the separation of politics and religion, for example, is not traditionally apparent.

The problems caused by seeing religion from an angle that is bound to the Western Christian context are painfully clear in the history of the study of religion in Africa. One's angle of study informs what counts as religion and what does not. Several early observers of African traditions reported that Africans had no religion, as the following quote from the historian of Christian missions Brian Stanley (2005) shows:

> [*The majority of early missionaries held the view that*] traditional beliefs and rites were unable to supply 'any religious help or consolation'. Other respondents were in little doubt that the absence of such spiritual consolation meant that Africans, quite simply, had no religion. […] The Rev. Godfrey Callaway from Griqualand East [… *stated*] that 'there cannot be said to be any definite non-Christian religions in this particular part of South Africa'. Callaway stressed that 'whatever belief in a supreme God the heathen people may give assent to in conversation, there is practically no sense of practical obligation due to such belief'. Charles Johnson, Archdeacon of Zululand, similarly insisted that 'among the Zulus and Basutos there is nothing which could be called, strictly speaking, a religious system. […] There are no doctrines or forms of religious observance which are helpful or consolatory to the Zulu mind.' (p. 175)

The missionaries quoted in this text were looking for religion as they knew and defined it: a separate sphere of life characterised by certain beliefs or doctrines

and practices of worship that can inspire certain feelings, for example, of consolation. They did not find this religion.

African scholars of religion have taken a position opposite to the stance of the early Western observers. In the 1950s and 1960s, African scholars of religion started to study African traditions. Their view was that Africans had been religious all along, even 'incurably' or 'notoriously' so. Religion in Africa is not a separate domain; rather, it permeates every aspect of African life, including economics and politics. In a famous quote, the eminent scholar of African religions John Mbiti (1990) writes:

> Wherever the African is, there is his religion: he carries it to the fields where he is sowing seeds or harvesting a new crop; he takes it with him to the beer party or to attend a funeral ceremony; and if he is educated, he takes religion with him to the examination room at school or in the university; if he is a politician, he takes it to the House of Parliament. (p. 2)

For Mbiti, every human being is religious by nature. Therefore, Africans are religious by definition. In his books, *African religions and philosophy* (1969) and *Concepts of God in Africa* (1970), Mbiti describes the contours of African religiosity. However, his views are criticised by both Western and African scholars. Stating that everything an African does is religious is as untenable in the end as stating that there is no religion in Africa.

Without falling into these extremes, African worldviews are more holistic than Western perspectives on the world. The Greek word *holos* means all, whole or entire. In English, holism refers to a focus on the whole instead of a division into parts. African worldviews are holistic because religion is not understood as a separate entity. According to the scholar of indigenous African religions Jacob Olupona, religion in Africa cannot be 'quarantined in its own sphere' as religion in the West is. In African societies, religion is not a distinct sphere. Every aspect of daily life is related to religious concerns. This has effects on African concerns about, for example, politics, as we will see in this chapter, but also health, as I will argue in Chapter 5.

■ The spirit world

African worldviews are holistic also in their emphasis that the spirit world forms an integral part of reality. It is not just that religion is not a distinct sphere, cordoned off from other aspects of life, but there is also less of a boundary between the world of religious entities and the physical world of human beings. For a Westerner coming to Africa, this idea is unfamiliar. Western thought, since the Enlightenment, has been shaped by a dualism that divides the cosmos into two realities: the supernatural world of God and other spiritual forces and the natural material world of humans, animals, plants and matter. In the past centuries, in Western Europe, the boundaries between these two realities have become more and more impenetrable. This means

that humans have few direct experiences of the supernatural world in their daily lives and also that God and the spiritual forces are not expected to intervene directly in the natural world.

The African spirit world has several different inhabitants, of which God or the gods, ancestors and spirits are the most important categories. These spiritual forces exist in a relationship with human beings, forming one community, although spiritual beings are not believed to exist in the same way as friends and neighbours. As Hermen Kroesbergen (2019:92) argues, when the people in a room or a village are counted, spirits are not included in this count. The quality of human life in this world is associated with the relationships within the community, including the relationships with the spirit world. If illness, poverty or other calamities strike, the cause is sought in a moral disorder in this network of relationships (Magesa 1997:81). Where in the West calamities are often related to mere misfortune or bad luck, in Africa such events have a spiritual significance. When negative events cannot be explained, controlled or predicted, the spirit world offers a way to respond to the contingencies of life (cf. Kroesbergen 2019:21–78). Health, well-being and abundance are amongst the concerns that are experienced as related to the spirit world. For this reason, African worldviews have been characterised as anthropocentric or this-worldly.

The following section gives an overview of the inhabitants of the spirit world and the rituals that tie the living community to the spirit world. As we will see in later chapters, all of these elements of an African worldview are relevant for an understanding of narratives about Satanism in Zambia.

An important category of inhabitants of the spirit world in the context of this study is the spirits. Spirits can be ancestral, the spirits of revered elders of the living. Ancestors can punish as well as bestow blessings on their descendants. They take care of their living relatives in the details of everyday life (Van Breugel 2001:38). In general, the benevolence of the ancestors is assured by appeasement through sacrifices. To neglect this duty means to invoke the wrath of the ancestors. Ancestors are further offended by the moral digressions of the living. In this sense, they function as the 'watch-dogs of the moral behaviour of the individual, the family, the clan and the entire society with which they are associated' (Magesa 1997:48).

Another category of inhabitants of the spirit world is nonancestral spirits. Some of these are spirits of the dead who have not become ancestors, such as children who passed away before their initiation or people who have not been buried appropriately, or nonhuman spirits, often associated with features of the landscape (Magesa 1997:53). These spirits may be troublesome and cause bad health, or they may be related to other misfortunes. In African worldviews, none of the categories of inhabitants of the spirit world are inherently evil, unlike the figure of Satan in Christianity.

In Zambia, important types of nonancestral spirits are the *chiwanda* (in Chinyanja) or *cibanda* (in Chibemba) and the *mashawe* (in Chinyanja) or *ngulu* (in Chibemba) spirits. *Chiwanda* or *cibanda* are treacherous spirits related to dead people who do not belong to a person's lineage. The ghost of a dead person can become a beloved ancestor for their relatives while becoming a harmful spirit to those who do not belong to the family, such as the spouse of the deceased (Udelhoven 2021:73, 274–275). This is why Zambian traditions often prescribe rituals to cleanse the spouse after their partner has died. *Chiwanda* or *cibanda* spirits may also in other ways be outside of the community. Their death may have placed them outside the community, as is the case if a person dies under unknown circumstances and goes unburied, such as in a natural disaster or a war. They may also have placed themselves outside of the community by committing murder or other severe crimes. *Chiwanda* or *cibanda* spirits are unpredictable. They possess people outside of their lineage, without any apparent reason, and this possession brings misfortune and illness. A *chiwanda* or *cibanda* is always looking for a host to possess. Innocent persons can pick up such a spirit by being in the wrong place, especially at the graveyard.

Mashawe or *ngulu* spirits are generally nonhuman and associated with local landmarks such as a river or a hill. Some *mashawe* or *ngulu* spirits are human but connected to foreign peoples. They can manifest themselves in the forms of wild animals, such as lions, snakes or baboons. *Mashawe* or *ngulu* spirits may be associated with a lineage. If a deceased relative was possessed by these spirits, they may be inherited through the line of the father or the mother. Also, some *mashawe* or *ngulu* spirits are said to be the spirits of legendary figures from the past, such as chiefs, prominent healers or famous warriors and hunters. Certain dreams, such as dreaming of flying, swimming underwater or being bitten by a snake, lion, monkey or dog, are the first sign of a *mashawe* or *ngulu* possession (Mildnerová 2015:162). The Tumbuka *vimbuza* and the Tonga *basangu* and *masabe* spirits seem to fall in this same category.

Cases of spirit possession are and were common in Zambia. In the 1970s, the Roman Catholic archbishop of Lusaka, Emmanuel Milingo, started to hold public healing sessions, which were visited especially by those who believed that their afflictions were caused by spirits. After reading the letters that were sent to Milingo in those years, Ter Haar and Ellis (1988:197) conclude that 'the letters to Milingo leave little doubt that many Zambians, of all social classes, consider spirit possession to be a frequent cause of illness, misfortune and social discord'. Bernhard Udelhoven mentions that it was also common for spiritual afflictions to disrupt life at school. Mainly in boarding schools for girls, possession by *mashawe* or *ngulu* spirits spread epidemically and could paralyse the school system (Udelhoven 2021:369–370).

Another category of the nonhuman spirit is the marine spirit. Water spirits are well-known in the African religious landscape. They may inhabit rivers or

lakes and can be ceremonially addressed to provide favours or food (cf. Frank 1995). Probably the most famous marine spirit, particularly in West Africa, is Mami Wata. Mami Wata means mother of water. She is a relatively new deity who has attracted many followers in the 20th century (Kamps 2018:74). She is portrayed as a woman with a light complexion, holding a mirror and combing her long, flowing hair. She often has a snake around her middle and a fishtail instead of legs, and she is also known as the Queen of the Coast. Followers of the Mami Wata cult come from Senegal in West Africa to Tanzania in the East (Drewal 1988), although it is not well-known in Zambia. The altars of Mami Wata followers often include 'European' items such as cutlery, Western foods, children's toys and cosmetics (Wendl 2001:273–274). Her devotees can travel spiritually to Mami Wata's realm beneath the sea using a mirror and find themselves desirable consumer goods like televisions. Mami Wata can give her followers money, power and success if they become her lovers. This means that it is prohibited for them to have children or sexual relationships with a human partner.

The connection between humans and the spirit world is seen most clearly in the rituals that accompany the life cycle. Many African traditions have rites of passage that mark the passing from one status to another, for example, the naming of a child, initiation into adulthood at puberty, marriage and burial. These rituals enforce the ties within the community, those between humans as well as those with the spirit world.

Having children is, in African worldviews, one of the most important tasks of a human. The birth of a healthy child is proof of health, of good standing with the ancestors; it is a duty towards society. The naming of the child is a meaningful moment. A child's name may refer to the circumstances during the time of its birth. Some names recall hard times, like the Zambian name *Mabvuto*, which means trouble or problems. Other names refer to desirable events or qualities; names like Faith, Charity, Blessing and their vernacular equivalents are examples. Some children are named after an ancestor. It is expected that with the name, the child will inherit the ancestor's character or personality (Magesa 1997:91; Udelhoven 2021:242–243). This makes the choice of the ancestral name important. Often a religious specialist such as a diviner helps the parents choose the right name.

Between birth and puberty, a child is introduced to the traditions of the community. The most important time of instruction is that of the initiation at puberty. At the beginning of the initiation ceremony, the boys or girls are secluded from the rest of the community. During this period, instructors teach them about the duties, responsibilities and rights that come with being an adult member of the community. After the period of seclusion, the initiated are integrated into the community again as mature members, approved by the ancestors. This means that they are now ready to get married and contribute to the community. In Zambia, initiation rituals for girls seem to be

more common than for boys, although there are significant differences between the different ethnic communities. In many African traditions, secret societies play an important role in the preservation of knowledge, customs and traditions, for example, the *Nyau* in the Chewa culture of Zambia's Eastern Province. Chewa boys are initiated into the *Nyau* between the ages of 10 and 14 years old.

The rituals of initiation, marriage and procreation generally form an important part of the lessons. Marriage is also a significant event because it entails the coming together of different clans or communities. This means that marriage is not just an agreement between two people, but it has a wider significance in the context of the community. The ancestors can become present again in the children of a married couple. Without children, this ancestral communion is not possible. This is one of the reasons that barrenness and impotence are experienced with fear and shame in many African societies.

Marriage is meant to ensure the preservation of life through sexual intercourse. In African worldviews, sexual intercourse is surrounded by prescriptions and taboos aiming to control the generative powers. In southern Africa, many taboos concerning sexuality are related to the conceptualisation of hot and cold. Sexual taboos are meant to make sure that the harmful hotness of sexually active adults is contained (cf. Mildnerová 2015:54–62).

Death and burial form the final stages of the life cycle. Death is rarely regarded as something natural, and the emotions flaring up in the face of bereavement can easily disrupt a community. Attending the funeral is seen as an obligation, and people become suspicious of those who avoid a burial. When there is no funeral, however, the graveyard is feared as a place of harmful spiritual beings. Together, the rituals connected to the life cycle emphasise the importance of the community of the living as well as the deceased ancestors.

That the spirit world and the physical world together form a community does not mean that anyone can access this spirit world. There are certain specialists who can interact with the spirit world. Witches are one category, using spiritual forces to harm. Others are diviners and traditional healers (*ng'angas* in Chinyanja), whose connection to the spirit world makes them able to discern the problems of their clients and give them cures or protections. *Ng'angas* often have a special relation to a *mashawe* or *ngulu* spirit. After an initial period of illness, a person possessed by these spirits may reach an understanding with them and become a channel for their powers when needed. The possessed medium often uses singing and dancing to the rhythm of drums (*ngoma*) and sometimes special medicines to grant the spirits access (Thornton 2017). In this way, *mashawe* or *ngulu* spirits can 'make a person upon whom they befell sick, but could also become a valuable resource for the community by bestowing extraordinary abilities of healing, prophecy or divination' (Udelhoven 2021:58–59).

There is no clear boundary between destructive witchcraft and protective or curative magic; they shade into each other (Mildnerová 2015:180). Healers draw on the same power as witches – they have to, in order to be able to counteract the harm that witches may bring. The difference between the two mainly lies in their social acceptance. Whereas witchcraft is rejected and conceptualised as something hidden, done in the dark, the practices that bring protection are approved and practised openly (Steinforth 2009:180).

◼ Satanists and the spirit world

Many of the connections between the narratives about Satanism and an African view of the spirit world will be discussed extensively in later chapters, but here I will give a brief overview of some pertinent aspects. Testimonies of adolescent Satanists, who often confess that they were not aware of being initiated into Satanism at the time and thus were not aware of the harm they were causing, are similar to possession. Like someone possessed by a spirit, the adolescent Satanist is not in control of their actions. Also, many Satanists report dreams that would traditionally be interpreted as related to possession by *mashawe* or *ngulu* spirits. Several testimonies mention that the narrator had to be delivered of scores of spirits or demons that possessed them. In the next chapter, we will go deeper into the transformation of African worldviews by Pentecostal Christianity that led to spirits being seen as evil demons. Experiences of Satanism often spread in schools, like the *mashawe* or *ngulu* possessions described by Udelhoven.

The rituals of the life cycle discussed show some important elements of African life. The well-being of the community is central to an African worldview. If the community thrives, individuals within the community will profit. Satanists are, like witches, agents who place themselves outside of the community, acting in a way that contributes only to their personal good. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, many of the actions of Satanists can be seen as an inversion of the traditional African sense of community, with its clear hierarchy and social roles. In African societies, children were traditionally seen as an asset. As will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, today the perception of the child is shifting. Changes in society have led to the feeling that children are a burden or even a danger, and many ex-Satanists grew up in households in which they felt treated as rather less than an asset.

In testimonies about Satanism, initiation is often an important element of the narrative. In traditional African life, initiations are an important element of the life cycle as well. However, I am not sure whether the two are related. In testimonies, the English word initiation is always used, while in discussing traditional initiation rituals people use the vernacular terms, such as *chisungu* in Chibemba or *chinamwali* in Chichewa. I can therefore not say with certainty

that speaking about initiation into Satanism reminds audiences of traditional initiation practices.

From this general introduction to an African worldview, we now turn to an important aspect of this worldview that has a clear relation to narratives about Satanism, namely witchcraft.

■ Witchcraft

Witchcraft is, of course, an English word which is used as a translation for several African vernacular words. In translations, it is always open for discussion whether a word from a different language and culture carries the same meaning. Concerning the translation of witchcraft, there are two main problems: firstly, that there are meanings inherent to the English word that are absent in the vernacular; secondly, that there are meanings inherent to the vernacular words lost in the translation to the English word 'witchcraft'. When the word 'witchcraft' is used, different audiences have different associations with it.

Regarding the first problem, witchcraft has a long history in Europe and is in this context defined as (Valente 2006):

> [*T*]he human exercise of supernatural powers for antisocial, evil purposes. [...] Over time, the idea of witchcraft has started to include the idea of a diabolical pact or at least an appeal to the intervention of demons. (p. 1174)

Two main notions in this definition are that witchcraft is utterly evil and that it is connected to demons or the devil. Using the word witchcraft in an African context means that these two notions get transplanted into that context as well. This is problematic because the devil and his demons are historically not known in African traditions, and because in Africa witchcraft used to be an ambiguous term – witchcraft could be used for protective as well as harmful purposes.

The second problem is that using one English word for a manifold of traditional terms glosses over local variations. According to some African traditions, witchcraft is inherited. Others say it is acquired. For some, witchcraft is a physical condition residing in a specific fluid in the belly. Yet others see it as an invisible, spiritual force. The ideas about what is translated with this one word, witchcraft, are by no means uniform.

As there are all these problems with the use of the word witchcraft, should it be used at all? Most anthropologists and scholars of religion see witchcraft as a problematic term, but in general, it is retained. It is difficult to avoid the term because it is not only used by scholars as an etic term but on the ground as well. In contemporary urban areas in Africa, people are mixing different languages, and the English word witchcraft is used even while

speaking in the vernacular. Witchcraft as an etic term is problematic, but it proliferates as an emic term and can therefore not be completely avoided. I use the term witchcraft here instead of a local vernacular as the discourse of Satanism is not limited to one tribe or ethnicity, and it can draw on several similar concepts of witchcraft. In fact, in the testimonies, the word witchcraft is used rather than a local vernacular. Even when the testimony is narrated in Chinyanja, the local language that is commonly spoken in Lusaka, the English word witchcraft is used rather than the vernacular *ufiti*.

Witchcraft beliefs in Africa

Though there are misgivings about the uniformity of witchcraft notions in Africa, there seems to be a common core. In the *New Encyclopedia of Africa*, Peter Geschiere (2008a) describes this core as follows:

> A basic theme is that misfortune – and often also spectacular success – are attributed to hidden human agency. Witches and sorcerers are believed to use secret forces to hurt other people or to enforce their own success. Witchcraft and sorcery are therefore closely related to jealousy, inequality, and the illicit search for power. (pp. 220–221)

The traditional distinction between witchcraft and sorcery, made by Evans-Pritchard in his study of the Azande, is that witchcraft is an innate quality of a person. A witch can harm people even without being aware of it. Sorcery, on the other hand, involves techniques in which material objects are used ritually to achieve a set goal. This distinction may be clear amongst the Azande, but it is not in many other African settings, and therefore Geschiere includes sorcery in his definition of witchcraft.

The basic theme of witchcraft – misfortune – refers to afflictions, problems and anything wrong or bad in one's life or society as a whole. Some afflictions and problems can be explained by natural causes, others through moral transgressions or problems in relations with the ancestors. If these explanations fail to satisfy, witchcraft is called upon.[10] In his study of Bantu witchcraft beliefs, Haule (1969) gives examples of what witches may achieve: they cause fertility problems in women by cancelling pregnancies or hindering a successful birth; they cause diseases and death; they cause agricultural problems like drought or crop failures; and they cause difficulties in marriage. The belief that witches cause misfortune is shared by a significant proportion of the African population. The Malawian Welfare Monitoring Survey, for example, found that 76% of the interviewed households said they knew that there were witches

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10. In an interesting exposition, Hermen Kroesbergen (2019) argues that witchcraft should not be interpreted as stating a cause for misfortune, but as the grammar in which uncertainty about causes and a lack of control is expressed. When someone says 'the failure of my crops is witchcraft', he is not expressing a hypothesis regarding the cause of his crop failure but stating that the failure of his crops is beyond his control and explanation.

active in their community, and this percentage was surprisingly even higher in urban than in rural areas (National Statistical Office 2008:107–108).

To inflict harm on their victims, witches use several techniques. They may send evil spirits or familiars to do harm; they control the forces of nature, especially lightning, or use 'medicines' that may contain poison (Crawford 1967:125). The belief that witches eat people is widespread and often described (cf. Crawford 1967; Haule 1969; Van Breugel 2001). In some African traditions, this eating is believed to be a spiritual act in that it is the life force of the victim that is eaten. In other traditions, eating is taken literally to mean the consumption of human flesh. In southern Africa, witches are said to meet at the burial ground, where they eat the flesh of recently buried corpses. They may use supernatural means of transport to go about their business. According to the participants in a Malawian study, witches fly at night using a broom or a woven basket (Chilamampunga & Thindwa 2012:35). According to Crawford, the Shona in Zimbabwe believe that a witch uses an animal like a hyena, owl or crocodile as a familiar and steed to travel to nocturnal meetings. All over southern Africa, the *lilomba* or *ilomba* is a witch's familiar that has the shape of a snake but with a human head. It is believed that this familiar feeds on the blood of its victims and helps the witch to become rich (Kroesbergen-Kamps 2018:242).

In different parts of Africa, different categories of people may be accused of witchcraft. Men and women, rich and poor, old or young: all may turn out to be witches. In some African countries, such as Malawi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), accusations of children are increasing. In Kinshasa, the capital of the DRC, children accused of witchcraft are often forced to live on the street when their families refuse to take care of them after a witchcraft accusation (De Boeck 2008:500). In Zambia, elderly people are the main recipients of mob violence after a witchcraft accusation (Office of International Religious Freedom 2019).

Being accused of witchcraft can have severe consequences (Chilamampunga & Thindwa 2012:61–68). Often, those accused of witchcraft are beaten, which sometimes results in death. Their houses or property may be destroyed, and their access to work may be limited. Witches are feared and hated, and those who are accused are often ignored or isolated, even if they are not physically harmed. In recent years, the situation of the accused has become a focal point for human rights organisations as well as academic research (Ashforth 2015; cf. Kroesbergen-Kamps 2020a).

In precolonial Africa, witchcraft was officially punished as a crime. To ascertain whether an accused person was a witch, they had to go through a test known as the *mwavi* or poison ordeal. A guilty witch was believed to die of the poison they were given, while an innocent person would just vomit it out. In 1900, the British colonial regime in Rhodesia outlawed this technique.

Witchfinders replaced the poisonous substance with a nonpoisonous concoction called *mchape*, which served to detect and cure witches. Later, in the 1930s, the witchcraft-eradication movement that swept through Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and the DRC took its name from that concoction (Gordon 2012:61–63). Groups of witchfinders (*mucapi*) would travel from village to village at the request of local chiefs to identify witches and cleanse them through the *mchape* (Udelhoven 2021:77). Witches are believed to keep their medicines in a vessel, for example, the hollow horn of an animal. During witch-finding campaigns, the discovery of such a horn is often used as evidence against the alleged witch (Richards [1935] 1982a). Even though acting as a witchfinder is prohibited by law in Zambia, this practice continues today.

■ Witchcraft and Satanism

Stories about Satanism show clear similarities to these beliefs about witchcraft. Like witches, Satanists cause misfortune. Grace, for example, confesses to causing sickness in her niece and also says that Satanists are responsible for barrenness and problems in marriage. To avoid attacks using poison, pregnant women in particular are warned against eating market food (Steinforth 2009:47). This danger of store-bought food in opposition to home-cooked food is also emphasised in most testimonies. Like witches, in almost every testimony, Satanists are said to eat human flesh and drink blood. Corpses are even used to produce foodstuffs found in every supermarket, thereby making every innocent customer complicit in the satanic activity. Where the corpses come from, or whether they, for example, were recently buried and dug up again, is generally not mentioned. Satanists are sometimes said to meet at the graveyard, travelling in extraordinary ways. This motif is present in Grace's testimony in the introduction, where she says: 'We used to meet at the graveyard, where we would arrive in many cars. Some of these cars were not even cars but coffins or hyenas'. In other testimonies, the motif of meeting at the graveyard is missing.

The similarities between witchcraft and Satanism suggest that Satanism has its roots in older witchcraft beliefs. However, there are differences as well. Narratives of Satanism are generally set in an urban context, whereas the village forms the natural setting for witchcraft. Satanists most often speak about living in towns or cities. Misfortunes that are specific to village life, like the agricultural problems described by Haule, are absent in the testimonies of ex-Satanists. In testimonies, Satanists generally do not use medicines to inflict harm, although businessmen accused of being Satanists are thought to use body parts in rituals to become rich.

Some authors have focused on the relationship between the supposed witch and their victim. According to Marwick, witchcraft works within the

family, more specifically in the matrilineage (1952). Isak Niehaus expands the circle in which witchcraft is thought to be effective to other close social relations, like those between neighbours (2001:84). Peter Geschiere (2013) argues that notions of witchcraft are anchored in the experience of intimacy. Often, Satanists make their victims in these intimate circles as well. In the testimonies, there is no clear preference for matrilineal relatives. Mostly, the relatives that ex-Satanists claim to have sacrificed are close relatives, often members of the same household: parents, brothers and sisters and their children. Many Satanists, however, exceed this circle of intimacy in their actions. The consumers of the tainted products that are claimed to be made in the underworld are random people, as are the victims of traffic accidents that ex-Satanists claim to have caused. It seems that victims tend to be either close relatives or random strangers. In the Zambian testimonies, neighbours are rarely mentioned as victims of Satanists.

Like witchcraft, Satanism is associated with the old as well as the young and with men as well as women. Those who confess that they have been involved in Satanism are generally young – mostly adolescent girls. I have not heard of any case in which a confession of Satanism in a church by an adolescent girl has led to violence, although ex-Satanists may experience negative effects in their social environment after the confession. According to Udelhoven (2020:166), narratives about Satanism are interpreted as belonging to the spiritual realm instead of the physical. Therefore, confessing adolescent Satanists are punished neither by official prosecution nor by mob justice. The story is completely different when it comes to accusations and rumours about Satanism levelled against adults. Accusations against businessmen often lead to violence and damage to property. The elderly, who are the main targets for accusations of witchcraft in Zambia, are not connected to Satanism in the popular imagination.

In the testimonies themselves, Satanism is seen as distinct but closely related to witchcraft. While in other African countries, alleged witches give testimonies very similar to the testimonies presented here, the Zambian ex-Satanists never refer to themselves as witches. However, some are initiated into Satanism through their relatives. These (older) relatives are referred to as witches rather than Satanists. For example, when Gideon Mulenga Kabila, Zambia's most famous ex-Satanist, narrates how he was initiated into Satanism, he begins his story with his mother, who was a witch (*How I was set free from Voodoo and witchcraft* 2007). When his mother arranges for Gideon to be initiated, he becomes a Satanist rather than a witch. According to the testimonies, witchcraft is older and less advanced than Satanism. Comaroff and Comaroff (1999:292) note a similar sentiment when they quote an ex-Satanist who claims that 'Satanism is high-octane witchcraft'.

Looking at the testimonies of Satanism, there are some clear similarities between notions of witchcraft and Satanism, although both words seem to

have their distinct fields of application. In the last century, new narratives connected to witchcraft have come up all over Africa, especially about elites using witchcraft rather than the marginalised. In his definition of witchcraft, Geschiere already states that misfortune, as well as spectacular success, are attributed to witchcraft. If you are a victim of an unexplained affliction or a crop failure that your neighbour was spared from, witchcraft is likely to be mentioned. But if you are especially successful, wealthy and powerful, people are also likely to think, 'this must be witchcraft'. In another publication, Geschiere (2001:227) calls this ambivalence within the concept of witchcraft 'its Janus-faced character'. Although Satanism in Zambia, like witchcraft, is related to misfortunes, the accusations of Satanism in particular are related to the rich and powerful. To understand these accusations better, we have to focus not on a broad concept of witchcraft but on the ideas within the witchcraft spectrum that connect magical practices to the acquisition of wealth and power. This will be the topic of the next section.

◼ 'New' narratives about illicit accumulation

In recent years, witchcraft has been lumped together with a range of other phenomena. There has been a long scholarly discussion about the distinction between witchcraft and sorcery that, for example, Evans-Pritchard makes in his *Witchcraft, oracles, and magic among the Azande* (1937). According to him, witches do their harm as a result of innate ability, while sorcerers know techniques and substances that can harm. But there are many more agents that do not precisely fall within the categories of either witch or sorcerer that can cause mystical harm, a number that only increases under conditions where people from different ethnic backgrounds live together (Turner 1964:318). In this section, I will discuss these new narratives that seem connected to witchcraft and are often focused on the illicit accumulation of wealth. Before doing that, however, I will first explain why I think that the term 'the occult', which is often used concerning these narratives, does not offer a helpful frame of reference.

◼ The occult in studies about Africa

Starting from the late 1980s, several anthropologists have introduced the label 'the occult' when writing about the system of ideas and agents related to mystical harm. Before this time, the occult was not used to refer to African phenomena. For example, Evans-Pritchard uses the word only once in *Witchcraft, oracles and magic among the Azande* (1937), in an exposé about the differences between European and Zande ideas about witchcraft. 'To us, witchcraft is something which haunted and disgusted our credulous forefathers', he writes (Evans-Pritchard 1937:19) and continues, '[b]ut the Zande expects to come across witchcraft at any time of the day or night. [...]

He is not terrified at the presence of an occult enemy'. The occult, associated with eeriness, belongs to the European, not the Zande perspective. Other classical anthropologists writing about Africa also do not use the term occult.

As I have argued elsewhere, the first to specifically employ the term 'occult' were a group of scholars writing about Cameroon. Fisiy, Geschiere, Rowlands and Warnier all make use of the term in various collaborated articles (Kroesbergen-Kamps 2020a:861). These authors prefer the label occult because it is more ambiguous than either witchcraft or sorcery, meaning that phenomena that do not neatly fit into these categories but are related to them can be discussed as well (Rowlands & Warnier 1988:131, footnote). In their famous article on 'Occult Economies', Comaroff and Comaroff (1999) use the term to include not only witchcraft but also other phenomena like zombies, Satanism and ritual murder (Kroesbergen-Kamps 2020a:861).

Another reason to speak about the occult, rather than about witchcraft or sorcery, is that the term has less specifically negative Western connotations. As Fisiy and Geschiere (1990) write:

> There is good reason to question whether terms like 'sorcery', 'witchcraft', or the French 'sorcellerie' are good translations of the African terms. In many instances these Western terms have highly pejorative overtones which do not do justice to the African terms. Often, a more neutral translation like 'occult forces' is to be preferred. (p. 136, footnote)

While I agree that the term witchcraft is problematic, I wonder whether speaking about occult forces is a solution. There are three issues at stake here: is it proper to discuss a range of ideas about mystical harm as one phenomenon? Should Satanism in Zambia be included in this phenomenon? And is 'the occult' the right label for this phenomenon?

With regard to the first question, Terence Ranger (2007) makes a distinction between 'splitters' and 'lumpers'. The former discuss phenomena within their own right as products of unique historical circumstances (Kroesbergen-Kamps 2020a:862), while the latter attempt to make statements from a more general perspective. Ranger chooses sides with the splitters, arguing that context and history are of utmost importance in understanding a phenomenon. Several scholars point out the confusion that can be the result of lumping together disparate phenomena. Murray and Sanders (2005), who have studied ritual murder in colonial Lesotho, for example, take a strong stance against discussing witchcraft and medicine murder as if they refer to the same thing, as Comaroff and Comaroff do. Ritual murder, in their view, is a crime that can be prosecuted on the grounds of empirical evidence: a person was murdered, and police can use physical clues to find the perpetrator. Witchcraft, on the other hand, refers to mystical harm caused through invisible means which are impossible to prove. The lumpers have advocates too, such as Birgit Meyer (2009), who states that making more general observations about developments

in society is a necessary part of much academic research, especially if comparisons are involved.

In this book, the topic is quite specific: Satanism in Zambia, rather than a general overview of occult phenomena within the whole of sub-Saharan Africa. It is therefore more of a splitting than a lumping work. However, I will use authors who are not writing specifically about Satanism in Zambia because the narratives that they discuss are similar. Stories about phone numbers that can initiate one or of dangerous gifts (cf. Bonhomme 2012) are reminiscent of the testimonies of Satanism that I have introduced here, as are ideas about zombies, spiritual husbands, firemen who steal blood, mermaids who may reward their followers with riches, et cetera. What these ideas have in common is that they are often related to misfortune, acquiring money or status and anxiety regarding interpersonal relations. A comparison between these different narratives and notions can be very informative because it may point to similar processes that occur in different societies.

Another thing that all of these ideas have in common is that they point at hidden forces or beings that are not recognised in, or at least not approved by, both science and mainstream religions like Christianity. The hiddenness of these forces makes 'occult', which means hidden, a logical term. Unfortunately, things are more complicated. In its history, the term occult has been used as a wastebasket category for whatever did not fit into officially sanctioned science or religion (cf. Hanegraaff 2012). This means that a normative judgement is inherent in the use of the word occult. Calling something occult is saying: this is not proper religion; this is not scientific. Within the academic field of Western esotericism, the occult is not used as a general label because of this lack of neutrality of the term.

Given these objections, the use of the label occult in African studies since the 1980s as an allegedly neutral term is unfortunate. The things that are called occult in African studies – spirits, zombies, witches, penis-snatchers, et cetera – are negatively valued from the perspective of both science and mainline religion. In science, these occult things are regularly treated with scorn as superstitions or illusions, and in mainline religion, they are rejected, if not denied, as will be argued in more detail in the next chapter. One could argue that the value judgement present in the term occult is a remnant of a colonial past that judges African concepts according to Western standards.

Therefore, in this book, I will speak about contemporary ideas about witchcraft and related phenomena rather than about occult phenomena. These phenomena form a fruitful context for a study about Satanism in Zambia because they (although they all have their contexts and peculiarities) often show thematic similarities and seem to arise in similar social circumstances. In the following section, I will give a few examples of these phenomena as they are discussed in the academic literature.

■ Zombies, vampires and ritual murder

In their article on occult economies, Comaroff and Comaroff (1999:285–286, 289–290) mention zombies as an example of the new forms of witchcraft that abound in postcolonial South Africa. Zombie is a term popularised in a Caribbean context but with roots in central Africa (Niehaus 2005:192). In South Africa, the term was used by a commission that investigated witchcraft and ritual killings in the Northern Province. This commission defined the word as follows (Ralushai et al. 1996):

> ZOMBI [*sic*]/SETLOTLWANE (N.SOTHO)/XIDADJANI (TSONGA)/MA-TUKWANE (VENDA)
>
> A zombie is a person who is believed to have died, but because of the power of a witch, he is resurrected, but he works for the person who has turned him into a zombi. To make it impossible for him to communicate with other people, the front part of his tongue is cut off so that he cannot speak. It is believed that he works at night only. It is also believed that by the power of witchcraft, he can leave his rural area and work in an urban area, often far from home. Whenever he meets people he knows, he vanishes. (p. 5)

Not all zombies are dead, however. Some people who wake up tired in the morning attribute their exhaustion to a nocturnal existence as a labourer for a zombie master (Comaroff & Comaroff 1999:289). Stories about zombie-like creatures are known in different parts of Africa, such as Cameroon (Geschiere 1997; Geschiere & Nyamnjoh 1998) and Malawi (Steinforth 2008, 2009), besides South Africa.

The zombie is created to provide cheap labour to its creator. Where witches were believed to eat their victims, the zombie is captured but not consumed (Geschiere & Nyamnjoh 1998:74). In some areas, like the victims of witchcraft attacks, the zombie is a relative of its creator (Steinforth 2009:184). In South Africa, this kinship connection does not seem to be necessary (Comaroff & Comaroff 1999:289). In Malawi, it is the spirit of a person that is captured by the creator of the zombie. This spirit works for the benefit of its captor. Steinforth (2009) describes the tasks that such a spirit may perform as follows:

> A businessman owning a maize-mill would use the personality spirit of a relative to safeguard high engine performance, leaving the invisible, immaterial [*spirit*] to pull the driving belt on. If the [*captor*] works as a freight carrier or a minibus entrepreneur, a captured spirit would be used to ensure good engine performance or high reliability of the vehicles, and a grocery shop owner could use the [*spirit*] to act as an invisible marketing manager, impalpably pushing potential customers into the shop when they could have bought next door just as well. (p. 184)

In the meantime, the person whose spirit was stolen either dies or is left with a severe mental disorder (Steinforth 2009:184). This link between zombification and mental disorders seems absent in South Africa.

In all cases, the captured spirit of a person is used for the private benefit of its captor. In Cameroon, the *nouveau riche* are suspected of having come by their

wealth through zombie labour (Geschiere 1997:139). Comaroff and Comaroff (1999:290) link the narratives about zombies to the experience of the new neoliberal economy in South Africa, in which wealth is accumulated in an obscured manner. Isak Niehaus, also writing about the South African situation, adjusts this perspective. In the accusations of zombification that he has collected during his fieldwork in Bushbuckridge between 1990 and 2005, the accused were not at all the elite who profit from neoliberal economic success. Rather, accusations were lodged against those who were most impoverished, people of whom neighbours wondered how they were able to get by without any visible source of income or support network (Niehaus 2005:200–202).

The experience of Satanism, according to the testimonies of ex-Satanists, is also one of unexpected and unwanted capture by a force from outside. Satanists labour for the kingdom of Satan, sometimes without even being aware of it. The connection between narratives about Satanism and these new witchcraft-like stories is even clearer in the figure of the vampire.

Like the zombie, in Europe and the USA, the vampire is a figure of literature and books, of entertainment. In Africa, the label vampire is known as well. In Gabon, the term vampire started to be used in the 1950s to speak about a connection between eating and acquiring power (Bernault 2019:183). Luise White uses the term vampire to discuss a genre of stories about employees working for Europeans who steal the blood of Africans to be rewarded with money (White 2000:10). In East and Central Africa, different groups were associated with this idea, such as firemen, police officers and managers of mines. In Northern Rhodesia, in what is now Zambia, game rangers were the employees of the colonial government who were first linked to stealing blood. The word for a game ranger, *banyama*, combines the Bemba prefix *ba-*, meaning 'people of' with the Swahili and Chinyanja word for meat and wild animals, *nyama*. By 1931, the word for the 'people of the game' or game rangers had become a synonym for people who steal blood in general (White 2000:12).

According to White, human blood did not have the significance it acquired in the narratives about *banyama* and other vampires in precolonial times (2000:14). The confrontation with Western medical practices and Christian narratives about the Eucharist increased the significance of blood in the African imagination. This new obsession with blood is duplicated in narratives about Satanists, who are also believed to drink and steal blood.

Bernhard Udelhoven (2021) describes narratives about *banyama* that caused a panic on the Zambian Copperbelt in the 1940s. He writes (Udelhoven 2021):

> During the 1940s, the Copperbelt was seized by fears about fashion articles and cosmetics that were said to be mystically charged to initiate their users, without their knowledge, into the sinister trade with the banyama. The banyama were also said to be canning African victims as 'corned beef', to be consumed by unsuspecting customers. (p. 408)

The idea that people can become allied to an unseen force without knowing it themselves is very similar to the unconscious initiation that many ex-Satanists have experienced. Stories about processed foods that contain human body parts are also well-known in the discourse of Satanism today.

A final narrative that gained traction in the 20th century and is mentioned by Comaroff and Comaroff (1999) as well is that of killing for body parts, also known as ritual murder. This phenomenon was investigated by the South African Commission of Inquiry into Witchcraft Violence and Ritual Murders in the Northern Province too. According to the commission (Ralushai et al. 1996:20), 'people are killed ritually for financial gain and to bring luck. In cases of rulers, ritual killing is done for the purpose of power and authority'. The body parts of the people who are killed are used in charms (called *muti* or medicine in the South African context). An eye, for example, is believed to grant farsightedness, blood gives vitality and genital organs are connected to fertility (Ralushai et al. 1996:21).

The use of human body parts in traditional medicine is known throughout Africa. Florence Bernault (2019:197) describes the belief in Gabon that rich people use the flesh of innocent victims to make charms that prompt the spirit world to award them with wealth and power. In Malawi (Steinforth 2008), Botswana (Burke 2000) and Lesotho (Murray & Sanders 2005), similar phenomena have been described. In East Africa, persons with albinism are especially in danger of becoming victims of murder for their body parts, which are believed to work as a lucky charm (for an extensive review of the literature on the murder of albinos in East Africa, see Reimer-Kirkham et al. 2019).

Murray and Sanders (2005) describe the occurrence of medicine or *muti* murders in Lesotho between 1895 and 1966, based on the judicial archives as well as newspaper records. Medicines, according to the Basotho, could be used in situations in which success was urgently needed but felt to be beyond control (Murray & Sanders 2005:53). The most powerful medicines are prepared by ritual specialists (doctors), and because humans are the most powerful creatures, medicines containing human ingredients are the ultimate source of power. This practice had a long history, but in the 1940s, the incidence of murder for the acquisition of body parts to be used in medicine multiplied. Partly, this was because more murders were recognised or reported as such, but even when that is factored in, there seems to be an increase. This increase in ritual killings in the 20th century has been noted by several scholars (see also Niehaus 2000; Turrell 2001).

Stories about ritual killings are also similar to the discourse of Satanism in Zambia. Satanists are believed to sacrifice people to become rich, like the perpetrators of ritual killings. In her comparative study of witchcraft and Satanism, Jean La Fontaine (2016:45–58) discusses the label 'ritual killing' at length. She distinguishes three actions that may be referred to as ritual killing:

human sacrifice, killing for body parts and ritual murder. The first, *human sacrifice*, is a public, religiously sanctioned ritual which took place in many different societies, although it is no longer practised today. Because the ritual was sanctioned, it was legitimised. Although human sacrifice involves taking the life of another human being it should not be called murder, because murder implies illegitimate killing, which human sacrifice was not.

The second, *killing for body parts* that are used in 'medicines' to enhance health, wealth or success in life, is what we have labelled here as ritual killing. According to La Fontaine, in contrast to human sacrifice, killing for body parts does not deserve the adjective 'ritual' because the act has no religious meaning and is done in secret for individual ends, rather than publicly and for the benefit of the community (2016:51; see also Bonhomme 2016:23).

Lastly, *ritual murder* involves an underground organisation devoted to the killing of human beings as an act of worship or to acquire illicit spiritual powers. The idea of ritual murder is part and parcel of the narrative about evil Others, which was described in Chapter 1. Through colonialism, this myth of ritual murder with its European roots has reached Africa, where independent or material evidence of such crimes cannot be found either (La Fontaine 2016:55).

The 20th and 21st-century narratives about murders that I have described here are part of the second category, that of killing for body parts. The narratives about Satanism, however, belong to the third category, that of an imaginary ritual murder that has no actual existence in the material world. There is an important difference between stories about witches, zombies, vampires and Satanists on the one hand and killing for body parts on the other. In the case of the medicine murder, a crime is committed that can be proven in court, whereas this is not the case with witchcraft, zombies, vampires and Satanists (cf. Murray & Sanders 2005:295).

Despite their differences, all of these new stories about harm using spiritual means or harm for spiritual purposes have in common that they are centred around ideas about wealth and power and how to acquire it. Zombies work for the gain of their creator, vampires steal blood for money and body parts are harvested to become rich. These stories have their roots not just in the belief in witchcraft but also in African notions of the distribution of wealth and authority. In the following section, we will take a closer look at those notions.

■ Illicit accumulation in African worldviews

How are narratives about zombies, vampires and ritual murders related to an African worldview? All of these stories are related to questions about legitimate and illegitimate power and wealth (see also Kroesbergen-Kamps 2020c). An important principle of life in African thought was and is equivalence. Robert Thornton (2017:138) defines this principle as 'the value that all members of the

community are, in principle, equivalent as human beings and as brothers and sisters'. If a person has more than another, some kind of support from the spirit world is needed. This support can be legitimate, but some people seek to enrich themselves through spiritual means that harm others. This support is vital for any form of success in the material world. In an article about religion and the secular, Birgit Meyer uses a Ghanaian case to show that from an African point of view, the spiritual and the physical are completely entangled and cannot be seen as distinct spheres. Rather, invisible forces are 'powers that generate power. Talk about spirits offers a statement about what "powers" the world' (Meyer 2012a:107). When speaking about power, one automatically speaks about the spirit world as well.

In Malawi, those who occupy a senior position in society are known as *kukhwima*, which means ripened, fortified or empowered (Van Dijk 1998:165). *Kukhwima* is also the name for the practices that allow one to reach this position. Positioned in a grey area between protective magic and harmful witchcraft (Steinforth 2009:180–181), *kukhwima* is not endorsed but accepted as a fact of life for those who have attained status, power or wealth. Specialists in the spirit world, such as *ng'angas*, are sought out by those who want to acquire *kukhwima*. The specialist will give this client instructions that need to be executed. These instructions may include the acquisition of certain material substances needed to make protective amulets, such as specific roots or pieces of snakeskin (Van Dijk 1992:167). For really powerful magic, more far-reaching measures are needed. Examples are committing incest with a close family member such as a sister or mother or using ritual means to cause their death or a severe mental disorder (Steinforth 2013:145). In Malawi, ideas about *kukhwima* are relevant both in narratives about zombies and murder for body parts.

Wim van Binsbergen (1981), in his classic study about religious change in western Zambia, writes that there are specific people who are associated with these practices:

> It is highly significant that medicine prepared out of human remains, so central in impersonal sorcery, is considered to be essential for the attainment and maintaining of precisely the few elevated statuses existing in the society of central-western Zambia: the hunter, the doctor (*nganga*), the commercial entrepreneur, and especially the chief. (p. 142)

In an overview of *muti* murder in Natal, Turrell (2001:23) mentions the chief, the healer and the businessman as three categories of people who need the extraordinary power acquired through the taking of human life.

In the past, it seems that the major beneficiaries of this kind of ritual were those who held positions of special skill and authority and, in particular, the chief. Like the diviner or healer, the chief acts as an intermediary between

the spirit world and the physical world through his embodiment of the mystical powers of the ancestors (Kaunda 2018:4–5). Though different precolonial African societies had different political systems, there are some commonalities in chieftaincies. Chiefs are the leaders of local communities, and they play an important role in the distribution of assets (Swindler 2010:159). These assets can be visible and physical; for example, chiefs manage the use of land and organise cooperative action. The chief is also connected to assets that are more spiritual, such as the coming of the rains and the flow of blessings from the ancestors to the community in general (Watson 1958:168). Finally, the chief has the spiritual power to protect his community from the threat of witchcraft and other spiritual dangers.

Through the chief, good things trickle down from the spiritual world to the larger community. But the chief can only have this position if he has some control over spiritual forces. Ann Swindler (2010) writes, for example, about chiefs in Malawi:

> A chief who does not accumulate control over material and spiritual resources becomes less 'sacred', less prestigious, and thus less able to provide collective goods for his community, both in the material and spiritual realms. (p. 164)

Today in Malawi, chiefs and headmen are still, like the traditional healers, providers of the instructions and rituals for how to become *kukhwima*, because they are taught these practices during their initiation (Steinforth 2009:186).

In Gabon, the distribution of power by powerful people was described in terms of eating (Bernault 2019:171). Those in power would absorb different kinds of wealth, such as goods, people and alliances, and regurgitate them again to redistribute the wealth for the benefit of the community. To be able to do this, the powerful men used the witchcraft substance in their bellies. To nourish this substance, the powerful men were also known to retain assets and destroy people's lives. In southern Africa, the idea of a witchcraft fluid in the belly is absent, but the ambivalent view of those in power is similar.

The association of chiefs with causing deaths to acquire their power tainted their position somewhat. According to Wim van Binsbergen (1976):

> Chieftainship took on a connotation of sorcery which the chief could not shake off even if he went so far as to attempt to monopolize the right to identify and prosecute sorcerers (e.g. by means of the poison ordeal). (p. 80)

A Tswana proverb quoted by Ørnulf Gulbrandsen (2002:223) shows a similar sentiment: 'A king is like a knife; he might cut his sharpener'. In this case, the commoners are the sharpeners who may get hurt. How often such rituals used to happen is unclear. According to some, human lives were taken only in times of great challenges towards the chiefly power or in times of severe drought, a sign that something had gone seriously wrong (Turrell 2001:22, 38). This practice seems not to have been rejected as sharply as other types of

witchcraft, and there are even some who argue that it was accepted. Wiebe de Jong (2015) writes:

> Since the well-being of the entire community was in the chief's hands, it was important to strengthen him. Ritual murders, consequently, were desired, meaningful and everyone knew that once in a while they had to be committed in order to keep or restore harmony in the community. (p. 13)

Ritual murders performed for the chief were seen, according to De Jong, as legitimate human sacrifices for the good of the community and not for the individual gain of the chief.

During the colonial age, things changed. The governments took up the role of the chief in the colonial administration, making it a salaried position. This made it an even more coveted office. In many parts of Africa, becoming a chief is not a simple hereditary matter. Chieftaincies are often linked to a specific clan or lineage, but birth is not the only or even the main criterion (Kroesbergen-Kamps 2020b:187). To become the next chief, some extra merit or support is needed. In colonial times the struggle for chiefly power became more intense, and with that came a growing number of deaths used to obtain spiritual support. There is evidence for this in the records of the colonial courts. Murray and Sanders (2005) investigated the occurrence of medicine murder in colonial Lesotho and concluded that this mainly happened in the context of rivalries about positions of traditional authority. Turrell (2001) argues the same for the beginning of the 20th century in Natal in South Africa.

At the same time, the practices that attract wealth and power in return for some kind of compensation also became available to a larger public. The traditional healers who provided *muti* containing human body parts started to work for people outside the chiefly hierarchy – people who were striving for personal gain instead of the collective good (Gulbrandsen 2002:225–226). From the 1920s onwards, ambitious commoners employed specialists who used human materials to attract spiritual power, wealth and other kinds of success (De Jong 2015:15; Turrell 2001:38). A human skull buried in the foundations of a building was believed to ensure the success of the business conducted there, and shop owners would incorporate human hands into the construction of their doorways, which would beckon prospective patrons in (Vincent 2008:44). In these cases, the only one who gains from the death of a human being is the individual ambitious commoner. No longer did the death work to sustain the collective good of the larger community. Where sacrifice may have been accepted in cases where it was used for the common good, success acquired through murder for individual gain was perceived as illegitimate. Isak Niehaus (2000:41) writes that from the 1960s, 'all forms of sacrifice [...] became illicit'.

Illicit or not, the practices whereby the life of a human is taken to become rich or powerful still occur. Murdered bodies are found with missing body

parts, although there is no statistic on how often this happens. In Malawi, the belief is that whoever uses *kukhwima* rituals will go mad if they fail to perform the instructions set by the ritual specialist. In mental institutions, the prevalence of this kind of madness has grown tremendously in recent years (cf. Steinforth 2017). The narratives about zombies and vampires discussed in the previous section fit in this same framework, as means of illicit accumulation for personal gain. Similarly, narratives about Satanism in Zambia, and specifically the rumours that lead to riots involving businessmen, need to be understood as a part of this image of the distribution of power and wealth.

■ Conclusion

Stories about Satanism are closely related to other rumours and narratives, traditions, practices and beliefs. Some of these imaginaries have a long history. Zambian narratives about Satanism make sense within an African, holistic worldview in which the spirit world is entangled with the physical world. They also echo witchcraft beliefs described by early anthropologists researching in Zambia and neighbouring countries.

Traditions and convictions are not unchanging entities, fixed in the past. Rather, they are fluid and adaptive, as can be seen from the more recent stories about witchcraft-like phenomena such as zombies, vampires and ritual murder. These newer phenomena also show similarities to the narratives about Satanism in Zambia, especially the accusations of Satanism that sometimes lead to violence in Zambian towns. In this chapter, I have discussed the Malawian notion of *kukhwima* and other similar southern African ideas of taking a human life in exchange for power or wealth. This practice seems to have been a known, yet uncommon, occurrence in precolonial times, and during that time it was possibly even socially acceptable for the few elevated statuses that existed. In colonial times, the rituals prescribed for this practice opened up for ambitious commoners who used them for their individual gain. In the course of this change, the practice became widely rejected.

Concerns about illicit accumulation show a cultural unease with social stratification. Those who have more or are in another way elevated above the general population are supposed to have done something antisocial to get to their position. In previous times, this may have been accepted as a sacrifice for the good of the collective, but now, becoming rich or powerful is seen as only benefitting the individual. In Chapter 4, I will delve deeper into what this means for the discourse of Satanism in Zambia.

Before that, however, we need to look at the history of Satan in Christianity and on the African continent. I will do that in the next chapter.

Satan comes to Africa

■ Introduction

On a Sunday afternoon in one of Zambia's many locally instituted neo-Pentecostal churches, a man is called forward to give his testimony. This is not an uncommon sight. Many of these churches have an 'ordinary' service in the morning, with praise and worship and a sermon, and a special deliverance service later in the afternoon or on one of the weekdays. In such a deliverance service, the focus is on what God can do. There is usually room for testimonies in which members of the congregation share how God has helped them, and often the pastor will call people who suffer from specific afflictions to the front of the church so that they can be prayed for by the pastor and his helpers.

On this Sunday, the man who comes forward confesses that he was a Satanist. He explains that he wanted to have more success in his business. Four of his children died in September – possibly over the course of a couple of years – and the father says that he was responsible for their deaths. The pastor invites the whole congregation to stretch their arms towards the front of the church where he and the father are standing and pray for this father.

The pastor starts a prayer that the father has to repeat word for word:

> 'Lord Jesus, today I repent of witchcraft and Satanism. I repent for the death of four children. May their blood be cleansed from my hands. Today, I break every curse.' (#149, participant observation, 14 June 2015)

The prayer proceeds haltingly, as the father does not really speak English and quite obviously does not know or understand every word he has to repeat. 'Every altar, every witchdoctor, I renounce them. Let every evil altar break. The graveyard I went to, I disconnect. Let the life of Christ [...]' Here the prayer stops: the father cannot say 'Christ'.

This is a meaningful moment, and the pastor asks the whole congregation to pray for the father to loosen his bonds with the devil. After a few moments, the father can continue:

> 'Let the life of Christ set me free. I renounce Satan. I refuse you. Heal my life. Heal my family. Heal my wife. Father, set me free. Heal me. I bless my children. May all be well with them.' (#149, participant observation, 14 June 2015)

The pastor continues praying for the father, saying God will deliver him today and declaring him whole.

In the previous chapter, we encountered narratives about illicit accumulation as an African web of stories in which the narratives about Satanism fit. What people are accused of when people speak about Satanism is related to older ideas about using human materials in rituals to become rich or acquire status. The father in the neo-Pentecostal church seems to have done something similar. He was a businessman but lacked success. Now, four of his children are dead – sacrificed, as he says. The pastor helps him to pray against this witchcraft, against the rituals in the graveyard and against the altars that were built for his success. But witchcraft is not the only term that is used. The pastor calls what the father has done Satanism, and it is Satan that he has to renounce. How did this traditional practice, which had several vernacular names in southern Africa, come to be known as Satanism? This is the topic I will address in this chapter.

To do this, I will first discuss the development of the figure of Satan in Christianity. Then I will give an overview of the contemporary Christian tradition that puts the greatest focus on Satan, namely Pentecostalism and particularly its spiritual warfare theology. Finally, I will discuss how the image of the devil was introduced in Africa and how it developed here, with special attention to the Zambian context.

■ Satan and his demons in Western Christianity

In Christian circles, I have regularly heard simplified presentations about the devil, in the order of, 'the Bible speaks about the devil, so we know he is real'. Unfortunately, things are not that straightforward. The devil, or Satan, is a figure with a history that has changed over the centuries and under influence of different cultures. I will therefore start this section with an overview of thinking about Satan in Western Christianity.

■ Satan in Christian theology until the 20th century

Today, the Hebrew word Satan is used as the name of a person. In the oldest texts of the Old Testament, however, it is more like the description of a certain role or function, namely that of the accuser. Like the name of any other job, it gets a definite article. For example, in the story about Balaam and his ass (Nm 22:22–35), *the* Satan is a celestial being sent by God to fulfil a specific mission. In the book of Job, Satan is also mentioned, seemingly fulfilling a particular role within a judicial context. Here, he is still a subordinate of God.

Over time, as we look at how Satan is described in the Bible, Satan develops from a helper and subordinate into the enemy of God and all goodness in the world (Almond 2014:17). 1 Chronicles 21:1, probably written around 100 BC, is the first instance where the definite article is omitted, and Satan becomes a personal name for the enemy of God. In the Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, Satan is translated as *diabolos*, slanderer, which is translated as the devil in English (Almond 2014:23). In the New Testament, the words Satan and devil are used interchangeably to refer to the enemy of God, who rules the kingdom of darkness that opposes the kingdom of God (Almond 2014:24).

What is missing in the biblical accounts of Satan are the popular stories about his fall from the heavens or the connection between Satan and the serpent in the Garden of Eden (Almond 2014:33). According to Philip Almond's history of the devil (2014), these ideas evolved in the second century AD. According to the dominant story that became current at that time, Satan had been created before the world or mankind as the chief of the angels (Almond 2014:47). He, however, rebelled against God and was, with some others, expelled from heaven. As, according to this narrative, the devil already existed when Adam and Eve were created, it was possible to insert him into the story of the fall as well. As Almond (2014) writes:

> The devil, having been identified with the serpent (or having literally entered into it) now became ultimately responsible for the fall of man, the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden, and the alienation of man from God through his disobedience. (p. 47)

Only from the second century onwards, when the backstory of Satan had been formed, did this become the preferred reading of the story of creation and the fall.

Satan was the leader of the group of angels that had rebelled against God. In theology, these other fallen angels were conceptualised as demons. The meaning of the Greek word *daimon*, from which the English *demon* stems and which is used in the gospels, is closer to the understanding of spirits in African traditions than to the concept of an evil spirit that we currently know. *Daimons*, in Greek culture, could be good as well as bad and served as intermediaries

between humans and the gods. In Christian theology, the word demon became the name for subordinates of the devil. Demons were thought to be able to tempt and assault Christian believers. At first, only a few demons were named, mainly those who appear in the Bible, such as Beelzebub and Leviathan. Over time, however, the number of demons grew to include pagan gods and other named spirits.

The idea that demons can possess human bodies and seize control of their faculties also developed over time, although it never became an article of Christian faith. The Nicene Creed is silent on demonic possession, as are the catechisms that proliferated after the invention of the printing press. According to the scholastic tradition inspired by the works of Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), demons were incorporeal beings able to possess human beings in great numbers. From the middle of the 13th century, there was a surge of interest in the devil and his demons (Almond 2014:70), and Christian writers started to compile comprehensive lists of named demons. They identified demons connected to days and hours, to the weather, to sexual sins or psychological and emotional weaknesses (Frankfurter 2006:27, 29).

At the same time, the devil became connected to magic, witchcraft, and heresy. Before Christianity, both the Romans and the Germanic people knew stories about evil women, able to fly or transform themselves into an owl, who killed and ate their victims. The common people suspected these witches of harming them by occult means by causing droughts, blight, sickness or death of livestock. When the interest in the devil and his demons increased during the period of the Renaissance, church scholars developed a different concept of witchcraft. In that period, the idea took hold that people, especially heretics, could make a pact with the devil. Witchcraft began to be seen by theologians and church officials as not merely harmful but a threat against Christianity. According to the historian Norman Cohn (1976:230), witches were believed to worship Satan in Sabbaths, which included sexual orgies and feasting on the flesh of babies.

Commoners and scholars urged each other on in the persecution of witches, which reached its height in the late 16th century. Jeffrey Burton Russell (1984:301), another historian of belief in the devil, writes that the witch craze 'revealed the most terrible danger of belief in the devil: the willingness to assume that those whom one distrusts or fears are servants of Satan and fitting targets of destructive hatred'. Russell interprets the witch hunt in the 16th and 17th centuries as one of the first instances where belief in the devil became intermingled with the belief in the existence of a harmful organisation devoted to Satan. The narratives about this organisation have been reviewed in Chapter 1 of this book.

During the time of the witch hunts, the focus on demons and their works increased in Christian theology, also because of a focus on apocalyptic thought.

Apocalypse refers to the description of the final judgement in the end times, given in the book of Revelation. This time will be a final battle between good and evil, God and Satan, and the world will be drenched in sin. Many people living in the 15th and 16th centuries saw signs of the apocalypse, according to Levack (2013:66). The economic circumstances were bad, wars broke out in Europe and there was the religious conflict that led to the Reformation and the founding of many break-away churches. During this time, demonic possession was seen as another sign of the coming apocalypse in both Catholic and Protestant churches.

Both religious thought and political, economic and social unrest made an eschatological interpretation of possession probable in the 16th century in both the Roman Catholic Church and the new Protestant churches. However, Protestants and Catholics did not completely agree on how to handle possession. Levack (2013) describes the debate about possession and exorcism that raged between Catholics and Protestants. Despite the absence of clear biblical guidelines on how to expel demons, Catholics developed a complex rite of exorcism. Protestants have generally been wary of this practice, claiming that it lacked a scriptural warrant. Faced with a case of possession, they referred to Christ's words that demons can only be expelled by faith, prayer and fasting (Mk 9:19; Mt 17:20) and denied the Catholic ritual as unsanctioned magic. They also claimed that miracles had not been possible or necessary since the apostolic age. This doctrine is known as the cessation of miracles. Levack (2013:40) argues that the lack of rituals for an exorcism was a problem, because 'Protestants who encountered a case of possession [...] could not do very much about the situation'.

In the 16th century, belief in the devil was a given. It was, as Almond (2014:196) writes, 'as impossible not to believe in the devil as it was impossible not to believe in God'. This changed in the following centuries, under the influence of better economic circumstances and a change in worldview in the period of the Enlightenment. For a time, instances of possession were presented as evidence for the reality of the existence of demons and the devil. Levack (2013:85–93) labels the public performance of exorcisms as 'confessional propaganda', meaning that it functions to proselytise amongst nonbelievers as well as to give guidance to believers and confirm their demonological ideas, defending them against competing, more secularised religious ideas (Kroesbergen-Kamps 2018:248).

When the rational worldview of a world that is governed by natural laws became commonplace, experiences that seemed to be outside that natural order lost credibility, regardless of whether they were miraculous or demonic (Kroesbergen & Kroesbergen-Kamps 2021). Within the Protestant church, the idea that the possibility of miracles had ceased after the time of the Bible gained ground. All events happening in the world now were deemed to only have natural causes. Cases of witchcraft and possession became less and less

frequent in Europe. God's active intervention in the lives of believers was not expected anymore, and the devil began to be seen as an internal force of temptation rather than as the personification of evil. In this worldview, there was no place for witches, demons and possession.

One response to the growing rationalisation and secularisation in the 19th century was a romantic revaluation of previously rejected objects of religious interest. This led to a new appreciation of pagan gods, which generated the modern movements of paganism and witchcraft in the West (Hutton 1999). It also engendered a new, appreciative interest in the figure of Satan, especially in 19th-century literature (Van Luijk 2016:68–112). Finally, in 1966, the Church of Satan was founded by Anton Szandor LaVey, one of the first and most well-known public incarnations of modern religious Satanism, in which Satan is a figure of worship and reverence. Besides these serious attempts to make Satan the focal point of religion, popular culture also continued to flirt with the figure of Satan in literature, music and film.

Another response against the rational worldview of mainline churches came from the renewal movements in the 18th and 19th centuries, which emphasised the direct experience of the divine. Out of these revivals, the Pentecostal movement emerged at the beginning of the 20th century. From the start, Pentecostals believed in demonic possession, and they practised exorcism or deliverance to expel those demons. At first, however, Pentecostalism was a movement on the fringes of Christianity. This changed in the 1960s when Pentecostal ideas started to gain influence in mainline churches as well. This not only made healing, deliverance and the gifts of the spirit acceptable in a range of Protestant and Catholic congregations but also gave new importance to the forces of evil in the world. In the next section, we will look closer at the history of the devil in Pentecostal Christianity.

■ Satan in 20th-century Pentecostal and evangelical Christianity

The beginning of the Pentecostal movement is often pinpointed very precisely to the revival that happened at William Seymour's church on Azusa Street in Los Angeles, starting in 1906. But the roots of the Pentecostal movement go back further than that, to the religious revivalism of the 19th century. In these Protestant revivals, the emphasis was on emotions and sensations rather than on the rationalism that had become prominent in many European churches after the Enlightenment. American Evangelicalism, of which the Pentecostal movement forms a part, at least in the USA context (Martin 2002:xvii, 2), was formed during this time. Of central importance in the revivals was the emotional encounter with God through the Holy Spirit (Anderson 2013a:11).

Scholars agree that Pentecostalism has grown quickly and spread globally during the 20th century, although they do not all agree on the numbers.

Today, there are between 300 and 700 million Pentecostals worldwide, especially in the Global South (Wilkinson 2015:97). The higher number includes Independent and Spirit churches in, for example, Africa. As we will see in the next section, the African Independent Churches (AICs) have a history that runs parallel to the history of the Pentecostal movement, but it is questionable whether the two should be conflated. In any case, the growth of Pentecostalism is remarkable and its influence on world Christianity is indisputable.

The history of Pentecostalism has been described as a succession of waves or consecutive periods of growth, each with a particular theological focus. In this brief introduction, I will use this classification, although I am aware that speaking about a succession of waves can be misleading from a global perspective, as outreaches from the different waves may reach a specific place at the same time (Anderson 2010:23). What arrived in waves spaced 50 or 25 years apart in the USA may arrive within one year in an African town.

The first wave of Pentecostalism emphasises a personal relationship with God as well as the gifts of the Spirit, especially speaking in tongues. The ability to speak in tongues is seen as evidence of true faith. Churches based on this first wave of Pentecostalism are known as the classical Pentecostal churches (Anderson 2013a:6–7). These are present worldwide, including in Africa (Anderson 2013b:114). African examples are the local churches within the worldwide fellowship of the Assemblies of God, which started its ministry in Africa in 1914 (Kalu 2008:42), or the Church of Pentecost, which was founded in Ghana in 1937.

The charismatic renewal movement of the 1950s and 1960s represents the second wave of Pentecostalism. Whereas the Pentecostals of the first wave were mainly disenfranchised groups like the poor and African-Americans, this wave was picked up by middle-class Christians within the mainline Protestant churches and the Roman Catholic Church. Many charismatics did not leave their churches for Pentecostal denominations during the charismatic renewal. Theologically, the focus shifted from speaking in tongues as evidence for a Spirit-filled faith to the use of other gifts of the Spirit, for example, healing and prophecy. Under the influence of the charismatic renewal movement, prayers for healing and deliverance became, if not mainstream, at least acceptable in various churches. The charismatic renewal gave a boost to missionary activity in mainline as well as Pentecostal churches. In Africa, the Deeper Life Bible Church, founded in Nigeria in 1973, is an example of a denomination with roots in second-wave Pentecostalism (Marshall 2009:69).

In the third wave of Pentecostalism, which developed in the 1970s and 1980s, the focus shifted to signs and wonders, spiritual warfare and prosperity. Churches with their roots in this third wave are known as neo-Pentecostal churches. In Africa, independent neo-Pentecostal churches have mushroomed. Many of these are small congregations around one pastor; others, like the Nigerian Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries or the (also Nigerian) Living

Faith Church Worldwide (also known as Winners' Chapel), are multinational organisations.

The prosperity gospel, deliverance and spiritual warfare are elements of neo-Pentecostal theology, which are relevant for the development of ideas about Satan. I will introduce each of these concepts here.

Within neo-Pentecostalism, money, health and good fortune are seen as divine (Bowler 2013:7). The good things a person can enjoy in this life are blessings from God. This is in itself not a shocking statement, but prosperity gospel adherents take a further step: as God wants his believers to prosper, believers have a right to become prosperous and enjoy good health. Another word for the prosperity gospel is the Word of Faith movement. If a believer speaks the word, claiming the blessings from God, and he does this in good faith, then he will receive it. A slightly pejorative label for the prosperity gospel catches this attitude: 'name it and claim it'.

Prosperity gospel can be seen as a response to a Protestant emphasis on austerity and enjoyment deferred to the afterlife. A good Christian will reap the fruits of his faith not in heaven, the prosperity gospel holds, but in this life. This-worldly well-being in personal health and personal wealth acts as a measure of faith (Bowler 2013:7). The prosperity gospel has its roots also in 19th- and 20th-century New Thought movements, which emphasised the power of positive thinking. New Thought sees an intimate connection between having the right beliefs and material prosperity and physical health (Hanegraaff 1996:484–490). The prosperity gospel adds to this that the right beliefs are Christian beliefs about God. Like the other elements of neo-Pentecostal theology, the prosperity gospel has mainly been a North American development. Neo-Pentecostalism as a whole is therefore sometimes characterised as an 'American gospel' (Brouwer, Gifford & Rose 1996).

Spiritual healing has been an important element of Pentecostal practice for years, although its relevance came to the front in the charismatic renewal movement of the 1950s and 1960s (Zimmerling 2001:147). From the beginning, Pentecostals believed in demonic possession as a cause for physical and mental problems, and they practised exorcism or deliverance to expel those demons. This is in contrast to earlier evangelical theology, which held that a Christian could be oppressed by demons but not possessed (cf. Hunt 1998). It may be that openness to experience the Holy Spirit in their bodies had the effect of stimulating the belief in the possibility of demonic possession as well. At first, Pentecostalism was a movement on the fringes of Christianity. This changed in the 1950s and 1960s when Pentecostal ideas started to gain influence in mainline churches as well. All of a sudden, mainline Protestants and Catholics began to experience both divine inspiration through speaking in tongues and deliverance from demonic possession. The importance of this aspect of Pentecostal ministry increased further in the 1970s and 1980s under the influence of third-wave neo-Pentecostalism. According to Michael Cuneo

(2001), who researched deliverance practices in American churches, exorcism (now labelled as the deliverance ministry) transformed from a rare practice into a common custom.

The focus on the deliverance from demons signified a shift in Pentecostal theology. While at first it was believed that a true Christian could not be possessed, now it was stated that even born-again Christians could at least be affected by demonic forces (Cuneo 2001). Sometimes these demons were conceptualised as personified vices like lust, anger or addiction (Cuneo 2001), but at other times they were seen as actual spirits with an existence beyond the material world or the psychological inner world of a person. If the promised earthly prosperity did not materialise, this was blamed on the actions of demons.

The deliverance ministry has received even greater importance in neo-Pentecostal theology because of the latter's emphasis on spiritual warfare. Pentecostals see the supernatural in their daily life (Martin 2002:7). This seems like a holistic view, but behind it lies a dualism that divides everything into good and evil. In neo-Pentecostal cosmology, the whole of history is seen as the stage for a war between the forces of God and Satan. Pentecostals believe that God can intervene in the world and people's lives in a miraculous way. Spiritual warfare theology focuses on the flip side of this belief: the idea that there is an almost equally powerful counterforce of darkness, which also affects people's lives. Spiritual warfare is the ongoing attempt to drive back the forces of evil so that the kingdom of God can materialise in this world (Hunt 1998). Spiritual warfare theology led to increasing attention to Satan and his activities on Earth.

In the USA, testimonies of self-proclaimed ex-Satanists have been around in Christian circles since the 1970s. Two prominent ex-Satanists of that time were Michael Warnke and John Todd. Warnke narrates how he was introduced into a cult, where he received the opportunity to specialise in an aspect of the occult (Ellis 2000:185–195). His choice was Satanism. As Warnke progressed through the levels of this cult, the rituals got more perverse, including sex, the desecration of religious symbols and cannibalism. He received apartments, drugs, money and cars for his involvement. John Todd's apocalyptic testimony conflates witchcraft and paganism with Freemasons and Illuminati (Ellis 2000:195–201). His main role in this movement was to promote rock music that had the power to demonise adolescents through spells it contained. On a larger scale, he predicted worldwide carnage as the Illuminati took control of the world. Both Warnke and Todd were popular for a time, delivering their testimonies in churches. They both published their experiences, and recordings of their testimonies circulated through the Pentecostal milieu.

The preoccupation with Satanism in the USA and Europe came to a peak in the 1980s and 1990s. The beginning of the 1980s saw the publication of *Michelle Remembers* (1980), a sensational book based on recovered memories

of abuse by an alleged satanic cult. A few years later, in 1983, accusations of ritualistic child abuse were made against a preschool in California. The trial, which ended without convictions in 1990, was covered widely in the media, and similar allegations towards other childcare centres were made. In the United Kingdom (UK), the Satanism scare caught on in 1988, when tabloids started publishing about sexual abuse and child murder in ritual settings (La Fontaine 1998:1). In both the USA and the UK, there were reports about a powerful satanic organisation abducting and breeding children for use in their rituals and orgies. During the 1990s, the panic around this organisation of evil Others slowly evaporated in the West, although accusations of satanic child abuse still emerge, for example, during the 2016 campaign for the US presidential election, when Hillary Clinton was accused of presiding over a satanic child trafficking ring in the basement of a pizza parlour. Material evidence of ritual abuse by a satanic cult has always been extremely scarce.[11]

In the history of Western Christianity and culture at large, Satan has been a figure of sustained interest. This brief overview of the history of Satan shows that ideas about who Satan is and what he does have developed and changed over time. Some of these ideas have found great acclaim within African Christianity, as we will see in the next section.

■ Satan comes to Africa

African Christianity is a somewhat contested term. As a lecturer in Lusaka, I heard complaints from my students that Europe had Christianity, the USA had Christianity, and they had African Christianity. For these students, the label 'African Christianity' implied that their Christianity was somehow different and possibly appreciated less than 'normal' Christianity. However, as the centre of gravity within Christianity moves south, it seems that (in numbers, at least) African Christianity may become the norm. According to Philip Jenkins (2007), African Christians:

> [A]re charismatic in the sense of being open to ideas of dreams, prophecies, and visions; and they are deeply committed to ideas of healing. They are, in that sense, more supernaturally oriented. (p. 114)

11. This is, to some extent, a question of definition. For example, in his social history of Satanism, Massimo Introvigne distinguishes 'folk Satanism' from Satanism *sensu stricto*. According to Introvigne (2016:8–9), folk Satanism can be connected to a number of murders, but because it lacks formal organisation and a clear ideology, it should not be counted as 'real' Satanism. Within the Italian 'real' Satanist group called the Beasts of Satan, murders were committed on metaphysical grounds, as human sacrifices to the devil, but this motivation was combined with a conflict over money (Introvigne 2016:545–549). The victims were members of the group, not outsiders. The examples of crimes committed by folk or real Satanists show that in isolated cases, a connection between Satanism and abuse or even murder can be made. There is, however, no evidence of the sustained, organised, ritual abuse supposed by Christian and secular anti-Satanists.

How did African Christianity develop this charismatic flavour? And what is the role of the devil in this configuration of Christian theology? These will be the main questions to answer in this section.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, in African traditional beliefs, there are harmful spirits and supernatural harm that may be caused by human agents like witches, but there is no concept similar to the Christian devil. In traditional folk tales, for example, good and evil were often personified in the same character, the trickster figure who could bestow blessings one moment and wreak havoc the next (cf. Pype 2015a:368). Spirits and even witches were not necessarily seen as forces of pure evil. This changed when missionary Christianity was introduced in Africa. As paradoxical as it may sound, Satan is a Christian. With missionary Christianity, Africans were introduced to the concept of pure evil, personified as the devil. I will describe the influence of this idea on Christianity in Africa, starting with the classical mission churches and then moving on to Pentecostal perspectives.

■ The devil and the classical mission churches

In *Translating the Devil*, Birgit Meyer (1999) describes the mission history of the Ewe, a people living in southeast Ghana and southern Togo. When the missionaries arrived in their territory in 1847, they found a community with long-established religious traditions. The Christian missionaries rejected the traditional Ewe gods and spirits and saw these pagan spiritual beings as agents of the devil.

The Ewe, like many African societies, did not have an established concept of the devil. The first translators decided to use the Ewe word for witch or sorcerer as a translation of the concept of the devil (Meyer 1992). Elsewhere, other missionaries made similar decisions that identified the Christian devil with local concepts of evil. Biblical scholar Musa Dube (1999), for example, analyses the translation of the biblical word 'demon' in the Setswana translation of the Bible. The translators chose the word for an ancestor, thereby literally demonising spirits that in traditional thinking could offer protection and give blessings as well as cause misfortune if they were displeased.

These translations of the devil meant that the spirit world was recast in absolute terms: spirits were either good, a designation reserved only for the Holy Spirit, or evil. According to Meyer (1999:100), the Ewe were unsatisfied with their traditional religion, and they now associated it with the devil and rejected everything to do with it. This equation of traditional gods and spirits with the Christian devil appealed to the Ewe, who were ready to follow a stronger god who could provide more blessings and better protection. In this way, the religious figures of the Ewe traditional religion found their place in Christian cosmology, albeit in a demonised form.

The expectations of the Ewe and the theology of the missionaries, however, were not evenly matched. The Ewe were converted by Pietist missionaries from Germany. Pietism is a movement within Protestant Christianity that places a great emphasis on both a pure inner life and a strict and sober way of life. The Pietist worldview can be illustrated through the famous image of the broad and the narrow path. The image shows a hilly landscape with a wide street that leads past a carnival, a theatre and a public house towards robbery, war and an erupting volcano; the other is a narrow path, winding its way past a church and a monastery towards the mountains, where lions need to be fought. Only those who follow the narrow path will be saved. Believers can choose which path to follow: the broad path with its beguiling worldly pleasures like gluttony, drinking, gambling and having sex that ends in hell, or the steep and difficult narrow path without any entertainment or bodily pleasures that leads to salvation. An eye in the sky symbolises that God can look into every heart.

According to the Pietists, to be accepted by God, it is not enough to perform certain rituals or to behave well (Meyer 1999:52–53). What matters is one's state of mind, which can only be ascertained by God. The image of the broad and narrow path implies a dualistic conception of God and the devil. A person is either on the way to salvation or on the way to hell; there is no other option. In life, everything can be divided into belonging to God or belonging to Satan. Animals such as black goats, cats and snakes belonged to the devil, as did antisocial and immoral behaviours. Non-Christian religions were also seen as part of the domain of Satan. The devil is even active in one's own heart, inspiring bad behaviour and unacceptable desires. This 19th-century Pietist dualism was later replicated in Pentecostal theologies. For the Pietist missionaries, the devil was primarily a voice of temptation, an inner voice that leads people to do evil things (Meyer 1999). Every individual believer was therefore expected to constantly evaluate their inner state and to personally fight satanic impulses. The Pietist missionaries aiming to convert the Ewe worked from this framework. Their goal was to get the Ewe on the narrow path to salvation.

For the Christian Ewe, on the other hand, the devil and his helpers, like spirits, demons and witches, were external forces that brought misfortune. The natural state of a human being was to be good and do good. If bad things happened, there must have been some kind of agency behind it: the ancestors were unhappy, a harmful spirit had befallen one or a fellow human being may have been using witchcraft against someone. Similarly, sin for the Ewe was something that came from outside, something one's heart had to endure rather than something that needed to be fought (Meyer 1999:102). While the missionaries may have agreed with the Ewe that the devil could tempt a believer to sin, the missionaries would see the inner fight with those evil impulses as the main task of a Christian.

Missionaries had resources to help with this inner fight against sin and the devil but not against the evil that came from outside. They did not have rituals to protect the Ewe from the external evil they perceived, and their hostility towards traditional spiritual specialists had driven these previous ritual authorities underground (Udelhoven 2017b:86). This meant that the missionary churches left their converts alone and unprotected in a world of evil spirits. Over time, this perceived shortcoming of the mission churches has proven to be a reason for 'backsliding' to traditional practices. The traditional ritual authorities were indeed underground, but they had not ceased to exist. As Bernhard Udelhoven states in his history of the devil in Catholic Zambia, no church in Zambia was able to make traditional specialists like the *ng'anga* or diviner redundant (Udelhoven 2017b:93). In times of crisis, these specialists were sought out by many African Christians. For the Pietist missionaries, the devil was at least a reality, albeit one that described inner impulses rather than misfortunes caused by outside forces. But not all missionaries to Africa were Pietists. After the 19th century, missionaries were more likely to be influenced by Enlightenment scepticism towards notions of witchcraft and possessing spirits. In the diaries of Catholic missionaries in Zambia from the 1950s onwards, the devil is all but absent. According to Udelhoven (2017b):

> Missionaries saw less and less of the devil in the spiritual forces that affected people and more of a world of superstitious beliefs that needed to be eradicated – not through engagement with such forces but through the provision of modern education and health care. (p. 101)

The missionaries now believed in secular answers to the problems of African Christians. Misfortunes like illness should be combatted by Western medicine and crop failures through better education about agriculture. The spiritual causes of such misfortunes that were perceived by Africans themselves were disregarded.

■ The rise of Pentecostal churches in Africa

Under the influence of the mismatch between mainline Christianity and African notions of spiritual causation of misfortune, many Africans sought other options. In some cases, traditional and Christian rituals and beliefs co-existed, with many people participating in both if the need so arose (Udelhoven 2017b:88). Others felt the need for an alternative kind of Christianity. African Independent Churches started to spring up in Africa. These churches, also known as African-initiated, African-instituted or African indigenous churches, were initiated in Africa by often charismatic and prophetic (black) African founders and more or less independent from foreign mission churches. The first of these churches had a socio-political orientation, emphasising the value of an African identity contrary to the paternalism and racism which was at times present in the mission churches (Anderson 2015:56).

The second group of AICs developed in Africa around the same time that Pentecostalism gained momentum in the USA. These churches had a more spiritual and religious focus than the first socio-political churches. In West Africa, these churches are known as Spirit churches, like, for example, the Aladura churches in Nigeria. In southern Africa, they are also known as the Zionist churches, like the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) in South Africa (Kroesbergen-Kamps 2019). In some cases, like that of the ZCC, these churches were influenced by Pentecostal missionaries from the USA, but they were all home-grown, independent churches led by Africans themselves.

African Independent Churches share with the early Pentecostal movement an emphasis on God's power to act in this world. The focus on healing is important in all AICs. This healing has a holistic nature that encompasses body, mind, spirit and even other aspects of life, such as having a job or success in business and finding a spouse. The problems in all of these areas are attributed to spiritual principles, and healing is a spiritual matter as well. African Independent Churches incorporated traditional African practices and cosmological notions in their rituals and theologies, and they are often dismissed as syncretic by theologians from the classical mission churches (cf. Adogame & Lazio 2007).

In the study of Christianity in Africa, until around 1990, scholars did not strongly distinguish between these AICs and Pentecostal churches (Meyer 2004:452). Some scholars use the name AIC for all independent churches led by Africans, whatever their theological focus is. Alan Anderson, for example, labels any church that is founded in Africa, by Africans, for Africans as an AIC (cf. Anderson 2018:43–44). At the same time, Anderson also uses the name Pentecostalism for AICs as well as other types of Pentecostal churches (see, e.g. Anderson 2015).

However, there are important differences between the Spirit church AICs and the African Pentecostal movement. The AICs tend to incorporate traditional cosmological and ritual elements in their practices much more readily than Pentecostal churches do (Lindhardt 2015:4). The function of the prophet who facilitates the healing of members of AICs is very close to the traditional role of the diviner. As a diviner, the prophet can discern problems within the spiritual world, such as an offended ancestor or an attack by evil spirits, sorcerers or witches, and prescribes the necessary ritual actions and medicines to restore well-being (Kroesbergen-Kamps 2019). Again, like the diviner, the prophet can do so because they have a special relationship with the spirit world, not only through the Holy Spirit but also through the spirits of ancestors. For most Pentecostal churches, the way an AIC prophet acts is far too close to traditional African religions and therefore generally rejected and demonised. Therefore, while there are many similarities between AICs and African Pentecostal churches, they do not perceive themselves as

belonging to the same category. Satanism is an issue in Pentecostal-type churches in Africa rather than in AICs.

Pentecostal churches arrived in Africa with missionaries from the USA. Between 1906 and 1912 Pentecostal missionaries started operating, especially in Liberia and South Africa (Kalu 2008:43). In the first half of the 20th century, Pentecostal churches with missionary connections to the USA had been established all over Africa (Anderson 2015:56; Lindhardt 2015:3). At first, the impact of these churches was low (Lindhardt 2015:5). In the 1960s, when most African countries gained independence, it was even expected that the role of Christianity in Africa would decrease because it had been so intertwined with colonialism (Gifford 1998:21).

But from 1960 onwards, when the Pentecostal movement in the USA and Europe got a new impulse from the second wave of Pentecostalisation, new waves of missionaries started to bring their message to Africa (Hackett 2003:62). Evangelists like Reinhard Bonnke, whose annual crusades to Africa attracted millions of people across the continent, were very successful in introducing a Pentecostal or evangelical message to the African audience (Hackett 2003:62; cf. Gifford 1994). By the 1970s and 1980s, it was no longer just missionaries from overseas like Bonnke or Derek Prince who spread the Pentecostal message. The Nigerian Pentecostal pastor Benson Idahosa, for example, started to organise similar crusades from 1978 onwards (Anderson 2006:122). Much more than the AICs, Pentecostal churches in Africa are an international affair, with ties to Pentecostal ministries from the USA, Europe, Brazil and South Korea.

In the 1980s, the popularity of the Pentecostal message in Africa grew explosively and surpassed the older AICs, suggesting a new phase in the appropriation of Christianity in Africa (Meyer 2004:448). From its humble beginnings as a movement at the periphery of African Christianity, Pentecostalism grew into an exceedingly vibrant face of Christianity in Africa (Lindhardt 2015:1). While many Pentecostal churches in Africa originated from the activities of foreign missionaries, from the 1980s onward many more Pentecostal churches were founded by African pastors, although many still share elective affinities with international preachers and organisations (Lindhardt 2015:8). This openness to a global Pentecostal movement is reflected in the names of these churches, which often incorporate the adjective 'international', regardless of whether they are part of an international organisation.

In terms of the general overview of the history of Pentecostalism, the type of Pentecostalism that finds the most success in Africa is of the neo-Pentecostal variety. Central tenets in African Pentecostalism are the focus on spiritual warfare and the prosperity gospel. The development of neo-Pentecostalism in its African forms has been discussed by several scholars in recent years.

For example, Ogbu Kalu (2008), Kwabena Asamuah-Gyadu (2013) and Alan Anderson (2018) write about Pentecostalism in sub-Saharan Africa. Ruth Marshall (2009) and Nimi Wariboko (2014) focus especially on Nigeria, but their observations are relevant to a broader African context as well.

In Zambia, neo-Pentecostal churches are mushrooming (Cheyeka, Hinfelaar & Udelhoven 2014). Many new neo-Pentecostal churches have been founded in Zambia since 1991, and several mainline Protestant churches – for example, the United Church of Zambia (UCZ) and the Reformed Church in Zambia (RCZ) – have experienced break-aways taking a more Pentecostal direction (Kangwa 2016; Soko 2010). Monographs on neo-Pentecostalism in Zambia are rare, but important articles have been written on aspects of Pentecostal religiosity by (for example) Adriaan van Klinken (2012, 2014), Naomi Haynes (2012, 2015, 2017a, 2017b) and Chammah Kaunda (2018). Justo Mwale University, an institution for the formation of pastors in the Reformed and Presbyterian churches in southern Africa, has contributed to the academic debate with two publications on the implications of the popularity of neo-Pentecostalism for the older Reformed and Presbyterian mission churches (ed. Kroesbergen 2014, 2016).

In neo-Pentecostal churches, healing is understood as a conquering of the evil spiritual forces that withhold health and material blessings (cf. Gifford 1994:15), and as such, it is a natural part of spiritual warfare. This means that in these types of African churches, there is ample attention given to the role of the devil in the sufferings of humankind (cf. Jenkins 2006:100). In the next section, we will turn to the devil in African Pentecostal Christianity.

■ The devil in African Pentecostal churches

As we have seen, there was a mismatch between the worldview of African Christians and the mainline mission churches. The overwhelming success of Pentecostalism in Africa is often attributed to its better fit with African ideas about spiritual causation. Pentecostal churches believe in an active force of evil that can affect human life, meaning that evil is conceptualised not as a metaphor or something that needs to be fought in the human heart but as a force from outside. This is a force that needs to be battled in spiritual warfare, and Pentecostal deliverance and anointing services provide healing and protection that cannot be found in mainline mission churches.

Early Pentecostal missionaries were astonished by the openness of non-Western people to their message. In 1909, a missionary to China wrote in his diary (cited in Case 2006):

> One thing is a great help to us: the people believe and know that the devil is real, not imagination (as so many in the home land would like to have it). (p. 139)

The notion of the devil had taken root in Africa as well, and the Pentecostal message was able to connect this notion to local understandings of misfortune.

Like the early Pietist missionaries to the Ewe that Meyer described, Pentecostal missionaries associated the devil first and foremost with traditional religious practices (Anderson 2006:120). African gods, spirits of ancestors, troublesome spirits and witchcraft all became linked to Satan. For converts to Pentecostalism, it became necessary to 'make a complete break with the past' and its beliefs and practices (Meyer 1998b). The Ghanaian scholar Opoku Onyinah has pointed out that this blending of religious notions under the label of Satan has led to an obscuring of the differences between, for instance, witchcraft and possession. He uses the label 'witchdemonology' to refer to these amalgamated African notions of evil (Onyinah 2012:172). African neo-Pentecostal churches are attentive to the fears of witchcraft and spirit possession amongst their church members. Pastors in these churches claim the ability to discern who is possessed or bewitched, or even who is a witch or a Satanist. In this way, Pentecostal churches seem to have taken up the role of the older witch-finding movements.

Where in the 1960s it was still possible to rejoice in and celebrate traditional cultural and religious heritages, under the influence of the growing Pentecostal movement, this became impossible (Hackett 2003:70). Filip de Boeck and Sammy Baloji (2016) narrate how they visit a museum in contemporary Kinshasa and note that there are no other visitors. The museum attendant explains to them that (De Boeck & Baloji 2016):

> [S]chool children, who used to visit the museum, no longer come because they have all converted to charismatic Christianity, which, in its attempt to break with autochthonous pasts, considers the museum's collection of ancestral objects and 'fetishes' to be diabolical and satanic. (p. 10)

It is not only religious practices that are associated with the devil. By association, the village of origin and even the extended family are also relegated to the domain of Satan (De Boeck & Plissart 2004:197–198; Meyer 2004:457).

There is, however, a paradox in the Pentecostal rejection of the African past. Because the religious notions of the African traditions are carried over into a Pentecostal worldview, albeit as devils and demons, the religious past lives on within African Pentecostalism. Breaking with the spirits of the past has by no means made them disappear. On the contrary, they seem stronger than ever (Meyer 2004:457). Paradoxically, breaking with the past actually preserves the traditional African worldview (Robbins 2004:128). Witches, traditional healers, ancestral spirits and African gods are seen as satanic, but their existence is not questioned (Lindhardt 2015:164). What Pentecostal Christianity does is offer a way to deal with these spiritual forces that are believed to have a negative influence on people's lives. As Fraser Macdonald phrases it (2018:539), 'Evangelical and Pentecostal Christians [...] actually have a serious need for the past'.

Through its closeness to traditional African worldviews, Pentecostal Christianity can respond to the African problems of spiritual causation more

than mainline churches do (Anderson 2006:133). In this, the figure of the devil is the main point of convergence between Pentecostal theology and the African experience of misfortune (Lindhardt 2015:13). Whether it is spirits or witches who cause bad things to happen, according to the Pentecostal view, the devil is behind it all. Pentecostalism, furthermore, offers ritual actions to deal with the problem through personal prayer and acts of fasting or the ministrations of an intercessor.

Ilana Van Wyk describes how one popular Brazilian Pentecostal church, the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG), is attuned to the conception of misfortune in a South African township (Van Wyk 2015:153–154). In Africa, a holistic view of well-being is common, which includes health, finance, employment and relationships. Unlike the mainline churches, a lack of well-being is in the UCKG not related to moral failings in Christians but nefarious forces that one can randomly pick up. In South African townships, if anything was lacking in any of the domains associated with well-being, it would be perceived as an attack of outside forces, like witches who blocked the blessings coming from the ancestors. The UCKG has a similar concept of the causes for lack of well-being, namely that demons blocked the flow of blessings from God. The two conceptions, African and Pentecostal, are close enough to each other to shade into one another, not just in the case of the UCKG in South Africa but for Pentecostal churches all over the continent.

The ability of Pentecostal churches to respond to African problems does not, however, mean that the African worldview has remained unchanged. The scale at which the forces that cause misfortune operate has dramatically increased now that they are taken up into a global framework (Rio, MacCarthy & Blanes 2017:12). Where, for instance, witches were traditionally supposed to operate within the confines of troubled kinship relationships or other close-knit networks, the association of witches with the devil gives their actions a different meaning. Mending relationships with the extended family, with one's neighbour or with the ancestors may have been the proper action when one suffered from misfortune in the past, but these local solutions do not work when the enemy is Satan (cf. Eriksen & Rio 2017:202). The universal demonic vocabulary of Pentecostalism changes how misfortune makes sense. This widening of the scope has had the effect that the danger of witchcraft and other spiritual forces has lost its bearing in the local context and has become a threat that may come from anywhere (De Boeck & Plissart 2004:203).

Whereas on the one hand, the new global force of evil may increase anxieties and spiritual insecurity (Ashforth 2005) because misfortune has become an omnipresent danger, scholars point out that the rituals against evil provided by Pentecostal churches, on the other hand, offer a sense of control and empowerment. Those who are committed to spiritual warfare are not weak victims but prayer warriors in God's army, able to throw Satan out

(Brouwer et al. 1996:181). The empowerment of individuals may also act as a way out of stifling hierarchies. As a prayer warrior, a young Pentecostal Christian has access to an authority that stands in marked contrast to the subordinate position many young people have in a traditional African setting (Lindhardt 2015:16).

But there is a danger, too, in perceiving all misfortune as caused by spiritual forces. It may distract from other, more practical causes of problems, like poor leadership, corruption and socio-economic processes (Deacon & Lynch 2013:117). If poverty is caused by witches and evil spirits that can be cast out, investing in education and good policies is unnecessary (cf. Ngong 2012). If, as the girl at the overnight prayer with whom I started this book claims, Satanists cause road accidents and prayer helps to fight off Satanists, there is no need to improve the roads and make sure that they are safe. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a focus on spiritual causes has led some African Christians to seek spiritual help and disregard measures to stop the spread of the virus, such as masking, social distancing and even getting vaccinated (cf. Kroesbergen-Kamps 2020b).

Another way in which the Pentecostal message is close to an African worldview is in its emphasis on this-worldly blessings. Because well-being is conceptualised holistically in African notions, including not only physical and mental health but success in other areas of life as well, problems in these areas are related to spiritual actions as well. In the words of Ellis and Ter Haar, challenges from economics to epidemics are considered in a spirit idiom (Ellis & Ter Haar 2004:92). Pentecostalism, and especially the popular prosperity gospel, offers a theology that fits with the spirit idiom that makes sense of fortune and misfortune in this world. According to the prosperity gospel, as we have seen in the previous section, wealth is interpreted as a reward for a strong Christian faith. A lack of wealth and other aspects of well-being can be caused by either a backsliding in faith or by the actions of demons and other evil spiritual forces. Similar to the traditional African worldview, Pentecostalism offers a spiritual explanation for success and failure in material things (cf. Deacon & Lynch 2013:110–111).

The prosperity gospel, combined with the ideas surrounding illicit accumulation, offers a way to think about the morality of wealth (Lindhardt 2015:182). On the one hand, wealth is evaluated positively as a sign of God's blessing. But wealth can also be acquired in an ungodly way through witchcraft-related practices. Wealth is therefore seen as 'an ambiguous sign of morality that can be obtained through God's beneficence or through demonic means' (Deacon & Lynch 2013:111). Besides wealth in general, consumer goods are also viewed ambiguously. Capitalism and consumption are a sign of faith on the one hand, but as we will see in the next chapter, consumer goods can also be perceived as associated with the devil. Neither is good or evil by its very nature but only by association with either God or Satan (Meyer 2010a:118).

As we have seen, the emphasis on the devil in Pentecostal churches has brought its theology close to the lived worlds of African Christians. The South African historian of African Christianity Alan Anderson (2006:133) stated, '[w]e should not therefore be surprised if the result is widespread conversion to Pentecostalism', and this is exactly what has been happening in Africa. With the increasing attention to spiritual warfare theology in global Pentecostalism came a surge in new Pentecostal churches in Africa. Pentecostalism provides answers to African problems and gives a sense of empowerment to its adherents. On the other hand, the globalisation of local concepts has given evil an indefinite quality, which may increase a sense of spiritual insecurity. Also, seeing the devil as a cause for all problems may lead to an obscuring of wrongs caused by worldly injustices and malpractices.

■ Satanism and Christianity in Zambia

As we have seen, neo-Pentecostalism has taken hold in African Christianity and, with it, the idea of the devil. How has this impacted Christianity in Zambia and the narratives about Satanism that are now popular? To answer this question, I will start with a description of Christianity in Zambia and then turn to the narratives about Satanism, which are not only related to an 'American gospel' of prosperity and spiritual warfare but specific developments in African Christianity as well.

■ Christianity in Zambia

Missionary activity started relatively late in Zambia, probably because it is a landlocked country in the heart of southern Africa, which made it hard to access. In the 1880s, the London Missionary Society set up mission stations in the north of Zambia, near the current border with Tanzania. Also coming from the north were Catholic missionaries from the Society of the Missionaries of Africa (or White Fathers) in the 1890s and missionaries from the Presbyterian Church of Scotland in the 1900s. From the southeast, inroads were made by the South African Dutch Reformed Church in the 1890s and the Anglican church in the 1910s. The Catholic, Presbyterian, Reformed and Anglican churches are still the most important missionary churches in Zambia (Sakupapa 2016). Besides these classical mission churches, the Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh-day Adventists also gained a strong presence in Zambia.

In his discussion of the devil of the Catholic Church, more especially referring to the White Fathers, Udelhoven (2021) qualifies the notion that for the missionaries, everything pagan was evil. Although the White Fathers prayed every evening for the deliverance of Africa from Satan's hold, their perspective of Satan seems to have been more of a rhetorical nature: everything that was outside of the church, in Europe or Africa, was deemed satanic. For the White Fathers, 'the process of studying the language and

local culture brought to many missionaries an appreciation and love for the traditional wisdom' (Udelhoven 2021:63). In general, Catholic missionaries have been more appreciative of traditional culture and religion than others. In her study of the Reformed mission in Zambia, Verstraelen-Gilhuis (1982) mentions more or less successful attempts to eradicate traditional dances and initiations. Even for the White Fathers, involvement with the spirit world was not a part of the cherished traditional wisdom. The White Fathers saw the belief in spirits as superstitious imagination and preferred not to talk about the spirit world. As in other parts of Africa, the silence of the missionary churches on issues of spirits left open a space for spiritualist and Zionist AICs and later for neo-Pentecostal churches, which did take the spirit world seriously and could offer countermeasures against its threats.

In Zambia, the first AICs started to emerge in the 1950s. Alice Lenshina's Lumpa Church is probably the most well-known example of a Zambian AIC. After receiving visions during an illness, Lenshina became the focal point of a religious revival in northern Zambia. In the 1960s, her church got caught up in politics, and in the transition to Zambia's independence in 1964, the church was forcefully repressed and banned. In contemporary Zambia, AICs are not a prominent feature of the Christian life (Sakupapa 2016:760). Neo-Pentecostal churches have been booming in Zambia since the 1980s. Many of these churches were founded by local preachers. Neo-Pentecostal churches, as we have seen, see traditional spirits as evil realities, and unlike traditional mission churches, they do offer a solution to affliction by the forces of evil in the form of deliverance or healing prayer.

In 2010, Bernhard Udelhoven investigated the changing face of Christianity in Bauleni, one of Lusaka's high-density areas. He found that in the 1970s, there were eight different denominations active in Bauleni. In the 1980s, as the population of the compound was increasing, the number of churches grew as well. The first Pentecostal churches in Bauleni were founded in the 1980s. Between 1900 and 2010, Bauleni saw, as Udelhoven (2010b:5) describes it, 'a Pentecostal explosion'. In January 2010 there were 82 different churches or denominations active in Bauleni, which has an estimated population of 25 000. Of these 82 churches, 53 can be classified as (neo-)Pentecostal. According to Udelhoven (2010b:9–10), most of the members of the new churches were not recruited from nonbelievers but from other Christian churches. This means that pastors of new and old churches are competing with each other for church members.

The popularity of the new neo-Pentecostal churches has also influenced the mainline mission churches. Practices like anointing, deliverance and mass prayer, in which people simultaneously pray out loud, which were common in neo-Pentecostal churches, are currently practised in mainline churches like the RCZ as well. Although these changes cause debate in churches and sometimes lead to break-aways, the mainline mission churches as a whole are

shifting more and more in the direction of the neo-Pentecostal churches. It may therefore be said that 'Pentecostalism has fast become the representative face of Christianity in Zambia' (Sakupapa 2016:761).

In 2010, the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life published a report on faith in sub-Saharan Africa. Zambia was one of the 19 countries contributing to the data in this report. The results show some clear trends in the experience of religion in Zambia. Ninety per cent of the Zambian respondents say that religion is very important in their life (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life 2010:3). Christianity is the majority religion in Zambia, with 98% of respondents identifying as Christians in this research (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life 2010:20). Of the 19 African countries, Zambia scores (together with Ethiopia and Nigeria) the second-lowest on the presence of traditional African religious practices. Only 11% agree with the statement that sacrifices to spirits or ancestors can protect them from bad things happening (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life 2010:4). In comparison, in South Africa, 56% agree with this, in Botswana 39% and in Mozambique 27%. In Zambia, even for those who believe in the effectiveness of sacrifices to ancestors or spirits, ATRs are not seen as a religious alternative to Christianity.

The Christianity that is prevalent in Zambia is a conservative or even fundamentalist kind of Christianity. A characteristic of fundamentalism is the advocacy for a strict, literal interpretation of scripture. Eighty-five per cent of Zambian Christian respondents hold that the Bible is the literal word of God, one of the highest percentages in sub-Saharan Africa (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life 2010:26). In Zambia, which was declared a Christian nation by President Frederick Chiluba in 1991, 77% of Christians even favour making the Bible the official law of the land (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life 2010:11). More evidence for the importance of religion in Zambian life is that 85% of Christians say they attend religious services regularly (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life 2010:27), and 77% pray at least once a day (2010:28).

The influence of Pentecostalism in the answers of Zambian respondents is clear. Eighteen per cent of respondents identify as Pentecostal Christian, whereas the mainline mission churches like Anglicans (4%) and Presbyterians (2%) fall behind (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life 2010:23). A large proportion of Zambian Christians (26% in this study) are Catholic. Within the Catholic Church, the charismatic movement is Pentecostal. Thirty-four per cent of Zambian Christians identify as charismatic (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life 2010:157), but in the report, it is not mentioned what percentage of the Catholics say they are charismatic. Neo-Pentecostal Christianity is often characterised by a belief in divine healing and deliverance. Of the Zambian respondents, 50% said that they had witnessed a divine healing of an illness or an injury (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life 2010:30), and 53% had experienced or witnessed the devil or evil spirits being driven out of a person

(Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life 2010:214). In comparison with other sub-Saharan Christians, Zambians score relatively low on the question of healing and high on the question about the deliverance of the devil or evil spirits. Only in Ethiopia and Tanzania, countries that (like Zambia) scored low on the practice of ATRs, a higher percentage had witnessed evil spirits being driven out. It seems to me that these results fit with the demonisation of traditional religions and practices. The spiritual and religious beings of previous times have not disappeared, but they have retained a status as evil spirits.

Another characteristic of Pentecostal Christianity is speaking in tongues. In most sub-Saharan countries discussed in the Pew report, about 20% or more of Christians belonging to non-Pentecostal denominations declare that they speak in tongues at least several times a year (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life 2010:31). Neo-Pentecostalism is closely associated with the so-called prosperity gospel. According to this belief, health and wealth will come to those with a strong belief. Often this belief is accompanied by the idea that money given to the pastor or the church will come back to the giver in the form of riches or other blessings. In Zambia, 68% of Christians believe that God will grant wealth and good health to those who have enough faith (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life 2010:31). The high percentages of Christians who agree with these statements show that different Christian denominations are influenced by Pentecostalisation.

■ Case study: A deliverance service in Lusaka

We started this chapter with a testimony of a man who confessed that he had been a Satanist. As a businessman, he possibly had been involved in rituals to ensure success and wealth. As we have seen in the previous chapter, such rituals for personal gain are rejected in contemporary African worldviews. In this chapter, it has become clear that any ritual that is associated with traditional African practices is interpreted as satanic from a neo-Pentecostal worldview.

The service in which this testimony was presented is a good example of neo-Pentecostal faith in action. So far, we have dwelt mainly on theologies and ideas, but Pentecostalism is a faith in which emotions and bodily expressions are important as well. I will use my fieldnotes from this service on a Sunday afternoon in Lusaka to turn the attention to this aspect of lived Christianity in Zambia, as well as connect what happens in the service to the notions discussed in this chapter.

On this Sunday afternoon, a small crowd gathers in one of the halls of an upmarket hotel for a church service. While many mainline churches have had years to invest in church buildings, the newer, neo-Pentecostal churches often are highly mobile, searching for quarters that fit their audiences from year

to year. A church may start in the living room of a pastor, then move to the empty classrooms of a school in the neighbourhood. Having the means to rent a space in an expensive hotel shows that this church is relatively successful, even though it is a young church founded only four years prior.

The congregation comes together this afternoon for a deliverance service. On Sunday mornings, a traditional service is conducted, but in the afternoon a more direct encounter with spiritual forces is on the program. Like an ordinary service, the deliverance service starts with worship and a sermon. After that, there is space for testimonies, and then people are called to the front to be prayed over. People come to deliverance services to find a solution for their problems. The timing of the service makes it easy for members of other churches to visit the morning service in their own (often mainline) church and then go to the deliverance service of a Pentecostal-type church to find healing. In this way, Christians combine the church in which they grew up with the Pentecostal faith that is more open to providing healing for their spiritual afflictions. The theology of this church is neo-Pentecostal, with an emphasis on the gifts of the Spirit, teachings of the prosperity gospel and ideas about the cosmic struggle between good and evil.

The deliverance service starts at 14:00 with time for worship. The praise team is singing, accompanied by keyboard and drums, while the hall slowly fills up. At this church, worship is an international affair. My husband and I are the only white people in the audience, but there are flags of other countries, including Zimbabwe, South Africa and the USA, displayed behind the podium where the choir stands. Some of the worship songs are in various Zambian vernaculars, but most are well-known English songs. A favourite is 'Alpha and Omega':

> 'We give you all the glory/We worship you, our Lord/You are worthy to be praised/ You are the Alpha and Omega/We worship you, our Lord/You are worthy to be praised.' (#150, participant observation, 2015)

This worship song was first recorded by Israel & New Breed, whose lead singer, Israel Houghton, is also the worship leader in Lakewood Church, a nondenominational megachurch located in Houston, Texas, pastored by the famous televangelist Joel Osteen. This Lusaka church may be an independent African church, but it is part of a wider, international Pentecostal movement.

During prayer, the choir leader and others in the congregation speak in tongues from time to time. I can see the pastor and founder of the church in the first row, kneeling in prayer. A woman with a professional camera seizes the moment and takes a picture. After a while, the pastor comes up on the stage, takes the microphone from the choir leader, and leads the congregation in another song. Then the music softens as the pastor leads the congregation in prayer. He urges the listeners to take this moment to enjoy the presence of God, forget about everything else and focus on the Lord. Around me, I hear

people whispering prayers. The pastor says, 'take this moment to sun-bathe in his presence. Don't mention your problems now. Just feel his presence. He is your lover. For now, just love him.' Some members of the praise team kneel, but most of the congregation stands up. 'There is a stillness now. Something is happening. When there is a stillness like this, it means that burdens are lifted', the pastor says. The prayer blends into a song, as the pastor sings, 'there is a stillness in the atmosphere. Come, lay your burden, he is here', a song by the famous American gospel singer Karen Clark.

Worship is a combination of singing songs of praise and praying out loud, accompanied by the musicians. It is a characteristic of both Pentecostal and evangelical churches to emphasise communal worship through song and prayer (Zimmerling 2001:209–210). The beginning of this service is similar to Tanya Luhrmann's (2012a) description of the American evangelical experience. Worship is about an intimate, intensely personal relationship with God and Jesus. This relationship can be described in terms associated with romance, as we hear from the pastor when he describes God as a lover. It is also a relationship that is experienced in the body, as the audience whispers, speaks in tongues, stands, kneels, raises hands – whatever feels the best way to embody this relationship with God.

The church service soon shifts focus from worship to receiving prosperity. As we have seen, according to the prosperity gospel, Christians are entitled to material and this-worldly blessings. On this afternoon, the pastor starts to quicken the pace of the service while the music continues in the background. The reflective atmosphere of prayer and worship is broken as the service moves on. 'Somebody shout to the Lord!' the pastor orders, and the congregation cheers. 'Celebrate your miracle today, before it comes. Celebrate your marriage! Celebrate your engagement! Celebrate your car! Celebrate your home!' The congregation responds with enthusiastic amens to the pastor's words. 'Maybe it looks crazy. Yet the Bible says God speaks, and things that were not, they are there. Create something this afternoon!' The two girls sitting next to me, who had been observing the service without really participating up until this point, take this moment to finally rise from their seats. One of them seems to be crying.

Here, the pastor is encouraging the congregation to engage in so-called 'positive confessions', confident declarations of thus-far-unencountered health and wealth. By speaking positively in this way, it is believed that what is declared will come to pass. Speaking negatively, on the other hand, will bring forth negative events. The congregation is encouraged to celebrate their prosperity even before it has materialised; that is how certain their entitlement to miracles is. In the contemporary world, the power of positive thinking is often invoked, not only by neo-Pentecostal theologians but also by writers in business spirituality and alternative medicine.

After his prayer, the music stops and the pastor starts his sermon. The topic this afternoon is the secrecy of evil inheritance. According to the pastor, some people have a secret evil inheritance that causes them to be in poverty, disease or have problems in relationships. Numbers 14 (King James Version) is projected on a screen:

> The Lord is longsuffering and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. (v. 14)

The pastor explains that if someone in your ancestry did something wrong, a generational curse is laid over the family. 'Some people say this doesn't exist', he says, 'but it's right here in the Bible'. He continues explaining that God does not look at a person's past but at the future. He says:

> 'You are not a prisoner of your past but a pioneer of your future! God relates to you based on what you are destined to become. Shout, "I receive it!"' (#150, participant observation, 2015)

The congregation shouts. Even so, the pastor explains, do the actions of grandparents affect people today. Divorce runs in some families; in others, it is barrenness or polygamy, or almost everyone dies of AIDS.

This sermon combines ideas from several neo-Pentecostal preachers. That a person can choose to be either a prisoner of their past or a pioneer of their future is a view attributed to the author and motivational speaker Deepak Chopra (1997:170). Another, slightly conflicting, notion is the 'generational curse', the idea that involvement with magical practices is satanic and leaves a psychic injury that can be inherited by children and grandchildren. This notion was developed by Kurt E. Koch (1913–1987), a German Lutheran pastor with a profound influence on American neo-Pentecostal theology. Koch's emphasis on the satanic makes him one of the forerunners of the ideology behind the Satanism scare in the 1980s (Ellis 2000). The idea of the generational curse finds wide acclaim in African neo-Pentecostal churches, where it resonates with the traditional conviction that the ancestors can act in a person's life, bestowing blessings or harm, and also with the Christian notion that these traditional spiritual forces are evil. It can also be used as an explanation for poverty in Africa, claiming that the involvement in traditional practices of (great-)grandparents who were not yet converted to Christianity still curses their descendants with deprivation.

In his sermon, the pastor uses testimonies as cases to illustrate his point. In Pentecostal and evangelical services, God becomes present not only in the worship section of the service but also in personal statements that show what God has done for a person (Zimmerling 2001:201). Through worship and testimony, God's presence and power are experienced. At this point, the pastor calls the man to the front to give the testimony with which I started this chapter. After the father has given his testimony of involvement in Satanism,

the pastor prays for him. A part of the congregation is praying together with the pastor, while another part is sitting back, maybe waiting for the altar call and their chance for deliverance.

In his prayer for the father, the pastor is engaged in healing, in making whole again what was broken. The cause of brokenness, whether this expresses itself in physical problems, problems in relationships or even poverty, is the interference of spiritual powers. Healing, in this neo-Pentecostal setting, is an act of spiritual warfare, of fighting against demonic forces. The father was in league with these forces of evil; he was a Satanist. But the demonic forces are everywhere and may affect Christians as well as non-Christians. They are still active right there in the service, as they prevent the father from saying Christ's name.

In the remainder of the service, members of the congregation are invited to come to the front to be prayed over. The pastor first calls those to the front who suffer from problems in their menstrual cycle and from mysterious discharges that may be related to an illness. Women and men come to the front, and the pastor, an assisting pastor and other deacons go from one to the other, touching them briefly on the head or shoulder. The music starts again, and the pastor sings his prayers. Then he says, 'I see someone who has a slight paralysis on the left side. Maybe it was a small stroke. If it is you, come to the front'. A woman comes and the pastor prays for her. 'I see a woman who has been told there is a cervical incompetence. She even miscarried.' After some urging, two women come, and the pastor prays for them. Then he says:

> 'I see a man with a problem with his testicles. I know this is a sensitive issue, but please don't be ashamed. Come to the front if I'm talking about you.' (#150, participant observation, 2015)

Three men come to the front.

These first altar calls are not related to topics touched by the pastor in this service. What the pastor does here is an example of the role prophecy plays in Pentecostal churches (Zimmerling 2001:165–176). The pastor, through his connection with the Holy Spirit, claims to be able to discern which problems should receive attention on this day. The notion of prophecy is of growing importance in Zambia. Even in mainline churches, people talk about prophecy and expect their pastors to give them prophecies (Kroesbergen-Kamps 2016:28). Many church leaders are called prophets and practise prophecy in some form.

Although there are different opinions on what prophecy means, it is often connected to the idea that God is actively involved in the world. He still speaks to his chosen people, and miracles have not ceased to happen. Prophecy in contemporary Zambia has roots in Christian theology as well as in traditional practices (Kroesbergen-Kamps 2016:38–39). Like a traditional healer, a prophet

can discern what is wrong with someone without hearing his complaints. The pastor makes a final altar call:

> 'Now, this is a difficult thing to say. I want to pray for those who think they may be involved in blind Satanism, those who say that maybe these stories about Satanism are about them.' (#150, participant observation, 2015)

Young people, at least 30, including the girls sitting next to me, flock to the front to be prayed over. A few of them, but not many, fall to the floor, where they lie thrashing. This is called manifesting, after the demons that are manifest in them. This final altar call is for those who may be involved in blind Satanism is the most popular. A blind Satanist is not aware that he or she is initiated into the ranks of evil, and they may inadvertently be causing harm to their friends and relatives. The considerable response to this altar call shows that many, mainly young people think this may be happening to them. After this, the congregation dissolves; it is now after 17:00.

This description of a deliverance service in Lusaka gives an insight into the workings of neo-Pentecostal Christianity in Africa. In this service, the prominence of neo-Pentecostal healing and spiritual warfare theology is obvious. It is an embodied faith in which the responses of the body are as important or maybe even more important than the intellectual expositions of the sermon's theology. It is in this context that testimonies of Satanism happen. Testimonies are presented in an environment where direct experience of both the divine and the demonic is triggered. A positive, divine connection is apparent when church members raise their hands in worship or speak in tongues. This connection is believed to bring health and wealth to the believers. On the other hand, the father who gives his testimony is a living example of a negative, dangerous connection with the satanic, which fortunately can be cut through the pastor's prayers.

The service gives a taste of the place of testimonies in a church service and of Satan in neo-Pentecostal theology. In the next section, we will investigate the advent of narratives about Satanism a little deeper and see the influence of not just American but specifically African theology on these narratives.

◼ Narratives about Satanism and the influence of transnational African churches

It is in the context of neo-Pentecostal Christianity that the first narratives about Satanism spring up, first in West Africa and in the 1990s in Zambia as well. According to some authors, these narratives are a spillover from the Satanism scare that spread in the USA and the UK in the 1980s and 1990s (Frankfurter 2006:3). The timing of the first African testimonies in the 1980s fits with the Satanism scare, and news about accusations of Satanism could very well have spread to Africa. However, the conclusion that narratives about

Satanism in Africa are a direct effect of the Satanism scare is unlikely. Although there are some surface similarities between the stories told in the Satanism scare and the African testimonies of Satanism, mainly in that both speak about a powerful organisation of Satanists, the differences are very obvious. The African testimonies are placed in a religious, Christian setting, whereas the Satanism scare was a relatively secular affair, with experts from secular disciplines like psychologists and police officers instead of religious experts. In the Satanism scare, the reports of satanic ritual abuse were set in day-care centres, with evidence collected by therapists and child protection workers instead of by pastors, as is the case in the African context. Ritual abuse of children, a core motif in the Satanism scare, is absent in African testimonies. Folklorists have noted that legends spread through channels or conduits of people with shared beliefs and interests (Ellis 2000:10), but there is no clear, direct conduit between the Satanism scare and the particular African churches that stage testimonies.

If the Satanism scare is not the conduit that brought narratives about Satanism to Africa, what is? Both phenomena likely have a common origin in neo-Pentecostal theology. The Satanism scare and the African testimonies probably have a shared root in the testimonies of ex-Satanists that started to surface in the 1970s. Like the African testimonies of Satanism, these American testimonies describe a worldwide, evil organisation where horrifying rituals are practised and where participants can advance in rank. The early American testimonies make sense in the neo-Pentecostal spiritual warfare theology, and this same theology forms the basis of the testimonies of ex-Satanists in Africa.

Much of the spiritual warfare theology originates in the USA. However, we live in a globalised world where preachers use television, radio and the Internet to deliver their messages. What is popular in the USA does not stay there but travels all over the world. In Africa, many neo-Pentecostal Christians perceive themselves to be the target of attacks by demonic forces that need to be overcome by spiritual warfare (Simojoki 2002). In African testimonies about Satanism, the notion of spiritual warfare is often visible, although it is not always explicitly addressed. For example, testimonies describe the tactics used against Christians by the agents of evil. The enemy uses certain products as spies to see which Christians are strong in faith (and therefore dangerous) and which are weak and therefore easy to conquer. The Satanists also try to weaken the forces of Christianity by preventing them from hearing the words of their commander, the pastor.

Rather than being a direct spillover from the Satanism scare, narratives about Satanism are likely to have reached Africa through the works and media of neo-Pentecostal preachers. Together with the already present preoccupation with the devil, this made a fertile ground for narratives about Satanism in Africa. It would, however, be one-sided to lay all the agency with Western

actors like missionaries and neo-Pentecostal preachers. African agents were just as important in the development of the discourse surrounding Satanism.

In contemporary Africa, the neo-Pentecostal spiritual warfare theology has been taken up by a host of African preachers who have access to the works of American authors like John Wimber and Peter Wagner in local Christian bookstores and through the Internet. These African preachers are not merely recycling the theology of their Western counterparts. African neo-Pentecostal Christianity is developing its own voice that travels through intra-African channels.

Nigeria is a nerve centre for this type of Christianity, with famous churches like T.B. Joshua's Synagogue Church of All Nations, David Oyedepo's Living Faith Church, which is internationally known as the Winners' Chapel, Enoch Adeboye's Redeemed Church of God or Daniel Kolawole Olukoya's Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries.

One of the most popular TV channels in Zambia is probably Emmanuel TV, a Christian television network founded by the neo-Pentecostal Nigerian pastor T.B. Joshua. Nigerian pastors regularly speak at conferences and crusades in other African countries, including Zambia (Burgess 2008:31). Some even settle there and set up their own churches. Narratives about Satanism in Africa started in Nigeria in the 1980s and came to Zambia in the 1990s. The particular flavour of African neo-Pentecostalism to which the Nigerian pastors have contributed includes, besides Satanism, a preoccupation with spiritual husbands, marine spirits, unconscious initiation into evil and the importance of dreams. In Zambia, all of these elements are present.

Many testimonies about Satanism speak about being married in the underworld to a spiritual wife or husband.[12] Having a spiritual husband or wife is, however, not limited to those who have experienced Satanism. In Zambia, I sometimes visited the Women's Fellowship in a RCZ congregation in Lusaka. When asked what their biggest spiritual challenge is today, the women answered, 'spiritual husbands and wives'. Having a spiritual husband or wife typically causes men and women to remain single, or if they are already married, it causes barrenness and other problems in this marriage. Other problems in physical and mental health may also originate from having a spiritual husband or wife. Spiritual husbands that trouble women are most common, but spiritual wives occur as well. In traditional Zambian cosmology, the relationship with spirits is sometimes described as a marriage. In types of Christianity where all spirits are deemed inherently evil, these older notions of interacting with the spirit world become threatening and harmful. In the theology of spiritual warfare, spiritual husbands and wives are agents of the

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12. In francophone Africa, the spiritual husband is known as '*mari de nuit*', night-husband. This term is also used in Zambia, next to the more common 'spiritual husband'. See Tonda (2016) for a discussion of this phenomenon in Gabon and Van de Kamp (2011) for Mozambique.

devil, operating on a global scale. African spirits, Christian notions of evil and neo-Pentecostal spiritual warfare theology come together in the image of the spiritual husband.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, water spirits like Mami Wata have become popular in West Africa. In neo-Pentecostal churches, these marine spirits are strongly rejected and claimed to be agents of the devil (Meyer 1998a:765). Again, we see the process of demonising local, traditional spirits at work. Marine spirits like Mami Wata have a prominent place in the testimonies of ex-Satanists. The first well-known African testimony, *Delivered from the Powers of Darkness* by Emmanuel Eni ([1987] 1996), describes how Eni becomes a servant of the Queen of the Coast, with access to her marine kingdom. The Queen of the Coast is not explicitly identified as Mami Wata, but her attributes are very similar: the mermaid-like figure, the marine world full of modern goods, the mirror, the snake and the prohibition of sexual relationships in the physical world. In Zambian testimonies, the Queen of the Coast or Queen of the Ocean is mentioned regularly. Although there are stories about water spirits and entrances to an underground realm in central Africa (cf. Ellis & Ter Haar 2004:52), it is unlikely that the image of a kingdom under the ocean arises from local traditions in a landlocked country like Zambia. I therefore see the mentioning of the Queen of the Coast in Zambian testimonies as an influence of West African neo-Pentecostalism.

Another typical feature of Zambian neo-Pentecostalism that originates with an African spiritual warfare theology is the idea that someone can be initiated into Satanism unknowingly and unwillingly, which the pastor in the deliverance sermon that I described called 'blind Satanism'. Like the spiritual husbands and wives, this belief has no clear precedent in non-African ideas about Satanism. Famous American ex-Satanists like John Todd and Michael Warnke made their own choice to become Satanists. Unconscious witchcraft is a notion that has a long history in Africa. Evans-Pritchard, in his famous study on witchcraft, magic and oracles amongst the Azande, defines witchcraft as an innate ability to harm others through the psychic force of one's conscious or unconscious intentions. The idea that one can be a witch and harm others, even unknowingly, is not unheard of in Zambia. The related notion of 'blind' or 'unconscious' witchcraft is known in African neo-Pentecostal circles (cf. Pype 2011:295). A blind witch meets his or her colleagues at night to plan attacks on churches and Christians. These meetings take place in the spirit world and are therefore only remembered as dreams or a feeling of tiredness in the morning. The blind witch is not aware of her activities at night or of her responsibility for the harm caused. It is only a small step from this blind witchcraft to unconscious initiation into Satanism.

Whether someone is afraid to be a blind witch or Satanist or is troubled by a spiritual husband or wife, dreams are important indicators that something is

not right. Traditionally in Zambia, dreams are interpreted as messages from the spirit world (Udelhoven 2013). Dreaming about food, eating and drinking is, in contemporary Zambia, interpreted as something evil. Other significant dreams that point to evil and Satanism are dreams about snakes, about getting married and about nursing a baby. This interpretation of dreams is not typically Zambian but can be traced, like the Queen of the Coast and the ideas about blind witchcraft, to Nigerian neo-Pentecostal churches. In her discussion of Nigerian Pentecostalism, Ruth Marshall describes manuals for dream interpretation in which dreaming of water or eating is interpreted as a sign of demonic activity (2009:150). The idea that there are dangers in dreaming about eating food is found on several African Christian websites but rarely outside of Africa.

Together, neo-Pentecostal theology and these specifically African Christian notions form a web of stories in which the testimonies about Satanism make sense. Contemporary Zambian Christianity builds upon the theology of early missionaries in the rejection of all traditional spirits. It is also influenced by later neo-Pentecostal theologies that emphasise a spiritual war between good and evil, taking place on a worldwide scale as well as within the individual. On the surface, ideas about Satanism in Zambia can be related to this Western Christian tradition. To a greater extent, however, the Christian theology behind the Zambian testimonies about Satanism is an African construction. Elements like the Queen of the Coast, spiritual husbands and wives, blind witchcraft and the negative evaluation of eating in dreams are found almost exclusively in African testimonies. The connection to older practices of killing to become rich or powerful that was discussed in the previous chapter is another African element in the Christian discourse of Satanism.

■ Conclusion

In the introduction to this chapter, we saw a father who confessed to being a Satanist because he had sacrificed his children to gain success in his business. In the previous chapter, we have seen the traditional notions behind that idea. But why was the father whose testimony I described in the introduction to this chapter called a Satanist instead of a witch or a practitioner of *kukhwima* or other local forms of rejected magic?

In this chapter, I have traced the figure of Satan in Western Christianity, where he was conceptualised as the mortal enemy of God. This idea waxed and waned, being important in the Renaissance and during the witch hunts, losing some of its relevance after the Enlightenment and coming back in full force with neo-Pentecostal spiritual warfare theology. In Africa, the devil became associated with African religious traditions. One might say that these traditions stayed alive because they were taken up in Christian cosmology. Ancestors, spirits, gods, witches – they now all fight in the leagues of the devil,

and involvement with these traditional religious figures is one of the things that is conceptualised as Satanism.

I have shown in this chapter that Satanism in Zambia is not merely imported from Western Christianity, nor is it purely a further development of Zambian ideas and practices such as those discussed in the previous chapter. Zambian neo-Pentecostal ideas about Satan are highly influenced by West African theologians and preachers. It forms what Birgit Meyer (2015:195) calls a 'constant recuperation and reworking of globally circulating ideas and images'. Beliefs and rituals do not stay the same forever. In the embrace of a Christian reinterpretation of the spirit world, local and transnational narratives and traditions are transformed and become part of a global narrative. The global narrative that serves as a framework for stories about Satanism is strongly influenced by modern spiritual warfare theology. This theology with Western roots has gained worldwide momentum since the 1980s. It is, however, not necessarily a Western message. African Christians are not mere receptacles for a foreign gospel; they add and adjust, for example, by giving traditional African spirits a place in their theology, albeit in a demonised form.

In this and the previous chapter, I have tried to understand the discourse of Satanism by referring to two sets of narratives that live in Zambian society. African worldviews and Christianity are important contexts for understanding narratives about Satanism. There are, however, elements in testimonies that do not seem to be related to either of these contexts. Why is it, for example, that so many testimonies speak about products made in the underworld? And why is Satanism such an urban phenomenon? These are questions that I will address in the next chapter, which explores the relationship between narratives about Satanism and Zambian ideas about modernity.

Dreams of modernity turning into nightmares of Satanism

■ Introduction

My friends and students in Zambia knew that I was studying narratives about Satanism and were on the lookout for more testimonies to add to my collection. I received audio files with Naomi's testimony both from one of my students and from a friend in Lusaka. The friend even had two versions of her testimony: an interview in which Naomi tells her story, guided by questions from the interviewer, and a narration of the testimony in which only Naomi's voice is heard.

At the time of the testimony, Naomi is 17 years old. She describes what happened to her between 2004 and 2007. Naomi narrates what she had to do as a Satanist. First, demonic spirits that dwell in her change her character:

> 'The first spirit: I was stubborn. I was like a lion. I used to fight. I never used to care; a man or a woman – I used to beat. The second spirit was a spirit of prostitution. I used to feel like wherever I am, I can have thousands and thousands of men. The devil changed me into a very beautiful girl. I was admired by every man passing, including women.' (#41b, Naomi's recorded testimony, 2012)

Then Naomi speaks about the underworld, Satan's domain:

> 'They taught me how to speak English, because I was somebody who never used to speak English. They took me to the Atlantic Ocean. There I met my fellow youths.

There were church elders, church deacons and pastors were found. Ministers and presidents of this world were seen there.' (#41b, Naomi's recorded testimony, 2012)

In the underworld, satanic products are made:

'There are foods that you can eat, and it will possess you. There are these what we call half chickens. Those half chickens, it's a baby, turned into a chicken. When you are eating that chicken, the devil celebrates and says, 'Yeah, this person is helping us eat people.' But for that, because you don't know, God will always forgive you. [...] There are sausages, whereby you people love to eat, Hungarian to be sure. There is original Hungarian and there is human Hungarian. They grind an innocent person and make this person a piece of meat or a sausage. There is jam. That jam, it is blood, but not all of it. They make that jam sweeter than the real jam. [...] That soap you use; it's changing your skin to a demon's. That soap, it's a baby's nose. And the whole tube of it that you use, that tube is the baby. Your own baby, who passed away, days ago.' (#41b, Naomi's recorded testimony, 2012)

In the interview, Naomi speaks about the wigs and weaves that many African women use:

'Those same wigs, they will influence somebody to do something evil. That is why mostly when a Christian puts on that, the devil counts that person as already one of his.' (#41a, Naomi's recorded testimony, 2011)

This is a danger, especially for children:

'Because that child, you have plaited her wigs [...] She is growing up, remember. And the way she is growing up, the more that you plait that child, she'll be in time a Satanist. You see? When she looks in the mirror, she doesn't see herself. She sees a demon, beautifully decorated, and she thinks that she looks like that. [...] That child will think, "Ah, these things look good on me". The next time, they will come to you and cry, "Mommy, plait my hair". And the more she will be saying again and again, and the more the demons will enter into that child. And that is where you will find the child, if she was humble, she will become too stubborn. She was respecting the daddy, but she changes immediately, doing such strange things that you say, "This child [...] something wrong." But you won't discover what is wrong with the child. But what is wrong is the wig that influences the child. One of the days, she will be one of the demons.' (#41a, Naomi's recorded testimony, 2011)

In the previous chapters, I have discussed what makes stories about Satanism plausible in Zambia. Their relation to traditional ideas about witchcraft and illicit accumulation and their embeddedness in the Christian, neo-Pentecostal frame of spiritual warfare makes it plausible that Satanists might exist, at least to Zambian Christians with a Pentecostal slant. But stories about Satanism are not only plausible, they are also popular narratives to share with friends and neighbours, in church or at the marketplace, as my student and my friend shared Naomi's testimony with me. In this chapter, I will turn to the question of what makes stories about Satanism not only plausible but also so popular at this specific time in history. Why do people want to hear Naomi speak about how Satanism can make one stubborn and aggressive and how innocent consumer goods like processed foods and cosmetics can become an entry into this satanic world?

The general theory about narratives about evil Others that was introduced in Chapter 1 forms an important context for these questions. As I have argued, stories about Satanism are a form of narratives about evil Others, in which ideas about society are inverted and projected upon a group that is seen as wholly different. These narratives often arise in times of social upheaval and cultural change. The specific inversions that are used in narratives can often teach us something about the social practices, values and roles that are experienced as under threat or vulnerable.

There are many examples of studies that explore the relationships between stories that are popular at a given time and what they say about society. In *The global grapevine*, Gary Alan Fine and Bill Ellis (2010) explore stories about terrorism, immigration and trade, and they explain how these rumours and legends resonate with the erosion of trust in an era of globalisation. Speaking about Africa, Julien Bonhomme (2016) has written about the story of the sex thief who steals genitalia with an innocent handshake, interpreting it as an expression of, again, a growing mistrust influenced by urbanisation in Africa. In their famous article on occult economies, Comaroff and Comaroff (1999) explain how narratives about zombies illustrate the exploitation that is felt by the poor population in a neoliberal system.

In the 1990s, a mode of interpretation became popular that related narratives about witchcraft to the changes brought on by processes of modernisation. This so-called 'modernity of witchcraft approach' developed in response to the widespread expectation that witchcraft would die out when Africa became more Westernised. This expectation did not materialise. On the contrary, it seemed that people were starting to speak more about witchcraft, even in places that one would expect to be touched most by the project of modernisation, such as universities and parliaments. Peter Geschiere's (1997) book *The modernity of witchcraft*, together with Comaroff and Comaroff's (1999) article on occult economies, heralded a shift in perspective. Instead of disappearing under the influence of modernity, witchcraft beliefs were now seen as responding to the particular conditions of modernity developing in Africa.

The witchcraft and modernity approach has been criticised especially for its use of the notion of modernity. As Sally Falk Moore (1999) notes, Jean and John Comaroff do not dwell on how to define the concept in their article. Several authors argue that, besides being broad and ill-defined, modernity is a concept that originates with researchers rather than with informants in the field (see Englund & Leach 2000:236). Maia Green and Simeon Mesaki (2005:372), for example, state that 'the modern as a category applied to social practice is essentially a category applied by us analysts rather than by our informants'.

The critics are right to say that modernity has often been used as a blanket term and that an analysis that focuses on specific aspects of modernity is

more fruitful. In current studies on witchcraft and related phenomena, these are seen as a part of contemporary living in Africa. Often, these phenomena 'operate in contexts affected by modernity, like the city, the market economy and the process of coming-of-age' (Kroesbergen-Kamps 2020a:865). Rather than using the broad term modernity as an analytical category, contemporary authors about witchcraft and related phenomena emphasise how local notions of witchcraft are related to the ideas about kinship, power, equality and personhood that live on the ground.

It would be a mistake to believe that ordinary Africans do not know the word modernity or have no associations connected to that word. In Zambia, the term modernity is associated with development and becoming more like the West. As I have argued previously (Kroesbergen-Kamps 2014), Zambians have an evolutionist understanding of modernity (cf. Hansen 1999:207). Anthropologist James Ferguson (1999) describes this metanarrative of modernity as follows:

> Modernisation theory had become a local tongue, and sociological terminology and folk classifications had become disconcertingly intermingled in informants' intimate personal narratives. [...] That which once presented itself as *explicans* was beginning to make itself visible as *explicandum*. (p. 84)

Modernity has become an emic concept, a term used in the field as well as in the works of academic scholars. But as an emic term, modernity has associations that the term may not have in scholarly literature. In this chapter, I will discuss how narratives about Satanism are related to an emic Zambian perspective on modernity.

How are narratives about witchcraft, zombies, vampires or Satanists related to modernity? In the witchcraft and modernity approach, the relation sometimes seems to be allegorical. 'Zombie production is thus an apt image of the inflating occult economies of postcolonial Africa, of their ever more brutal forms of extraction', write Comaroff and Comaroff (1999:299). Luise White (2000:34), in her study of vampire narratives, states, 'I think bloodsucking by public employees is a fairly obvious metaphor for state-sponsored extractions'. When people speak about these evil others, the Comaroffs and White seem to say they do so as metaphors for their experience of inequality and unfair profit, a 'metacommentary on the challenges of modernity' (Moore & Sanders 2001:14).

Several scholars have criticised this allegorical conception of narratives about evil Others like witches, zombies and vampires (see, e.g. Marshall 2009:28–30; Smith 2019:71). Adam Ashforth (2005:114) summarises the criticism as follows: the idea that these narratives are allegorical 'suffers from the singular defect [...] of treating statements that Africans clearly intend as literal, or factual, as if they were meant to be metaphorical or figurative'. People who share stories about evil Others are not poets who have the

intention of using metaphors to express a deep sentiment or conviction. The eagerness to interpret elements of a narrative that are hard to understand with Western ears as symbols or metaphors betrays an inherent ethnocentricity. For people who grow up in a society where witches and other agents of evil are a part of reality, these characters do not need any reinterpretation. They are just accepted at face value (cf. Kroesbergen-Kamps 2020a:870).

Perhaps an example can help to make this point clearer. If people start building fences around their houses, an observer may say that this says something about a perception of insecurity, the importance of the home as a safe space, creating clear boundaries between private and public spaces, or a lifestyle that is less oriented towards communal living and is more individualistic. All of these things make interesting hypotheses for further research. But for the people who built the fence around their house, the main reason is not to make a point about private spaces and individualism but to keep criminals out. Similarly, people in Zambia are afraid of witches, zombies and Satanists because to them, they (like criminals for the one who builds a fence) are a real threat. Tensions surrounding economic inequality are real too, but stories about witches, zombies and Satanists cannot be reduced to these things. The intention with which narratives are shared should be acknowledged so that stories can be understood on their own terms as well.

I will give another example of a story that one of my former students shared. He said:

> 'There is a couple in my congregation. The husband, because of the current economic climate, he went to see a certain man. This man, he told him that everyone can become rich within 14 days, but that he would have to do something, sacrifice someone, that is. The man was surprised, and he said that he would think about it. He went home and thought about whom he might sacrifice. After some time, he thought of his wife. Now, the father to the wife is a powerful witch. Somehow, he heard about the husband's plans to sacrifice his wife and he thought to himself, "That is my daughter. I will lose her if she dies." So he used his powers to take the wife away. The wife, she just disappeared. As the minister, I was told, "One of your members is missing". So we prayed for her. Later, they found her in Malawi, where she was kept in a room in a house. The people in that house said, "We know how she came here and we have agreed to keep her". You see, these things are really happening.' (#151, interview with Rev. Mwanza, 28 August 2016)

The main motifs in this story are familiar from Chapter 2: spiritual forces are active in the world and can be accessed through spiritual experts and sacrifice. The last sentence shows that the narrator intends his story to be taken as a truth and not as an extended metaphor.

If it is not a metaphor or a symbolic comment, then what does this story show about Zambian society? Firstly, it reveals day-to-day life: people are married, possibly not without tensions; some fathers love and want to protect their daughters; and life is difficult in the current economic climate. This is the world Zambians are living in. Beyond that, what strikes me in the narrative is

how the wife is absent. The story is about her, but she has no active role. Her husband wants to sacrifice her to get rich; her father spirits her away; and then she is kept in a house in Malawi. Men are the ones acting in this story and the woman could just as well have been a possession, an object. If the references to the woman are substituted with an object, such as a TV, the story would still make sense. A man wanted to earn money. Someone told him that to do that, he would have to make a sacrifice and give something up. The man thought about his TV. His father heard about his plans and thought, 'But I have given him this TV. I can't let this happen!' So he took the TV away. Later it was found in a room in a house in Malawi.

The story teaches me something about the place and worth of women in the Zambian worldview. Now, the point of the story is not to say something about women. My student is not symbolically trying to express or even criticise social gender norms. But still: the narrative has a woman-shaped hole. It can only be told in this way if the narrator has a certain worldview, a way of experiencing the world. In this chapter, we will see narratives about Satanism as stories that express lived realities, but not in a symbolic way.

As we have seen in Chapter 1, there exists a narrative tradition of narratives about evil Others that is characterised by images of cannibalism, infanticide and sexual perversity. These stories shed light on what is happening in the society in which they are told more than they give us information about the imputed group of evil Others. In this chapter, I will use both testimonies and newspaper articles about Satanism to establish what we can learn about changes in Zambian society from the narratives about Satanism.

To establish which changes are addressed in these narratives, I will start by describing the main associations of the danger that is presented in testimonies. In testimonies, the things that are deemed satanic are predominantly associated with the urban world and the spoils of modernity, as I will argue. Next, I will discuss some possible changes in society that relate to urbanisation and modernity, namely anonymity and shifts in the relationships with the extended family and within the nuclear family. These changes have been widely discussed in academic scholarship, and they have some bearing on the testimonies and accusations of Satanism but are still unsatisfactory. In the final part of the chapter, I will introduce the change that resonates most with the narratives about Satanism, namely a worry about the moral consequences of becoming modern.

■ The dangers of the urban world

Narratives about Satanism describe a group of evil Others who threaten Zambian society with their actions. In this chapter, I investigate where this threat is perceived to come from. As I will argue in this section, the threat is overwhelmingly related to the world of the city, not only in the spaces that are

described as dangerous in the testimonies but also in the professions that are associated with Satanism in accusations reported in the media. Before I turn to the testimonies and accusations, I will introduce the place of the city in the Zambian imagination.

◼ Urban imaginaries

In 2020, almost 45% of the Zambian population lived in cities (Statista 2021). Urbanisation in Zambia grew particularly quickly between 1960 and 1975, when economic development related to mining led to employment opportunities and the growth of urban centres on the Copperbelt. After a long slump in the price of copper during the 1980s and 1990s, Lusaka established itself as Zambia's main urban centre. When people nowadays speak about 'the city', it is the capital of Lusaka that they are most likely thinking of. In 2010, 1.7 million people lived in Lusaka, more than three times as many as in Zambia's second-largest city, Kitwe (World Population Review 2021). Currently, the population of Lusaka is estimated at 3 million (CIA World Factbook 2022).

To the residents of Lusaka, amenities and wealth are deceptively close by. In advertisements and on huge billboards along the main roads, everyone can see what money can buy. For many Africans who migrate to urban areas, the city is a symbol of hope and a chance for a better life for themselves and their families. In 2010, 42% of the population in Lusaka Province was born somewhere else. Many of these migrants from within Zambia (38.7%) move from one urban area to another, for example, from the Copperbelt to Lusaka. Migration from rural to urban areas (30%) is very common as well (Central Statistical Office 2013:12). Statistics of living conditions show that the circumstances in the city, at least for some, are truly better. In urban areas, the average household income is three times higher than in rural areas, and the proportion of the population living beneath the poverty line in urban areas is 23.4% against 76.6% in rural areas (Central Statistical Office 2018:32). The prevalence of underweight children under the age of five is the lowest in Lusaka Province, and the proportion of the population that uses an improved drinking water source is the highest (Central Statistical Office 2015a).

At first glance, the city seems a positively charged place, but a closer look shows that life is not always easy in the city. In Lusaka, 70% of the population lives in slums, often in insecure housing and with a lack of infrastructure and basic services (UN Habitat 2007:18). In these slums, which in Lusaka are called compounds, 90% of the population uses pit latrines, which are often shared by multiple households (UN Habitat 2007:13). The compounds are generally overcrowded and vulnerable to airborne diseases. Poor drainage combined with a lack of waste collection services makes Lusaka's compounds vulnerable to contagious diseases like cholera, dysentery and typhoid as well, especially in the rainy season. Combined with these problems, quality

health care services are still unaffordable and thereby inaccessible for the majority of Lusaka's residents. The prospect of wealth may be visibly close in the city, but it remains out of the grasp of many of its residents. For many Zambians, life is a struggle to make ends meet, to find the money for school fees, medical bills, funerals and other emergencies.

Statistics give an initial impression of urban life in Zambia. But such numbers struggle to capture the lived experiences of ordinary residents of a city like Lusaka. How do they make sense of their fortunes in the city? Which beliefs help them in that project? The city is not just a specific place on the map; it is also an idea, a meaningful imaginary space. In the Zambian image of the city, it is a place of contrast between desires and anxieties, between expectations and the real threats of everyday living. While numbers give us valuable quantitative information about the city, it is the stories that people tell that help us to understand how they imagine and conceptualise the world in which they live.

Religious images play an important role in the way people make sense of their environment. In the history of sociology, cities have often been associated with modernisation and, by association, with secularisation. But urban Africa is not a secular place (cf. Hancock & Srinivas 2008:620). As Robert Orsi (1999) argues in his introduction to *Gods of the City*, the city is imbued with religious meanings. Religious people 'have remapped the city, superimposing their coordinates of meaning on official cartographies' (Orsi 1999:47). Neo-Pentecostal Christianity in particular, with its emphasis on achieving prosperity and spiritual warfare, thrives in African cities. According to the popular neo-Pentecostal prosperity gospel, wealth is within reach of those whose faith is strong enough. In the city, with its abundant advertising and the proximity of riches, this message is feasible. If wealth does not materialise, this is blamed on adverse spiritual powers like demons or other agents of Satan. In the Pentecostal imagination, the city is a place where blessings can manifest themselves but where the flow of blessings from God's hands can also be blocked by the forces of evil.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, neo-Pentecostal Christianity is one of the webs of stories that help people to make sense of narratives about Satanism. Let us now turn to those narratives and see what they have to say about the city and its inhabitants.

■ Spaces of evil

Narratives about Satanism imply that the world we see around us is not the only world. Most ex-Satanists describe experiences of visiting another realm, generally referred to as 'the underworld' or 'the kingdom of darkness'. Some describe this world as under the ground, and they speak about tunnels and

staircases leading down to get to this place. In many narratives, however, this underworld is located not under firm ground but in the ocean. This is in line with the first, West African, descriptions of this realm, such as Emmanuel Eni's testimony. That Zambia is a landlocked country without direct access to an ocean does not seem to matter. One ex-Satanist, Felista, recounts her first visit to this place, where she is accompanied by other Satanists (in Udelhoven 2021):

> I was given some perfume to spray my body. I sprayed my body and then we disappeared. I found myself near the ocean. […] They talked to me, saying, 'Welcome to our kingdom.' Then I was told to step two steps forward. I walked in the water and then I sank. I went inside the water. There, I found a world like Earth. (p. 380)

The world underwater is a dry world and is in many respects similar to the normal world. It is also an urban world. As Naomi says when the interviewer asks her what it is like under the sea, 'I can say it is a place like Lusaka'. Like Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia, the underworld has schools, universities, industrial areas, hospitals, roads and houses. The underworld is equipped with modern technologies that one may find in urban areas. Several testimonies speak about monitors, big screens and tracing computers, from which the inhabitants of the normal world are held under surveillance. There seem to be no villages, huts or rural areas with mountains and bushland in the underworld that is described in testimonies of Satanists.

Like the underworld, the descriptions of the ordinary world in the testimonies of Satanism are urban as well. From the discussion about the advent of the idea of Satan in Africa in the previous chapter, one might expect that places related to African traditions are primarily deemed satanic because they are related to a pre-Christian and demonised past. To some extent, this is true. Rivers and graveyards, which are traditionally seen as places with a strong connection to the spirit world (cf. Pype 2015b:80), are mentioned in many testimonies as places where Satanists gather or where they enter the underworld. Traditional healers and their medicines open a connection to the satanic realm. As, for example, ex-Satanist Eve says, 'That witchdoctor you go to, that person, before he prophesies, he first consults with the devil' (#37a, Eve's recorded testimony, 2013). These connections are, however, mentioned only briefly, in passing. Surprisingly, the village is not a location that is related to Satanism. Villages are mentioned only a few times in testimonies. The real emphasis of testimonies about Satanism is not on the traditional or the rural but on the marketplace and the supermarket, the road, the hospitals and schools, the home and the church.

These satanic localities in the testimonies can hardly be avoided. One needs to go to the marketplace or the supermarket, but the things bought there may be produced in the underworld and, as we will see later in this chapter, they may be a threat to your health and home. On the roads, accidents happen that

are caused by Satanists who want to sacrifice innocent lives. A friend at school may be a Satanist who is set on initiating you. Not even hospitals are safe, as Gideon Mulenga Kabila explains (*How I was set free from Voodoo and witchcraft* 2007):

> I used to move from hospital to hospital. [...] I could steal somebody's face and impersonate him. Going to the hospital, I became like the doctor. Then I would get a syringe and go from bed to bed, injecting people. At the end of the day, 30 people could die at the same time in the hospital. The doctors couldn't even understand why these people have died. They would say, 'But the doctor was just here', not knowing that it was a [*Satanist*]. (n.p.)

Doctors may be Satanists, out to harm their patients. It seems that everything that makes a city urban – the presence of facilities in the spheres of business, education and health care, as well as its infrastructure – is tainted by the presence of the devil.

Even the church is not safe. Several ex-Satanists describe attempts to attack churches. In 'true' churches, they are burnt and have to flee. But, according to the testimonies, many churches are not 'true', and these are vulnerable to attacks from Satanists. There are many examples of this in the testimonies. I quote Gideon Mulenga Kabila again (n.d.:25–26):

> Some church buildings are meeting places for agents of the devil. Not all the church buildings, but some, that is why they fail to pray for a long period of time and lack the guidance of the Holy Spirit. [...] These are some of the things that can help you to identify whether your church is dedicated to the devil or not:
>
> • people dosing during the preaching of the word because of the demon of heaviness;
> • absconding from church service before time;
> • failing to participate in church programs;
> • lack of concentration during worshipping and praising time;
> • failing to give when it is offering time.
>
> When you see all these signals in your church then you must know that there is much to be done. These church buildings are dedicated [*to the devil*] due to lack of intercessors. The intercessors are the backbones of the church; a church without intercessors is dead. (pp. 25–26)

Some churches have become – like hospitals, schools, shops and roads, connected to the underworld.

Of course, churches, hospitals, schools, shops and roads exist in rural areas as well. But in the Zambian imagination, they are specifically an urban thing. The connection between Satanism and the city is even clearer when we look at the professions that are commonly associated with Satanism.

Satanic professions

Not only urban spaces are connected to Satanism. Looking at 80 newspaper articles that report accusations of Satanism, there are also certain urban

professions associated with Satan's powers. If accusations make the news, it means they are somehow newsworthy, for example, if they lead to riots or if they concern rumours about famous people such as politicians. Learning about accusations from newspapers is limited. The media filter leads to disproportionate attention towards the most dramatic cases and does not indicate how often accusations are made (Bonhomme 2016:6). However, the sample of accusations of Satanism from Zambian news outlets gives an idea of the sectors of life, which are most commonly connected with Satanism, namely politics, governmental organisations, religion, business and education. In this section, I will discuss these sectors and give examples of the accusations that are referred to in newspaper articles.

The sector that is mentioned most often in news articles is politics. In 28% of the newspaper articles, accusations against politicians are mentioned. In another publication (Kroesbergen-Kamps 2020c), I have described these accusations against politicians in detail. To summarise, accusations against politicians are generally not related to specific events. They are made as political statements by fellow politicians or by newspapers related to particular political parties. Both the ruling party, which during the time in which the articles were collected was the PF, and the main opposition party, UPND, are accused of involvement in Satanism. The leader of the UPND, Hakainde Hichilema, who was elected in 2021 as the seventh president of Zambia, is especially often linked to Satanism. Accusations of Satanism against politicians seem to be related to political strife in times of elections. Especially during that time, the media choose to publish or repeat accusations of human sacrifice and involvement in Satanism against politicians. These accusations fit well with the worldview described in Chapter 2, in which worldly success is sometimes connected to illicit spiritual support.

Related to the accusations against politicians are the accusations against governmental development organisations, which are mentioned in eight of the 80 articles. These accusations are generally a rural phenomenon. Three of the eight incidents are related to projects aimed at improving health care. Others target registration projects, such as the registration of subscriber identification module (SIM) cards and voter registration. Government funds aimed at sustainable development, such as a social cash transfer for the poor, a youth development fund and an e-voucher system for farmers are also related to Satanism by concerned citizens.

In the case of the suspicions related to health care, people fear that they will be harmed or that their blood will be used by Satanists. Several academic articles about health care programs in Zambia refer to these fears (see Geisler & Pool 2006; Peeters Grietens et al. 2014; Schumaker & Bond 2008). In other newspaper articles, the fear is related to having your name or number registered. This is interpreted as either an initiation into Satanism or as related to the number of the Beast mentioned in Revelation. In the case of the mobile

health care team, the rumours are related to the accusations towards politicians discussed earlier. Southern Province, where this incident took place, is one of the strongholds of the UPND. Mistrust of the PF government made the claim that the PF would try to prevent them from voting in the 2016 general elections plausible.

A third sector that is affected by accusations of Satanism is religion. Of the 80 articles, 18 deal with accusations against pastors and churches. Unlike the accusations against government projects, these accusations against pastors and churches are mainly an urban phenomenon, with examples in Lusaka and the cities of the Copperbelt Province. There are three distinct configurations of accusations visible in the articles: accusations made by the community in which the church resides, accusations made by other pastors and accusations made by church members.

If accusations of Satanism made by members of the community against a pastor or a church in that community reach the media, it is often because violence was involved. In 2011, violence erupted in Chongwe district, a rural area just outside of Lusaka, against a religious group that had settled there. Banda (2011) reports:

> Angry villagers set ablaze houses in a compound alleged to be home for suspected 'Satanists' in Kanakantapa area in Chongwe district, an incident in which three members of a named church at the heart of the controversy, were seriously injured. The houses were allegedly set ablaze yesterday around 11:00 hours, following allegations that the members of the religious group practised Satanism and were terrorizing the villagers in the surrounding areas. (n.p.)

This group, known as Goshali, an acronym for 'God shall live (forever)', came to live on a farm in Chongwe in the late 1990s (Banda 2011). During the national census of 2000, it emerged that the members of the religious community did not want to be counted. They did not have national registration cards and refused medical treatment and vaccinations. Children of the community were home-schooled. Tensions with the surrounding villagers intensified when the Goshali distributed a list of 35 commands to the neighbouring households and villages, expecting the wider community to adhere to them. According to Emmanuel Banda (2011), a local expert, the list of rules was introduced as follows:

> Neighbours and friends living near the Goshali home, due to the Goshali's unstoppable greatness, you are ordered to obey these rules starting from the day one receives them onwards. The Goshali wants to see decent neighbours who are ethically principled according to these rules. (n.p.)

The rules contain moral guidelines for marriages, conflicts and home management, and they forbid brewing beer, working in the fields at certain times, witchcraft and Rastafarianism (amongst others). They also give strict decrees about registering the names of surrounding residents and reporting visitors to the Goshali community. A week later, a farmer was assaulted when

he worked his field at a prohibited time. After this, the surrounding villagers turned against the Goshali, accusing them of Satanism, attacking them and burning their houses. After the riots, the members of the religious group were forcibly relocated to the Southern Province, where they hailed from (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor 2012).

The accusations against a church in Zambia that elicited the most media and scholarly attention were made against the UCKG in 1998 as well as in 2005. The UCKG is a neo-Pentecostal church of Brazilian origin that is spreading rapidly in southern Africa. The accusations against this church fall outside of the sample discussed here, which covers the period between 2011 and 2016. Unlike the articles in my sample, the accusations against the UCKG were internationally reported, for example, by the BBC. In both 1998 and 2005, the church was officially banned after allegations that the church was involved in satanic practices, a ban that was later revoked (Hackett 2003:199). Similar accusations have been made against this church in South Africa (Comaroff & Comaroff 1999:291–292).

In some instances, pastors accuse each other of involvement in Satanism. In 2016, Pastor Ian Chipuka of Christ of Fire Embassy Ministries in Lusaka accused another Lusaka pastor, named Prophet Anointed Andrew (also known as Seer 1), who seemed to be successful with his Christ Freedom Ministries. According to Pastor Chipuka, Prophet Anointed Andrew told him to do some rituals, which he later recognised to be satanic, if he wanted to be successful with his church as well. The accusations of Satanism were the start of a series of accusations of unpastoral conduct against Prophet Anointed Andrew. Within two weeks, 12 women came forward saying that the prophet slept with them and forced them to have abortions. A month later, he was arrested on suspicion of defiling a 14-year-old girl. He was released, but later that year Prophet Anointed Andrew was banned from Zambia by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. In 2020, Anointed Andrew again made the news when he recorded several video messages from his new residence in South Africa, stating that in 2016 he had given powers to politicians that he now would take back.

A final type of accusation against pastors comes from church members themselves. A clear example is that of Bishop Haggai Mumba of Rehoboth Naphtali Mkadesh church. In December 2014, church members wrote a letter to the Registrar of Societies, the government body that oversees the compulsory registration of religious associations, asking for the deregistration of the church. There seems to have been a growing sense that the teachings and practices of Bishop Mumba were not biblical and even satanic. Newspaper *Lusaka Voice* (2013) summarised the accusations:

> The former congregants accuse the 35-year-old prophet of instructing his members to shave their private parts, armpits and heads and take the hair to a mountain

near Mwana Mainda on the Kafue-Mazabuka road. Another accusation [...] is that members were told to contribute money and leave it on the mountain at Mwana Mainda. Another claim is that members were told to buy rings and instructed to wear them on the middle finger as Satanists do. (n.p.)

After these accusations, Bishop Mumba was banned from practising ministry. After a few months, however, he was reinstated at the Rehoboth church. The accusations from (former) church members point to the presence of tensions and conflicts in the religious community, although the newspaper articles do not give enough information to allow speculations about these conflicts.

Another sector that is often associated with Satanism is business. Ten of the 80 articles describe these accusations. Accusations against businessmen are generally made by the community in which they live and often result in violence, as we have seen in the description of the Chambishi riots in the introduction to Chapter 2. Both rural and urban communities accuse businessmen, although in rural areas the accused businessmen are commercial farmers rather than shopkeepers.

In the riots that follow the accusations, finding facts and evidence is often forgotten. In an incident in Katete in 2012, for example, a schoolgirl was found murdered. Riots broke out against a businessman because the community suspected him of murdering the girl and storing her breasts in a cooler box, even though the police had by that time already apprehended four other suspects. Furthermore, according to the police, the body of the murdered girl showed signs of sexual assault but was otherwise intact. The perceived relationship between murder and success in business is so strong that when emotions run high, further evidence for an accusation is not necessary. In an act of mob justice, shops are looted and destroyed, and in some cases, the accused businessmen are killed.

Education is the final sector that is often related to Satanism, also with 10 out of the 80 articles in the sample. Here the accusation is generally not of murder, harm or the search for power but initiation into Satanism. Teachers are thought to make their pupils Satanists, thereby spreading the danger of Satanism in Zambia. In 2014, in a school in Lusaka, the following events took place (*MuviTV* 2014):

Chaotic scenes characterised Lusaka's Chibelo Primary School following allegations of Satanism at the institution. Ten Pupils are reported to have been initiated into the practice without their knowledge after enticing them with sweets. Four of the ten affected children were found in a stupor performing weird acts. The seemingly perplexed pupils could not walk on their own but were aided by their parents. (n.p.)

Accusations such as this appear in the newspapers if pupils, parents or the community use or threaten to use violence against the teachers or the school. However, most concerns about Satanism in schools do not reach the news.

Schools frequently have to deal with suspicions of involvement in Satanism among pupils or toward teachers. Often these episodes involve pupils showing physical symptoms, like the 'stupor' and 'weird acts' described in the case of Chibelo Primary School.

In the academic literature, mainly written from a biomedical perspective, similar episodes in schools are analysed as epidemics of mass hysteria. In mass hysteria, a group of people from one school, village or church suddenly develop identical symptoms for which there is no physical explanation (Nakalawa et al. 2010:43). Episodes of mass hysteria in African schools are a well-known phenomenon. In an overview of the literature, Demobly Kokota (2011) mentions outbreaks in South Africa, Tanzania, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Uganda. Mass hysteria is closely related to local belief systems like witchcraft, possession or Satanism and can be intensified by rumours and gossip (Kokota 2011:76). Unfortunately, the academic literature that is written from the biomedical perspective rarely investigates the contents of the belief systems that give meaning to these episodes of mass hysteria in schools. As I have mentioned in Chapter 2, before Satanism was an interpretative frame in Zambia, such episodes were often related to spirit possession.

In sum, the sectors that are most associated with practices of Satanism are politics and governmental development programs, religion, business and education. Although the accusations in each sector and each case have their particular characteristics, most are related to the idea that involvement in Satanism brings power and wealth to perpetrators at the cost of death or harm to victims. Involvement in Satanism is further related to strange religious practices. Teachers are accused of bringing their pupils into Satanism, which leaves them acting strangely.

Whereas in olden times chiefs, diviners or healers, traders and hunters were associated with acquiring extraordinary powers through the sacrifice of human life, as we have seen in Chapter 2, these practices currently are associated with politicians, pastors, businessmen and, to a much lesser extent, teachers. Under the influence of the Christian framework introduced in Chapter 2, these practices are known as Satanism.

The classical and new categories related to taking lives to gain success are related to each other. One could say that politicians occupy the same space as the chiefs traditionally did, as leaders of the community, and that they thus need the same extra support from spiritual powers. Pastors, especially those in neo-Pentecostal churches, seem to have filled in the space traditionally occupied by the diviner or healer. Like the traditional healer, a contemporary prophet can discern what is wrong with you and manipulate the spiritual forces so that you are healed. The teacher, too, may have stepped into the role of the diviner and the chief as a provider of knowledge. The traders of old

have become the businessmen of today. I do not see a profession that correlates with the hunter of old, although the road to success in business may be described as a hunt as well.

Even if the new professions show similarities to the old ones, there is more going on than just an updating of the language. Chiefs still exist, but it is telling that while chiefs are still believed to need the support of the spirit world, they are never accused of Satanism. What is the difference between chiefs on the one hand and politicians, businessmen, pastors and teachers on the other? One important difference is that they belong to different moral universes. I argue that chiefs and headmen belong to a rural world, while the professions that are related to Satanism are all more linked to urban settings.

In this regard, Deborah Kaspin's (1993) analysis of traditional Nyau dancers in Malawi is insightful. According to Kaspin, chiefs and village headmen belong to a rural universe of meaning associated with tribal identity. Within this universe of meaning, there are traditional and legitimate rituals to access spiritual powers. State officials, politicians, teachers and Christians, in general, are defined as outsiders to this traditional milieu. Their universe of meaning is urban, with its own pathways to spiritual power. In this urban universe of meaning, which is associated with Christianity, traditional spiritual powers are rejected but still perceived as real. Satanism is the name for the use of illicit spiritual powers to gain personal success in the urban world (see also Kroesbergen-Kamps 2020c:190).

In the case of accusations of Satanism, the link with the urban world is obvious as well. Even those who are accused of Satanism in rural areas are somehow associated with an urban universe of meaning. For those who live in a rural area, politicians and government officials are outsiders associated with a structure of power that exists parallel to village politics. Teachers are government employees as well, educated in the city and then randomly placed in schools by the Ministry of Education. Because they are new in the community, because they are educated in town and because in many rural areas the teacher is one of the few persons receiving a reliable salary, teachers are viewed as people who belong to the urban world more than to the world of the village. Finally, the relative wealth and the trade links with customers beyond the village make the commercial farmer also an outsider to the rural world. Accusations of pastors and churches are generally already an urban phenomenon. Those who are accused are often pastors in churches of a neo-Pentecostal type. Neo-Pentecostal churches, often with names ending in 'International', are known to offer their members access to a global urban network of like-minded believers.

The professions that are associated with accusations of Satanism all belong to an urban universe of meaning, which is constructed in contrast to the world of the village. Even in this urban world, extraordinary success requires support

from spiritual powers (cf. Kroesbergen-Kamps 2020b). According to Ruth Marshall, politicians and businessmen were the first groups to be connected to satanic ways of acquiring riches. She gives the example of Nigerian dictator General Sani Abacha, who was rumoured to have amassed wealth and power using 'macabre juju shrines' (Marshall 2009:167). About the newly rich businessmen, Marshall (2009) writes:

> These businessmen are popularly understood as having achieved their wealth not only through criminal means (advance fee fraud, abuse of confidence, drug dealing, fraudulent speculation, corruption of various sorts) but also through ritual human sacrifice, macabre trafficking in human body parts, contacts with secret societies and cults, and pacts with powerful witches and other diabolical spirits. (p. 185)

When churches became more like business ventures, the accusations of illicit accumulation were aimed at pastors as well. The approved way to access spiritual powers is through Christian rituals of prayer, fasting and offering. Satanism is the name, obviously given from a Christian perspective, for illicit ways of accessing spiritual powers. In the moral universe of Zambian urbanism, Satanism signifies an illegitimate application of extraordinary powers to attain a special status.

All of the accusations against politicians, businessmen and government officials can be interpreted in this way, as can most of the accusations against teachers and pastors or churches. Accused businessmen are thought to have acquired their wealth and success in business by sacrificing innocent lives. Like the businessmen in the quote from Marshall, politician Hakainde Hichilema is thought to be a member of a secret society for him to have achieved his wealth and political power. Even the miraculous powers of pastors may come from an illicit, diabolical source. Exceptions are the riots against the Goshali church in Chongwe and instances of mass hysteria in schools.

In both the places discussed in the testimonies and the accusations in newspapers, Satanism is portrayed as an urban thing. The urban is conceptualised as a place where people access illegitimate power at the cost of human lives. Where the city for many people in Zambia is a place of hope, in testimonies it is a place of threat. The places that are singled out as particularly dangerous – the roads, shops, hospitals, schools and churches – are connected to what modernity is supposed to be in the Zambian imagination. This theme of modernity returns in the next section on the dangers of the spoils of modernity.

■ The dangers of the spoils of modernity

In the Zambian imaginary of modernity, the life of the village and its traditions is seen as backwards. When I discussed the concept of modernity with my students at a university in Lusaka, Zambia, one of them said, 'We have schools now and don't hold our traditional beliefs anymore. That is civilisation, isn't it?'

(Kroesbergen-Kamps 2014:98). Modernity is almost portrayed as a promised land, a place somewhere down the road where health and wealth will be abundant. Education, health care and infrastructure: these are important aspects of modernity in Zambia. Life in the city, which has more schools, more facilities for health care and better infrastructure, is the epitome of modernisation in Zambia. The Zambian imaginary of modernity also includes Christianity, which is contrasted with the traditional rituals of the rural village. Christianity came to Zambia with the promise of development in the form of the package deal referred to as the three Cs, Christianity, commerce and civilisation. The church is as much a part of African modernity as the city.

A city is a place that not only has better facilities but also opens the possibility of a life of modern consumption. One of the first things one notices when hearing testimonies about Satanism in Africa is their focus on materiality, specifically on products that one can buy. The excerpts from Naomi's testimony in the introduction give a flavour of this. In this section, I will explore the meaning of the consumer goods mentioned in the testimonies and relate them to modern life in the city.

■ Tainted products and their effects

The testimonies are full of references to food and drinks available in supermarkets, clothes, rings, cosmetics, et cetera. As Naomi's words in the introduction to this chapter show, in the testimonies, these products are connected to the devil. Some testimonies give long lists of dangerous products and explain how they are manufactured. When Gideon Mulenga Kabila, for example, describes the underworld where Satan reigns, he dwells extensively on the factories in which the satanic products are made. In these factories, the bodies of the people that are sacrificed by Satanists are used as the raw materials for anything you may find in the supermarket. I will give only a brief section of his elaborations on the different factories in this underworld. He writes (Kabila n.d.):

> The human ginnery separates human beings into different parts, and these parts are the head, bones, skin, and every part that is found in the human body. These parts are used in different industries for making products and clothes and even vehicles. [...] Nails are used to manufacture crisps. Lungs are used for manufacturing tropical rubbers [*a local name for flipflops*] with dragons on them. Intestines are used for making sausages made from human meat. They remove the brain which they mix with a fluid found in the spinal cord to form toothpastes, and when they dry the skulls in the automatic dryer, they make washing powder. They also drain the fluid from the eyes to make mineral water, which tastes selfish. After babies are sacrificed these babies are grinded, they take the grinded substance to another industry within for making creams for ladies. (pp. 22–23)

These descriptions produce a shock of disgust. Everyday consumer goods consist of human body parts, according to Gideon Mulenga Kabila's testimony.

Besides, these products are infectious, like a disease, and can cause all kinds of trouble.

Not every testimony is as explicit about satanic products as Gideon Mulenga Kabila is. In this section, I use 12 testimonies that mention these products, most of which are introduced in Chapter 1. Later I will discuss the nature of the products mentioned, but in this section, I will focus on which problems are caused by the use of these products. In general, products from the underworld may connect the buyer or receiver or their home to the underworld or even initiate them unknowingly into Satanism. More specifically, the troubles caused by these products can be divided into different categories. In order of importance, the following categories are apparent in the testimonies: medical problems, problems related to behaviour or character, problems in relationships, possession by spirits or spiritual spouses and financial problems. I will briefly introduce each category.

Medical problems, including both physical issues such as anaemia and infertility and mental problems like madness, are mentioned in more than half of the testimonies. For example, Naomi explains:

> 'You buy a drink. You drink that drink. The more you drink, the more your blood is drained. After a little time, they say, 'That person has no blood. Where did your blood go?' The drinks you were using! […] Those drinks you are drinking, they have drained all your blood.' (#41b, Naomi's recorded testimony, 2012)

These medical problems cannot be treated by ordinary doctors as they are caused not in the physical but in the spiritual world.

Another common problem caused by satanic products is a behavioural change. This is also mentioned by more than half of the 12 testimonies. Gideon Mulenga Kabila writes (n.d):

> I saw a certain woman with her two children getting into a shop of an Indian, where they bought products. And all those products were perfect except tinned fish. When they went home, they prepared it and ate. Then, after, they all became wicked, and it started with children who went to their neighbour's house, who was cooking okra. These children started laughing at this woman, saying, 'us, we have ate [*sic*] tinned fish, and you are eating okra, you poor woman'. Then the woman became furious and slapped those children and told them that, 'after all, this is your first time to eat tinned fish'. And these children left that house and went to their mother, crying that their neighbour had slapped them because they ate tinned fish. And this woman became furious also, insomuch that she even forgot about her spiritual life and went to this neighbour, where their quarrels began, which led them to start fighting. What was the cause? It was the tinned fish. Be careful with the things you buy; don't forget to pray for any food before cooking and eating. (p. 61)

Because they ate canned fish made in the underworld, the children taunt their neighbour with their good fortune of having been able to eat this fish, and the mother of the children gets into a fight with the neighbour as well, forgetting her Christian values. Eating the satanic fish has brought their worst behaviour to the surface.

In the previous case, the relationship between neighbours was affected by satanic products, but it is even more common that relationships between husbands and wives suffer. This is mentioned in a third of the testimonies. David, another ex-Satanist, explains how people sometimes give gifts that are made in the underworld:

> 'You will find that there are people who bring you pots, bring you stoves. They will put spells in those, so you find that once you have been given a stove, a gift, maybe a pot, whatever you are going to cook in that pot, it will be just giving you a problem. Like when your husband doesn't like your food. You cook the food, it tastes bad, you find that he will even prefer eating from a restaurant. So those gifts, they bring problems. Others, you find that they just bring arguments in the house. Once you put that property in the home, it will be just bringing problems. You have not discovered where the problem is coming from. You find out a small thing, you argue. A small thing, you argue. Others end up even fighting. You find that people fight, even kill each other.' (#31b, David's recorded testimony, 2013)

In this passage, a satanic pot will cause troubles in a relationship, causing the husband to seek his food elsewhere or even causing serious fights.

Satanic products may also cause possession by demons, which is mentioned by more than a third of the ex-Satanists. In Grace's testimony in Chapter 1, she says that they used to sell satanic bottles of Coke (#43, interview with Grace, 8 July 2013). Whoever drank them became possessed by demons. A final consequence of satanic problems is financial hardship. A quarter of the ex-Satanists mention this. For example, Mr X explains how satanic doctors in hospitals make tainted products:

> 'The doctors in the hospital would remove kidneys, livers and private parts. They use these to make products like biscuits, crisps, et cetera. When a person eats those, whatever they do fails until they submit to the power of God.' (#4a, Mr X's recorded testimony, 2015)

If you consume satanic products, your business will never be successful, and you are doomed to live a life of poverty.

■ Main categories of satanic products

Satanic products cause all kinds of problems, as we have seen in the previous section. In this section, I will shift my focus from the problems to the products that cause them. A closer look at the products that are deemed to be satanic shows that these are not just any products. Satanic products can be divided into a limited number of categories. The main one is that of products used for (female) beautification: cosmetics, accessories, jewellery and hair products. Almost all of the 12 testimonies mention this category. More than half also mention clothes, food and drinks, and almost half mention cars as satanic products.

A pastor who interviewed an ex-Satanist explains in one testimony why hair extensions are so dangerous. The ex-Satanist had said that wigs and hair

extensions are made from snakes that one of the underworld queens has instead of hair. He says:

> 'Women, I hope you can catch this here. We are talking about hair that was actually not hair, but snakes. They were snakes cut into threads that look like hair. So when you've got this kind of hair that you put on your head as a woman, number one, you begin to lose your mind. You realise that you made decisions without understanding and as a result did things that drove your husband crazy, and as we are talking, you may be separated or you are divorced or things are not just right. There is no peace at home, so to say. For other women, it leads them to begin to get attracted to other men wrongfully. You may be married or you may be single, but ultimately, they want you to commit fornication or adultery. All because of that hair.' (#44i, Mphatso's recorded testimony, 2013)

In this passage, almost all of the problems that can be caused by satanic products can be seen. The hair extensions or wigs cause mental problems, problems in relationships and a negative change in one's character.

Both beauty products and clothes change the wearer's appearance, and it seems this change has an effect that carries beyond the surface. It is not just incidental behaviour that is affected by satanic products but one's whole character. Naomi emphasises this danger of products. She tells about shoes that are made in the underworld:

> 'Those shoes are dangerous. [...] If you are a pastor and you have put on that shoe, you will be boasting. Even stepping on the floor, you will be, "I am the king of the world now." [...] Everyone is watching that shoe, and those shoes are to be good-looking and attractive. When someone looks at your legs, he says, "This is a man of God." And you don't know those shoes will be causing problems to you. They will be entering through your slippers, the demons. In the end, he becomes somebody blaspheming God, no respect for God. You think like God now is your cousin. You turn him into your grandfather now, because of the shoes.' (#41a, Naomi's recorded testimony, 2011)

On the surface, the satanic products look good. They make you look prosperous, like a true man of God. But when you use these products, they will change who you are, and instead of being a devout Christian, you will become someone who has no respect for God. In the testimonies that mention cars, these are sometimes also interpreted as something that makes the driver too proud.

Naomi especially targets black women who want to change their looks by lightening their skin or straightening their hair. 'God gave me this splash of good hair', she says. 'What is the reason for putting another [sic] hair?' she asks. 'God made you black and beautiful', Naomi continues. But instead of honouring that natural beauty, women use powders and creams to make their skin lighter. 'Why changing [sic] your skin? [...] You are a black person. If you use that tube, it will be changing God's colour to a demonic colour' (#41a, Naomi's recorded testimony, 2011)

Sometimes consuming satanic food and drink has these changing effects too, like in the case of the family who had canned fish for dinner and got in a

fight with the neighbour. But more often, having satanic food causes a different change, namely an initiation into Satanism. As I have mentioned previously, it is often food or clothes that are presented as a gift that have this effect. These gifts are generally given by family members or friends. As Filip De Boeck argues, narratives in which gifts become poisoned have been common in African traditions for a long time. The witch applies her craft through gifts within kinship networks (De Boeck & Plissart 2004:196). In the narratives of Satanism, the Satanist seems to have taken the place of the witch. New in these notions surrounding gifts in Africa is the idea that a gift can create a debt obligation of which the receiver is initially unaware (De Boeck & Plissart 2004:203–204). The gift of the Satanist is not free or the start of a relationship but entails an obligation to the devil, a compulsion to start working for his evil kingdom and sacrifice others in his name. The value of the gift stands in no relation to the obligations it entails. Like the use of cosmetics and clothes, accepting the gift changes the receiver from the inside out.

Through all of these products, whether they are cosmetics, clothes or food, owners and receivers are changed. Many ex-Satanists use striking images to describe this change. 'The devil took my heart of flesh', an ex-Satanist tells the Fingers of Thomas, a Lusaka-based group that investigates narratives about Satanism (Udelhoven 2021:374). Another ex-Satanist tells them, 'My heart was locked with a hundred keys' (Udelhoven 2021:380). Similarly, Memory Tembo writes in her testimony that she became heartless (#2, Memory Tembo's published testimony, 2010). 'My heart was like a stone', Naomi says about her days as a Satanist (#41a, Naomi's recorded testimony, 2011). Gideon Mulenga Kabila (n.d.) describes a hospital in the underworld where Satanists are given hearts of stone to enhance their effectiveness. Eve, in a dream, sees how Satan removes her heart and gives her a different heart. After that, she can speak with snakes (#37, Eve's recorded testimony, 2013). Tsitsi's heart is changed as well. 'My heart was changed with that of a mouse, and my tongue with the tongue of a bat', she says (#10c, Tsitsi's testimony in church, 08 February 2015).

In Zambian understandings, the heart is the seat of a person's character and of their way of being and acting (Udelhoven 2021:241). Losing one's heart, as the Satanists describe, is losing an important part of one's identity. The hearts of the Satanists are inaccessible, made of stone or animal parts. Becoming a Satanist has not just changed them, it has made them lose their humanity. As we have seen in Chapter 1, the Other is often described as not quite human. In the testimonies, the Satanists embody that Other. But the beginning of their descent into evil often lies in the products that many Zambians covet. In the narratives about Satanism, these desired accoutrements of modernity are not good but evil. What does this tell us about Zambian society?

■ Satanic products as modern products

As we have seen, instead of bringing joy and status, the products mentioned in the testimonies bring suffering and change one's identity. As I have argued elsewhere (Kroesbergen-Kamps 2022), there is something special about the products that are singled out in the testimonies as being satanic. Cosmetics, accessories, clothes and processed foods are all products that have relatively recently become available for a large public and are connected to the urban world. I will explain how these categories of products are both recent and related to the urban.

A first clue can be found in an article by Wim van Binsbergen about a young woman, Mary, who leaves her rural hometown to start working in a city in Botswana. Her friends and colleagues in the city teach her to use the products that are available to her in the city's markets. She had never used creams, lotions and cosmetics, but her female friends give her an introduction to their usefulness. According to Van Binsbergen (1999):

> Her calloused hands and feet soften, […] she learns to use cheap body lotion after every bath, comes to insist on the use of toilet paper and disposable menstrual pads (instead of improvised thick wads of toilet paper grabbed at the factory toilets), becomes expert at the names, prices and directions-for-use of hair-styling products. (p. 189)

Except for toilet paper, all of the products mentioned by Van Binsbergen are in the testimonies named as potentially dangerous satanic products. The testimonies presuppose a working knowledge of these products. For example, some of the queens in the underworld who are mentioned in several testimonies, including Naomi's, carry the names of specific types of weaves, like Bella and Belinda. Becoming a modern, embodied urban subject is something that has to be learned because it is new for those coming from rural areas. It is also a path of change fraught with dangers, as the testimonies warn.

There is something special about the clothing mentioned as the second category of dangerous items in the testimonies as well. In the villages as well as in the compounds of the city, many women wear *chitenges*, the traditional printed cloths that can be worn as a skirt or as a carrier for a baby on the back. The *chitenge* is a ubiquitous piece of women's clothing in Zambia. Yet its absence in the testimonies is striking. The clothing that is mentioned as dangerous is not traditional Zambian clothing but off-the-rack consumer fashion like skirts and Western-style suits.

The Zambian elite and middle-class may be able to buy these clothes from the South African and British stores that can be found in the big malls throughout Lusaka, but for most Zambians, these clothes come from the second-hand clothing market, known locally as *salaula*. In her analysis of the

use of *salaula* in Lusaka, Karen Tranberg Hansen (1999:216) states that '*salaula* meets most of the clothing needs amongst roughly two-thirds of the households'. These second-hand clothes are often donations from Western countries, and their prints are often illegible to the wearers. As I have related elsewhere (Kroesbergen-Kamps 2022), I once visited a youth camp in a rural area of Zambia. The evangelist who was preaching to the youths was speaking about Satanism. He asked the youths who had worn clothes with words they did not understand to come forward to be prayed for as these clothes could well have initiated them into Satanism. All of the youths came to the front for prayers. The anxiety triggered by an unknown language is not unlike the American urban legends and cautionary tales discussed by Fine and Ellis (2010) about buying t-shirts or getting tattoos with Chinese or other non-Roman characters that eventually are revealed to have a different meaning than presumed.

The foods and drinks mentioned in the Zambian testimonies are also not traditional types of food and beverages. Maize porridge, the staple food for almost every Zambian I knew, is never mentioned in the testimonies. Traditionally brewed beer like *thobwa* or *chibuku* is also not mentioned. The dangerous foodstuffs in the testimonies are processed foods, with obscure production processes and often imported from abroad, which can be bought in the supermarkets and markets in town. Nowadays, these products are present in rural areas as well, but in town, they are almost omnipresent.

All of the products mentioned in Zambian testimonies are relatively new on the Zambian scene. The products are produced and processed abroad and subsequently imported to the Zambian market. In its emic conceptualisation, products like cosmetics, fashion and processed foods are associated with modernity and development. But as was the case with the modern locations mentioned in the testimonies, these modern products do not bring the bliss that Zambians desire. Instead, they change their owners to the point of possibly taking their humanity away.

Zambian cities, as we have seen in the previous sections, are presented in the testimonies as threatening places. The enjoyment of what the city has to offer in consumer goods also holds a threat. In all of these cases, the threat of spiritual evil is related to expectations of development and modernity. The city is perceived by many Zambians as a place for development, a chance for a better future away from the hardship in the village. In the city, one can embody modernity by driving a car, wearing the latest fashion and eating store-bought foods.

The Pentecostal churches especially, with their emphasis on blessings of prosperity to come in this life, encourage this desire to become modern. In Zambian Christianity, the prosperity gospel has become influential not only in

Pentecostal churches but also within the mainline mission churches like the RCZ. Looking at the emphasis on material blessings preached in church, it is no coincidence that Naomi describes a pastor who is wearing fancy shoes that turn out to be satanic. Pastors are pressed to show evidence of their good standing with God in their appearance by wearing the most expensive and whitest suits, the shiniest shoes and driving the biggest cars. Only a pastor who embodies this modern way of life is accepted as a true man of God. Pastors, as well as congregants, will aim to look as smart as possible in church.

In an insightful ethnography of 'postcolonial automobility', Lindsey Green-Simms (2017:195) describes how cars in West Africa are perceived as extensions of the self. The use of consumer goods as tokens for one's identity is a well-known element of consumerism (Giddens 2009:188). But in Africa, the boundary between the material world and a person's identity may be perceived as more porous. In traditional masked dances, like the ones of the Nyau in Zambia and Malawi, the dancers embody the spirits whose masks they wear. Wearing the mask is not just a symbol but has real consequences for one's identity. Like a pastor's clothes, a car is an attribute of a modern African self. You are what you drive, what you wear and what you eat. This idea of porous boundaries between the self and the material world makes it easier to understand why eating tinned fish or wearing hair extensions potentially has consequences for one's character and one's heart as well.

In this first part of the chapter, I have argued that in testimonies and accusations of Satanism, the danger comes from the city in an emic understanding of modernity. Becoming modern, living in the city, taking up an urban profession and consuming the new products that development has made available: all of these are seen as dangerously connected to Satan and his underworld. What is it about the city and about modern life that is so threatening? Several scholars have tried to answer this question. In the next section, I will discuss some of these answers.

■ Changes in society and narratives about Satanism: Anonymity and the family

One theory is that urbanisation leads to an increase in the confrontation with anonymity, with acts as a stressor and leads to stories that seem similar to narratives about Satanism. Another is that there is a shift in the expectations and responsibilities attributed to kinship networks. In Africa, the expectations of help from members of the extended family are sometimes labelled as a black tax. In the narratives about Satanism, family is also an important category. So can these theories about changes in society explain why testimonies and accusations about Satanism find so much acclaim in contemporary Zambia?

■ Urban anonymity

The threatening spaces in the city that are described in the testimonies – roads, schools, hospitals, shops and churches – have one thing in common: they are spaces in which strangers are encountered. The conceptual relationship between urbanisation and anonymity is a classic of sociological analysis. In the early 20th century, George Simmel already argued that living near many unknown people in the city changes the forms of social interactions, forcing people to take greater emotional distance from each other. In the city, one could say, the dangerous Other may be your neighbour.

In an article on contemporary rumours and urban legends in West Africa, Julien Bonhomme (2012) writes about penis snatching, killer phone calls and dangerous gifts. The penis snatcher is a stranger who may steal one's genitals through a handshake. The killer phone calls refer to a rumour that taking a call from a certain number may leave the receiver unconscious, ill or spiritually harmed. The dangerous gifts in Bonhomme's article are alms given by a mysterious, wealthy benefactor to those in need, who afterwards die. The common denominator in all of these narratives is anonymity. Face-to-face and mediated interactions with strangers, a typical occurrence in an urban space, are filled with dangers (Bonhomme 2012:226). Anxieties connected to these ordinary situations blend with common African discourses of witchcraft and related phenomena and give rise to new rumours and narratives. In these narratives, the danger of spiritual harm is no longer restricted to intimate relations, as it was with witchcraft. Instead, its scope has widened to include the stranger as a source of spiritual danger.

How does Bonhomme's analysis relate to narratives of Satanism in Zambia? The city is prevalent in testimonies, as are specific locations in which many strangers can be encountered. Some of the narratives surrounding Satanism also point to the perceived dangers of anonymity described by Bonhomme. For example, in June 2013, I received the following text message:

> 'Never pick up a call from 0800 226655. They are using people for rituals from today till August 17. They just want your voice. Send this message to people you care about. Please do it and save a life. Am not joking.' (Anonymous, text message, 2013)

Although Satanism is not explicitly mentioned in this text, in conversations people do associate the message with unsolicited initiation and ritual sacrifice by Satanists. The rumour about killer phone numbers was reported in Nigeria as early as 2004 (Bonhomme 2012:208), and it quickly grew into a transnational narrative. A very similar message to the one I received from a Zambian contact in 2013 was spread in Nigeria in 2011. Bonhomme interprets the rumour as an illustration of the perceived danger of anonymity that is mediated through information technology.

The narratives about deadly alms that Bonhomme also describes are mainly prevalent in countries with a strong Muslim presence, where giving alms is one of the religious duties. Zambia is an overwhelmingly Christian country, so these specific rumours are not shared in Zambia. But in Zambian testimonies of Satanism, initiation is often related to receiving gifts. Generally, these gifts are given by someone who is known, like a friend or a teacher, but sometimes the giver is unknown. In one testimony, an ex-Satanist warns, 'be very careful with things that are given to you'. 'You mean things that we get from neighbours,' the interviewer suggests. The ex-Satanist continues: 'With neighbours, it's okay, but not things you get on the road like children sometimes get. Don't take these things.' The things that he is referring to are mainly sweets and biscuits. Fears of satanic food are also prevalent in the scares of Satanism that affect schools, and the fear of gifts from strangers, especially when these are given to children, is also a common theme in European and American panics surrounding child-molesters.

Bonhomme relates stories about deadly alms to a crisis surrounding gifts in contemporary Africa. According to another classical sociological theory, proposed by Marcel Mauss, the exchange of gifts between people and between groups strengthens their relationships and builds solidarity. In contemporary urban Africa, the circle in which gifts are given and reciprocated is narrowing. In an extensive deliberation on the relation between gift-giving, witchcraft and the influence of the new Pentecostal churches, Filip de Boeck argues that gift cycles operated within networks based on kinship. He points out that traditionally, this was a point of resemblance with witchcraft, which also operated within the same kinship network. Witchcraft and gifts were also related to the belief that witchcraft could be transmitted through gifts (De Boeck & Plissart 2004:196).

In more recent times, however, the relationship between witchcraft and the kinship network has become less clear. 'Witchcraft is no longer something from within', as De Boeck (2004:203) notes. At the same time, kinship networks have narrowed to include little more than the nuclear family. I will give more attention to this point in the final part of this chapter. Also, the neo-Pentecostal churches, in which it is common to give gifts to the pastor to receive blessings of wealth and health, have redefined the nature of the gift (De Boeck & Plissart 2004:198). Rather than being a free and spontaneous act that oils the mechanics of kinship or intergroup relations, gift-giving has become a calculated investment. A gift comes, more than ever, with strings attached. In the narratives about Satanism, accepting a gift from a Satanist creates an obligation, an initiation into Satanism that one may not be aware of at first. The price of a biscuit taken from a stranger may well be your life.

The gift, which was supposed to strengthen social relations and redistribute wealth, has become a danger, Bonhomme agrees with De Boeck. Bonhomme's

main emphasis is that the gifts in the rumours he describes come from anonymous donors rather than from family members or other relations. The final rumour Bonhomme analyses as related to urban anonymity is that of the penis snatcher. The penis snatcher is a stranger who greets you in the common African way, with a handshake. After the handshake, however, the private parts of the receiver are gone, snatched by the stranger. This specific motif is absent from Zambian testimonies of Satanism. But in one testimony, the interviewer does warn against shaking hands with strangers because the ex-Satanist giving the testimony confessed to sacrificing his parents with a handshake. The interviewer says:

> 'Hearing what he just said here, that if somebody, a stranger, comes and wants to greet you [...] Of course, I know it's impolite not to greet back. But with the trends of what is happening right now, what is going on in our time and age, you can't afford to greet anybody anyhow.' (#44i, Mphatso's recorded testimony, 2013)

In the testimonies, there are only a few places in which strangers are explicitly identified as a threat. We have one statement about gifts from strangers, one statement about handshakes from strangers and a rumour about phone calls that are not mentioned in any testimony. When ex-Satanists speak about markets, schools and hospitals, it is not directly connected to the danger of strangers. In fact, in most testimonies, strangers play a role as innocent victims of the Satanist rather than as a source of danger. To give a few examples, Naomi says, 'I can't count how many I have killed because there just have been so many' (#41a, Naomi's recorded testimony, 2011). Others claim to have caused notable accidents with heavy death tolls in Zambia or beyond, such as the plane crash that killed the Zambian national soccer team in 1993 or the tsunami in the Indian Ocean in 2004.

The strangers in testimonies are somehow different from Bonhomme's anonymous strangers. For although the strangers in the rumours discussed by Bonhomme are unknown, they are still relatively close. They are faces in the street whose hands you might shake and who might get hold of your phone number. Bonhomme (2012:215–216, 224) also argues that the rumours involve specific groups of strangers, like certain ethnic groups or the people behind big companies. On the other hand, strangers in the testimonies are a faceless mass. The killing of these strangers does not involve a profound moral dilemma. They exist only as numbers. The testimonies may reflect a general fear that misfortune may strike at any time and from any direction, but looking at the treatment of strangers in the testimonies, strangers and anonymity do not constitute a major worry. The deaths of strangers in testimonies are collateral damage that does not touch the heart of the narrative (Koschorke 2012:227) or that of the audience. The connection that Bonhomme makes about urbanisation and threatening anonymity is therefore not well represented in the testimonies.

■ Tensions surrounding family and kinship: The extended family

The family plays an important role in testimonies. Family members are amongst the most important categories of people mentioned in the testimonies. They are particularly mentioned as intended victims, much more so than, for example, friends, neighbours or church people. In African conceptions of witchcraft, the family is often presented as a source of danger. According to Peter Geschiere, modernity may have extended the scope of narratives about witchcraft and related phenomena by introducing strangers and global networks, but in the end, the danger leads back to the intimacy of the home.

In *Witchcraft, intimacy, and trust*, Geschiere (2013) begins his argument with fears of Cameroonian *evolués*, meaning the people with an education and a position outside of the village, to return to their village because of witchcraft attacks out of jealousy for their success. In the 1970s, villagers complained that these successful sons did not bring their wealth back to the village, while the *evolués* themselves kept a safe distance from the village. Twenty years later, the relations between villagers and urban relatives were still fraught with suspicions of witchcraft, but this time it was the villagers who felt threatened by the 'new' forms of witchcraft practised by the wealthy urbanites. As I have argued in Chapter 2, rumours about illicit accumulation are a source of fear of people who are wealthy, successful and have a connection to the city.

In the 1990s, when young Cameroonians started to define themselves as global citizens, the scope of the witchcraft discourse also increased. This broadening of the scope meant that the connection between witchcraft and kinship became less strong or at least obscured. However, kinship did not become absent as a force in narratives about witchcraft and related phenomena. Even migrants to Europe feel the expectations of relatives and fear witchcraft if they are not able to live up to them. For Geschiere (2013), the baseline is this:

> Despite growing distance, there seems to be a recurrent and somber refrain that people 'at home' – even if this home has become an almost virtual one – have dangerous powers and must therefore be respected. (p. 62)

Satanism is a new form of witchcraft that is not mentioned by Geschiere but is similar to the West African narratives he describes. As with the types of modern witchcraft described by Geschiere, there is an interesting tension between an increase in scope and a recurring relevance of intimate relations. The label Satanism itself already points to a more global scope than parochial witchcraft. Satanism, as it is understood in the Zambian context, implies a struggle between forces of good and evil that takes place on a global scale, as we have seen in a previous chapter. The extended scope of narratives about

Satanism can also be seen in the contexts in which accusations of Satanism occur: professions related to the urban world are particularly suspect.

Geschiere notes that even though witchcraft now operates on a global level, the danger is still located within the intimate relations of the family. In narratives about Satanism, this is the case as well. The narrative of one ex-Satanist, Taiba, is a good example of this phenomenon. Taiba recounts how she and her friends tried to attack the prominent Nigerian pastor T.B. Joshua, already an international target:

> 'We sat, having a meeting. That's when my grandmother said, "You should go and attack T.B. Joshua, who has brought a lot of people in Christianity". So the first people who went [*to attack him*] were my friends whom I used to work with: Lady Gaga, Beyoncé, Rihanna, Jay-Z.' (#53c, Taiba's recorded testimony, 2013)

The globally famous artists were allegedly, according to Taiba, her friends in the underworld or even her subordinates – 'They were like my secretaries', Taiba says later. But global as this may seem, at the top of the hierarchy in the underworld stands not an international figure of evil but Taiba's grandmother. She is the one who tells them whom they have to attack. The global and the intimate local intermingle, and of these two, the intimate receives the highest standing.

This is obvious in other testimonies as well. While the sacrifices of strangers and even friends are mentioned in passing – 'I used to cause many accidents', as Naomi said (#41b, Naomi's recorded interview, 2012) – killing relatives is described much more extensively. The most elaborate episodes of sacrifice in testimonies relate to the sacrifice of close relatives. This is often the case with the first assignment as well as with the last failed assignment.

Filip de Boeck adds to Geschiere's analysis by pointing out that the emphasis on the nuclear family has grown ever more in the period that Geschiere describes. This has led to a redefinition of what kinship is (De Boeck & Plissart 2004:198–203). Nowadays, in many urban families, the core kinship relation that should be honoured is the relationship within the nuclear family. According to De Boeck, this makes mistrust amongst relatives who do not belong to the intimate nuclear family even more likely, and with mistrust often come suspicions of witchcraft.

The relationship with the extended kinship network is often experienced as a stifling bond. According to Birgit Meyer (1998b), Pentecostal religiosity, in which the worldview of the testimonies makes sense and which offers a platform for many testimonies, strives to help Christians to 'make a break with the past'. This past is associated with the extended family, with the village and with rejected cultural or religious traditions that tie a person to the satanic. These ties need to be cut to become a free individual, independent of and unaffected by family relations and able to progress (Meyer 1998b:338).

The portrayal of the witch doctor or traditional healer and the village life in the testimonies shows that the past is perceived as a toxic bond.

In the testimonies, Satanists literally sever ties with their families by sacrificing family members, and this is what makes them wealthy. In another article, Meyer (1995:247, 246) writes that narratives about Satanism 'refer to tensions surrounding financial matters within the family.' and especially 'the assertion of individual interest above that of the family.' In South Africa, the obligations towards the extended family are commonly known as the 'black tax' (cf. ed. Mhlongo 2019). In South Africa, black tax is the pressure that is felt to 'care financially for people in a broad family or kin network, while at the same time trying to build sustainable wealth' (Mangoma & Wilson-Prangley 2019:444). In a short essay, Dudu Busani-Dube (2019) describes the experience of black tax:

> Black tax is earning a big enough salary to buy your first car, but you can't because the bank loan you took to fix your parents' dilapidated house landed you at the credit bureau. […] Black tax is opting to go for a diploma when you qualify for a degree, because a diploma takes only three years, and hopefully you'll get a job after that and take over paying your siblings' school fees so that your mother can maybe quit her job at that horrible family she is working for in the suburbs. […] Black tax is being in Johannesburg and trying very hard to hide your struggles from your family back in Mtubatuba, or Qonce, because you don't want them to worry. Black tax is your mother having to change the subject every time the neighbours ask her why her paint is peeling and her geyser is broken when she has an employed daughter. (pp. 20–21)

Maybe the obligations towards extended kinship networks were self-evident at one time, but in today's world, they are experienced as a stifling bond as well. And from the perspective of the receiver, if a person chooses to spend money on herself instead of the family, 'her gain is the others' loss' (Ashforth 2005:32).

In the academic literature on narratives about witchcraft and Satanism, the links with the extended family seem to be most under pressure. The extended family represents an association with a non-Christian tradition and the claims for support of members of the extended family put a strain on one's income. In the Zambian testimonies, however, most intended victims of the Satanists come from the nuclear family (parents, siblings or children) rather than from the extended family (aunts and uncles, nephews, nieces, cousins).

In the testimonies, the ex-Satanists report few qualms about sacrificing members of the extended family. Those that are mentioned as intended victims are, in almost every case, according to the narrative, really harmed. This is different from the intended victims coming from the nuclear family. In the testimonies, half of the intended victims who are members of the nuclear family could not be harmed by the Satanists because of moral misgivings.

Within the nuclear family, relationships matter. If the testimony refers to a troubled relationship in the nuclear family, this family member is killed, while a loved member of the nuclear family cannot be killed or harmed. Such a failed assignment is an important feature of many testimonies. These emotional deliberations that are relevant in the decision to sacrifice a close relative play almost no role in the sacrifice of extended family members, friends, church people or strangers. If the testimonies show something about the experience of relations within the family, ties within the nuclear family should be part of the interpretation and not just ties with the extended family.

■ Tensions surrounding family and kinship: The nuclear family

The nuclear family, a household consisting of a father, mother and biological children, was promoted in Zambia by missionaries. According to De Boeck, the churches imposed a restricting redefinition of lineage and clan relations (De Boeck & Plissart 2004:203). The extended family circles of clan and lineage lost relevance under the influence of missionary emphasis on the nuclear family. But missionaries were not the only group sponsoring the nuclear families. In Zambia, welfare officials connected to the mining industry had an important role as well, making housing and pensions available for a husband, one wife and their children but not for extended family members (Ferguson 1999:166–206).

Anthropologists expected that, with industrialisation and urbanisation, the modern nuclear family would take hold in Zambian society. James Ferguson's (1999) book on the Zambian Copperbelt shows that these expectations were not met. Throughout the 20th century, the nuclear family remained an ideal rather than the actual norm, even though that ideal was shared by both policymakers and ordinary Zambians.

Ferguson shows that many households supported relatives other than biological children. He also argues that marriage in the Zambian context could be interpreted fluidly and that marriages were often brittle and far from sexually exclusive. Also, although the Zambian laws of inheritance give rights to the nuclear family, the relatives of a deceased husband often do not adhere to these laws. When a husband dies, his relatives are ready to dissolve the household and leave with most of its possessions. In practice, the nuclear family remains an ideal that is preached by churches, the government and the media, but it is far from the lived reality of many Zambians.

Adam Ashforth (2005) notes the same thing for South Africans living in Soweto and writes:

> If the 'nuclear' type of family is the ideal, then about six in ten Sowetans live in households with some sort of family configuration that they probably consider suboptimal to some degree. (p. 213)

Zambia is not very different. This is partly because of the influence of the AIDS epidemic, which causes children to live in vulnerable households with nontraditional heads of the household, such as grandparents or children. According to statistics from the *Zambia Demographic and Health Survey 2013–2014*, 30% of households in urban Zambia contain children under the age of 18 who are living with neither their mother nor their father present (Central Statistical Office 2015b:23). In urban areas, only 45% of children live with both parents (Central Statistical Office 2015b:25). It may be understandable that in this situation, the 1960s image of the perfect nuclear family comes up as an ideal.

The nuclear family may be an ideal, but it is an ideal that is inverted in the testimonies. In the testimonies, children sacrifice their parents and siblings to Satan instead of living together in harmony. Even though Satanists invert the image of a loving and supportive family unit, a closer look at the testimonies shows that the inversion is not complete. Members of the nuclear family are often loved, and ties with them cannot be severed easily. In the deliverance service described at the beginning of Chapter 3, this was an important theme. The father, who had confessed to sacrificing several of his children, was reunited with his other children a week later. His daughter, speaking on behalf of the other children, told the church how the family separated after the father joined a church that the others thought was satanic. The children were on their own and the father was on his own. They were living miserable lives. They became poor, and the children were forced to get into early marriages to find security. Furthermore, the children feared being sacrificed by their father. The father replied, 'Don't be scared. I'm born again. I want us to live in harmony. Let us unite the way we used to live'. The pastor thanked God that he had made it possible for the family to reunite and emphasised that children belong to their parents. He said:

> 'Do you know that the children, what they did, running away from their father, not listening to their father, they were not fulfilling what scripture says, that you must obey your parents? Whatever they do, they are still your parents.' (#149, participant observation, 14 June 2015)

This emphasis on the nuclear family is not uncommon in Pentecostal churches. David Maxwell, writing about Pentecostals in Zimbabwe, states that the energies of the churchgoers are refocused from communal rituals, for example, to honour the ancestors of the clan to the nuclear family (Maxwell 1998:354). Writing about South Africa, Maria Frahm-Arp shows that Pentecostal churches support the model of the nuclear family, which has become a 'symbol of modernity and success in South Africa' (Frahm-Arp 2010:212).

Another way in which the inversion of the nuclear family is not complete is through the narrative of failed sacrifices. Gideon Mulenga Kabila sacrifices his hated stepmother, but he is not able to harm his father. This is a recurring theme in the testimonies. Unlike strangers, friends and members of the

extended family, the closest family members are not easily killed or harmed. The bonds within the nuclear family are stronger. It seems that the testimonies of Satanism both resonate with the fraught realities of life in contemporary Zambia, where people live in 'suboptimal' family configurations, and with the hope that the love in the ideal nuclear family will conquer all.

All of the ways that relate narratives to society mentioned in this part of the chapter – the brittleness of the nuclear family, the burden of the extended family and the anonymity of the city – have some relation to the narratives about Satanism, but there still seems to be something missing. In the following section, I will present another frame of interpretation, namely that of the moral consequences of becoming modern.

■ The moral consequences of becoming modern

Narratives about Satanism are related to local understandings of the urban and the modern. What is it about urbanisation and modernity that sparks the anxieties that speak from these narratives? Anonymity and shifting relations within kinship networks may have something to do with it, but a better frame, as I will argue in this part of the chapter, is that of worries about a change in morality.

In Chapter 1, I have presented narratives about evil Others as inverted spectacles or negative copies of a society's value system. In narratives about Satanism, the figure of the Satanist is an inverted version of the standards of Zambian society. What are those standards? How do Satanists invert them? And what do these inversions tell us about tensions in Zambian society? Those are the questions that I will deal with in this part of the chapter.

Dignity is a concept that is central to both African and Western ideals of human rights and the good life. It is, in African as well as Western societies, related to both what a person has and does. But what it is exactly that a person needs to have and needs to do to be seen as a dignified human being is changing in the interaction between more Western and more African ideas. Getui (1992) describes the current situation as follows:

> Due to contact with, influence of and domination of foreigners the religious, economic and political doctrines that governed in traditional African societies have been disrupted. Those doctrines at work in contemporary Africa are not easy to define as they are neither African nor Western. This has led to a situation of confusion and lack of identity meaning that many Africans may not be sure of who they are and what they want. (p. 63)

Although the disruptions brought on by colonialism are obvious and may well lead to confusion and tensions, there is a risk in portraying the 'doctrines that governed in traditional African societies' as changeless institutions,

unchanging before the disruptive appearance of Western ideas and powers. African beliefs and practices have always been diverse and have never existed in isolation. 'African thought' and 'Western thought' do not exist as mutually exclusive, monolithic institutions. Rather, they describe tendencies that can be constructed as opposites – but this constructed nature should not be forgotten. The opposites are used not only by scholars but also by ordinary Africans in an ongoing positioning of identities. Like modernity, the West is a term that has important local associations. Wanting to belong to the West or preferring an African identity are opposite poles used in the process of claiming one's position.

In urban Zambia, where most of the testimonies hail from, the diverse population means it is also not appropriate to speak about norms related to specific Zambian ethnicities, such as Bemba norms or Chewa norms. Still, within this multi-ethnic Zambian society, there is a shared understanding of what behaviour would traditionally be deemed proper. In this section, I will present an overview of the traditional Zambian value system and show how the testimonies are an inversion of that. I will do this in two parts: firstly, values related to material well-being, and secondly, values related to the hierarchical society.

■ Redistribution and illicit accumulation

As we have seen in Chapter 2, in the traditional African view, everything good (including material things) comes from the spiritual world, from God and the ancestors. Amongst human beings, material things are distributed or redistributed according to their needs: 'Each member of the community is responsible for every other and is obligated to provide for the welfare of the other' (Moyo 1992:52). That, however, does not mean that there were no differences in affluence in African traditional societies. Poor people, as well as rich people, have always been present. Rather, it means that being rich is not only a source of prestige but also comes with the responsibility to share with the needy of the community. As Ambrose Moyo writes (1992:55), 'the rich and the poor were in such cases mutually dependent and related to each other with dignity'. What brings dignity here is the use of wealth rather than its possession.

This ideology of redistribution according to the needs of the community is reflected in the notion of legitimate and illicit accumulation. As I have argued in Chapter 2, those with extraordinary power, status or wealth need support from the spiritual world. For that support, a sacrifice may be necessary. This sacrifice is perceived as legitimate if the good that comes from it trickles down to the community. Traditionally, this may have been a practice reserved for chiefs in extraordinary circumstances and maybe a few others with elevated statuses. Colonialism, however, gave others aspirations to break the ranks of

equivalence as well and democratised this practice while also delegitimising it (see also Kroesbergen-Kamps 2020c).

Against this background of legitimate and illicit accumulation, the accusations against certain professions become understandable. Businessmen especially have become suspected of putting the success of their businesses before the well-being of others. Riots towards businesspeople in the newspapers are always related to missing persons and especially missing children. If a child goes missing or is found murdered, the first frame of reference is that the child was a victim of a ritual to earn more success in business. There is therefore a clear connection between the sphere of business and this illicit accumulation, which from a Christian perspective is known as Satanism.

But what about the other spheres that are connected to Satanism, like politics and the government, religion and education? As we have seen in Chapter 2, there is a well-known connection between spiritual forces and political power. Both Nimi Wariboko (2014:278–297) and Stephen Ellis and Gerrie ter Haar (1998:190) give many examples of politicians who are said to have used invisible powers to become powerful. Politicians also often have religious specialists in their entourage to help them retain these spiritual powers. Making use of the advice of spiritual experts does, of course, not necessarily mean harming human beings to become powerful. But in the minds of many people, this connection is readily made. As Ellis and Ter Haar (2004) write:

> Rumours drawing on the idea that great power is exclusive, and that initiation into elite networks requires ritual action that may involve blood sacrifice, lead people in many countries to associate national elections, when power is open to competition, with the abduction of children. (p. 80)

The idea that groups of powerful people share the secret of acquiring that power makes associations that rely on secrecy especially suspect. Freemasons and Rosicrucians, which are originally European groups that often draw their members from the elite, have in Africa become synonymous with the secret knowledge that can make you rich and powerful and involves human sacrifice. This is an important motif in many West African movies, as well. For this reason, the rumour that the Zambian politician Hakainde Hichilema is a Freemason makes a serious dent in his reputation. But even without suspected involvement in secret societies, politicians are believed to need blood to come to or remain in power. Some Zambian newspapers do their best to activate that frame in the minds of voters when they, for example, report on every road accident as a sacrifice ordered by a political party.

As the government is often seen as the arm of the ruling political party, it is not so strange that governmental development projects are associated with rituals that require blood as well. Furthermore, the relationship between

government employees and stealing blood has a long history in Zambia, as well as in other East and Central African countries, as Luise White (2000) shows in her study of these narratives.

Some of the accusations made against churches and pastors can better be understood as a fear of the other, such as in the case of the Goshali church, or as a demonisation of traditional practices, such as in the case of Bishop Mumba. Other accusations, however, do fit with the notion of illicit accumulation. Prophet Anointed Andrew, alias Seer 1, explicitly asserts that he can give spiritual powers to others, like the traditional healers whom one would see to acquire *kukhwima* in Malawi would. Nollywood movies such as *Church Business* (2003) and *Who Is the Chosen?* (2014) apply this frame when they show how pastors receive the power to do miracles from traditional spiritual experts or devil-worshipping societies.

In the Zambian competitive environment for churches, pastors seem prompted to perform ever more astonishing miracles. A few years ago, pastors or prophets who were able to recount the phone numbers of random people in their audience were the talk of the town in Lusaka. Nowadays, pastors are said to turn water into petrol or be able to miraculously make money appear in your wallet or bank account. The diviner or healer was already on Van Binsbergen's list, mentioned in Chapter 2, of professions that use human remains in medicines to become powerful. The same suspicion follows the pastor as the new diviner or healer.

Of all the spheres in which accusations of involvement in Satanism are made, education fits the traditional framework the least. In a rural setting, being a teacher means holding an elevated position, which can be cause for suspicions of illicit accumulation. A teacher in a rural area is often the only one in the community in formal employment with a dependable salary. The teacher, like the businessman and the commercial farmer in the same rural setting, seems to have discovered the secret to wealth that is withheld from ordinary villagers. In one of the articles, this explanation is confirmed by a rural district commissioner, who says in a statement that (Hatyoka 2014):

> The PF government [*has*] increased teachers' salaries. [...] Nowadays teachers have more money and they are able to access loans. But the community always think that teachers are Satanists when they buy expensive cars. (n.p.)

Accusations of Satanism made against teachers do, however, not only occur in rural areas, and in town, the difference in income between teachers and others is much less pronounced. These accusations are not so easily explained from the framework of illicit accumulation. In the case of accusations against teachers, the first accusations are often made in testimonies of Satanism of their pupils. These pupils mention the school as the place in which they have been initiated into Satanism. There is an interesting difference between the people who give testimonies of involvement in Satanism and those who are

accused of it. The majority of the ex-Satanists who give their testimonies are adolescents, mostly girls, for whom school is a daily context of life. In their testimonies, they name teachers, politicians, businessmen, pastors and musicians as fellow Satanists. Members of these other categories, however, rarely come forward as ex-Satanists. Those who are accused of Satanism are not the ones who claim to have been Satanists. For this reason, I think that the accusations of teachers are, in many urban cases, collateral damage to the testimonies of adolescents.

Accusations of Satanism show a cultural unease with social stratification. Those who have more or are in another way elevated above the general population are supposed to have done something antisocial to get to their position. In previous times, this may have been accepted as a sacrifice for the good of the collective, but now, becoming rich or powerful is seen as only benefitting the individual. Even in the case of politicians, who could be said to be the chiefs of the country, attaining power and status is viewed with suspicion. After years of independence and halting development, people do not believe that the power of politicians will mean those good things will trickle down to them, as was allegedly the case with chiefs. Narratives about Satanism show a tension surrounding values of accumulation and redistribution that is unresolved in contemporary Zambian society. Further tension can be seen in the norms surrounding stratification according to age and gender.

■ The inversion of norms concerning the hierarchical society in testimonies of Satanism

The testimonies show the Satanists as inverting expected behaviours. Instead of taking care of the community, the elevated professions of politicians, businessmen, pastors and teachers use their gains for the betterment of themselves only. The most visible inversions are embodied by the Satanists themselves. Hierarchy is an important feature of Zambian society. Two important markers of stratification in Zambia are gender (male or female) and age (elder or child). The behaviour that is expected from Zambians depends on their relative station in life regarding these characteristics.

Most narrators of testimonies are adolescent girls. The inversions that they personify most prominently are those of norms connected with the child and the woman. Traditionally, for a child, the right thing to do is to obey the elders, which include not only the parents but also other older people in the community (Nasimiyu-Wasike 1992:164). In contemporary Zambia, parents and elders expect to be respected and treated with reverence. When visiting a Zambian home, it is common for the children to come and kneel in respect to greet the visitors. Also, children often act as extensions of their parents, going on errands and doing household chores.

Instead of being respectful youngsters, the Satanists in the testimonies are stubborn and rude. One ex-Satanist describes his behaviour towards his mother:

'My mother was just coming back from work. She was so furious with me. I just told her, "Mom, if you do anything stupid to me [...]" I knew she was in the process of going to hit me or do something, but I just took order [*sic*]. I was young, I was a boy, but then I was able to threaten my mother. I just told her I would do something that you've never seen before. It was at this particular time that I think my mother got very much afraid.' (#29a, Charles's recorded interview, 2013)

Instead of giving his mother respect, this boy speaks out against his mother and even gives her orders.

In traditional African societies, the distribution of power and knowledge between the generations is unequal. The power of knowing what is hidden gives elders authority over those who are younger or of a lower rank. According to William Murphy (1980:193), 'secrecy supports the elders' political and economic control of the youth'. Murphy's research is on the Kpelle of Liberia and Guinea, but the same can be said for secret societies like the Nyau in Zambia and Malawi. Initiation for boys in a society like the Nyau, or girls in the secrets of womanhood, is a first step on the way to adult existence. This relationship between knowledge, power and adulthood is inverted in the testimonies as well.

According to several testimonies, becoming a Satanist means acquiring secret knowledge. Naomi recounts how every school she went to belonged to the devil: 'That is where they started explaining some things, but not all secrets'. Gideon Mulenga Kabila (n.d.:14) also writes about acquiring secret knowledge: 'Before I was given any assignment, I was taken to the school of demons where I was told to go and learn about the hidden things of this world'. Knowledge belongs to the world of adults, and the emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge and secrets in testimonies presented by adolescents can be seen as an inversion of the innocent, unspoiled child.

Like children, women are expected to treat their elders and men in general with reverence. This is one of the foremost lessons in the traditional teachings for girls. For example, in the Bemba female initiation ritual, *chisungu*, a girl is reminded of her position in the social structure and the behaviours and attitudes related to that position. One of the songs learned during *chisungu* is 'the armpit is not higher than the shoulder', meaning that the social hierarchy is an unchanging fact of life. According to Jean La Fontaine ([1956] 1982), in her introduction to Audrey Richards' study of *chisungu*, the song:

[*R*]epresents the ineluctable nature of such a hierarchy, condensing in a bodily metaphor the subordination of women to men, and of both to inherited authority and the seniority of experience that comes with age. (p. xviv)

Ellis and Ter Haar (2004:51–52) see the underworld as an inversion of the normal, physical world. The main inversion they note is that it is 'organized as in the visible world, except that those in charge are women'. Many testimonies indeed mention queens, and this sounds like a position of great power that is hard to reach for a Zambian woman in a culture influenced by patriarchy. In the underworld, this title is rewarded to almost every female Satanist. Many different female ex-Satanists report that they were queens or at least princesses in the underworld. Upon closer inspection, however, the queen is not the highest in rank. Take, for example, the pamphlet written by Memory Tembo. After becoming a Satanist, she is introduced to the queen:

> 'A special meeting was called by the queen and I went to attend. During the meeting, I was given a cup of blood and a piece of human meat. I drank and ate. That was swearing to the queen that I will never serve anyone apart from the queen. That was a sign that [/] am now a member of the ocean family.' (#2, Memory Tembo's published testimony, 2010)

This queen seems to be a person of power, but she is not the highest in the underworld. Satan is even more powerful. Memory describes how there is even a waiting list to see Satan himself: 'I was put among people who were due to meet him. […] Every agent is privileged to see Satan once a year'. After Memory makes sacrifices, she advances in rank and becomes a director in the department of the hair industry. There, three or four queens supply their hair to her. In sum: women in the underworld are called queens and princesses, and some of these have a high position. They are, however, not the highest power, and some queens are working for others. The designation 'queen' does not mean that, as Ellis and Ter Haar hold, those in charge in the underworld are women.

Instead of being docile followers, the female Satanists act aggressively and acquire power for themselves. 'I was a hero on my own', one adolescent female says. 'I used to fight. I was not like, "I am just a woman." I was like a wrestler. I used to beat anyhow I feel'. A hero, a fighter, a wrestler: these are words associated more with men and masculinity than with a girl on the brink of womanhood. Other female ex-Satanists acquire powers and titles. From a case of the Fingers of Thomas:

> 'I was given 100 bodyguards to look after me, whom I could send wherever I wanted. Other Satanists had to climb up the hierarchy by following orders and going out on missions, but I was a queen from the very beginning.' (#66, testimony recorded by the Fingers of Thomas, n.d.)

Instead of being subordinate, these young women describe themselves as standing at the top of the hierarchy. Others have to bow to them, even those who are in power in the normal world. 'They can be respected in the society, but under the sea they are humbled. […] They are juniors to other people', as Naomi says (#41a, Naomi's recorded testimony, 2011). In the testimonies, the

inversion from subordinate and respectful to powerful and aggressive is the most common of all the inversions discussed in this chapter.

For both men and women, sexuality in general and (more specifically) having children belongs to the expected behaviour. Van Breugel writes in his study of Chewa traditional life in Malawi and Zambia (2001) that sexuality is highly regulated. There are rules for when to have and when not to have sexual intercourse, and these rules are often related to events in the community, such as a funeral or the inauguration of a new chief. Intercourse, from this perspective, is not an act of pleasure limited to a couple but an act contributing to the welfare of the community. Even in contemporary Zambia, the community bears some responsibility for the sexuality of individual couples. In ritual teachings for women on the brink of getting married, women from the family and the neighbourhood show the young woman, in highly explicit dances, how to have sex.

As was already mentioned in Chapter 2, having children is one important aim of sexuality that contributes to the community. As Nasimiyu-Wasike (1992) states:

> Child-bearing is a sacred duty that has to be carried out by all normal individuals of the society. [...] The woman's status in the society depended on the number of children she bore, and her entire life was centred on children. (p. 154)

Nowadays, a woman's life may not be entirely centred on children, and it is debatable whether this has ever been the case, but it is expected of a woman to have children of her own.

Just as with all the norms discussed so far, the Satanists invert these rules about sexuality, community and children. For female Satanists, sex does not contribute to the community and brings destruction rather than life. Several ex-Satanists describe being married in the underworld. This prevents them from having a productive marriage in the normal world. As is described in one of the testimonies collected by the Fingers of Thomas, 'I was a wife of Satan. The devil was jealous of any man who wanted me. That is why I could never get married in the physical world'.

Sexuality for female Satanists is a source of power over men. Grace narrates:

> 'In the underworld, they gave me three gifts. The first was beauty: every man who saw me saw a beautiful girl. The second was my step: when I walked, men would turn around and think I was beautiful. The third was an irregular period.' (#43, interview with Grace, 08 July 2013)

With these gifts, she can seduce men. 'During the day, some men would want me, but I said no. During the night, I would visit them in the spirit' (#43, interview with Grace, 08 July 2013).

These powers, however, bring destruction upon the men who fall for the Satanists. Gideon Mulenga Kabila describes the tactics of female Satanists and their consequences for men (n.d.):

There is a school of advanced prostitution [*in the underworld*] and it trains prostitutes that are in blood shedding how to kill men and make Christians backslide. They use advanced tactics, and these are:

Blood draining tactic, involving the draining of blood from men using the snakes that are inserted in the female vagina, after the man sleeps with the possessed prostitute of the underworld.

X-trinal tactic: this is a tactic that is used by these advanced prostitutes to remove the private parts of a man. [...] When you have an affair with these girls, automatically you will be initiated and at times these girls are told to sacrifice and they will not sacrifice anyone except those who slept with them. [...] Many have died because of these girls; they make men to develop sores on their private parts for them not to have affairs with another lady. [...] They are also assigned to spread diseases such as AIDS and sexually transmitted illnesses (STIs). [... *Other girls*] are trained to break down marriages. Many people's marriages have been broken because of these girls and they can pretend to be humble to men so that they can convince them, and if a man sleeps with one of these girls, he will automatically leave the first wife. (p. 19)

Female Satanists are particularly dangerous. Their sexuality brings death and disease instead of new life, and it harms rather than contributes to the community. In all of these ways, the sexuality of female Satanists is an inversion of the sexuality expected of a woman.

As we have seen, the behaviour of the Satanist is an inversion of the expectations for a child and a woman. What about the normative role model of the man? In recent years, several publications have drawn attention to cultural expectations and constructions of masculinity in Africa. Certain norms of masculinity, like aggression, dominance and having multiple sexual partners are labelled as troubling or even toxic because of their contribution to the spread of HIV and the oppression of women (cf. Muparamoto 2012). Other norms are described as challenged, for example, because poverty and unemployment pose challenges to the expectation that a man can provide for his family (cf. Ewusha 2012). One general expectation of masculinity in Zambia is the ability to produce. This ability can be taken in a few different senses: to produce food or an income for the family, to produce children to sustain the community and as basic virility. In Zambia, a man struggling with infertility or impotence is said not to be able to produce.

As with the women in testimonies, the sexuality of Satanist men is inverted. Instead of having productive sexuality, male Satanists are often ordered to abstain from sex with their spouse. David, the ex-Satanist who was head of the department of destroying marriages, married a woman. But, 'the problem was that sleeping with her was under instruction', meaning that he was not allowed to have intercourse with his wife. His interviewer recognises this:

'There are couples right now that don't understand why their husbands behave the way they are behaving. Your husband wants not to have sex with you. I was talking to a lady in Kitwe, and I'm praying for this lady. This lady, hear me, she has never

had sex with her husband. Now, we are talking six years! And yet they are living together. Six solid years! And I told her exactly these things you are telling: no, your husband is up to something. Your husband is into something. If I were you: run away from this marriage as quickly as possible.' (#31b, David's recorded testimony, 2013)

Similar conditions on intercourse are known from testimonies from other African countries (see e.g. Meyer 1995). Other conditions for being a Satanist mentioned in the testimonies are not being allowed to bathe, use a vehicle or wear shoes. In testimonies of women, such conditions are less prominent.

Although the sexuality of male Satanists follows the pattern of inversions, in other respects the testimonies of men are less obviously inverted. Men who become Satanists, as we have read in the rumours from an earlier chapter, often do so to become successful, powerful or wealthy. Success, power and wealth are characteristics of the ideal African archetype of the 'big man'. It seems that not being able to live up to this high standard of masculinity leads people to Satanism. Take, for example, David, who says:

> 'I was dealing with hardware. The business was not going the way I was thinking, the way it's supposed to be going. So now I consulted my friend and said, "No, I've been trying, and still, I'm stagnant on the same position". Then my friend advised me and said, "You know, business nowadays, you don't just do business like you used to. You need to find help somewhere".' (#31a, David's recorded testimony, 2013)

David had thought that his hardware store would make him rich. However, things did not work out in the way he had expected. But David's friend explains to him that nowadays this is a common problem. To become rich, one needs special help, as we already have seen in a previous chapter. As Satanists, according to the testimonies, these men can become wealthy and powerful. David receives money to buy stock and is able not only to make his hardware store a success but to set up new stores as well. After some time, he starts a new business in wedding supplies. A Malawian ex-Satanist recounts how he found 'bags full of money' in his room after his first sacrifice, in both Malawian kwacha and US dollars (41i, Mphatso's recorded testimony, 2013).

In the course of their involvement in Satanism, the men receive not only money but titles as well. David becomes the head of the department of destroying marriages, and the Malawian ex-Satanist gets in charge of several companies in the underworld. For men, however, this is not an inversion of expectations but rather an alternative, albeit unacceptable, way to live up to the norm.

To sum up this discussion, the testimonies present the Satanist as an inversion of the traditional value system, except perhaps for the case of the man. Women and children in testimonies of ex-Satanists do exactly the opposite of what is expected of them. Inversions are a main characteristic of narratives about evil Others, and this inversion is most clearly seen in the description of the behaviour of the Satanist.

■ Shifting positions of youth and women

Narratives about evil Others, like the testimonies and rumours about Satanism, show tensions in society. If the norms of society are inverted in the narratives about Satanism, it may point to a vulnerability present in the way that these norms are experienced in contemporary Zambia. We have already discussed the tensions surrounding redistribution and illicit accumulation. In this section, I will further discuss tensions related to living in a hierarchical society.

Should women and children be content with a subservient position and with treating those with a higher position in the hierarchy with respect? This question comes back in almost every testimony given by female ex-Satanists. In the last 50 years, shifts have taken place in the hierarchical structure of African societies. Institutions like the European Union present themselves as champions of gender equality, which is exported to other parts of the world (Woodward & Van Der Vleuten 2014:67–92). International organisations also advocate for the implementation of children's rights. This pressure is felt in countries like Zambia, although it is not always appreciated. Whenever in my classes the topic of gender-based violence would come up, a male student would always be quick to point out that he had heard about a woman who beat her husband instead of the other way around. Advocacy on children's rights, especially aimed at the abolishment of physical punishment, was perceived by my students as neocolonial interference in cultural practices of child-raising.

Nonetheless, things are changing. The gender gap in economic opportunities and participation, in level of education, health care and survival and in political empowerment is slowly declining in Zambia (World Economic Forum 2021:399). There are changes in the position of children as well. Many children grow up in vulnerable households, affected by the HIV and AIDS epidemic. In these households, children may occupy a structurally weak position themselves if they are not the biological children of their caregivers (De Boeck & Plissart 2004:192). To that can be added the difficult economic situation in many African countries. According to UNICEF, for example, in Zambia, 40.9% of children have to deal with multiple deprivations, like lacking access to food, schools, health care, clean water and sanitation, as well as adequate housing (UNICEF 2021:151).

But there is another side to the position of children as well. Zambia is a very young country, in which almost half of the population (48%) is younger than 14-years-old (UNICEF 2021:24). African children and young people are prominently present in the public space, and they have become more important in the past 25 years in several ways (De Boeck & Plissart 2004:182). In different parts of Africa, children have been deployed in armed conflicts. As child soldiers, they have tasted what it means to wield real and violent power. Children also play a role in economic production. As young labourers, of their

own volition, adolescents can acquire status through the money they earn. Children are not merely a group that is at risk. Sometimes, they are perceived as a risk themselves (De Boeck 2009). The adolescent Zambian Satanist and the child witches of Malawi (cf. Chilamampunga & Thindwa 2012) and Kinshasa are examples of children who are seen to pose a threat rather than being victims of threatening circumstances.

The position of children and adolescents is particularly interesting as most of the ex-Satanists are either adolescents or describe events set in their childhood or adolescence, and the most far-reaching changes in society have a bearing on their position. In several publications, Filip de Boeck has described a crisis surrounding children in Kinshasa, the capital of the DRC (De Boeck & Plissart 2004, eds. Honwana & De Boeck 2008; De Boeck 2008, 2009). Honwana and De Boeck (eds. 2005) write:

> More than anyone else, [*children and youths*] are the ones who undergo, express, and provide answers to the crisis of existing communitarian models, structures of authority, gerontocracy, and gender relations. Children and youth are the focal point of the many changes that characterise the contemporary African scene, afloat between crisis and renewal. (p. 2)

Several factors cause shifts in the hierarchical structure of society and especially the position of children.

One is a profound socio-economic shift that has resulted in the decrease of male authority. In the classical hierarchical African society, the adult or even elderly male holds the apex position of status and authority. He is the one who has laboured and provided for his family and should be treated with the utmost respect. The testimonies of male ex-Satanists show something about how difficult that role has become in recent years. In contemporary Africa, many male heads of households are unemployed and therefore unable to provide for their families. As I have argued, male ex-Satanists describe their first encounter with Satanism often as a tool to become successful in business. This business success is more than an individual achievement. Being able to provide for your family is part of what makes a man a man in Africa, and this is dependent on economic success.

Younger men may be more successful and streetwise to make it in the informal sector in urban Africa (De Boeck & Plissart 2004:190). It gives them an edge over the adult male heads of households. Often, men feel the necessity of seeking employment away from home. Migrant labour has been a feature of life in Africa for the past 150 years, with many men finding work in the mines in Zambia or South Africa and returning home on a cyclical basis. The place of the absent men in the economy of the city is taken up by women and youths. As their economic importance grows, so does the status of women and youths. As the authority of older men declines, a rift between the generations develops. According to De Boeck (De Boeck & Plissart 2004:193), 'the (urban) young

claim for themselves the right to singularise and realise themselves as "authoritative elders," and to use the syntax of gerontocracy before one's time, as it were'. A similar development is visible for girls and young women. These shifts in the position of elderly male authority may have the effect that youngsters, more than was previously common, are experienced as a threat.

Besides these socio-economic shifts, the growing importance of the nuclear family and, related to that, the greater cultural acceptance of individualism also changes the position of children and youths in society. Traditionally, the extended kin network acted as a social safety net. As the discussion of the 'black tax' in a previous section shows, the claims of extended family members are more and more felt as a strain. This influences the position of children as well. Where it used to be self-evident that relatives would take care of the children if they were orphaned or needed a place to stay that increased their opportunities at school or on the labour market, this privilege of relatives has started to become questioned. The redefinition of kinship networks makes the position of nonbiological children in households even more precarious – as several of the ex-Satanists have experienced in their biographies. Often, children who occupy such a structurally weak position in a household are more likely to be accused of witchcraft or Satanism, as we will see in more detail in a later chapter.

The burden of vulnerable children is not merely an economic one. Abandoning a child because of an accusation of witchcraft or Satanism means that there is one less mouth to feed, but this is not the only element of these accusations. Accusations of witchcraft, as De Boeck argues, happen not only amongst the poorest families. Amongst the emerging middle classes, as well as with the relatively better-off Africans living in the diaspora in Europe or the United States, accusations of witchcraft against children can occur (De Boeck 2009:135). Besides economic factors, a more general change in culture is important.

In contemporary African cities, increasingly, only members of the nuclear family are entitled to the support that previously was rendered to the extended family as a whole. This is an effect of the emphasis on the nuclear family by, amongst others, churches, but it is also related to a more positive evaluation of individualism in general. Extended families who take care of their own fit well within a communal lifestyle in which, as the saying goes, 'you need a village to raise a child'. People sometimes bemoan that this ideal has disappeared in Europe and the United States. In Africa, it is not self-evident anymore either. In the academic literature, the rise of individualism at the expense of a communal ideal has often been related to the influence of Pentecostal churches. In Pentecostal churches, becoming independent individuals is celebrated. Independent means free from the stifling bonds of kinship, free from the influence of the devil (which is often related to these

kinship bonds) and free from the traditional hierarchy that endorses age and masculinity over youth and femininity. In this way, Pentecostalism supports a more individualist style of production, distribution and consumption (Meyer 1998a:229).

Research from Kenya and Ghana supports the view that Pentecostal Christianity endorses individualism. In an analysis of sermons in Pentecostal churches in Nairobi, Kenya, McClendon and Riedl (2015) find an emphasis on individual autonomy at the expense of traditional collective ties. Similarly, in a study of the concept of love in Ghana that compared Pentecostal and mainline churches, Osei-Tutu et al. (2021) found that members of Pentecostal churches were less likely to conceptualise love as material care and scored weaker on measures of family obligation and relationship harmony. These results point to the conclusion that, if pressed, Pentecostals are inclined to choose for themselves and their nuclear family rather than the extended family when it comes to the distribution of their assets.

Children who have traditionally benefited from kinship solidarity now live on the edge of rejection. In Kinshasa, some children take matters into their own hands and choose a life on the streets. De Boeck quotes the sentiment of some street children (De Boeck & Plissart 2004):

> At home, it is 'cold-cold' [*malili-malili*], but the street is where one is free [*place ozali libre*]; if you feel like stealing you can steal; if you feel like fighting you can fight; if you feel like lying, you can lie; if you feel like smoking you can smoke. (p. 188)

If the situation at home becomes unbearable, children may use their agency to 'uninsert' themselves from the responsibilities and expectations that they are confronted with in the family context (De Boeck & Plissart 2004:189).

Under the influence of the embrace of the nuclear family and increasing individualism, children and youths are increasingly perceived as burdens or even threats. A sense of spiritual insecurity adds to this process. The term spiritual insecurity was coined by Adam Ashforth (2005) in his ethnography of the South African township of Soweto near Johannesburg. In Ashforth's use, the term has connotations both to the ever-present threat of harmful spiritual forces and to a sense of ignorance and uncertainty towards spiritual issues. Where in traditional African notions of witchcraft, a witch never struck without a reason that made sense within a network of relationships – out of jealousy or spite or anger – the new forms of witchcraft and similar phenomena that have become common in Africa do not seem to work from this logical framework. The forces of evil have become omnipresent. As we have seen in this chapter, they are in the market, on the road, in school and (if you are not careful) even in church and in your home. Even though in the narratives of ex-Satanists relationships still matter, the danger of Satanism is everywhere. Whether a product or a stranger is dangerous cannot be easily determined; it is a lingering, undetermined threat.

This spiritual uncertainty means that anyone can be perceived as a threat, even children. Harri Englund (2004:302–303) notes concern with 'deceptive appearances' amongst Pentecostals in a Malawian township. Things there are often not what they seem: a church member may be an agent of the devil or may be found in an unchristian place like a bar after faithfully attending a church service. Reality is not straightforward. What appears to be real may be masking a truth that can only be discerned by a religious expert, as we will see in the next chapter.

The spiritual insecurity about an evil that can be hidden amongst both those who are closest to you and the strangers in public places can attach itself to anyone. In Kinshasa, it is often attached to the children in structurally weak family positions who are accused of witchcraft. In Zambia, as we have seen, suspicions of Satanism are levelled against people with status and power, like politicians and businessmen, but children can also be perceived as a threat. The fact that most testimonies are given by adolescents seems to imply that there is an inherent relationship between youths and evil in Zambia as well.

In this section, I have discussed shifts in the hierarchical order of society and the position of youths and children. Under the influence of socio-economic changes, the position of youths has shifted at the expense of the traditional male authority figure. At the same time, an emphasis on the nuclear family and individualist norms has made the situation of vulnerable children more precarious. Spiritual insecurity contributes to the perception of these children as not only a nuisance or a burden but a threat.

These developments show that the traditional society with a clear hierarchy based on age and gender has become problematic. Youths no longer want to wait until they are elderly before they can enjoy status and authority, especially as their father figures (if they are even present) are often struggling to embody the ideals of masculinity themselves. Furthermore, the values of individualism that are on the rise within nuclear families are also affecting youth. They want to use their agency to make their own choices in life, without being pressed into the expectations of their elders.

■ Conclusion

The stories about Satanism in Zambia, including the testimonies given by ex-Satanists, are examples of narratives about evil Others. As we have seen in Chapter 1, these types of narratives introduce a group that stands at odds with the norms held in the society in which the narrative develops. The Other is an inversion of everything that is counted as good and proper within that society. These narratives seem to be related to changes and tensions present in society. People start speaking about evil Others if the world they knew has

changed and its norms are no longer unquestionable. In such times, there is often a sense that something is wrong, but it is yet unspecified. Narratives about evil Others give this unspecified sense of threat a name and a face and a place within a larger narrative, which makes it easier to cope with changes. For scholars of these narratives, they act as a gauge to measure the sentiments in society. An analysis of narratives about evil Others can give an insight into what specifically is perceived as vulnerable or under threat within that society.

In this chapter, I have analysed testimonies and accusations of Satanism in newspapers to find out which tensions in society they address. From these sources, it is clear that Satanism is a danger related to the urban world and a Zambian understanding of modernity. For Zambians, becoming modern is often perceived as entering a better state, with higher-quality education, health care and infrastructure, as well as access to coveted consumer goods. In the testimonies, however, all of these dreams of modernity are tainted with evil. Schools, hospitals, roads, shops and the things one can buy there are all associated with the realm of the devil. The testimonies speak to the fear that modernity may not be the promised land it was dreamed to be.

More specifically, the testimonies are concerned with the consequences of becoming modern. Many of the consumer goods discussed in the testimonies are used to change one's appearance. For example, creams can lighten your skin, and weaves may make your hair appear straight. Other items are used as an extension of one's identity, such as a nice car, fashionable clothes or nontraditional food and beverages. The testimonies address a fear that these changes go deeper than just the surface. In the testimonies, using these products leads to changes in behaviour and character. In the most extreme cases, they may make you lose even your humanity.

It is not so strange that modernity is associated with changes in behaviour. The traditional norms for proper behaviour are under discussion in contemporary Africa. Women and youths are no longer content with a position at the bottom of the hierarchy, and socio-economic shifts have weakened the authority of the elderly men who used to be at the top. A growing appreciation of individualism means that the redistribution of assets to the extended kinship network is no longer self-evident and also that youths begin to perceive themselves as autonomous individuals who want to control their destinies.

The testimonies show a fear of what happens when traditional patterns of behaviour are inverted. Rather than men, it is women and youths who hold the positions of authority. Rather than contributing to the community, they keep everything for themselves, sacrificing their family members to acquire even more. Even sexuality no longer contributes to the bonds within a relationship; instead, it corrupts and does harm.

Today, the roles prescribed by gender and age are less clear than they previously may have been. For example, adolescent girls expect to have some measure of control over their destiny and are strengthened in that expectation by school and media. According to Misty Bastian (2001), testimonies celebrate gender roles where the (young) woman has power over the man while at the same time enforcing a patriarchal form of Christianity. In the testimonies, it is the adolescent women and not the men who have authority, who can act without showing respect and take whatever they want. For a short period, the ex-Satanists can embody this strong image of femininity, albeit one that is cast as evil. But in the end, the message of the testimony is that this evil is conquered, and the woman has found her way back into the Christian fold. According to Bastian (2001:88), 'Women's modern magics, while feared, are thus ultimately tamed [...] and brought under the surveillance and control of senior, masculine forces'. It seems that in Bastian's analysis, the testimonies enforce the status quo.

However, the Zambian testimonies also exemplify change. Zambian ex-Satanists, after their deliverance, do not exactly go back to the norms that they inverted as Satanists. The desire for autonomy and freedom stays with them. For Eve, being delivered brings freedom. She says:

> 'From the time I've been delivered, I've been set free. I'm at peace. I've got a free mind. I've got a free mind and I enjoy myself in the Lord. I love working for God. I love everything that I do. I actually love myself now more than before, and I've accepted myself and everything.' (#37a, Eve's recorded interview, 2013)

Pentecostal spiritual warfare Christianity allows Eve to act as a powerful individual. 'One thing I've learned as I was going through deliverance', she says, 'was that I have a certain authority in me, that even the devil cannot control me'.

Naomi shows this authority in the prayer with which she starts her testimony:

> 'Father, may you guide me. May you be the bodyguard. Let your Holy Spirit be with me, that wherever the devil is, I dominate him wherever he is. I dominate his computers. Devil, I know you are listening to my prayer. Now I am tying you with the holy chains and throw you in the endless pit where the Holy Ghost fire is always burning.' (#41a, Naomi's recorded testimony, 2011)

Naomi does not ask for God's intervention in the works of the devil. Rather, she finds in herself the authority to bind him. Grace also finds a different role than mere subservience; she wants to be a role model:

> '[*My experience with Satanism*] has helped me to be more sensitive and careful. And now I can encourage others. I see their behaviour and because I went through the same thing, I can tell. So then I call them and try to help them. God was not a fool when he saved me; he had some purpose for me.' (#43, interview with Grace, 08 July 2013)

Looking at these examples, the testimonies do not seem to be repressing changes and keeping the status quo. Rather, the ex-Satanists use their experience to find the ability to wield some authority while still contributing to the community. They do not adhere to the traditional roles for their age or gender but become role models as born-again Christians. Here, testimonies may inspire innovation and change rather than reinforce the norms of society.

In the anxious imaginations of contemporary Zambians, becoming modern seems to be associated with becoming an inversion of traditional norms. It is this worry that makes Zambians receptive to the message of testimonies about Satanism. The testimonies portray a picture of the worst that could happen when one becomes modern. But the performance of testimony does more than just allow the audience to conceptualise the 'worst possible things' (cf. Frankfurter 2006:99). The ex-Satanists also give a glimpse of a way out. As born-again Christians, they embody both a life lived according to a conservative (if not traditional) value system as well as a sense of authority over their situation. They have the power to deny Satan and the status to act as role models for other youths. They can show the way to become modern in a manner that does not negate all norms while at the same time claiming a position that was unavailable to them in the traditional hierarchy.

Rewriting the life story after the diagnosis of Satanism

◼ Introduction

Over two weeks in 2015, Tsitsi gave her testimony in church on two consecutive Sundays, on a television programme hosted by the pastor of the church and in an all-night prayer meeting in the same church. She is a slight woman who speaks with a low, strong voice. Growing up, she feels rejected by her father and develops emotional and physical problems. One day, Tsitsi and her sister notice a crusade in town. Her sister suggests that they go there so that the pastors can pray for Tsitsi's ailments. In her testimony, Tsitsi narrates:

> 'We went there. When the altar call came for people with sickness, I went in front. I remember falling down, and then I remember waking up covered in dust in another place. They told me I had been moving like a snake and that I was so violent that they couldn't handle me, so they had to take me to this place. It was when the pastors started to dig into my life that I realised that my problem started earlier; it started when I was born. When I was growing up, my father never wanted to buy me female clothes. I would wear shorts, and I was always hanging around with boys. To this day, I still don't really know how to walk like a woman. That is why I often don't wear heels.' (#10c, Tsitsi's testimony in church, 08 February 2015)

In the process of her deliverance, Tsitsi remembers all kinds of events from her youth: her father who showed no love for her, the time that she fell into a river while visiting her grandparents (a river that was connected to a marine spirit)

and how she used to think bad about her siblings. But Tsitsi's deliverance is not easy. She says:

'It took 15 years of prayers to get deliverance. Wherever there were prayers, I would go. Whenever there was a pastor from Nigeria or Ghana, I would be there. So many pastors laid their hands on me. They were addressing demons in their prayers, but I was married to the devil himself.' (#10c, Tsitsi's testimony in church, 08 February 2015)

In the end, Tsitsi finds out that her case is not just simple possession:

'I came to know I was in blind Satanism. I came to know that I was in lesbianism, which I had never known in the physical. I learned that I had a higher rank than the Queen of the Coast. My heart was changed with that of a mouse and my tongue with the tongue of a bat. [...] If I said, "I will never see you again," it was true. If I said, "I hate you," bad things would happen to that person.' (#10c, Tsitsi's testimony in church, 08 February 2015)

Eventually, Tsitsi meets a pastor who can set her free from Satanism. Later, Tsitsi and this pastor get married. The husband is present at her testimonies in church as well. In his role as husband as well as a pastor with a deliverance ministry, he explains:

'Satanism, blind Satanism, is especially for the youth. Never older people are initiated. [...] That is where the battle is, not with older people. She got initiated when she was six years old. You may have a child who is into Satanism, and you don't know.' (#10d, Tsitsi's testimony in church, 22 February 2015)

Narratives about Satanism in Zambia draw on various traditions: ideas about witchcraft and possession, theologies of deliverance and spiritual warfare and dreams and nightmares about the prospect of becoming modern. This web of meaningful narratives makes the content of these stories plausible to Zambian Christians with a Pentecostal bend; it means that stories about Satanism in Zambia make cultural sense.

It is one thing to deem the existence the existence of an organisation devoted to evil plausible. To claim that one has been a member of this organisation, however, is something else completely. For ex-Satanists like Tsitsi, not only does the discourse of Satanism make cultural sense, but it also makes personal sense. It is a reality that they have experienced for themselves. In this part of the book, we turn to how narratives about Satanism make personal sense, and in this chapter, we start with the Satanists themselves. How do they come to see themselves as Satanists?

At first sight, conversion seems to be an important interpretative frame for testimonies of ex-Satanists. Testimonies follow the common script of conversion stories, in which an evil past gives way to a newfound, born-again Christian present. Narratives about a past as a Satanist and the subsequent affirmation of a born-again Christian identity seem to point to a change (or maybe even two consecutive changes) in religious conviction. The picture of

Satanism that emerges from the testimonies, however, has little to do with religious beliefs or doctrines. The conversion that the ex-Satanists describe is not one from the religion of Satanism to the religion of Christianity. In terms of the first chapter, the narrative of ex-Satanists is an anti-Satanist narrative, in which an image of an evil Other is invoked and embodied by the narrator of a testimony.

Another difference between a conversion and the experience of ex-Satanists is that for the ex-Satanists whom I have interviewed or whose testimonies I have heard, becoming a Satanist was not a choice, not even a misguided one. Usually, they can point to a specific moment when it all started, an initiation in their words. But this initiation often happens to them involuntarily and they are initially even unaware of it. This is why Satanism is often called blind Satanism, like it was in Tsitsi's case. Other ex-Satanists tell similar stories. Grace, for example, was initiated in a dream:

> 'I had a dream that I was in a room with all these Satanists. They spun me around, and when I didn't fall, they said, "If you had fallen, you would have become a Satanist, but since you didn't fall, you are not". Later, I had another dream, where I was at a party with friends. They offered me a drink and I took it. When I drank it, I realised that it was blood. I knew then that I had joined Satanism.' (#43, interview with Grace, 08 July 2013)

Martha, another ex-Satanist whom I interviewed, traces her initiation back to a gift received from a friend at school:

> 'When my birthday came, she asked me what to buy. I said, "Anything". She bought me a neck chain. When I got it, I didn't understand what it meant, but after I got it, I started dreaming about being under the ocean.' (#3, interview with Martha and Loveness, 23 March 2015)

Under the ocean is where the realm of the Satanists is located, and the necklace gave Martha access to this place. Other testimonies claim initiations through wearing clothes given by a friend, sleeping under a certain blanket at the house of a relative or eating food given to them.

Only two testimonies describe a somewhat more intentional involvement in Satanism. Both David, an unsuccessful businessman from Lusaka, and Moses, a soldier in the Congo, intended to do something to acquire wealth and power (#31a, David's recorded interview, 2013 and #38, interview with Moses, 11 November 2013). Later, they realised that the rituals they submitted themselves to were their initiation into Satanism. In none of the testimonies that I have collected or heard about through conversations with pastors and the Fingers of Thomas was becoming a Satanist a doctrinal choice.

Becoming a Satanist does not mean leaving the doctrines of one religion behind for the beliefs of another. Scholars have noted this lack of a profound change in religious convictions for African religious change in general. In his research on narratives of Zambian born-again Christians, the scholar of African

Christianity Adriaan van Klinken (2012:216–217) argues that conversion in Zambia refers more to a change in lifestyle than a change in beliefs or doctrines. Nicolette Manglos is a sociologist who has researched conversion narratives of born-again Christians in Malawi. She adds another element to Van Klinken's change in lifestyle: 'The conversion experience is central to how Pentecostals understand themselves as miraculously "healed," emotionally and physically, and empowered to live a devout, moral life' (Manglos 2010:413). The frame of conversion as adopting a new belief or theology does not explain how someone first becomes a Satanist and afterwards becomes a born-again Christian.

In this introduction, I have argued that Satanism is not a religious conviction. If that is the case, then how does someone come to see their experiences as involvement in Satanism? In other words, through what process does an individual accept the discourse of Satanism as a personal narrative? In the first part of this chapter, I will argue that affliction is a better interpretative frame than conversion for the discourse of Satanism. The second part of the chapter discusses how the diagnosis of Satanism is incorporated into the life story.

■ Satanism as affliction

If Satanism is not a religious conviction, what is it? The responses of an audience to a testimony may shed some light on this question. In a certain Christian radio programme, different kinds of testimonies are delivered. Some focus on overcoming barrenness, miraculous healing or even coming back from death. Others emphasise the dangers of traditional ceremonies and visiting traditional healers. Still others report having spiritual husbands and wives. Some testimonies are specifically about Satanism, although Satanism is mentioned in some of the other testimonies as well.

Between January and March 2015, throughout several episodes, a guest named Mr X gave a testimony about his involvement in Satanism. His testimony is in itself not very special. It seems to rely heavily on Gideon Mulenga Kabila's published testimony, with some details repeated almost verbatim. What makes these episodes interesting is that listeners had the opportunity to call in and send SMS messages with their questions. This makes it possible to establish how an audience hears a testimony. What does it make them think of? The following is a list of the questions asked during one of the episodes of Mr X's testimony:[13]

- 'The Bible says that money is the root of all evil. But we need money every day, so what can we do?'
- 'I often dream that I am getting married.'

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13. Most of the questions were asked in Chinyanja; this is my abridged translation.

- 'My niece, who is two years old, often wakes up at midnight. She cries and starts vomiting. This happens up to three times a week, but only when she is sleeping alone. When she is with her mother, it never happens.'
- 'How should I preach?'
- 'I have never slept with anyone, but now I have an STI. How is that possible?'
- 'I often dream of women and of getting married, and at the end of 2014, I dreamed about a snake entering my stomach.'
- 'I am dreaming about a snake. It always bites me, and one time the snake shouted, "I am your wife".'
- 'I am a pastor and I fail to understand these things. Sometimes I pray for people, but the situation stays the same. I want to meet you.'
- 'I have a problem in the night with my legs; they are twitching.'

Both men and women call in to ask questions. Of these questions, only the first about money directly engages the topic of the testimony. Testimonies often explain how Satanists are rewarded with money for sacrificing people. Does that mean that money is always evil? But do you not need money to survive? Two questions seem to be asked by aspiring pastors who want to learn from the host. The other seven questions all have the same underlying concern: what is wrong with my loved one or with me?

In all of the episodes where listeners had the opportunity to ask questions, this was a major concern. For the audience, hearing a testimony triggers questions about their state of well-being. The academic literature, especially from the modernity of witchcraft perspective, often interprets testimonies of Satanism as reflecting the political and economic situation. This situation may be there in the testimony, like the backdrop against with a play is performed, but it is not the message that a Zambian audience gets from a testimony. For the audience, testimonies do not offer an abstract explanation of how the world works. Rather, upon hearing a testimony, people look at their own lives and the lives of those close to them and wonder whether a similar thing could be happening to them. They have the feeling that something is not right in their lives, and narratives about Satanism provide a possible cause for that. In short, they are looking for afflictions.

In testimonies, the connection between Satanism and affliction is present as well. Many ex-Satanists describe their initiation as the start of their involvement in Satanism. But as this initiation often happens without their conscious assent, the question arises at what moment they realised they were Satanists. The answer is not a topic that is generally discussed in a testimony; it does not form part of the general script. However, in some testimonies, it is possible to see glimpses of the moment when someone realised that they were involved in Satanism. A good example is Eve, on whose testimony the following case study is based.

◼ Case study: Eve's affliction

Eve is in her early 20s when her testimony is recorded in an interview with a pastor and radio host. As a teenager, she went through a difficult time:

'I was 16, and I can say I was very lonely. I was staying far away from my parents. I was actually being mistreated by the people I was staying with. So I used to feel like nobody loves me.' (#37a, Eve's recorded testimony, 2013)

She suffered from some vague physical complaints, like the feeling of a lump in her throat and high blood pressure. In retrospect, Eve saw that she had always been different from others. She says:

'I was just a weird kid. I was very quiet. I never had friends and I never liked being around people. I would lock myself in my bedroom, stay there the whole day.' (#37a, Eve's recorded testimony, 2013)

She was especially wary of others, men, touching her. Friends and relatives noticed her strange behaviour:

'Somebody told me that he thought that I behaved in a very strange way. I was very quiet. I was too quiet. […] I remember at school that they used to laugh at me that I never had a boyfriend.' (#37a, Eve's recorded testimony, 2013)

Her friend advised her to see a certain pastor who might be able to help. It was only after being prayed over several times that Eve realised the extent of her divergence from the norm:

'After they'd prayed for me in church for a month, […] that's when I began to realise what was happening to me. That's when I realised that there was something wrong with me. […] Even certain thoughts I used to have were not normal thoughts. They were somehow … maybe I can call it crazy.' (#37a, Eve's recorded testimony, 2013)

Something was wrong with Eve, as she repeated four times in her testimony.

In Eve's narrative, there are several intermediaries involved in her dawning realisation of being a Satanist. Eve herself feels out of sorts. People around her are worried. A pastor is instrumental in both Eve's realisation that she is a Satanist and in her deliverance from this evil. For Eve, Satanism is the diagnosis of what is wrong with her. Rather than a religious conviction or ideology, Satanism appears to be an affliction. A similar dawning realisation seems to have struck Tsitsi, whose process of deliverance took 15 years and started with physical problems as well (#10c, Tsitsi's testimony in church, 08 February 2015).

The word affliction suggests a medical discourse. Much has been written about the difference between a Western biomedical perspective on health care and a holistic African perspective, where physical health is seen as closely related to other aspects of well-being. According to Laurenti Magesa (1997), the essence of traditional African cosmology is maintaining or reviving the force of life. If this vital life force flourishes, families enjoy good health, are relatively prosperous and see their children survive into adulthood.

As we have already seen in Chapter 2, a disturbance in this life force, caused by moral transgressions or a malevolent human or spiritual entity, may cause problems in various spheres of life. From this perspective, the very different problems of physical illness and poverty, for example, may have a common cause. A health problem is not seen as merely a personal medical issue but as having a social and spiritual dimension as well. Compared to this holistic view of health care, the Western biomedical paradigm is said to be limited, and it is criticised for addressing symptoms but not the cause of an illness.

However compelling this distinction between Western and African perspectives may be, a strict dichotomy may not be very helpful in understanding how contemporary Zambians see well-being and affliction. Holistic or alternative healing is not a purely African thing but is popular today in the West as well. On the other hand, hospitals in Zambia offer biomedical cures rather than holistic healing. It seems to me that everyone, whether Western or African, strives for well-being in all aspects. People from all over the world could probably agree that a lack of well-being may have medical, social or spiritual causes.

In different contexts, however, people may differ in their evaluations of who can help in a specific situation. In southern Africa, for a common, mild illness like a cold or a sore throat, basic treatments are well-known within the general population, and no health care specialist is involved (Steinforth 2009:66). For serious ailments, treatment is sought in hospitals (Sugishita 2009), although in rural areas traditional medicine is often more accessible and affordable (Stekelenburg et al. 2005; Van Rensburg 2004:33). The choice to visit a traditional healer is also made if the physical symptoms are unusual or persist even after a visit to the clinic (Sugishita 2009). Unexplained and lingering symptoms indicate that more is going on than just a medical problem, and the wider expertise of a holistic, traditional healer is required. Research conducted in Lusaka shows that distance and cost are not decisive in the choice of a traditional healer. Clients are willing to travel far to visit a well-known traditional healer and to pay more than for treatment in the hospital (Mildnerová 2015). Chinese doctors in Zambia, who use a combination of Western biomedicine and traditional Chinese healing practices, are an interesting category that transcends boundaries.

Besides biomedicine and traditional healers, Christian faith healers form a third alternative for persons seeking healing and an explanation for their afflictions (Manglos & Trinitapoli 2011). As I have argued in Chapter 3, one of the reasons for the success of Pentecostalism in Africa is the holistic answers it provides to African problems in various spheres of life. Like traditional healers, faith healers are receptive to nonbiological causes of affliction. Although some faith healers discourage the use of biomedicine (Togarasei 2010), most accept biomedical diagnoses of illness (Manglos & Trinitapoli 2011).

It is not just the Pentecostal churches that support faith healing. Along with the rise of Pentecostalism in Africa, a 'Pentecostalisation' of mainline churches has taken place as well. Manglos and Trinitapoli (2011) state that in Malawi:

> As expected, Pentecostal congregations are most likely to be practising faith healing and to score very high on our index of faith healing indicators. Yet the Mission Protestant churches closely follow Pentecostals as the most actively engaged in faith healing, and they are followed by African independent congregations, [*and*] Catholic parishes. (p. 110)

This is similar to my observations in the Zambian mainline mission churches. As I have argued elsewhere, the RCZ, especially, is shifting towards Pentecostalist views and practices (Kroesbergen-Kamps 2016).

In case of an affliction, Zambians make their own choices on where to seek help. These choices are, however, not fixed. Many Zambians shop around for a diagnosis and a therapy that fits best with their understanding of the situation. Research on therapy-seeking behaviour in Lusaka shows that clients seek out a variety of diagnoses, finally choosing the one that feels most appropriate (Mildnerová 2015:36). This is not an individual process but is informed by conversations with and the opinions of the patient's network. The acceptance of a diagnosis is 'a process of negotiation between a healer, a patient and his significant others (kinsmen, friends or neighbours)' (Mildnerová 2015:96).

In her testimony, Eve describes herself as lacking well-being. She feels lonely and weird, has physical problems, her behaviour is evaluated as strange, and she calls herself 'maybe crazy'. Eve does not explicitly describe seeking help from the medical profession, although the remark that she had high blood pressure indicates that she may have undergone a medical examination at some time. For the lump in her throat that Eve experienced in combination with dreams about eating flesh, her mother took her to a traditional healer. Eve narrates:

> 'Once, I woke up with a piece of meat in my mouth. [...] I told my mom about it. And at that time, my mom wasn't born again, and she believed so much in traditional medicine. She gave me something; I don't know what it was. She told me to chew it. Then I chewed and we forgot about it. [...] There was a time when I got very sick, I had something moving in my stomach, and then someone said that it was trying to eat my heart. The person that said that gave me medicine. It was traditional medicine, but I don't know what it's called. That day, it left my stomach, and then the very day, in the night, it came again. It entered through my left arm. I didn't see it, the way it was, but I could see it moving in my skin. And then my mom took me to the same man, who made a tattoo on my left arm. After that, we went home. My mom got scared and she went to a witch doctor. They said that I needed protection, and she was given medicine that was mixed with a python snake. She was asked to make those tattoos on me, and when putting the same medicine, she was told to say certain words. I don't remember them. After she made those tattoos, I was asked not to bathe. Because I was going to school the following morning, I was asked, "Don't bathe in the morning, bathe later in the day". So I just went to school, just like that.' (#37a, Eve's recorded testimony, 2013)

We do not know why Eve's mother 'believed so much in traditional medicine'. It may have been an assertion of her traditional African worldview, as Magesa would have it. It may also have been a question of availability and affordability, although people are known to travel far and pay a lot for the services of a traditional healer, regardless of the presence of medical facilities in their neighbourhood (Mildnerová 2015:34). It may have been that she believed that the symptoms Eve was showing, namely dreaming and the experience of things moving in her body, were more connected to spiritual than biomedical causes. The therapy that the healer prescribed for Eve is common. Rubbing medicine into incisions (tattoos) in the skin is believed to have a purifying effect (Mildnerová 2015:120).

According to Eve's testimony, after undergoing the rituals as per the instruction of the traditional healer, her condition worsened. It took more than a month of prayers from a Pentecostal pastor before Eve felt better and was delivered. Like traditional healers, Christian pastors who heal through prayer see spiritual causes for the afflictions of their clients. Maybe this leads to competition between both groups. Evidently, in Zambia, Christian faith healers have little regard for traditional healers. In Eve's testimony, this becomes clear through the way she speaks about going to a traditional healer. It is only because her mother was not yet born again that she even considered going to a traditional healer. Later, Eve does not mention him as a traditional healer (or in the vernacular a *nganga*) but refers to him with the pejorative 'witch doctor'. Traditional healers, from a Pentecostal perspective, may not be Satanists as such, but they are definitely in league with the devil.

In Eve's narrative, Satanism is, more than anything else, a diagnosis of what is wrong with her. This section has given an overview of the specialists Zambians may turn to when they feel that there is something wrong with them. For complaints of a strictly medical nature, hospitals are visited where possible. Unexplained and prolonged illness and lack of well-being in other areas of life are addressed by professionals who take into account spiritual causes as well, such as traditional healers and Christian faith healers. Because of the Christian background of the discourse, the diagnosis of Satanism is restricted to Christian faith healers. In the following section, I will focus on Christian faith healing and on how the diagnosis of Satanism is established.

■ Christian faith healing

What is Christian faith healing in the Zambian context? According to Christian faith healers, illness, poverty and other problems may be caused by spiritual forces, for example, through demon possession and witchcraft. As I have described in Chapter 3, these forces need to be expelled in deliverance. A common spot to see Christian faith healing in action is during deliverance services at church. In such a service, it is common for the pastor to make a so-called altar

call, in which he invites members of the audience who suffer in some way to come to the front of the church – the altar – and be prayed for. A small group of people will assemble at the altar, and the pastor and his helpers go from one to the other, praying and often laying their hands on them. Prayers after an altar call are relatively quick, and if real problems emerge, people are asked to come back later for an individual appointment with the pastor. Many pastors offer walk-in sessions for individual deliverance at a fixed time during the week. In mainline churches like the RCZ, it may be a group of intercessors or 'prayer warriors' rather than the pastor who pray for the afflicted.

Eve does not say much about what happened during her deliverance, except that one or possibly more pastors prayed for her over an extended period. As a researcher, I have witnessed several deliverance sessions. The following example shows that the diagnosis is not fixed at the beginning of a prayer session.

■ Case study: Pastor Jere prays for Monica

Pastor Jere, who founded his Pentecostal church a few years ago, opens his house every Friday for anyone in need of healing. During my visit, people are waiting for their turn in the living room while Pastor Jere is praying for a family in a spare room. This room is not big, maybe three by four meters. Apart from three plastic garden chairs, there is no furniture in the room. When I arrive, the pastor is praying for a young woman. Her mother and aunt are there as well. An assistant pastor records the proceedings on a tablet. The pastor's wife, his three-year-old son and two female helpers are in the room too. Soon, the prayer for the daughter is finished, and it is the mother's turn. The mother and daughter come from a provincial town in Zambia. They are visiting the mother's sister, who lives in Lusaka and visits Pastor Jere's church. In their hometown, the mother and daughter go to one of Zambia's mainline churches.

As it is her turn to be prayed for, the mother moves hesitantly to the centre of the room. 'Don't worry, God is able. He will break every chain in your life,' Pastor Jere says reassuringly. The middle-aged woman nods and whispers, 'Yes'. 'Okay, raise your hands. What's your name?' the pastor asks. 'Monica,' the woman answers. 'Okay. Come two steps forward'. Pastor Jere touches Monica's forehead briefly, sighs and starts to pray. 'Father, we bless our name, that you are God [...] Close your eyes,' he tells Monica, and then he lays his hand on her forehead. 'Every power of darkness that has held your life bondage, the spirit of blood pressure [...]'. With her eyes closed, Monica lifts her head as if she is looking up. 'Satanic invasion in your blood!' Pastor Jere shouts, 'I command you to go!' Monica tilts her head further and further backwards. 'Loosen. Something is happening. Loosen, in Jesus' name', Pastor Jere says as Monica collapses to the ground.

The helpers arrange her neatly on the floor, taking care that her legs stay covered. Monica has her eyes closed and does not move. 'Every demon that

has held her children and have followed her family, I command you today to leave this bloodline and go. Your time has expired, in the name of Jesus! Every sickness and disease […],' the pastor says as he kneels next to Monica. At first, she lies very still as the pastor commands the demons that she suffers from to go. Then she starts breathing heavily. 'Something is happening. Get out of her! Get out of her! Get out of her! This body is under fire!' Every sentence the pastor says is accompanied by a 'Yes, yes,' from the helpers. 'Yes, it's under fire!' 'Under fire', the helpers repeat. Monica groans:

> 'I command you, open her mouth, surrender and leave this woman and go. You have been hiding in her blood, trying to kill this woman, but God wants her to live. I command you: go! Take your luggage! Take your sickness. Get out of her! Loosen your hold! You spirit of a dead person, your season is over, leave her.' (#152, participant observation, 2015)

Monica lets out a long moan while Pastor Jere says, 'Go. Go. Go. Go. Go. Go out!' 'In Jesus' name,' responds a helper.

> 'Get out, right now! Leave her. You have no longer power over her soul. All of you devils, people that have died in the bloodline, I command you, move. Leave her. Go back to the graveyard. Human spirits, leave her now, by the fire of the Holy Spirit. Go.' (#152, participant observation, 2015)

Monica is moaning almost continuously now. Pastor Jere and a helper stand on either side of her head. 'Get out of her,' the pastor says. 'Now,' the helper responds. 'Get out of her'. 'Now'. 'Get out of her!' 'Now!' Monica's groaning turns to shouts. 'Leave her now! I command you, go!' 'Aah,' shouts Monica. 'I command you, go!' 'Aah!' 'I command you, go!' 'Aah!' 'I command you, go!' 'Aaaah!' Monica's screams get louder as Pastor Jere continues to command the demon to get out. 'Fire!' 'Ai!' 'Fire!' 'Ai!' 'Fire!' 'Ai!' Monica shrieks, high and loud, and her body contorts. Helpers quickly cover her with a spare *chitenge* cloth. 'By the fire of the Holy Spirit, leave this woman! Go out! Go!' Monica rolls over from one side to the other. The screaming has stopped. 'Go. This marriage is over! Get out! Leave her children!' Monica lies still:

> 'Never come back in this body, and go. This body belongs to Jesus. All devils are broken. Generational curse, your marriage is over. She'll never die of HIV. She'll never die of sugar, diabetes. She'll never die of blood pressure! I command you to take all the diseases out of her blood because God has come to heal her. I break every witchcraft disease!' (#152, participant observation, 2015)

As Pastor Jere continues praying for her, Monica's muscles tighten. She seems to lift her hips from the floor, and her arms are flailing and threshing. 'I set you free. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, I declare freedom is your portion. It's over, in the name of Jesus.'

Then, suddenly, Monica lies still, and it is over. 'Can you stand up?' the pastor asks. Monica gets up with difficulty. Her hair is in disarray and she looks exhausted. 'Chains have been broken', Pastor Jere announces:

> 'She was married to the spirit of a big man. Demonic forces held her life and wanted to kill her. All the symptoms in your life will die. Your health will revive, and

God will give you strength and power. You are healed just now.' (#152, participant observation, 2015)

With a soft voice, her head shaking, Monica says, 'Thank you'. 'How are you feeling in your body right now?' the pastor asks. 'I'm just feeling light,' Monica responds in a whisper. 'Amen! Something heavy has been moved from you. The devil has left you. From today, you will feel different. Your body is healed.'

In this description, Pastor Jere prays for Monica and Monica manifests, meaning that she falls into a trance and moves or speaks strangely. Manifesting means that a demon is demonstratively present in her. In the study of possession and exorcism, the theatrical quality of the ritual of deliverance has been noted (cf. Frankfurter 2006; Levack 2013). There is a rhythm in the call and response between the pastor and helpers and between the pastor and the possessed client. During the session, tension builds up, in Monica's muscles, in her moaning, in the increasing volume of the pastor's orders and his helpers' encouragements. Then, suddenly, a climax is reached, and everything is quiet again.

Public deliverance sessions have a stage and an audience. The actors on the stage are well defined: the pastor, who expels the demons; the victim, showing signs of possession during the deliverance and peace and happiness afterwards; and often some helpers responding to both of the main actors. The pastor wears a clerical costume, which makes him easily recognisable, and he uses the props of his religion, such as a cross, a Bible and a flask of holy water or anointing oil. The actions of the pastor and the victim do not exceed the expectations of the audience. They are, as Brian Levack (2013:29–31) calls it, 'scripted', bound by the cultural notions connected to possession.

Levack (2013:28) describes the participants in the deliverance session as 'performers in a religious drama'. This does not mean that they are play-acting, aware of their roles in the way actors may be. Rather, they are, consciously or unconsciously, following patterns of behaviour expected in the context of Christian faith healing. They learn their script by reading about possessions, hearing about them in sermons, and seeing possessed people being exorcised in public gatherings. For someone unfamiliar with this practice, Monica's moans and Pastor Jere's shouting at her may seem shocking or offensive. However, within the Zambian practice of deliverance, there is nothing out of the ordinary in their actions.

In his description of the ritual of deliverance, Stephen Hunt (1998:218–220) speaks about phases in the deliverance process. Firstly, the pastor establishes that an evil spirit is present. He or she then names the spirit. Finally, rituals aiming for the expulsion of the spirit are applied. In the case of Monica and Pastor Jere, this succession is not very obvious. The pastor has no previous history with the client; she is visiting her sister and has never before been prayed for by this pastor. There is no introductory conversation between

healer and client; Pastor Jere immediately starts praying. What ails Monica is not clear. Maybe Pastor Jere does not need that information: after the session, he explains that he has the gift to discern the presence of demons. Likewise, for Zambian traditional healers, it is a sign of their power and effectiveness if they can diagnose and cure a client without having spoken to them first. What is clear is that in this session, little time is spent on establishing whether Monica's problems are caused by a demon, by witchcraft or by another natural or supernatural cause.

Possession, witchcraft and Satanism are three spiritual causes of affliction recognised by Christian faith healers. Although there seems to be no fixed relation between specific causes and symptoms (Mildnerová 2015:64) because all three phenomena can manifest themselves with multiple, diverse symptoms, according to the literature, some symptoms have a closer connection to witchcraft and others to possession. In their analysis of letters sent to Archbishop Milingo, Ter Haar and Ellis (1988) give a pathology of possession:

> Physical symptoms commonly considered to be caused by spirit possession include many complaints with no obvious physical cause. [...] General aches and pains fall into this category. So does the mysterious sensation of a lump travelling round the body. Bad smells, lack of concentration, obsessive behaviour, impotence, infertility, social strife and disturbing dreams are also typical symptoms of spirit possession. (p. 197)

Although witchcraft may cause similar complaints, witchcraft is typically associated with sudden, severe illness (Van Binsbergen 1981:141) and recurrent misfortune in general (Sugishita 2009:440). Swollen legs are claimed to be caused by stepping on a charm, and they are also attributed to witchcraft (Stekelenburg et al. 2005:74–75). Incidentally, this latter phenomenon is what is troubling Monica's sister. After Pastor Jere's initial prayers during a Sunday deliverance service, the sister is relieved that her legs are not troubling her as much anymore.

In his prayers for Monica, the pastor immediately starts expelling demonic forces. He repeats several times that evil forces affect the bloodline, a diagnosis that is supported by the fact that Monica's daughter and sister experience troubles as well. In deliverance theology, many problems are thought to be caused by generational or ancestral curses, which may affect a whole lineage. Although these teachings have been developed and popularised outside of Africa by evangelical and Pentecostal preachers such as Derek Prince and Kurt E. Koch, they resonate with specifically African beliefs about the influence of ancestors on one's well-being.

Apart from a force of evil affecting the bloodline, Pastor Jere addresses demons associated with medical conditions like high blood pressure, HIV and diabetes. After the prayers have finished, the pastor gives his final diagnosis:

Monica was married to the spirit of a big man. In Zambian traditions, the ancestral spirits of chiefs, healers or warriors, who may be addressed with the honorific 'big man', can possess an ethnically related person. For traditional healers, such a possession often forms the beginning of their career. After a period of affliction, they learn to communicate and live with the spirit, which gives them the ability to diagnose and heal the problems of others. The relation between the healer or medium and the spirit is sometimes characterised as a marriage. In the Pentecostal Christian discourse, such a positive evaluation of ancestral spirits is out of the question. Any spirit that is not the Holy Spirit is seen as an evil spirit, a demon sent by Satan. From this perspective, Monica's spirit of a big man cannot be accommodated and has to be expelled.

Although Pastor Jere concludes that Monica was afflicted by the spirit of a big man, during the deliverance session there is no clear moment in which the demon is named. Rather, Pastor Jere seems to be trying different options: an ancestral curse, a medical condition personified as a demon, an affliction by a male spirit or a disease caused by witchcraft. There seems to be a buffet of possible causes for Monica's unstated problems. In a first deliverance session like this, these remain largely undifferentiated. Pastor Jere's eventual diagnosis seems to be supported by Monica's symptoms and responses: sometimes she moans in a deep, manly voice. She does not seem to be responding to the mentioning of Satanism or witchcraft, while she seems to moan louder when the pastor refers to a male spirit possessing her.

When confronted with an affliction, Zambians have a choice regarding the professional they will use to find restoration. They may go to a hospital, a traditional healer or a faith healer. In many cases, people shop around for diagnoses and therapies that feel appropriate to them. Bernhard Udelhoven (2021) has interviewed many people suffering from spiritual afflictions and provides more than 20 specific cases in his book on dealing with spirits, witchcraft and Satanism. In some cases, a relative has been accused of witchcraft before, and witchcraft becomes the main focus of interpretation. Other families have a history of spirit possession and interpret problems in that way. I have no information about what happened with Monica after this first deliverance session. She may have been healed completely, but it is just as likely that she continued seeking an improvement in her health and well-being. If Pastor Jere's diagnosis of spiritual marriage to a big man seemed appropriate to Monica and her family, she may have continued seeking help to cut her bonds with this oppressive demonic force. On the other hand, she may also have visited a traditional healer in her hometown or gone to a hospital to receive medical treatment.

Specific to Pentecostal faith healing is the conviction that all non-Christian spiritual forces are of a demonic and evil nature. In a first prayer session, the

causes for affliction are largely undifferentiated, although a preliminary diagnosis is given. In later sessions, in the process of negotiation between the healer, client and significant others, the diagnosis is clarified. How this works in the case of a diagnosis of Satanism is the topic of the next section.

■ Diagnosis: Satanism

If Satanism is an affliction, then how does a healer come to this diagnosis? The testimonies can only show us glimpses of this process. Testimonies are constructed after the diagnosis of Satanism and often are silent on what happened before this diagnosis was stated. What are the symptoms that lead a Christian faith healer to investigate whether Satanism could be at stake here? As was mentioned in the previous section, in deciding whether problems are caused by possession or witchcraft, not only the symptoms are relevant. The response of the client during deliverance is important too, as is the assessment of the client and their family. In diagnosing witchcraft and possession, symptoms, the response of the client and the context of the client all help in establishing what the problem is. In what situation is Satanism the preferred diagnosis?

■ Case study: Bishop Phiri and his nephew Bright

As Tsitsi's husband in the introduction already mentioned, Satanism occurs mainly in young people. For older clients visiting a Christian faith healer, a diagnosis of possession or witchcraft is more likely. Often, the youth and/or his family have a feeling that there is something wrong. One such youth is Bright, whose uncle is a bishop in his church in northern Zambia. Bright's experience with Satanism led to the involvement of Bishop Phiri both as a family member and as a pastor. He narrates:

> 'My nephew Bright is the son of my younger brother who lives in the Copperbelt. He used to walk to school every day, a two-hour walk. His father didn't have money for his lunch, but he had a friend who invited him to his home to have lunch with his family. One time, they exchanged school uniforms. Later, we realised that this was how Bright was initiated. At another time, the friend brought a packed lunch to school and told Bright, "Today we'll have very special food!" Later, Bright understood that the soup was actually blood.

> 'I had the feeling that there was something wrong with my relatives on the Copperbelt. I had to persuade my brother to send Bright to me, so I could have him close for a while. When he was staying with me, he showed some strange behaviour. He wouldn't talk. He would sit in the yard where the chickens are, and he would stay there all afternoon. Once, we found him there lying on the ground, unconscious. At the hospital, they said it was malaria, but I think it was something from the underworld. Later, he confessed that he had an altar there, which he used to fly to Chingola. He said that Chingola is the headquarters of the Satanists in that region.

'Another strange thing: while he was staying in my house, he used to eat soap. I called his father and he confirmed that Bright ate soap at their home as well. Then a pastor from Tanzania who was visiting us told me that this is a sign of demon possession. So we prayed over him and he manifested. He even confessed that he had pledged my daughters for sacrifice. During the exorcism, the demon said that the first daughter would be sacrificed that evening at 21:00 hours, and promptly one of my daughters had trouble breathing. We prayed and prayed, and she survived. The next day, I continued praying for Bright. This time, the demon said, "Now the contract is broken, but Satan can mend it again". We prayed more, binding the demons, and finally, the contract was gone. Bright confessed that he had sacrificed more than 500 people, including a pastor in Kenya and a pastor in Namibia.

'After this, his father took Bright back to the Copperbelt. I doubt whether he is really delivered. His father now denies that his son ever was involved with Satanism, and because of this, we don't speak anymore.' (#154, interview with Bishop Phiri., 2017)

In Bright's case, as in that of Eve, it is evident that there was some shopping around for a fitting diagnosis. Apart from his uncle, the Christian faith healer, a hospital was briefly involved. What makes Satanism a likely cause for Bright's problems? Bright's uncle already had the feeling that something was wrong with his relatives, and so he urged his brother to send Bright to him. Here, Bright's behaviour stands out. Instead of interacting with his family, Bright stays outside. He also eats soap, which is interpreted by a visiting pastor as a sign of possession. During Bright's deliverance, a demon manifests in him, and he confesses to being a Satanist. Now, other things start to make sense as well, for example, Bright's friendship with a boy who was better off than him and shared his food with him. This must have been his moment of initiation. In the end, however, Bright goes back to his parents, who are not convinced of Bishop Phiri's diagnosis of Satanism.

Bright's case is an introduction to the topics that will be discussed further in this chapter: that the diagnosis of Satanism is related to abnormal behaviour, that this diagnosis is not always accepted and that the acceptance leads to a new interpretation of events in the personal history. In this section on the diagnosis of Satanism, I will first explore the types of behaviour that are associated with Satanism.

■ Abnormal behaviour linked to Satanism

In a diagnosis of Satanism, abnormal behaviour is often an indicator. Eating soap, as Bright did, is not mentioned elsewhere. More frequent are strange happenings related to sleep, for example, a girl who goes to sleep in her bed and is found somewhere else every night (Udelhoven 2021:302–309) or a girl who twitches her legs while sleeping, or, conversely, lies completely still. Disturbing dreams, although absent in Bright's story, may enforce the feeling that something is happening. Dream images that many ex-Satanists recount in their testimonies are dreaming of eating, dreaming of snakes and lions and dreaming of entering an underwater world.

In Zambia, certain dreams are seen as messages from the spirit world, although the interpretation of dreams differs significantly between traditional healers and Christian faith healers. In traditional healing, a dream about receiving food is linked to witchcraft attacks. As was described in Chapter 2, dreams about a snake or a lion or about swimming underwater point to a calling from an ancestral spirit known as *mashabe* in Chinyanja or *ngulu* in Chibemba. These spirits are auspicious; they may assist a medium in healing or give warnings (Mildnerová 2015:68, 111). In Christian faith healing, the same images are experienced as disturbing because they signify involvement with evil and demonic spirits.

Dreams and strange behaviour can be indicators of involvement in Satanism, but the most common symptoms of Satanism are troubled social relations. These troubled social relations can be identified in the testimonies of ex-Satanists in several ways. Their behaviour often falls outside the norms of acceptable behaviour. Especially introversion and deviant behaviour are linked to Satanism. They also may feel they are not able to live up to the expectations that their social environment has for them. I will give examples of all of these instances.

In most cases, behaviour that in the Zambian context is not considered normal is mentioned. Eve, for example, prefers to spend time alone in her room instead of hanging out with friends. Bright is silent and likes to spend his afternoons alone in the yard. Tsitsi hangs out with boys and does not know how to walk like a proper girl.

Rudeness and stubbornness are other undesirable character traits that some ex-Satanists show. Grace, the first ex-Satanist I met, told me that after she moved from her provincial hometown to Lusaka to stay with relatives, she changed. 'I went to live in Lusaka, and when I was there, I had really changed. I became rude to other people. I was not who I used to be' (#43, interview with Grace, 08 July 2013). Naomi, a 20-year-old young woman from the Seventh-day Adventist church, describes herself as stubborn and sees that as a reason for becoming a Satanist:

> 'By that time, I was growing very quiet and stubborn in some actions, so they started to use my life in their kingdom because I was someone who was suitable.' (#41a, Naomi's recorded testimony, 2011)

For relatives and Christian faith healers, abnormal behaviour is a sign of involvement in Satanism. Because the discourse of Satanism is so prevalent, this relation between Satanism and abnormal behaviour is well-known in the population. In some cases reported to the Fingers of Thomas, Satanism seems to be used as a synonym for culturally unacceptable behaviour. For example, the Fingers spoke to a girl who, in the past, had been involved in Satanism:

> 'She got involved with Satanism when she was in boarding school. This was an expensive school; her parents are quite rich. However, the girl never had the things

her friends had, and she felt bad about it. The parents also were often away, abroad for business. When she was 14, she and her friends decided to get into prostitution. She was always a very quiet girl when she was at home, but during this period, she acted wild. They were meeting boys and sleeping with them for money, and they called this Satanism. She did it to become rich, to become rich by working as a prostitute, and she would say to her friends, "Let's go do Satanism".' (Fieldnotes, 10 June 2015)

Another case reported by the Fingers of Thomas dealt with a young woman in a lesbian relationship. Homosexuality in Zambia is generally not accepted. Rather than telling her parents that she was gay, the woman said to them that she was a Satanist. Apparently, this was an easier thing to confess to than being a lesbian (Fieldnotes, 10 June 2015).

In a different context, the behaviour of the ex-Satanists may be interpreted differently. Take, for example, Bright's habit of eating soap. In the medical literature, the consumption of non-nutritive substances deemed inappropriate in the developmental or cultural context is called pica (Sturmey & Williams 2016:18). Pica has been related to nutritional deficiencies, intellectual disabilities and autism spectrum disorder. In a Western context, Bright's behaviour of not speaking to others and his upbringing in a family that lacked the means to provide him with food may be interpreted from this perspective. Extreme introversion, aggression and other behavioural problems that are reported in testimonies may also be interpreted as caused by an underlying psychological problem or mental illness. My aim, however, is not to give an evaluation of the veracity of the diagnosis of Satanism or to deliver an alternative diagnosis but to understand how ex-Satanists come to see themselves as such.

The discussed testimonies so far have been from narrators who experienced Satanism in their adolescence, which is the majority of ex-Satanists. The few slightly older male narrators also speak of a troubled youth. One of them, for example, says that he decided to sacrifice his father because he treated his mother badly and was never there for him. However, these narrators are generally older and have different concerns than a child living in a household. The male ex-Satanist is an adult man looking for success in his professional life as a musician, a businessman, a politician or a soldier. Like the adolescent narrators, he feels the heavy burden of expectation from his family and friends. They are not dependents themselves; rather, they have others who depend on them. As men and heads of their families, they are expected to provide an income to take care of their families. Their struggle to do so leads them to seek help in quarters later realised to be satanic.

An example is David. David is a young man. When I saw him, he was smartly dressed, with stylish, thick-rimmed glasses. In 2013, when his testimony was recorded by a pastor, he was 28. David's testimony is extremely detailed. 'I was dealing with hardware', he says. He continues:

'The business was not going the way I was thinking it's supposed to be going. So I consulted my friend and said, "No, I've been trying and still I'm stagnant on the same position". Then my friend advised me, "You know, business nowadays, you don't just do business like you used to. You need to find help somewhere". He told me, "If you can travel with me to Beira", that's the border of Mozambique and Zambia, "and there I might show you someone who can help you to do business".' (#31a, David's recorded testimony, 2013)

David expected to visit a traditional healer specialising in giving his clients business success. Instead, the canoe in which he and his friend were travelling capsized, and David entered an underwater world in which he was initiated. From this moment, what happened in David's life and the superimposed satanic narrative are hard to disentangle. What is clear, however, is that David's start of a career as a Satanist came when he tried to be more successful and better able to provide for his family or save up for his bride-wealth.

Reporting disturbing dreams, feeling rejected, not being able to live up to expectations and showing abnormal, deviant behaviour is enough to cause a search for help from a Christian faith healer. If demons manifest during prayer, the feeling that something is wrong is confirmed. The behaviour of the client during the healing prayers may point specifically to Satanism, for example, if the client avoids religious symbols like the Bible or the name of Jesus Christ. Eve's interviewer remembers:

'One of the things that happened as I prayed for you [...] The first day you came, I realised every time I started reading the Bible to you, you would actually close your ears, and I realised on the spot that had to do with your mind.' (#37a, Eve's recorded testimony, 2013)

Eve agrees, saying that the Satanists had trained her mind.

During deliverance, the client may also say things about Satanism that he or she later does not remember. When he is prayed for, a demon speaks through Bright, confessing that Bishop Phiri's daughters are next in line for sacrifice. A case of Satanism is not solved within one prayer session. Eve says she had to undergo a month of prayers, seemingly at the hands of several pastors. Grace had to be delivered of 150 demons. Gideon Mulenga Kabila (n.d.) starts his published testimony with an apology about his process of deliverance:

This deliverance of mine started a long time ago as I was struggling for knowing the truth. I would first of all like to apologies [sic] to all the pastors who wanted to help me, and then after [/] disappointed them. All the pastors were good to me, but the only thing was that I was not ready for it. Please, you are still my parents and I respect you with the heavenly respect. (p. 5)

In sum, the diagnosis of Satanism is confirmed by symptoms like disturbing dreams, abnormal behaviour and occurrences during the deliverance prayers. The pastor is an important figure in the confirmation of the diagnosis of Satanism. Bishop Phiri is convinced that his nephew, Bright, was or may even

still be a Satanist. However, the father did not accept that his son might be a Satanist. The diagnosis of a pastor needs to be accepted by the client and his or her family.

■ Accepting the diagnosis of Satanism

The diagnosis of Satanism explains strange occurrences and abnormal behaviours. Receiving this diagnosis gives meaning to these occurrences. A girl who, before, did not understand why she must feel so rejected now understands that it is because she belonged to Satan's kingdom under the sea. Accepting this new meaningful interpretation of one's life is a process that takes time. Maybe this is also one of the reasons that the deliverance of a Satanist takes such a long time.

It is not easy to reconstruct this process from the finished testimonies of ex-Satanists, but it seems likely that the first response to the diagnosis of Satanism is bewilderment. On the Fingers of Thomas blog about Satanism and the deliverance ministry, a concerned young woman writes (Udelhoven 2008b):

> Usually, I am not going to other churches. My friend asked me to come. She had manifested during prayer with a certain pastor and said something about me. The pastor told her to bring me for prayers. So I went with her, though I felt uncomfortable. [...] I was scared 'cause [*the pastor*] told me that he saw something wrong with me. When he prayed, I collapsed. I don't know what I said. They say I manifested demons. They also say I talked about my family. He said I should bring my aunt about whom I had revealed something, though I don't even know what I said. (n.p.)

The author seems confused. She has not accepted the diagnosis of Satanism at this moment, although that may change if she continues seeking help from this pastor.

Similar bewilderment speaks from the story of a woman calling in on a radio programme that often airs testimonies. In a previous week, the host had prophesied that women were suffering from certain afflictions because their underwear had been stolen and was now used by witch doctors for evil purposes. This unnamed woman – I will call her Rose – approached the host, confessing that she had indeed lost her underwear. On air, she explains:

> 'You were saying that the person who lost the pants [...] It's like those pants were used for charms to destroy the marriage or something like that. Each time I am in my house, I feel like, "What am I doing here?" It's like I'm just sweeping for somebody and just cleaning. You know, I've been to school, and I can work. Each time [...] Because we've come a long way, but this time, instead of me being affectionate, my mind is just telling me something else, something contrary to marriage life. It's just telling me, "What are you doing here?" And all I see, I'm just seeing a bother in the house and nothing else. So when you were praying on the radio, I started telling myself, "No, it's that pant which is actually working", because you said that the pant was used for charms and things like that.' (#49d, Rose's recorded testimony, 2013)

Rose feels like a slave in her marriage. She can accept and understand these improper feelings when she hears the host explain that they may be caused by external, evil agents.

She does not leave it at that but seeks help in her local church. She says:

> 'After we talked, I went to attend a certain meeting within my area. And for sure, when they were praying for me, they started saying I am married under the ocean, and I've got 15 children [*there*].' (#49d, Rose's recorded testimony, 2013)

Suddenly, satanic imagery enters Rose's story. The prayers of deliverance led the pastor or the intercession group to the conclusion that Rose has a connection with the satanic, underwater world and that she even has 15 children there. Rose still sounds a little stunned by this discovery. 'They said,' she says. She is not yet ready to identify herself with this diagnosis by stating, 'I was married under the ocean'. The host picks up on this as well and asks her whether she is completely delivered now. 'It's not complete,' Rose says, 'because I had 15 children under the ocean. They managed to kill ten; I remained with five'.

In Rose's narrative, the distinction between possession, having a spiritual husband and full-fledged Satanism is vague. The diagnosis is not entirely clear and, more importantly, still fresh. It takes more than a diagnosis to become an ex-Satanist. According to Mildnerová (2015:42), 'the stronger a social pressure is exerted on [the] patient, the more probable it is that he finally identify with his illness'. The network of family, friends and neighbours surrounding someone suffering from an affliction is very important, as can be seen in the case of Bright, whose parents did not believe in the diagnosis of Bishop Phiri. Accepting the diagnosis means giving it a place in one's life history. In that process, Rose could become not merely someone struggling with an unhappy marriage, interpreted as an affliction, but an ex-Satanist. The following section discusses how a diagnosis can change one's life story.

■ Rewriting the life story

Dan McAdams (1993:11) calls a life story the 'personal myth', a narrative that contains the things we find true and meaningful in our life: 'In order to live well, with unity and purpose, we compose a heroic narrative of the self that illustrates essential truths about ourselves'. McAdams' (1993:5) claim is not only that the stories we share about ourselves say something about who we are, but that 'identity is a life story'. Our life story unites different parts of ourselves and our life into a meaningful narrative. It shows the pattern we perceive in our past that makes us who we are today. Telling stories is how we construct our identity. In this section, my focus is not on the social aspect of the narratives of Satanism (about, for example, what they say about the context of Zambia) but on how the narrators construct their identity through these stories.

The relevance of life stories has been noted in both the study of conversion and the study of living with (chronic) diseases. Both are defining moments in a personal myth. These moments compel us to look back on our life and reconstruct our life stories. According to Peter Stromberg (1993:29), constructing the narrative of conversion 'draws a new part of the subject's experience in the realm of the self'. Looking back on one's life from the perspective of conversion gives a new meaning to experiences from the past. These experiences, which may not have seemed relevant to one's identity before, are now comprehended as foreshadowing the conversion.

The narratives of ex-Satanists are not conversion narratives in the sense of reports of a changing religious conviction. However, they do provide a new interpretation of the past. In this chapter, I have analysed the testimonies and reflections of a diagnosis. Like a conversion, acquiring a severe or chronic illness asks for a reinvention of one's identity, and with that, of one's past. An example of a study discussing the relation between illness and the life story is Arthur W. Frank's (2013) *The wounded storyteller: Body, illness & ethics*. Life stories may also be used as a form of therapy after receiving a diagnosis (McKeown, Clarke & Repper 2006). Transformative or disruptive experiences like illness and conversion encourage us to develop a coherent life story once more, in which there is a narrative continuity between the past and the present and a purpose for the future.

◼ Self and personhood in an African context

The perspective that sees identity as constructed through life stories is in line not only with the narrative turn in the social sciences but also with the modern 'turn to the self'. According to Anthony Giddens (1991:75), the contemporary self is 'a reflexive project, for which the individual is responsible'. Individuals write their own life stories and have the agency to make significant life choices. Before applying these ideas about identity and the self to the testimonies of ex-Satanists in Zambia, it is relevant to ask whether this 'contemporary self' exists in Zambia. Does the concept of the person exist outside of Western society?

This anthropological question has a long history and has become a hot issue in recent years. Around the middle of the 20th century, some anthropologists argued that personhood, defined as the notion of an autonomous individual, is a European idea (Mauss [1938] 1985; Read 1955). Later, most anthropologists argued that every society has some notion of personhood, although personhood in different societies may look different.

We are dealing with slippery terms here. Person and individual are used as synonyms in common parlance, but in some anthropological traditions, they refer to different aspects of a human being. For example, for Radcliffe-Brown

(1940), an individual is a biological organism, ready to be studied as a specimen. A person, on the other hand, is a human being in its web of relations to other human beings. This distinction can be problematic, for example, if one is discussing the Western, individualistic notion of personhood. In Radcliffe-Brown's distinction, another related term is conspicuously missing: the self. Harris (1989) proposes to assign each term to a corresponding field of study: 'individual' belongs to the biological way of conceptualising a human being, 'self' to psychology, and 'person' to sociology. Together, they give a full account of a human being. In actual practice, however, the terms are used interchangeably by scholars across these fields, as they will be in this study.

These problems with defining slippery terms notwithstanding, there seems to be some consensus that the specific concept of personhood that has developed in Europe, namely that of the person as an autonomous unit of society (cf. La Fontaine 1985:137), is contextual and cannot be readily applied to other places and times. In comparison to this Western concept of personhood, other notions are characterised as holistic, socio-centric or groupist (Smith 2012:50).

In African philosophy, personhood has been a much-debated issue. Oritsegbubemi Anthony Oyowe (2013) traces the history of this discussion back to Placide Tempels, who wrote about Bantu philosophy. According to Tempels, having personhood meant being in possession of a vital force, and the quality of this vital force depended on relationships with others (Oyowe 2013:206). This is consistent with the tenets of the African worldview described in Chapter 2. The famous African philosopher and theologian John Mbiti used the same perspective to play on Descartes' statement, 'I think, therefore I am'. According to Mbiti, in Africa, the statement should be, 'I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am' (cited in Oyowe 2013:207). The Nigerian poet and philosopher Ifeanyi Menkiti takes this perspective to a logical conclusion when he argues that a child that has just been born has no personhood yet and only becomes a person through its introduction into the community and society (Oyowe 2013:214–215). Menkiti refers to the African concept of personhood as maximising, in contrast to a minimising concept in the West.

Speaking from a more global perspective, Marilyn Strathern has introduced a similar distinction between 'individual' and 'dividual'. The (Western) individual is conceptualised as having an autonomous existence, separate from its relations to others in society. A dividual, on the other hand, is a multiple person, produced in relationship to others and able to divide itself, to shed parts in favour of others if the context requires it (Strathern 1988:185).

A different conceptualisation of the various notions of personhood is the distinction between porous and buffered selves (Taylor 2007). The buffered self is imagined as possessing a clear boundary between the person and the influences of the surrounding world. T.M. Luhrmann (2020:85) uses the image

of a citadel to describe how the mind of such an individual is perceived: 'European Americans are invited by their cultural heritage to imagine the mind as a private place, walled off from the world, a citadel in which thoughts are one's own and no one else has access to them'. In the porous self, this boundary or buffer is absent. The porous self is therefore penetrable by forces that originate from outside, such as spiritual agencies.

The focus of the different distinctions, minimising–maximising, individual–dividual and buffered–porous, seems to be slightly different, the former two pointing at relations with other human beings, the latter emphasising openness to spiritual forces. They all, however, see the conception of a person as an autonomous individual as not wholly applicable to African (and Asian) cultures, where obligations to others and relations with the spiritual world blur a sense of autonomous personhood.

A few critical remarks can be made concerning this perspective. Firstly, this account makes it easy to slip into an undesirable rhetoric of progress. In their article on an African concept of personhood, Comaroff and Comaroff (2001) ask some critical questions:

> To the extent that 'the autonomous person' is a European invention, does its absence elsewhere imply a deficit, a failure, a measure of incivility on the part of non-Europeans? And what of the corollary: is this figure, this 'person', the end point in a world-historical telos, something to which non-occidentals are inexorably drawn as they cast off their primordial differences? (p. 267)

If this were the case, a nonautonomous self would be seen as somehow being backward – an ethnocentric assumption that few anthropologists would agree to.

Secondly, one may ask whether this autonomous self exists at all, even in the West. Contemporary psychological theories of selfhood, for example, by Hermans and others, argue that the self is extended, multivoiced and dialogical, meaning that other persons and other cultural positions are parts of the self (cf. Hermans & Dimaggio 2007). One's perception of personhood is not fixed and unchanging. Rather, it is constructed in an internal or external dialogue with, for example, significant others like relatives and friends and with cultural or religious positions and expectations. A person's position concerning these multiple voices may change over time and depend on the context in which they find themselves. In anthropology, a stark polarity between individualism and dividualism has also been criticised, for example, by Englund and Leach (2000:229) who state that 'all persons are both dividuals and individuals'. In contemporary anthropology, buffered and porous, dividuality and individuality are imagined as aspects of personhood, rather than as mutually exclusive categories.

Although there are different conceptualisations of the self, African and Western persons are not fundamentally different. To some extent (even)

Westerners are dividual, and to some extent (even) Africans are individuals. Both African and Western persons need stories to express and construct their identities. Tilmann Habermas and Elaine Reese (2015) are psychologists writing about the development of life stories in different cultures. They state:

> The need to make connections between one's past and present self is pressing in contemporary society, regardless of one's culture [...] but the way that the self is constructed and presented to others is likely to differ across cultures and subcultures. (p. 194)

All over the world, societies are touched by the modern project of the reflexive self. Which expression of the self makes cultural sense depends on the stories that are known in a given context. These stories also affect the narrative framework of a life story. In Europe, the life story of a Zambian ex-Satanist would be bewildering. In Zambia, this is much less the case.

Narratives of Satanism as life stories

Now that we have established that Africans and people from the West are not so fundamentally different, I will apply the ideas about life stories to the narratives from ex-Satanists. But before that, a few words about how testimonies of ex-Satanists differ from life stories.

The narratives of ex-Satanists are different from the life stories McAdams and others recount in some respects. Firstly, the narratives of ex-Satanists are not told as life stories. They are told as testimonies, to show something about God's power. Testimonies do not always narrate a whole life, making sense of it from its beginning to the present. Rather, they form an episode, though probably an important episode, within a life. The content of the narrative of the ex-Satanist is chosen because of its relevance to the testimony. The past, for example, the childhood years, is reviewed from the point of view of the ex-Satanist recounting how it all happened and how they got over it.

A second difference lies in the audience and the setting of the narration. In common life story research, the subjects are interviewed about their life by a researcher. The researcher asks a fixed set of questions to gather similar life stories from several subjects. Although the stories they narrate are not new to the narrator, one could say that these life stories come into existence at the moment of the interview. The interviewer is the coaxer, and his questions bring out the life story and its elements, for example, by asking for an absolute high and low point in life.

In contrast to these interviews, the ex-Satanist delivering a testimony has a big audience. They tell their story in a church as a part of a deliverance service or overnight prayer or on local or national radio and television. They know beforehand that they will tell this story and have had time to prepare it. Probably it is not the first time that they are telling it. They may be regular

guests at such meetings precisely because of this story. More than life stories based on interviews, the confession of the ex-Satanist is a performance with a relatively fixed script; a text that the narrator has laboured on, maybe even improved over time. It has become a public, religious document. In this chapter, I will focus on the testimony not as a public narrative but as a personal narrative. The production of the testimony as a public narrative is the topic of the next chapter. Despite these differences between a testimony and a life story, the similarities between both are significant. As I will argue in the following sections, both involve a reinterpretation of the past, and both aim to construct a meaningful, coherent story about one's identity.

While situations differ between, say, Zambia and the Netherlands, in both places, persons have a sense of self and identity. The construction of this identity is a reflexive process in which life stories play an important role. Adolescence or young adulthood is a pivotal time in this process. Adolescence is a stage in life when many things change in the body as well as in social life. The place of an adolescent in the family and the community shifts as adulthood approaches (Jones, Presler-Marshall & Samuels 2018:1). For many Zambian girls, adulthood starts during adolescence. Almost a quarter of Zambian girls aged 15–19 years old have already given birth (UNICEF 2021:103). During this time, individuals start to bring unity to everything they have been through up to that point by embarking on the creation of a coherent life story. McAdams (1993) states:

> They become creative historians as they experiment with different ways of making sense of their early years, their relationship with their parents, and even their ethnic, religious, and class roots. (p. 92)

This upsurge in mythmaking during adolescence, this creation of new frameworks to understand oneself, may be one of the reasons that experiences of Satanism are often narrated by youths and young adults between the age of 15 and 25. Furthermore, in the previous chapter, we have seen that youths are under special pressure because of shifts in the hierarchical order of society. If youths feel the diagnosis of Satanism fits their experience, it may be because they are already involved in the process of identity formation and can use the diagnosis as input for that, but it may also be that the specific diagnosis of Satanism fits with the pressure they feel from society. Receiving a diagnosis of Satanism at this time, when a fixed identity is not yet established, encourages new evaluations of the past. Testimonies of Satanism form a reflexive reinterpretation of personal history, establishing one's identity as an ex-Satanist. The diagnosis of Satanism becomes a frame through which life is reinterpreted.

The diagnosis of Satanism is often based on the behaviour of the suspected Satanist. The ex-Satanists themselves mention another aspect of their life that makes the diagnosis of Satanism plausible, namely a feeling of rejection and isolation. Looking at the background stories of the ex-Satanists who give their

testimonies, one sees that many of them have grown up in difficult circumstances. Parents are divorced or deceased, and often the children are living with relatives. In none of the testimonies does the ex-Satanist look back on a happy childhood. In the testimonies, ex-Satanists often tell how they shifted from one household to the next, going from living with a mother to living with a grandmother, a sister or an aunt. For example, Naomi, a 17-year-old ex-Satanist who gave her testimony in 2011 and 2012, says that in 2004, 'I lived with my grandmother and grandfather, the elder brother to my grandmother'. Then:

> 'The devil threw me out from Chipata to Lusaka. In Lusaka, I stayed with my grandfather. After that, he died. [...] I started asking about my father, but nobody told me what happened to him. Some years later, I was brought to stay with my mother.' (#41b, Naomi's recorded testimony, 2012)

In itself, being raised by a single parent or by relatives is not an uncommon situation in Zambia, as we have already seen in the previous chapter. Almost one in three youths between 15- and 17-years-old do not live with a biological parent (CSO, MOH & ICF International 2015:25). Amongst them are many single or double orphans living with, for example, their grandparents. Others are living with relatives because they are financially more able to take care of the children or because of practical reasons like the availability of schools in the vicinity. Like many Zambian children, Naomi was never able to live with her sister and their biological parents.

According to the Fingers of Thomas, what is special about the living situation of ex-Satanists is that they often do not feel accepted by the family they are living with. Udelhoven (2008) quotes the testimony of a girl interviewed by the Fingers of Thomas:

> My mother became pregnant with me while her husband was abroad. Her family advised my mother to abort me, but she refused. When her husband came back home and found me, he committed suicide. When I grew up with my mother, my stepbrothers told me that their father died because of me. My mother could not support me and she gave me to my father, who was married to another woman. I grew up without ever confiding myself to my stepmother or to any other person. I grew up knowing: this is not my family. I knew very well since childhood that I belonged somewhere else. (p. 6)

Eve, the ex-Satanist introduced earlier in this chapter, has a similar story. She sometimes lives with her mother, but at other times she stays with other people, possibly relatives. In her testimony, she says that she feels mistreated by them (#37a, Eve's recorded testimony, 2013).

Even when living with parents, the situation is not necessarily ideal. Testimonies tell about absent fathers and uncaring stepmothers. Gideon Mulenga Kabila narrates in a video recording of his testimony that sometime in his childhood, he discovered that his father, whom he had believed was dead, lived in Zambia (*How I was set free from Voodoo and witchcraft* 2007):

That is how I moved from Namibia to Zambia. When I came to Zambia, I found that my father was still alive. [...] When I came to my father's place, I discovered that my father was a man who had a heart for the children. He loved me so much. (n.p.)

Because of his father's love, Gideon is later unable to sacrifice him. But his new living situation is not a happy one (Kabila n.d.):

He was married again to another woman, who was my stepmother. The stepmother hated me so much. She would mistreat me. She used to push me, do a lot of things. (n.p.)

Kabila proceeds to sacrifice his stepmother.

Another Satanist, David, is asked to sacrifice either his mother or his father. The choice is easy:

'I loved my mother so much. The problem was with my father, because my father, he mistreated us when we were young. He was a drunkard, beating mom. He divorced her. I had that bitterness and hatred with my father. So I said, "Okay, I can sacrifice my dad".' (#31a, David's recorded testimony, 2013)

These little biographical details in the testimonies show that living together as a family is often unattainable or filled with conflicts.

Other ex-Satanists feel rejected by their friends. Gideon Mulenga Kabila (n.d.) describes his youth as follows:

My mother and father divorced when I was young, and mom decided to go and stay in Namibia where I was taken with her. [...] One thing that surprised me a lot was that I had no friends at school, and every time I wanted to contribute in class, they could laugh at me. This made me develop bitterness and [/] stopped contributing in class. (p. 8, 9)

In a recorded testimony, he adds (*How I was set free from Voodoo and witchcraft* 2007):

'That's how I went to my mom, and I said to her, "Mom, I don't know what's happening in my life. No one loves me, even my teachers, and a lot has been happening. Tell me what is happening". She told me, "You know, you don't belong to this world. You belong to another world".' (n.p.)

This sentiment can be recognised in several testimonies. The ex-Satanists somehow feel rejected, as if they do not belong. This feeling may make them more receptive to a diagnosis of Satanism. Through this diagnosis, their difficult circumstances and feelings of rejection and isolation are given meaning within a greater narrative. The life story of an ex-Satanist is not just a collage of personal experiences, but a chronicle of a war between God and Satan.

■ Case study: Tsitsi's new life story

Tsitsi's testimony shows how the process of reinterpreting a life story through the lens of the diagnosis of Satanism works. The experiences narrated in Tsitsi's testimony happened years ago. Unlike many ex-Satanists,

she is not an adolescent, but she has never really dealt with these experiences. Creating a life story starts during adolescence or young adulthood, but it never really stops. The life story is open to change and revision. Tsitsi's experiences never used to form a part of her life story. Now that she has decided to share her testimony, she is forced to look again at her past and to see connections that she had never before been aware of.

Like many ex-Satanists, growing up, Tsitsi felt rejected. Tsitsi is a woman in her late 30s when she decides to share her testimony at a Pentecostal church in Lusaka. Looking back at her youth, she says:

> 'I am the sixth in a family of eight. I have four elder sisters. There were already two born before a male child was born in my family, and my father really wanted a male child. So a male child was born, and he named him after himself. Everybody was happy. His family was happy that finally there was a male in the family to take up the family name. You know, in Africa it is very important to have a male child.

> 'The fourth child was born, and this child was also male, but he only lived for a month and died. My father was very bitter because he thought, "Yes! Everybody will say that I am a man; I have two sons!" But then he didn't live long. After a month, he died. Then, my father being bitter and frustrated and all that, they tried to have another child, and they had a female child. My sister, though being named after my father's aunt, was not very [*sic*] favourite because it's like my father was really in love with the male children. However, she was somehow accepted. She got the love and care that she needed.

> 'And then another boy was born. Very healthy, handsome; I saw his picture. He really took after Dad. The baby was just looking good. Everyone was happy. He was loved. He was given everything that a baby needed. That boy only lived up to 18 months when he died of measles. He had finished all the vaccines, but despite finishing the vaccines, he still died of measles. My father was more bitter than ever.

> 'They attempted having another baby. The baby came, tiny, me, female. Eish, my father was bitter! And he said [*to my mother*], "This one you can have. I won't even give her a name". As I was growing up, there grew a vacuum inside me. [...] I desired the love of my father. It is the father's responsibility to give his children love. I didn't receive that.' (#10c, Tsitsi's testimony in church, 08 February 2015)

Tsitsi longs for the love and acceptance of her father, but being the child born just after a beloved male child passed away, she feels rejected.

Her feelings start to make sense when she is diagnosed with Satanism after a long search for deliverance. In her new view on her personal history, the vacuum she felt while growing up was filled by Satan. Tsitsi starts to adjust her life story according to this diagnosis. This process does not stop, even after delivering her testimony. Within two weeks, Tsitsi gave her testimony at an all-night prayer meeting, during Sunday services and on television. The second time she gave her testimony in the Sunday service, she was still reworking, reshaping her life story. 'What I am going to share today,' she said, 'I didn't share before because it just came to my awareness yesterday afternoon'. The experiences that she will narrate in this service were always there in her

personal history, but they never before took on a meaning significant for her identity. She continues:

> 'In my family, a lot of things have been going on. I did never understand why these things were happening. I never understood how these things were happening. My younger brother, he is 30-years-old. Everything he does, he always fails. He still lives with our mother. My older brother, he got great scores in school, but yet he never succeeded. And now I know that I was responsible. My elder sister, she is very intelligent. But her life, it just got frustrated, all the way until now. Her marriage, it did not succeed because of me. She has got divorced. Now, all three, they are living with our mother at home again. They are doing nothing, drinking a lot, are on drugs.

> 'I prayed for them all the time, "Lord, save them". But yesterday afternoon, I was taken aback, then I suddenly realised. Like I told [*sic*], at six I was initiated. Then I had that power. Naturally, I always was quiet. I liked to lock myself in my room. I was rejected by my father, and all the little love that was left for me was taken by my brother. I would take things in my heart. I didn't understand what was happening. I would think bad of my brothers and sister, they who got my love and the praises that I was supposed to get. I would think, "Later, you will have to beg from me". And everything, it happened. Every wish I made, it got to happen. They got nowhere. Yesterday afternoon, I understood [*starts crying*] that I had a higher rank even than the Queen of the Coast.' (#10d, Tsitsi's testimony in church, 22 February 2015)

Tsitsi has accepted the diagnosis of Satanism. Unlike Rose, who takes some distance from the diagnosis by stating, 'they said I was married under the sea'. Tsitsi fully identifies with the diagnosis: 'At six I was initiated', and 'I had a higher rank even than the Queen of the Coast'.

The experiences that are rendered meaningful through the lens of the diagnosis of Satanism are generally negative. Feelings of isolation and rejection are almost always mentioned. In this excerpt of Tsitsi's testimony, added to that is the difficult relationship with her brothers and sister and their later failure in life. In other testimonies, the deaths of relatives or disasters like road accidents become meaningful events in the life story because, as a former Satanist, the narrator takes responsibility for these events. All of these things did not just happen; they happened for a reason.

The identity that Tsitsi constructs in her life story is that of an ex-Satanist. As an ex-Satanist, she takes responsibility for all the bad things that have befallen her brothers and sister. They fail, they never succeed, they are unmarried, doing nothing, drinking a lot, on drugs, all because of Tsitsi's power. But the evil deeds that Tsitsi recognises in her personal history after accepting the diagnosis of Satanism are in the past. Now, she is delivered and wants to share her testimony. Testimonies, like conversion stories, are examples of redemptive personal narratives, where a bad past is overcome and gives way to a good present. Despite the negative occurrences that have happened in the past and for which the ex-Satanist takes responsibility, this type of narrative is essentially optimistic. According to McAdams (2006), the central message of the redemptive life story is that suffering and disadvantages can be conquered.

■ Credibility, coherence and meaningfulness in life stories

A good life story needs to be credible, coherent and meaningful. According to McAdams (2006:66), these aspects of the life story are even more important than the literal truth of the narrative: 'The story tells us who we are, even if in its details and scenes it is not exactly "true"'. It seems likely that parts of the Zambian testimonies ring true in their narrator's inner world, while not being exactly true in the outer world. The ex-Satanists discover their responsibility for the deaths of others without physically having killed them. A life story, however, needs to be credible enough to be accepted by an audience, a factor that is partly dependent on cultural expectations. To a Dutch audience, Tsitsi's claim that she is responsible for her brothers' and sister's failure just by thinking badly about them is not credible. In Zambia, where a majority of the population has grown up with notions of witchcraft and spiritual harm, bad thoughts are believed to have the power to cause misfortune, and therefore Tsitsi's testimony can very well be seen as plausible.

Coherence is another characteristic of an adequate life story. Coherence in the context of life stories means that the events described in the life story are presented as meaningful, allowing the narrator to find unity and purpose in life. In the end, what makes Tsitsi's story meaningful is that it is a foundation for her to help others. 'We came to realise that we should be a blessing. You here should get something from this. God is speaking to you,' says Tsitsi's husband, while Tsitsi prays, 'God, we are here to shame the enemy. You set captives free. I am one of the captives who has been set free by you. Amen'.

Other ex-Satanists are even more clear about the sense of purpose that their life story fills them with. Eve, for example, explains that she wants to be a role model for others:

> 'God allows things to happen in our lives. That's for a reason. I'm sure that he just never allowed such a thing to happen to me, because I know there are a lot of people, young people or maybe older people, who have been in blind Satanism and they don't know it. But if I share my testimony like this, at least somebody would be able to identify certain things that have happened to them.' (37a, Eve's recorded testimony, 2013)

According to psychologists Theodore Waters and Robyn Fivush (2014), constructing a coherent and meaningful life story is related to psychological well-being. Almost all of the ex-Satanists who give their testimony in public, and most of the people who were willing to talk about their experiences with me, give meaning to this episode in their lives, similar to Eve. Being delivered makes them feel free, clean and less fearful than before. They want to be role models and examples of God's power over the forces of evil. This new perspective on their life and the future also holds a promise of positive agency that is absent in the past.

These narrators of testimonies have accepted the diagnosis of Satanism and integrated it into a meaningful life story. However, this is not always as easy as it may seem from these successful life stories. Many adolescents with experiences that point to Satanism, or even with a diagnosis given by a pastor, do not want to talk about it. For example, Bright, the nephew of the Pentecostal bishop who suspects that he is a Satanist, denies the diagnosis of Satanism. He will probably have constructed a life story that finds meaning in other experiences or a different diagnosis. Rose, the lady who feels like a slave in her marriage, is in the process of revising her life story. As of now, it is unclear whether she will accept the frame of Satanism.

Martha and Loveness are two girls from one of the poor, high-density areas in Lusaka. Their church has an active intercession group where Satanism is often mentioned. One of the intercessors has arranged my meeting with Martha and Loveness. Hesitantly, they come into the vestry, where we are waiting for them. They say their names in a whisper. They do not meet my eyes. The intercessor urges them to share what they have experienced. Martha begins to speak haltingly. Loveness only speaks when directly addressed. 'What did you learn from this experience?' I ask them. 'Has it changed you?' Martha answers, 'I learned nothing'. For her, there is nothing good that can come from her experience of Satanism. Martha says she feels free after the intercession group prayed for her. Loveness still feels oppressed: 'I see no change. They still attack me' (#3, interview with Martha and Loveness, 23 March 2015). She feels haunted by the Satanists who are after her. For the intercessor, it is clear that Martha and especially Loveness are not completely delivered yet; otherwise, it would have been easy for them to give a testimony and they would have been able to find meaning in the experience. I cannot judge whether Loveness and Martha are delivered, but from the perspective of life stories, I can tell that this episode is not, or not yet, part of a coherent and meaningful life story. In Loveness' and Martha's narrative, there are too many loose ends that, in a coherent life story, would have blended out.

Interpreting testimonies as more or less successful life stories gives these narratives a positive meaning. Most of the ex-Satanists seem to have found some peace with their history. They can 'render sensible and coherent the seeming chaos of human existence' (McAdams 1993:166) without focusing only on negative experiences, fear and powerlessness. However, there is also a risk in presenting a testimony over and over again. According to McAdams, a life story should always leave room for reinterpretation and ambiguity. In the future, the life story and its interpretation of the past may need to change yet again. A testimony, as a public narrative, runs the risk of becoming too rigid and unable to change.

In his book on how to pastorally deal with possession, witchcraft and Satanism, Fingers of Thomas founder Bernhard Udelhoven explicitly warns

pastors, counsellors and other helpers against creating fixed testimonies. In a list of helpful and unhelpful approaches to experiences of Satanism and witchcraft, he writes:

- **Helpful:** To allow the experience of the victim to be integrated into their life story in a natural way. To allow the experiences to be retold in different ways. While retelling an experience, one can often gain new insights.
- **Not helpful:** Fixed styles of testimonies, which can close the experience into one single interpretation. To narrate an experience under group pressure. To retell the story when no new insights are emerging in the process. (p. 230)

The Fingers of Thomas, whose approach was introduced in Chapter 1, take the experiences of Satanism seriously but emphasise that they are happening in a person's inner world, which is not shared with others. The approach of the Fingers is to reduce fear and powerlessness by focusing on strengths and positive aspects of the ex-Satanist's life.

Chileshe is a member of the Fingers of Thomas. She used to have experiences that she interpreted as Satanism. She came into contact with the Fingers of Thomas through the Catholic Church she visited in Lusaka. When I interviewed her, she had been involved with the Fingers for some time. Her narration was short, minimally detailed, and she seemed to distance herself from the imagery of Satanism. Her first experience of Satanism happened when she was in secondary school in a provincial town in Zambia. She bumped into a girl who was said to be involved in Satanism, and after that, she started dreaming of going to the graveyard with that girl to drink blood and eat human flesh. Charismatic church members prayed for her, and she was sent to Lusaka to continue her education. Chileshe continued:

> 'But in Lusaka, it happened again. I would find myself in a forest or say that my grandmother came to our home and brought presents like necklaces. This was not true. My grandmother has never visited Lusaka. In a diary, I would write names of classmates and I would say that my grandmother would come and initiate them. […] My friends at school were scared of me. I would hear voices when I was sleeping: "When you join us, we will stop troubling you". Now, I think it maybe had to do with the situation with my sister and brother-in-law where I was staying. I never wanted to tell my sister [*that my brother-in-law came onto me*], I kept it all to myself.' (#39, interview with Chileshe, 06 November 2013)

During the interview, Chileshe questioned parts of her earlier testimony. She used to say that her grandmother initiated people into Satanism by giving them necklaces. Now, she retracts that story: her grandmother had never been to Lusaka. She also gave a new interpretation of the things that happened when she stayed in Lusaka: maybe it had to do with the fraught living conditions with her sister and brother-in-law. Chileshe's example shows that if there is no pressure to repeat the testimony over and over again in public, the life story may change, and new meanings may be found.

The perspective of life stories shows us that it is not so much that people are ex-Satanists because their lives have 'really' followed a certain path. It is rather that they construct and believe in these kinds of life stories because they have accepted the diagnosis of Satanism. As long as the identity of ex-Satanist is embraced, the testimony can give a sense of meaning and purpose. As our lives change over time, this identity and the interpretation of the past that goes with it may eventually be discarded again.

■ Conclusion

This chapter focused on the narrator of the testimonies. Through what process does an individual accept the discourse of Satanism as a personal narrative? Two main points have been made. Firstly, afflictions and diagnoses form a better interpretative framework for the testimonies of Satanism than religious conversion. This diagnosis should be seen in the context of contemporary charismatic faith healing in an African environment. A diagnosis of Satanism is often given if there are specific elements present in the life of a client, like youth, having disturbing dreams, behaving in a typical way during deliverance and, especially, feelings of rejection and isolation.

Secondly, testimonies, like other life stories, involve a reinterpretation of the past. Constructing a coherent and meaningful life story provides the narrator with a stable identity and a sense of purpose. Testimonies of Satanism help to make sense of negative experiences like deaths in the family, accidents and the feeling of not belonging. Most testimonies give the narrator a sense of purpose in life.

Adopting the life story of an ex-Satanist gives meaning and a clear identity. However, it remains an open question whether building one's life story on the negative image of the Satanist is beneficial, even though the fact that Satanism is seen as an affliction may mitigate feelings of guilt and personal responsibility. Any benefits are, furthermore, undermined when the life story becomes a fixed, static testimony, unable to change or respond to new circumstances as a life story should.

This chapter discussed the conceptualisation of personhood in contemporary Zambia. In anthropology, the discussion about personhood is mainly focused on the influence of Pentecostal Christianity on a believer's concept of the self. Making a break with the past and with evil spiritual agencies could imply a buffering of the self. On the other hand, the Pentecostal person still conceives affliction by spiritual agencies as a possibility and is also highly dependent on affirmation by others.

Becoming a Satanist is not the choice of an autonomous individual but the effect of an external influence, a force from outside penetrating the person. This means that experiencing Satanism as an affliction is in line with the

conception of the self as porous. The diagnosis of Satanism is given by a religious specialist, and its acceptance is dependent on the recognition by family members and others close to the affected person. This means that there is a strong relational or dividual aspect to the experience of oneself as an ex-Satanist.

However, the self is not imagined as porous and dividual only; different models of personhood co-exist. The evidence of shopping around for an appropriate diagnosis shows that alternative causes are considered as well, and these may be rooted in different conceptualisations of the self. Importantly, the diagnosis of Satanism needs to become part of a life story in the narrative praxis of identity formation. Ex-Satanists are involved in what Daswani (2011) calls a process of self-fashioning: balancing individual boundaries and the control and expectations of human and nonhuman others. As we will see in the next chapter, this self-fashioning is not a process that happens in isolation and has only personal relevance.

Mediating the divine and the demonic

◼ Introduction

In the previous chapter, we have seen that young African Christians may wonder whether their problems are caused by an unknown involvement in Satanism. At several church services and religious meetings that I observed in my time in Zambia, when a pastor asked people who had such fears to come forward to be prayed for, many adolescents did so. In certain circumstances, the fear of involvement in Satanism, either by adolescents themselves or by their parents or caregivers, can lead to a diagnosis of Satanism made by a pastor or intercessor. For a smaller group, this diagnosis makes enough sense to become part of one's identity and inspire a rewriting of the life story.

But what happens next? Some ex-Satanists decide to go public with their story by becoming role models for other adolescents and guiding them past the dangers of growing up in this modern world. Some do this by presenting their testimonies in church services or overnight prayers, on the radio or in self-published pamphlets. It is these most visible ex-Satanists whom we will turn to in this chapter. How does one become an ex-Satanist with a public platform? And what role do the testimonies of these ex-Satanists play in the religious life of their audiences?

Often, when presenting their testimony, ex-Satanists are not alone. Gideon Mulenga Kabila is introduced by a Norwegian pastor, Jan-Aage Torp, in the video *How I was set free from Voodoo and witchcraft: Interview with Gideon Mulenga Kabila*. Torp, a middle-aged white man wearing a shirt in the colours of the Zambian flag, is sitting in a living room with Gideon. Looking straight at the camera, he says (*How I was set free from Voodoo and witchcraft: Interview with Gideon Mulenga Kabila* 2007):

> It's an honour and a privilege for me here in Ndola, Zambia, to introduce a young man of 27 years of age. His name is Gideon Mulenga. He was a Voodoo incarnate, high-ranking Satanist, among the highest ranking. And three years ago, we're talking about 2004, Gideon Mulenga met the Lord Jesus Christ. This young man has been set free, and he is now a shining testimony to the power of Jesus Christ to change a life from darkness to light, from Satan to God. (n.p.)

Pastors are involved in many testimonies to introduce and question the ex-Satanists. Another example is Naomi's testimony. Her interviewer says:

> 'Dear brothers and sisters. Here is a very important discussion of your lifetime. To all followers and nonfollowers of Christ Jesus, please be attentive and listen carefully. The discussion is with a young lady, who was involved in Satanism, but one day she met Christ our Saviour. Most of you could have heard about Satanism. Satanism is real and more dangerous than you ever thought. Knowing that his time is short, the devil has devised sophisticated techniques to bring many people to his side. Now listen to the person who was involved in the various activities of Satanism. Not rumours, but reality. Let's get it from the horse's mouth.' (#41a, Naomi's recorded testimony, 2011)

Testimonies do not simply, unprompted, burst forth from anyone that has had an experience of Satanism. They require preparation, a certain setting with an audience and often the involvement of a pastor who introduces the narrative. In the first section of this chapter, we will investigate how testimonies are developed as narratives that follow a certain script and use specific jargon. The sharing of a testimony is also an act of storytelling, and in storytelling, the interactional terrain plays an important role (Gubrium & Holstein 2009:31–32). Interactional terrain refers to the social interactions that shape the development of narratives. Narratives need a specific context to materialise. In the following sections of this chapter, we will look at this context and the people involved in it, namely the ex-Satanist, the pastor and the audience.

■ Scripting the testimony

In many evangelical and Pentecostal churches, a specific slot in the worship service is set apart for testimonies. What is a testimony in general, and more specifically a testimony delivered by an ex-Satanist in Zambia? Before giving a definition, I will discuss some narrative genres that show similarities to Zambian testimonies.

■ Narratives of ex-Satanists and the religious genre of testimony

Narrating means selecting, singling out certain details from a mass of data and emplotting them. The selection of these details depends on the story that a narrator wants to tell, as we have seen in the previous chapter. In the personal life story of an ex-Satanist, those events that make sense from the perspective of the diagnosis of Satanism are highlighted. But personal significance is not the only criterion. A successful plot is also dependent on the audience's expectations of the storyline (Koschorke 2012:56).

In my research, I have found that prompting by an interviewer is no substitute for the context in which testimonies are normally produced. The narratives I acquired through interviews often seemed bland and far less detailed than testimonies narrated in their natural environment. For testimonies, this is often a religious context, like a deliverance service, an overnight prayer meeting or a religious media broadcast. This environment moulds how the testimony is told.

According to the advocates of narrative ethnography Jaber Gubrium and James Holstein (2009), narrators are aware of their audience and formulate their account with that audience in mind. Bernhard Udelhoven gives clear examples of testimonies that are presented with a certain audience in mind. For example, when speaking to a Pentecostal audience, an ex-Satanist explains that the devil is not afraid of Catholics because their churches are not 'spirit-filled'. But another Satanist, who speaks to a Catholic audience, warns, 'The devil is really out to destroy the Catholic Church. [...] The Catholic Church is the real Church and the devil knows it' (Udelhoven 2021:404–405). In their testimonies, ex-Satanists create boundaries of who is good and evil, and those boundaries depend on the audience of the testimony.

Testimonies also address what Gubrium and Holstein (2009:33) have labelled 'interpretive communities', namely audiences, both present and anticipated, who share certain stories, concepts and interpretive frames. In previous chapters, we have seen the main interpretive frames for the narratives about Satanism: notions of illicit accumulation, Christian theology and emic understandings of modernity. A testimony acquired in an interview runs the risk of being formulated in the concepts of the interviewer rather than in the language of the narrator, shaped by the natural environment of a testimony.

A testimony is always told not as a factual report but as a demonstration and explanation of an experience of transition that is meaningful for both the narrator and their audience (Davidman & Greil 2007:203). This means that in testimony, the experience of transition is a vital part that an audience will expect to hear about. There are many different narrative genres in which

transition is an important factor. One could even argue that transition is what makes a collection of events a narrative. The eminent literary critic Tzvetan Todorov, for instance, defines an emplotted narrative as 'the passage from one equilibrium to another' (Todorov 2006:213). Some kind of change or transformation is inherent to every narrative.

Some narrative genres, however, show a particular similarity to the testimonies of Zambian ex-Satanists. In the most general terms, testimonies of ex-Satanists are a variety of the narrative of redemption described by Dan McAdams (2006). Redemptive narratives are religious or secular stories that describe blessings born from death and suffering. Often, these narratives stress the long-term benefits of negative experiences (McAdams 2006:16). Testimonies of ex-Satanists are full of negative experiences, and often they end on a positive note: the experiences of the past have made the ex-Satanist stronger and able to warn or encourage others.

Another genre with obvious similarities to testimonies of ex-Satanists is the genre of conversion narratives. Conversion narratives generally follow a typical formula: 'I was living in sin, but now I am saved; I was lost, but now I'm found' (Gooren 2010:93). Ex-Satanists describe a past away from the fold of Christianity, which could be labelled as being lost or living in sin.

However, as I have argued in the previous chapter, there are some problems with conversion as an interpretative frame for narratives about Satanism. For one thing, the word sin is virtually absent in the narratives of ex-Satanists. This is in line with the concept of personhood discussed in the previous chapter. Ex-Satanists demonstrate a concept of the self as porous and afflicted by external forces rather than an individual self, choosing a new religious conviction or choosing to do evil. As we have seen in the previous chapter, conversion in Africa refers to a change in lifestyle or finding healing more than to a change in beliefs or doctrines (cf. Manglos 2010:413; Van Klinken 2012:216–217).

The third genre with similarities to testimonies of ex-Satanists is the apostate or ex-member narrative. In these narratives, a former member of a religious group gives insight into the workings of that organisation, often emphasising the atrocities experienced in their time with this group (cf. Chryssides & Geaves 2014:85–86). The experience of conversion is important in these narratives. The ex-member has experienced a conversion to the now rejected group and their leaving the group often goes together with a new experience of conversion. As discussed, this is not entirely applicable to the testimonies of Zambian ex-Satanists.

But apostate narratives do not necessarily describe an existing group, and this is where they are similar to narratives of ex-Satanists. In a volume on religious apostasy, Daniel Carson Johnson (1998) writes about 'the apostasy

that never was', meaning that some apostate narratives describe a fictitious conversion to a nonexistent group. The narratives about evil Others described in Chapter 1 often draw on alleged testimonies of defectors (Jenkins & Maier-Katkin 1991:129). In the history of Satanism, there are some examples of this phenomenon that we have already encountered in Chapter 3. For example, Mike Warnke, one of the first ex-Satanists who gave his testimony in Pentecostal churches in the USA, has been called a 'fake apostate' as many elements in his narrative proved untrue. According to Johnson (1998:122), there is no evidence that the satanic groups that people like Mike Warnke speak about really exist: they are apostates *absque facto*. This means that their apostasy is of a special kind in which the experience of conversion may not be central. Like the American testimonies, testimonies of Zambian ex-Satanists imply the existence of an organisation of Satanists that factually does not seem to exist.

The different narrative genres discussed show some similarity to testimonies of ex-Satanists, whereby the 'fake apostate' narratives seem to be the most analogous to the Zambian testimonies. But what are the characteristics of the testimony as a genre in itself? In this Chapter, I define testimony as: a personal narrative of divine intervention, which is publicly performed and scripted according to standards and expectations shared by the audience.

As *personal narratives*, testimonies are deemed more credible than mere rumours or stories that happened to the proverbial 'friend of a friend'. The narrator of testimony claims first-hand knowledge of the workings of the spiritual world, and the credibility of the testimony is further enforced by its endorsement by pastors who allow people to share their testimonies in church services.

The narrator of a testimony is an eyewitness to a significant event. In Pentecostal churches, the sharing of testimonies is often aptly referred to as witnessing. The events described in a testimony can vary. Some testimonies describe finding healing or job opportunities; others deal with battling addiction or returning to society after a life of crime. Always, the events are brought in relation to *divine intervention*. A testimony 'asserts something particular that God has done for the speaker', according to Elaine Lawless (2005:86), who researched women's narratives in a Pentecostal church. This subjective interpretation of events is the personal meaning of the testimony. For the testimonies of ex-Satanists, this personal meaning was addressed in the previous chapter.

A testimony, however, transcends the purely personal because it is a narrative that is *performed in public*. The audience has certain expectations of what a testimony sounds like, and testimonies generally follow these conventions. Sometimes they do so very strictly. In the church described by

Lawless (2005:87), for example, the repertoire of conventional phrases was so extensive and well-known that a narrator could very well give a testimony without adding anything original. Sometimes there is more freedom in the emplotment of a testimony.

Testimonies of ex-Satanists in Zambia often follow the same scheme, and certain elements are shared by almost all testimonies, like the drinking of blood or the eating of human flesh, sacrificing relatives or others and going to the underworld. The testimony of the ex-Satanist is a performance with a relatively fixed script, a text that the narrator has laboured on and maybe even improved over time. It has become a public religious document, maybe even to a greater extent than it is a personal story.

The following example shows that not every experience is framed according to the fixed format of a testimony. Laura is a woman who had an experience but who chose not to script it as a testimony.

■ Case study: Laura and the story that did not become a testimony

Testimonies of ex-Satanists performed for a religious audience are scripted, meaning that they share the same jargon and storyline. This process of scripting or emplotting the testimony does not always happen. Laura's narrative is not a testimony about Satanism because the typical storyline and jargon, even any mention of Satanism at all, is absent (#153, interview with Laura, 05 June 2016).

Laura is a young woman in her 20s, currently living with her parents, together with her three-year-old son. She is married to a businessman who often travels to Europe and Dubai, but when I speak with her, they are separated. A couple of years ago, Laura began to have strange dreams and see things. For example, she would see a woman in the bed between her and her husband. While she was pregnant with twins, voices would tell her that only one would live. This was exactly what happened: after she gave birth in the hospital, the nurses brought her only one baby; the other was stillborn. About a year before I met Laura, the voices and strange occurrences at her home became too much for her, and she came back to her family. For a while, she was admitted to a psychiatric hospital. She also came into contact with the Fingers of Thomas, who help those who have experiences with Satanism.

The details of Laura's story could easily be transformed into a testimony about Satanism. Her family, aware of Laura's experiences, suspects that her husband may be into Satanism to gain success for his business. After she came back to her mother's place, the family even burnt her clothes because they thought they might be dangerous. Laura's testimony, if she had one, could

narrate how her husband sacrificed their unborn child or how she was initiated through her clothes.

When I speak to her, however, this storyline is absent, as is the jargon common in testimonies. By now, Laura has started school, and that keeps her busy. But she still hears voices that tell her what she should do. For example, when she is about to write down an answer for an assignment at school, the voices tell her, 'That is the wrong answer' and that she should write something else. They also tell her to get up in the morning and bathe herself and her son. Often, the voices give her good advice, but sometimes they say negative things, for example, that she has made a mistake or that she did not explain something well. At times, the voices annoy Laura, and she feels controlled by them.

About her husband, Laura says that the two families are now discussing whether she and her husband can get together again. They still speak to each other on the phone, although her husband sometimes has no time for her. Until now, they have never really sat down and talked about the issues that drove them apart. Laura says that her husband is afraid of her because of the things she hears and sees.

Different cultures have different ways of dealing with hearing voices. A comparative investigation of the experience of auditory hallucinations in India, Ghana and the USA indicates that in the African setting, the experience of voices was predominantly positive (Luhrmann et al. 2015). Laura's case is unresolved. She is still searching for a way to deal with the voices she hears, and there is uncertainty about the future of her marriage. But Satanism does not seem to be a frame that gives meaning to Laura's experiences, and therefore her narrative does not show the storyline and jargon common in testimonies.

Although Laura has visited pastors who prayed for her, she takes the stance of the Fingers of Thomas, who are critical of charismatic deliverance and narratives in the style of a fixed testimony.[14] In an earlier publication, I discussed the work of the Fingers of Thomas in more detail (Kroesbergen-Kamps 2018). For the Fingers, it is an important point of departure that anyone can help those who have frightening experiences related to witchcraft, possession or Satanism. One does not need to be a pastor or a 'man of God' to empower those who go through disturbing experiences. In this way, the responsibility for healing is kept with the individual instead of being assigned to a specialist.

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14. A detailed description of the work of the Fingers of Thomas can be found in Bernhard Udelhoven's *Unseen Worlds: Dealing with Spirits, Witchcraft and Satanism* (2021). In 'Dreaming of Snakes in Zambia: Small Gods and the Secular,' I discuss the approach of the Fingers in comparison to neo-Pentecostal ways to handle similar experiences (Kroesbergen-Kamps 2018).

Secondly, the Fingers see spiritual issues, like hearing voices or having frightening dreams, as closely connected to issues in other spheres of life. The Fingers make a distinction between 'inner world' and 'outer world' (Udelhoven 2021:147–167). In the inner world, dreams and visions can be experienced by an individual, but bystanders do not have access to this world. For the Fingers of Thomas, this inner world is real, but as it cannot be accessed by them, they focus their actions on the outer world that both the Fingers and the person they are helping inhabit. In Laura's case, this means helping Laura to get back to school and facilitating marriage counselling and reconciliation between the two families.

Thirdly, the Fingers of Thomas take the experiences of the inner world to be symbols for problems in the outer world. These symbols do not have a fixed meaning. Hearing voices, for instance, does not necessarily mean being under attack by evil powers. The Fingers try to show Laura a different way to deal with her voices. Rather than seeing herself as a victim, fearful of her experiences, the Fingers encourage her to hear the words of the voices as positive advice and stimulate her to enter into a conversation with them. In that way, she may become able to accept the voices and visions and transform them into something that she controls instead of something that controls her.

The approach of the Fingers of Thomas allows Laura to retell her experience in different ways rather than to force this experience into the fixed storyline and jargon of the testimony of Satanism. In the previous chapter, I argued that narratives about Satanism can form a meaningful interpretation of the past. The Fingers of Thomas seem more negative about these narratives. The ability to incorporate change is a characteristic of a successful life story. The Fingers of Thomas warn that an interpretation of the past that is suspended in a fixed form, like a testimony, can hinder further growth because it prevents the life story from changing again.

The pastor and the production of a testimony

Whether an experience becomes a testimony depends on the context in which the experience is interpreted. The Fingers of Thomas provide an example of a context that does not promote the development of a testimony. In which interpretive context are testimonies cultivated?

The Belgian anthropologist Filip de Boeck (2008), writing about alleged child witches in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, discusses the role of pastors and churches in the emplotment of testimonies (pp. 501–504). Children accused of witchcraft are taken in by churches and kept in seclusion for a while. During this period of seclusion, the children are interrogated by church members. According to De Boeck (2008):

During these more private sessions that evolve between the child and the preacher or one of his or her assistants, there slowly emerges a narrative of disruption and descent into evil. (pp. 502–503)

Partly, De Boeck sees this as a therapeutic narrative process, helping to give meaning to difficult experiences. This is the perspective that guided the previous chapter of this book.

At the same time, De Boeck (2008) emphasises how the resulting narratives conform to the specific expectations of their audience:

This period is a crucial point in a whole process of emplotment which helps to shape up the imaginative task of modelling an experience of crisis and drawing a rather standard and stereotypical narrative configuration out of a simple succession of illnesses and deaths. (p. 503)

The narratives developed by the children are not merely life stories; they are meant to be performed in church as testimonies.

In Zambia, ex-Satanists are not kept in seclusion like the witch children of Kinshasa, but the role of churches and pastors in the emplotment of testimonies is considerable as well. As experts who give the diagnosis of Satanism, pastors are closely involved in the narrative process of interpreting the past in the frame of Satanism. A pastor I spoke to is very aware of this process. He says:

'People have to be taught to give a good testimony. Some people only tell how they messed up their lives and forget to share what God has done for them. So I give them pointers, for example, that they should first tell what happened to them and then turn to how God saved them.' (#155, interview with Pastor P., 08 October 2013)

In this way, the narrative is fitted into the mould of a testimony of God's power, moving from a bad past to a better present.

Less explicitly, pastors are influential in the production of testimonies through the questions they ask in the deliverance process. Gideon Mulenga Kabila ends his published testimony with advice for pastors and intercessors praying for people who have experiences with Satanism. He writes (Kabila n.d.):

There are many steps of delivering a person, and these are some of the steps:

1. Ask the person what he or she wants, let him confess with his or her mouth, because there is power in confession.
2. Ask your client to forgive all the people who did wrong against him or her.
3. Ask him or her how he was initiated, whether it was parental, material, food, ancestral, childbirth, etc. NB: Many people are initiated into Satanism through different means and they need different solutions.
4. Ask the person whether she was spiritually married or not. This can only be identified through the dreams and marriage breakages even miscarriages.

5. Ask the person whether she or he was given some tattoos as a symbol of blood covenant; this can also be done through blood exchange.
6. Ask the person about the code number; most of the people have different codes that connect them to the communication system of the devil.
7. Ask the person whether his mind or heart was once changed or transferred into any living thing such as animals, trees and reptiles, etc.
8. Ask the person about his or her dream life, whether she goes to the underworld by astroprojection or transcendental meditation.
9. Ask the person about the level that she or he reached in the devil's kingdom. (p. 63)

Deliverance, in this example from Gideon Mulenga Kabila, is more than praying for someone to expel their demons. The pastor or intercessor needs background information from his client to finish the process of deliverance. De Boeck mentions that children accused of witchcraft in Kinshasa are subjected to interrogations. This list from Kabila's testimony gives an idea of the questions supposed Satanists are asked during such conversations. Code numbers and astral projection are unique to Kabila's testimony, but the other elements are very common elements of testimonies, as we will see.

Asking people in a crisis to think about these questions encourages them to interpret past events in the frame of Satanism. For example, that there was an initiation is not even a question, but the supposed Satanist can choose which of the options fits his experiences best: initiation by the parents, by a gift, or by eating certain foods. The questions also show what the expected elements of a testimony are. In the next section, I will discuss these in more detail.

■ Script and jargon in testimonies of Zambian ex-Satanists

Testimonies are adjusted to the expectations of their presumed audiences. Through this process, they become more or less scripted, as we have seen in the previous section. The scripted nature of testimony refers to how testimonies follow certain conventions and expectations shared by the audience of the narrative. What are these conventions for testimonies of Satanism?

According to narrative analysts like Jerome Bruner (1986:16), there are limits to the variety of stories people tell. The common storylines are known as canonical narratives. The conversion narratives, stories of redemption and apostate accounts discussed are examples of such canonical narratives. The closest comparable narratives to the testimonies of ex-Satanists are the testimonies of apostates. Johnson (1998:123) interprets these apostate accounts as captivity narratives, where the protagonists somehow find themselves under the control of a religious group. For a time, they are

true followers, but eventually they 'wake up' and find an opportunity to escape. After that, they renounce this former religious affiliation.

Testimonies of ex-Satanists in Zambia have a different storyline. Whereas Johnson's interpretation emphasises a struggle to break free from control, in testimonies of ex-Satanists, the rewards and costs of assignments take a central place. The typical testimony starts with an experience of initiation, followed by an assignment, generally to sacrifice a relative. In the most complete narratives, this assignment is accepted, and the protagonist receives rewards. Eventually, however, there comes an assignment that the protagonist cannot execute, often because the one they have to sacrifice is an especially loved family member. The failed assignment inspires the protagonist to search for deliverance. This is often a difficult and lengthy process, but in the end, after being delivered by a powerful pastor or prayer group, the protagonist finds a new, positive human identity. Almost all testimonies shared in a religious setting have this structure. In testimonies narrated in an interview setting, however, steps are often missing, especially the acceptance of assignments and the final failed assignment.

Not only do most testimonies share a canonical storyline, but they also use a common jargon, 'a new vocabulary through which the satanic world, its locations and hierarchies were described' (Udelhoven 2021:392–393). Satanists do not visit hell or devilland but the *underworld* or go *under the ocean* or *under the sea*. There, they do not enter a contract or go on missions, but they may make a *covenant*, receive *assignments* and meet the *queen*. By their prevalence in testimonies of Satanism, traditionally neutral concepts like *initiation* or *sacrifice* are cast in a negative light. This of course fits with the Pentecostal program of demonising traditional African religions. The 13 extensive testimonies all use a selection of these eight terms.

In comparison, other types of narratives use different jargon. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o coined the term 'devilland' in his novel *Wizard of the Crow* (2006). In this novel, he describes the African state of Aburĩria, which is obsessed with the forces of evil. Although passages in *Wizard of the Crow* are very similar to narratives about Satanism in Zambia, he never quite uses the same jargon, as in the case of his use of 'devilland'. In another episode, Ngũgĩ writes about an elderly couple befallen by Satan with a desire for the flesh of other people. For one familiar with stories of Satanism, it is surprising to discover that this refers not to the eating of human flesh, but sexual lust. My experience with the book is that if a story does not follow the expected conventions the audience is left in confusion.

Two Zambian sisters, Rachael and Zipporah Mushala, have built an audience amongst end-time believers with their prophecies and visions of heaven and hell (#26a-c and #27a-c, online testimony, 2013 and 2014). Their testimonies show some similarities to testimonies of ex-Satanists, but like Ngũgĩ wa

Thiong'o, they use different jargon. Both the sisters and the ex-Satanists describe the manufacturing of satanic products. However, in Rachael and Zipporah's texts, the typical jargon of testimonies is missing. In six testimonies about these visions, the words *sacrifice* and *initiation* are used only once.

The testimonies collected in interviews also show a marked difference in the use of jargon. On average, in a testimony performed for an audience and in a religious setting, the specific jargon of the discourse of Satanism – words and phrases like the underworld, going under the ocean or sea, covenant, assignment, queen, initiation and sacrifice – are used 83 times per testimony, in a range between 14 and 218 times. In testimonies collected through an interview, these words are, on average, used only five times per testimony, in a range between two and eight.

◼ Ex-Satanists and their testimonies

◼ Performing testimony

As we have seen, the context in which a narrative is shared has important effects on the emplotment of its content. Sociologist Gary Fine and folklorist Bill Ellis (2010) add an element to this, namely the influence of performing the testimony. According to them, narratives are not waiting out there to be written down by a researcher but are generated in a social process. Sympathetic reactions from the audience, like verbal responses, gestures or laughter, are interpreted by the narrators as a licence to prolong the narration and repeat certain elements (Koschorke 2012:160). This is the social setting in which testimonies are performed.

In religious studies, the term performance has a wider application than the performing arts of theatre, music and dance. The term performance was popularised in sociology by Erving Goffman. According to Goffman (1956), all social action is staged. People are always aware of being watched and present themselves according to the impression they want to make to their audience. They play the role and wear the mask most fitting to the situation and the others present.

The anthropologist Victor Turner (1987), who did most of his fieldwork amongst the Ndembu, a tribe living in north-western Zambia, has a slightly more limited view of performance. For him, performance refers specifically to the theatrical qualities of ritual actions in times of crisis or transformation. In the final stage of initiation rituals, for example, the presence of an audience is significant because, through the ritual, the performers show others what they have learned and thus acquire recognition for their new state and status.

Both Goffman and Turner stress that social (inter)actions have a theatrical quality. They are observed by what could be called an audience, and the participants inhabit established roles that they are more or less aware of.

Performance theory has been used to interpret religious events like possession (see e.g. eds. Behrend & Luig 1999; Frankfurter 2006; Levack 2013).

Sharing a testimony in a religious setting is a relatively obvious example of performance. In a church service, the audience consists of the members of the congregation who see what happens at the front of the meeting hall. It is not farfetched to call the place where things are happening the stage. It is, after all, often a slightly elevated podium occupied by those who have a function in the service.

To do justice to the performative aspect of testimonies, this chapter looks at the different individuals and groups involved in the performance of a testimony: the ex-Satanist who is the narrator of the testimony, the pastor who acts as sponsor or enabler for the performance of the testimony and the audience of the testimony. In this section, we focus on the ex-Satanist.

■ The performance of testimonies as confirmation of group membership

What does it mean to give a testimony in a church setting? Testimonies form a genre of religious narratives that have been studied extensively. Most of the literature on the performance of religious testimonies concentrates on the question of what sharing a testimony means for one's position in the community. Like Turner, some authors emphasise that giving a testimony in a religious setting marks a transformation in that position.

For example, Meredith McGuire (1977) compares the importance of glossolalia and sharing testimonies as markers of conversion in Catholic Pentecostal prayer groups. Glossolalia or speaking in tongues has often been discussed as the focal point of conversion to Pentecostal-style religion. Conversion means showing commitment to a new group and an abandonment of one's previous life. This show of commitment must be both public and private. It must have a subjective meaning to the convert as well as be performed in public to establish their membership. According to McGuire, in the Catholic Pentecostal groups she researched, glossolalia does not fulfil this function because it is something that happens in private prayer. Testimony, on the other hand, is given publicly and, therefore, is a better signifier for conversion.

When applying this idea to testimonies of ex-Satanists, we have to remember that these testimonies are not so much stories about conversion but of a change in lifestyle or healing from affliction. This means that for ex-Satanists, sharing the testimony may be a public announcement of the transition from an evil, Satan-controlled, afflicted life to being born again, experiencing healing and belonging to Christ. At first glance, testimonies do seem to be a marker of transformation.

Other authors, however, doubt whether this transformation is truly central to the sharing of testimonies. In the Holiness sect investigated by J. Stephen Kroll-Smith (1980), giving a testimony is a common occurrence and not restricted to new members. Rather, according to Kroll-Smith, performing a testimony means signalling your commitment to the group. Sharing a testimony in this group is a ritual of affirmation, attesting to the position in the group that the performer of the testimony already has.

McGuire and Kroll-Smith do not agree on whether a testimony necessarily signifies a transformation. For both McGuire and Kroll-Smith, however, sharing a testimony is related to group membership. The function of testimonies, according to McGuire and Kroll-Smith, is giving evidence for the conversion of the narrator (and thus an authorisation of their group membership) or an affirmation of their religious commitment and position in the group. The testimonies discussed by these authors are performed by members of the religious community, whether new members who want to show their commitment or long-standing members who affirm their membership by sharing a narrative fitting to the standards of that group.

It is difficult to see testimonies about Satanism in Zambia as an indication of a group membership. Ex-Satanists are rarely regular members of the church in which they give their testimony. After sharing their testimony, ex-Satanists often disappear again. They are only at that church for the occasion of performing their testimony. If they are church members, they often do not want to be remembered for their testimony of evil deeds. In the context of the discussed academic literature, it is remarkable that an affirmation of their faith and their place in the community does not seem to be the point of the testimonies for ex-Satanists.

◼ The performance of testimonies as a way to acquire status or freedom

Giving a testimony could have a function other than confirming one's position in the community. Jennifer Badstuebner mentions the reward of a privileged position by the narrator in her article on testimonies of witchcraft in a South African Pentecostal church. She argues that the narrator of a confession gains some advantages from sharing the story at revival meetings (Badstuebner 2003):

> These revivals offer these young women an opportunity to travel, to be the centre of intense public attention. Their lives on the revival trial are an adventure compared to the usual lot of young, unemployed women living in the townships (many days of boredom and unending household duties). (p. 20)

Badstuebner's argument echoes I.M. Lewis's functionalist theory of peripheral cults of possession. These cults provide the possessed, mostly women, with

an opportunity to air their grievances and, in time, to gain status and authority in a possession cult group (Lewis 2003). The young women discussed by Badstuebner gain status and opportunity from delivering their confessions, at least from a short-term perspective.

In Zambia, this may happen as well. Some ex-Satanists travel from one overnight prayer meeting to the next to share their story, like the women in Badstuebner's article do. This was certainly the case for Zambia's most well-known ex-Satanist, Gideon Mulenga Kabila, who from 2005 spoke at meetings in various churches, published his testimony as a pamphlet and whose confession on video is available on YouTube and through other websites. From 2015 until he died in 2017, he worked as a pastor of his church in Zambia and South Africa.

However, it is only a small portion of those with a similar experience who can use their testimony to gain status. Often, the first time that a testimony is shared is also the last. Ex-Satanists find that the reactions are negative, for instance, because family members are angry or afraid owing to the confession to having killed family members. Friends may turn away, and the confessor is the subject or rumour and gossip. In my research, I found that only very few ex-Satanists were willing to talk about their experiences. They do not want to draw attention to the issue, and mostly they just want to get on with their lives. Apparently, for Zambian ex-Satanists, the profits of the attention a testimony receives, as emphasised by Badstuebner, do not normally outweigh the negative effects.

Like Badstuebner, Filip de Boeck mentions the advantages of status in his discussion of witch children in contemporary Kinshasa. One of these advantages is that a confession to witchcraft creates for these children freedom from the control of their parents or families (De Boeck & Plissart 2004:188). In Zambian narratives about Satanism, the suspected Satanists often remove themselves from parental or educational control. Suspicions of Satanism, as we have seen in the previous chapter, often go together with a drop in school attendance and grades, and often parents do not know where their children are when they are missing school.

It is, however, debatable what comes first: accepting the narrative of Satanism and using that to be free from control, as De Boeck states, or first being absent from home and school, resulting in suspicions of Satanism. In the Zambian situation, it seems likely that some children take the liberty to abscond from school and their homes, after which this abnormal behaviour is interpreted as a sign of Satanism.

Cases of missing children are often interpreted spiritually, for example, by linking them with rituals to gain wealth and accusing a local businessman of the abductions. When the spiritual answer is accepted, a thorough search for the missing child is not always undertaken. One children's home in Lusaka

with connections to the Fingers of Thomas regularly had cases of children where the home managed to find the child's family. In some cases, the family said that they did not look for the child because they went to church and the religious leader said that the child was dead.

In Zambia, the advantages of the status and freedom that sharing a testimony provides seem to be more limited than is presupposed by the literature. Also, it is not clear whether the freedom from parental control is a consequence or a cause of suspicions of Satanism.

■ The role of the pastor in the production of a testimony

The incentives for ex-Satanists to share their testimony in a church service or other religious setting seem very limited. So how does such a testimony come about? In an article about apostate narratives – narratives of former members of religious groups who are very vocal in discrediting these groups – Daniel Carson Johnson (1998) points out that these apostates often have a sponsor who pushes and helps them to share their story. These sponsors (Johnson 1998):

> Encourage the apostate to go public, and furnish the means for him to do so – serving as ghostwriters, securing publishers, financing fact-finding trips or speaking engagements, staging the rituals that typically accompany the apostate's going public, adding extra-narrative materials that situate the story in a broader contextual history, etc. (p. 131)

For ex-Satanists, pastors and other religious specialists are such sponsors. Some examples of the role of the sponsor in a testimony were given in the introduction to this chapter.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, pastors are instrumental in finding ex-Satanists. It is often in prayer sessions with a pastor or an intercessor that future ex-Satanists find out that they are involved in Satanism. During these sessions, as we have already seen, the pastor or intercessor asks the alleged Satanist questions that help them to frame their story. Once they are freed from the powers of evil through deliverance, these pastors and intercessors encourage them to share that story.

For example, one of my interviews was with two girls from Lusaka. I knew about their experiences with Satanism through the Facebook page of their congregation, where an intercessor reported that several cases of Satanism had emerged (#3, interview with Martha and Loveness, 23 March 2015). I contacted the intercessor, and he arranged for me to meet the two girls. He was present at the interview as well. My first question was supposed to be easy: 'Martha and Loveness, thank you for coming. Can you start by telling something about yourself?' The two girls looked shyly at their feet, and the intercessor interrupted: 'Now you have to give your testimony like it is said in

the Bible. Tell her how it started, how you became involved in Satanism.' I had expected an answer about their age, school and background, but the intercessor's prompting urged the girls to start recounting their testimony. Similarly, pastors of neo-Pentecostal churches will encourage those whom they deliver to share their stories in church.

As hosts of talk shows about testimonies or pastors of services in which testimonies are shared, pastors set the stage for the performance of a testimony. The pastor selects his guests and vets them before giving them a platform. He also ensures that the story of the ex-Satanist is credible. Testimonies are presented as first-hand experiences and therefore are already seen as more trustworthy and more credible than mere rumours. Daniel Carson Johnson (1998) calls the different techniques of adding credibility to the testimony 'defensive posturing'. One technique is to address critical questions beforehand, for example, by explicitly saying that what is going to be told is not fiction or by challenging the audience to check certain facts.

This often happens in the staging of testimonies. One of the interviewers quoted in the introduction to this chapter for example emphasised that the testimony his listeners were about to hear was real: 'Not rumours, but reality. Let's get it from the horse's mouth'. Others are careful to point out things that could be checked to increase the credibility of a testimony even further. For most people, being given the possibility to check the details of the testimony is in itself evidence enough for its credibility. Just the fact that the pastor is asking for some kind of tangible evidence increases the credibility of the testimony.

A final role of the sponsor is, according to Johnson, adding material that contextualises a narrative, placing it in a broader history or theology. The host of the performance of a testimony embeds this testimony in its religious context by pointing out the relevant aspects of the testimony in his introduction and by praying for elements in the testimony that he deems significant. Often, the involvement of the host goes even further. If a testimony is presented in the form of an interview with the host, this host has ample opportunity to influence the meaning of what the ex-Satanist says. As a pastor, the host has special knowledge, often labelled as revelation or discernment, that allows him to take a step beyond the boundaries of the narrative of the ex-Satanist.

As sponsors, pastors provide the means to go public with a testimony, and in that process, they add supporting sources to the narrative. They not only give a platform for the sharing of the narrative but also add extra-narrative materials to the testimony. In an interview, the pastor can do this through his questions and interventions. In a church service, the pastor adds meaning to the testimony through his sermon and his prayers. This framing of the testimony with a sermon and with accompanying rituals places the testimony in the theological context described in Chapter 3, of traditional notions reinterpreted in the framework of neo-Pentecostal spiritual warfare theology.

In the following case study, I will show through a close reading of one testimony how a pastor acts as a sponsor for the testimony of an ex-Satanist.

■ Case study: The pastor and David's testimony

Testimonies are shared in religious settings, for example, at an overnight prayer as the testimony of the girl that started off the introduction or in a deliverance service like the testimony of the father in Chapter 3. Another religious setting in which testimonies are shared is special broadcasts on radio or television. In all of these settings, the ex-Satanist is a guest speaker in a show or service with a host. Some pastors have a role in multiple settings. The presenter of a radio program in which testimonies are shared may well also be a pastor, inviting speakers to both the radio station and his church.

The endorsement of a pastor lends a testimony more credibility. As Katrien Pype (2015b:77) notes, 'recurrently [anecdotes] begin with the words "I heard in church [...]," as if to emphasise their validity'. Pastors give a platform to ex-Satanists, but as we have seen in the previous section, their involvement often goes further. One pastor told me that he likes to prepare people who give their testimony for their performance. He added:

> 'It's even better to interview the ex-Satanist rather than to give them a free podium. In that way, you can guide them to the parts that are educational for the congregation.' (#155, interview with Pastor P., 08 October 2013)

In this case study, I will discuss a testimony that was presented at a popular Zambian radio show specifically aimed at sharing testimonies. The format of the show is that of an interview. The host introduces the guest and then asks questions that help the guest to narrate his or her experiences. The program ends with a prayer by the host. As the case study will show, this context shapes the meaning of the events and experiences narrated to such an extent that the host may even be labelled as a co-author of the testimony.

The text I use for this case study is the transcript of an unedited version of the interview between the host and the ex-Satanist sharing his testimony. His name is not mentioned in the interview, but I will call him David. In total, the audio is over 5 h long, and an edited version of the interview was broadcast on the radio in several sessions. For this case study, I use a representative 2-h portion of the interview in which David narrates how he became involved in Satanism, how it made him a successful businessman and how he married his first wife, whom he sacrificed after two years of marriage. Rather than looking at the plot of the narrative or specific inversions, as I have done in in earlier chapters, I will analyse the interactions between David and the host of the radio program.

In some testimonies, hosts do no more than introduce the ex-Satanist. In other cases, the testimony consists of a conversation between the host and

the ex-Satanist. David's testimony is an example of the latter. David and the host speak almost equal amounts of time, David narrates his experiences and the host asks for clarifications before adding his own knowledge and understanding. The host contributes as much or even more to the testimony than David, the narrator. The nature of these contributions is diverse. The interviewer can ask for clarifications or ask questions that help the narrator to tell his story. The contributions of the interviewer can also be more active interventions in which he adds his own experience or interpretation.

The following quote is a small section of the interview in which the interplay between interviewer (H) and narrator can be seen. David (D) is recalling his first experience with the underworld. He went to Mozambique with a friend to get charms that would make his business more successful. In Mozambique, they board a canoe together with the owner of the canoe. David says:

D1: 'So we jumped in the canoe, the three of us, although I had that fear because it was my first time to move in a canoe. We moved about three to four hours.'

H1: 'On the canoe? You were not reaching?'

D2: 'Yes.'

H2: 'When you look back, three hours, did you see where you were coming from?'

D3: 'No, it was just water this side.'

H3: 'Could you see where you were going?'

D4: 'No, there was just water.'

H4: 'On the sides also water? All you could see was the sky?'

D5: 'Yes, it was just water. I said, "Ay, man". Then I was even asking him, "What time are you going to reach?" He was just telling me, "Don't worry". At a certain point, there just came some waves. Then the canoe overturned, and we all drowned.'

H5: 'It capsized.'

D6: 'Then, to my surprise, I was going down and down, but I was not […]'

H6: 'Drowning.'

D7: '... Drowning. I was just thinking, "What is happening?"'

H7: 'But you were going down?'

D8: 'Just going down.'

H8: 'Meaning at that point, your friend had already chanted. Your friend had already done charms, and most likely what you were moving on was not even a canoe. It could have been a coffin already. By the fact that you are not drowning, being in that same coffin, which was not a canoe, already gave you some powers that could not make you drown. In other words, just by getting in what looked like a canoe to you was an initiation already, an initial stage where they initiated you.'

D9: 'Mm.'

H9: 'And the person you thought was a person paddling a canoe, most likely it was not even a person. It could have been just some demonic force, some demonic

spirit, not a person per se. At that point, that's why you could not drown as you were going down, because everything was artificial around you. The canoe was not real. So you thought you were drowning?' (#31a, David's recorded testimony, 2013)

Most of the host's interventions, H1 to H7, are meant to stimulate David to tell his story and to clarify some details. The longer interventions H8 and H9, however, are of a different kind. The host interprets and explains what David has told him, thereby adding meaning to David's testimony.

I am aware of the fact that the questions an interviewer asks are never completely neutral. However, in this case study, I take questions for clarification and more details as neutral in comparison to other, more active interventions. Two-thirds of the host's interventions are open questions, questions for clarification or more detail and summaries of what David has said; these I count as neutral interventions. The remaining one-third is adding meaning to the testimony, and it is these interventions that I will focus on. These active, meaning-altering interventions make the interviewer a co-author of the testimony. David may be the 'owner' of the experience, but with his interpretations, it is the host who transforms the experience into a testimony on the struggle between the powers of good and evil.

The interviewer connects the narration to his own experiences and wider discussions. He adds interpretations, as in H8 and H9, exclaims, prays and makes plans for the future. The host's meaning-altering interventions can be divided into four categories. The category 'Other' contains exclamations like 'Oh my God!' or 'Hear this!', as well as prayers and plans for the future, like presenting David's testimony in other churches, inviting his mother to tell her story and visiting the house David rented when he was a Satanist to pray for the people who live there now. Almost 28% of the host's intervention fall into this category. More interesting are the categories of revelation, evidence and polemics.

The largest category of the host's meaning-altering interventions is that of revelation, which includes 42% of the interventions of the host. The interviewer is constantly trying to ascertain what really happened in the events that David describes. As a pastor, he has access to special knowledge – in his own words, 'revelation' or 'discernment' – that allows him to step beyond the boundaries of David's narrative. David's observations are not taken at face value but examined for a deeper reality.

The host's statements often have this structure: 'What you thought was X was not really X, but Y'. In the section quoted from David's testimony, the host reveals that what David thought was a canoe was probably really a coffin, and the person paddling the canoe was most likely not a person but a demonic spirit. This interpretation is not denied by David, who hums and says yes, but on the other hand it does not naturally follow from what has been said before. The host is adding his own meaning to David's story.

Later in the testimony, the host says, '[God], he's given me revelation in this area, he's given me grace in this area to interpret some of the things you are saying that even you don't know'. Through this gift of discernment, the interviewer cannot only establish what is really happening but also why it is happening. He can explain the motives of the satanic world.

Revealing reality and revealing reasons go together in the following quote. David recollects how he is ordered to go to his home village after his first visit to the underworld. In the underworld, he receives goods like blankets, sugar, salt, cooking oil and *kapenta* (a small, locally caught fish) to present to the villagers.[15] The host comments:

> 'Sugar, salt [...] So what they were doing [...] It was not actual *kapenta*. Some of it were snakes. You know they can cut snakes and they can make it look like it is fish. They would get things like blankets, and it's not blankets. They manufacture all of those things. And now you go to this village, and you are going to blind or brainwash everybody who partakes of that stuff. They become, what word can I use, they become useless. They become easily manipulated by you. You can tell them anything, they'll obey you, they'll do it. That's what's happening. [...]

> 'So you gave them the blankets. You gave them the *kapenta* from the underworld. You gave them everything. The idea was to actually enslave them. They don't question you, should they sense that you are moving out in the night or you're doing something funny. They have no right to question you now. You have bought them with these things.' (#31a, David's recorded testimony, 2013)

The goods that David brought to his village were not what they seemed, and it is the host, not David, who reveals their true nature and explains why David was ordered to give the goods to the villagers. The words of the host connect David's narrative to older and newer stories about the dangers of accepting gifts or aid, emphasising that it never comes without strings attached. His words also resonate with the local knowledge about practices such as the Malawian *kukhwima*, in which someone who strives for wealth or power can enslave others by taking their mental capacities (Steinforth 2008:40–41).

Other interventions, which I have labelled as polemics, tie the testimony to a wider discussion surrounding the existence of spiritual forces in which the host is involved. Almost 10% of the interventions of the host fall into this category. The host uses the testimony to defend his position that there truly is a spiritual war between God and Satan in which spiritual forces are agents of the devil. He especially takes the opportunity to highlight the idea that spiritual husbands and wives can cause problems in marriages. At one point,

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15. This selection of goods and the location where David takes them is quite uncommon in testimonies of ex-Satanists. This is one of the few places in which a village is the setting for what happens in a testimony. The items that David takes there are also items that are associated with life in the village: basic foods like sugar, salt and cooking oil, as well as a locally produced fish. As we have seen in the previous chapter, most of the testimonies take place in an urban setting, and the products mentioned are connected with that urban, modern world.

he begs his listeners to believe him: 'People have got to hear me, hear me, hear me!'

The host also addresses his opponents in this discussion directly. When David narrates how before he married his first wife, he is taken to the underworld where he is married to a mermaid that looks exactly like his fiancée, the interviewer says:

> 'What you slept with there was a spiritual wife. It wasn't the normal person you left on Earth. This is what pastors don't understand. When we use the term spiritual wife, it's not like [...] Yes, you can't find it in the Bible, but we are saying these spiritual things are there. They exist. You married somebody; the marriage was not physical but spiritual, so we call it a spiritual marriage, so we call her a spiritual wife. It was not this woman on the face of the Earth, right? Those things, they exist and they are there. They are there in homes right now.' (#31a, David's recorded testimony, 2013)

In this and other examples, the host emphasises again and again that his interpretation of marrying spiritual wives, which causes suffering in the marriage in the physical world, is real. He advises his listeners not to stay in churches that deny the existence of these spiritual forces and reveals that God has given him the mission to start a church that does tell the truth in these matters.

In earlier chapters, I argued that narratives about Satanism and spiritual forces like these spiritual husbands and wives are plausible because of both traditional beliefs and an African adaptation of Pentecostal spiritual warfare theology. For the sake of the host's revelations and his polemics, listeners must accept not only the plausibility of the narrative but also the credibility of David's testimony.

Plausibility and credibility are related but not the same. While plausibility refers to the content of a narrative, for example, by wondering whether something could have happened, credibility refers to the trustworthiness of its source (Fine & Ellis 2010:24–25). Through the third category of interventions, namely contributing evidence for David's narrative, the host increases the credibility of the testimony. More than 20% of the responses of the host are about evidence.

This evidence is taken from the host's own experience as a minister, who practises the deliverance ministry and hears many testimonies, but also from other sources like movies and the Bible. When David, for example, recalls that he was not allowed to sleep with his wife, the pastor connects this to the conversation he had with a woman whose husband refused to sleep with her. On other occasions, he compares David's story with movies: 'Just like those things we see in some of these movies, especially the Nigerian movies. Those things we see are real!'

The host also points out where David's narrative can be checked against reality. For instance, when David mentions that the car he used on his wedding day, a brand-new Mercedes-Benz, came from the underworld, the interviewer asks whether there are photos of this car:

H1: 'And everybody saw it on that day, that it was a Mercedes-Benz?'

D1: 'Yes.'

H2: 'If we looked at your wedding photos today … Do you have any?'

D2: 'I have, lots of them.'

H3: 'I'd like to see them.'

D3: 'OK.'

H4: 'And the Benz itself is there?'

D4: 'It is there.'

H5: 'And the photos came out as a Mercedes-Benz?'

D5: 'Yes.'

H6: 'I'd like to see those photos.' (#31a, David's recorded testimony, 2013)

Here, the host tries to find ways to check David's narrative. By doing that and by relating David's testimony to his knowledge and experience, the host makes his claim that the testimony is real more credible and trustworthy.

According to Daniel Carson Johnson, sponsors provide the means to go public with a testimony, and in that process, they steer the development of meaning in a testimony and add supporting sources. This case study shows how the host of the radio show does just that with David's testimony. He encourages David to tell his story through the platform he offers to David and through the questions he asks throughout the narration of the testimony. The host, furthermore, asks questions that add meaning to the testimony, offering interpretations and adding revelation and polemics. The host as a sponsor of the testimony also tries to increase its credibility. All of these ways in which the host adds meaning to David's narrative make him a ghost-writer or co-author of the testimony, just as Daniel Carson Johnson claims.

We have now seen that pastors are sponsors of testimonies, but what are the motives of pastors to act in such a way? I will discuss this question in the final section of this chapter.

■ The appeal of testimonies for pastors

Pastors have a moral obligation to help those in spiritual need. At the same time, there is competition in the religious marketplace, and many pastors are vying for church members to sustain their ministry and lifestyle. In this section,

I will make the argument that the persuasiveness of a pastor and his church need to be constructed. This involves the presentation of testimonies as evidence.

■ Case study: The evidence of Sister X's story

To make this point, I will use the case of one interview recorded for a Zambian radio show. The recording that I have access to is unedited and includes more material than what was eventually broadcast. The host interviews a girl, designated as Sister X in the program, about shame and how to deal with it. She had sent a text message to the host about being raped several times, once by a pastor. The host then invited her to the studio for an interview. Sister X speaks very softly and sounds quite vulnerable. After the interview, the host thanks her and addresses the audience:

> 'Dear listeners, here you are. I hope you have learned one or two things from this interview. I hope it's been an eye-opener to you. I pray that if you are that person who says, "Brother [...], that sounds like me; that sounds like what I'm going through", we are available for you to help as much as possible. Do not hesitate. Get in touch with us.' (#55d, Sister X's recorded testimony, 2009)

As a 'man of God', the host can help people who struggle with shame and with traumatic experiences such as rape. Sister X's testimony is a calling card for his pastoral ministry: 'Get in touch with us,' he says; 'we are available for you to help as much as possible'.

Commentators on neo-Pentecostalism point out that this pastoral approach, focusing on resolving the personal problems of congregants, is not the only reason why pastors like to spread narratives about deliverance. James Collins, a theologian who studied the practice of deliverance in the 20th century, explains that deliverance is a component of the larger emphasis on spiritual warfare in neo-Pentecostalism. Personal experiences are significant because they show something about the global struggle between the forces of good and evil. According to Collins (2011:95), in neo-Pentecostal spiritual warfare theology, deliverance is 'more than just pastorally desirable', because it also offers evidence for both the presence of the demonic and God's power. Through testimonies, spiritual forces become real for Christian audiences.

The endorsement of a pastor lends a testimony more credibility. On the other hand, a testimony also gives credibility to the work of a pastor. The next sequence of the interview with Sister X shows something of this appeal of testimonies that lies beyond the pastoral and personal. After having closed the interview, the host remembered that he had forgotten to ask Sister X about the time she got pregnant after being raped. Sister X starts crying. The host explains that this means she has not been healed yet. Sister X says that she just wants to feel normal and wants this thing to be in the past. The host comforts her, saying that she will feel normal and that she needs to forgive the

men who raped her. Sister X says she releases and forgives all the men. When the host asks her to forgive her father too, who was never there for her, she says she forgives him, and then she starts sobbing loudly. The host stops the recording, and as he starts again, this is what he says:

> H1: 'Well, dear listeners, as I'm talking to you right now, it's a totally different story altogether. I'm just coming from praying with Sister X here in the studios. As you can hear, I'm still panting for breath. It's been a long battle. Now, do you know what was happening to you just a while ago as we were praying for you?'

> SX1: 'No.'

> H2: 'The devil himself was refusing to leave your body. He was refusing to leave you. He was actually saying that you came from the sea and that you were theirs and that you were the chosen one. We told them that God chose you before you were born. He knew you before you were created, and that's what we were saying to the devil. Today, he has let you go. How are you feeling right now?'

> SX2 [*softly, as if she could cry*]: 'I feel free. I feel so much joy in my heart. My body feels lighter, and my mind feels ... so empty. I feel different from the way I came in. I feel so much joy in my heart. I don't know how to explain it.'

> H3: 'In fact, you are not empty per se. What you feel as being empty is actually the fact that there were those things that burdened you. They were like burdens, loads that the devil had put on your shoulders. But now you are lighter because God has taken all those things away from you. Amen and amen. What would you like to say to God right now, as we finally close on this?'

> SX3 [*almost inaudible*]: 'I want to say, "Thank you, God, for setting me free and..."'

> H4: 'I know you are tired right now; you are weaker than you were before. But I know you can be excited and let people know that you are happy because of what happened today.'

> SX4: 'OK.'

> H5: 'As you talk to God right now, what do you want to say to God?'

> SX5: 'I want to thank God for what he has done for me, for setting me free. And I want to say I promise that I'll live my life according to God's will. I want to thank you for giving me this opportunity, that I've finally come here, and I've been set free. I'm so happy inside, even though I can't really express it, but I'm so happy. I want to say, "Thank you, Lord".' (#55d, Sister X's recorded testimony, 2009)

What started as a personal story about rape, shame and abandonment suddenly becomes a battle on a global scale. During a prayer of deliverance, the host 'finds out' that Sister X is a pawn in the spiritual war between God and the devil. In H2, he explains that both the devil and God claimed her but that today the devil has let her go. Sister X's problems do not merely belong to the realm of the individual self, but ultimately are significant within the global realm (cf. Pype 2015b:71).

The host encourages Sister X to testify about her experiences, even though she is weak and distressed. Here the host risks letting his desire to get the right quote for his radio show trump his pastoral instincts. For the host, such

a narrative is attractive because it is proof of his power as a man of God. In H1, he is still panting from the difficult struggle, but he has won this fight.

■ The importance of testimonies as proof in a competitive environment

Testimonies or acts of deliverance have a specific use in the context of religious competition. Collins (2011) discusses this aspect in the context of competition between pastors in the postwar Pentecostal healing revival. He writes:

> It seems likely [...] that emphasis on deliverance ministry was driven in part by the competitive nature of the ministry during the revival which demanded continual evidence of the evangelists' elevated spiritual status and increasingly spectacular evidence of God's presence and power.(p. 90)

As we have seen, in contemporary Zambia ministry is a competitive affair as well. This competition is consequential as the income of a pastor in neo-Pentecostal churches, and to a lesser extent also in mainline churches, is dependent on the tithes and offerings of the church members. The sociologist Andrew Singleton (2001:136) predicts that a church that offers persuasive testimonies will prosper. To succeed in a competitive environment, the theology of the church – but maybe even more so the person of the pastor – must seem to be attractive alternatives, and testimonies support both. This explains why the host of the radio show seemed to put some pressure on Sister X to share her experiences.

The evidence of testimonies is not only important in the competition between different religious entrepreneurs. It is interesting to note that testimonies of Satanism seem to be used more as evidence for the existence of evil forces than as evidence for God's power. Sponsors of testimonies do not cry out, 'Hear me, God is real!' but rather focus on the reality of Satanism, spiritual husbands and wives and other evil spiritual forces.

In the Zambian religious marketplace where pastors operate, the reality of God and his power is not debated. The reality of evil forces, however, is. Mainline churches in Zambia are under pressure from their church members to practice deliverance but lack official policies. Pastors and students at theological institutions are divided on the issue. The debate transcends the religious marketplace, as it concerns the more general question of one's stance towards an enchanted or a more secular worldview. Testimonies are used as proof for a worldview in which spiritual forces like Satanists, demons and witches are real and out to harm and take control over human beings. This worldview stands opposite a more secular, scientific worldview where spiritual causes are rejected (Kroesbergen-Kamps 2018:248).

'This is real' is a sentence that recurs over and over again in the comments of pastors on testimonies (cf. Kroesbergen-Kamps 2018:248). The ethnologist

Jean Pouillon (2008:91) has argued that one opens up the possibility of doubt by stating explicitly that something is real. If belief were self-evident, there would be no need to express it in a statement, just as the only context in which people point to a chair and say, 'this is a chair' is in philosophical discussions about the nature of reality. Saying 'this is a chair' implies that it might be thinkable that this is not a chair. In the same way, there is no need to say that a testimony is real if there are no doubts about it. Pastors who present testimonies feel the need to say it very often, implying that there are many who believe otherwise.

In Zambia, testimonies seem to be used as evidence in the debate about the reality of spiritual powers. Brian Levack (2013), in his study on possession in the Western world, *The Devil Within*, makes a similar point. He writes, 'Reliance on possession and exorcism as the main proof of demonic reality persisted through the sixteenth and seventeenth century' (Levack 2013:71). As we have seen in Chapter 3, society grew increasingly sceptical about any supernatural forces. In this context, exorcisms had a function as polemic tools, attempting to enforce an enchanted worldview. Levack (2013:85) gives this rhetorical use of exorcisms the label of 'confessional propaganda'. Zambian testimonies about Satanism serve as confessional propaganda as well, proving that spiritual forces are real. In contemporary Zambia, the worldview that holds that spiritual forces are real and can influence the physical world seems to be fragile and in need of constant maintenance (Kroesbergen-Kamps 2018:248). According to the scholar of African Christianity Paul Gifford (1998:328; see also 2019), many Africans have 'an "enchanted" worldview'. But this worldview is not unquestionable, and testimonies are used in its defence. As I have argued elsewhere (Kroesbergen-Kamps 2018:248), testimonies in their religious contexts can be seen as polemic devices in a discussion between secular and religious or enchanted worldviews.

The case of Sister X shows the significance of testimonies for neo-Pentecostal pastors. For pastors, testimonies function as a calling card for the pastoral support they can give to church members. Besides that, they are proof for a neo-Pentecostal spiritual warfare theology, where God's power battles against the forces of evil and where individual experiences have meaning on a global scale. Testimonies show the power of God, but even more, they show that evil forces are real and that the pastor is fit to conquer them. This confirmation of reality is enforced by the content added by the pastor as a sponsor of a testimony and also by the performance of the testimony, which mediates the reality of spiritual forces.

■ Testimonies and the audience

So far, we have looked at the significance of performing a testimony for the narrator and for the pastor who offers a platform to ex-Satanists to tell

their story. In the context in which testimonies are performed, there is a third party that has an interest in seeing them, namely the audience. What do testimonies mean for an audience? In this section, I will argue that testimonies make God and Satan real to an audience and that they allow audiences to fantasise about transgressions.

The genesis of religious presence

People sometimes seem to assume that it must be easy for Africans to believe in things like Satanism. They may even experience a kind of envy towards this kind of faith in, for example, a spiritual war between God and Satan that gives meaning to one's whole life (cf. Kroesbergen 2021). While it is true that cultural and religious frameworks like the notions of illicit accumulation and spiritual warfare make it easier to accept narratives about Satanism as plausible, such accounts overlook the reality that faith never comes easy. As anthropologist T.M. Luhrmann states (2018:303), 'faith is hard and requires effort'.

Although Africans have been labelled as incurably religious (for an overview of the genealogy of the phrase see Platvoet & Van Rinsum 2003), the discussion mentioned in the analysis of David's testimony about whether invisible agents like spiritual husbands exist shows that not everything is believed on all accounts. African societies have also been described as 'never-secular' (Luhrmann 2012b). However, as I have argued elsewhere, a globalising secular worldview informs African religious perceptions just as much as the globalising theology of Christianity (Kroesbergen-Kamps 2018). Even in this context in which faith seems to come more effortlessly than in the Western world, it is not uncontested (cf. Luhrmann 2020:13–22).

For believers, it takes hard work to keep their faith alive and their gods real (Luhrmann 2018:306). Both narratives and religious rituals support that work. According to Luhrmann (2020:xiii), 'The work of making an invisible other feel present begins with a good story'. Narratives help believers to build a paracosm or private-but-shared imagined world (Luhrmann 2020) that helps them to see the world from a religious perspective. Luhrmann's concept of a paracosm is similar to the idea of a web of stories that helps people to make sense of the world mentioned earlier. This paracosm is a necessary prerequisite to being able to perceive religious or cultural beliefs as plausible and to interpret one's own experiences in terms of these beliefs. Participating in religious rituals has a similar effect. According to Luhrmann (2018:307), 'What rituals do is to remind people that their beliefs are plausible'. Religious rituals tie into the narrative paracosm and give it a place in this world.

Together, religious rituals and narratives contribute to the genesis of a sense of presence (Meyer 2012b:22). Through what Birgit Meyer calls 'sensational forms', the religious real becomes tangible (Meyer 2020). Testimonies are an example of such a sensational form. The threat of Satanism

becomes real through the performance of testimonies. This is a boon for pastors whose social and financial standing depends on the credibility of their message, but it is also an important function of testimonies for the audience. In a testimony, audiences can see with their own eyes that the theology they hear about in church is real. An audience seeing an ex-Satanist tell her story sees not just an (often) adolescent girl but the embodiment of the whole idea that there is a war going on between God and Satan, as well as the effects that Satan can have on human life.

To return to the case of Sister X, the host tried to make her speak in her own words about what happened and how she now feels. Through these words, spoken haltingly and with emotion, the listeners who hear this testimony come close to seeing the power of God over the devil for themselves. In an article on testimonies of healing, Andrew Singleton (2001) comes to the following conclusion:

> As a vivid and highly persuasive communicable form, storytelling allows the narrator to emphasise the plausibility and incontrovertibility of their experience. Consequently, a well told story has enormous utility in convincing the audience about the reality of God. (pp. 135–136)

This is an important function of testimonies. They bring God close to an audience. That alone makes them an essential part of neo-Pentecostal services, in which the emotional experience of the audience plays an important role.

It may be easier to make the devil or another force of evil present than to ensure God becomes real in the experience of believers. According to Luhrmann (2020:20), humans instinctively look for demons, devils and other forces of evil: 'Something goes wrong – a crash, a rustle in the bushes, a dark and lonely road – and humans look for an agent that could harm them'. But the focus in services in which testimonies of Satanism are shared is not just on the existence of the devil. The message of the service is that it is God who can overcome the power of Satan. This resonates with Luhrmann's (2020:96) own experience in Africa: 'Every church service I attended in Accra – from any of the new charismatic churches – focused its emotional crescendo on a counterattack to evil'. In these services, Satan and God have to become real, and testimonies assist in both objectives.

A space to play with ambiguous experiences

Not only do testimonies help to make the presence of spiritual beings real, but they also provide a space to play with ambiguous experiences. In the performance of a testimony, the personal experience of the ex-Satanist becomes a shared narrative that addresses certain pressing concerns of the audience (Meyer 1999:201). What are these concerns of the audience that resonate with the ex-Satanist's narrative?

As we have seen, the genre of stories about evil Others that the narratives of ex-Satanists belong to is strongly related to changes in society that affect the perception of values. When the norms of a society are under pressure, narratives about evil Others may help to make sense of what is happening and who is to blame. The performance of a testimony supports this process. Audiences not only want to hear stories that confirm their value system, but they also crave to see these stories embodied in public by real people (Frankfurter 2006:173).

In Chapter 4, I have argued that 'becoming modern' is, in the contemporary emic jargon, coveted as well as fraught with anxieties. Testimonies resonate with this interplay between desire and fear. In an early article, Birgit Meyer (1995) discusses Ghanaian confessions of involvement with Satan. She is struck by the fact that these confessions, which are very similar to the Zambian narratives discussed here, are always related to money. The narrators talk about a Faustian pact with the devil that promises to make them rich, but what they find is that Satan's terms are very harsh: the money is acquired in exchange for human lives. This motive is present in local confessions, in pamphlets like Emanuel Eni's *Delivered from the Powers of Darkness*, and also in Ghanaian and Nigerian so-called 'occult movies'.

According to Meyer (1995:243), the performance of these stories makes them very believable: 'Anyone who admits to having killed others by witchcraft or done harm to people must indeed be telling the truth'. The content makes these narratives credible. Meyer does not discuss the context of the performance of testimonies, but as I have argued in this chapter, pastors who offer a platform for these narratives often try to enforce this credibility even more. Once a narrative is affirmed as credible, an audience can easily accept it as a revelation from a hidden world.

Meyer interprets the Ghanaian stories about money and the devil as reflecting tensions surrounding relationships within kinship networks, a topic that I have discussed extensively in Chapter 4. Wealth is on the one hand something that many people in Africa greatly desire. On the other hand, there are worries about what becoming wealthy might mean for one's identity and relationships with others.

Listening to stories about satanic riches helps people to playfully engage this dilemma. Audiences can relish the image of unimaginable wealth and opportunities, or a woman being stronger than she would ever be allowed to be in contemporary Africa. The testimonies allow people to think about these ambiguous desires from a safe distance (Meyer 1995:250). The audience can sympathise with the narrator's choices to become wealthy and at the same time renounce these choices as evil and satanic. In the words of David Frankfurter (2006:156): 'These lengthy depictions of transgressive enrichment and pleasure offer a safe arena for fantasy, for it takes place in a proscribed, "evil" world'.

In this way, if Satan becomes real in testimonies, this is not just a source of terror. Testimonies offer an inspirational context in which the audience can experience feelings and desires that are not entirely acceptable (Frankfurter 2006:158). By watching the narration of a testimony, transgressive desires can be experienced from a safe distance.

Learning to see the world in a different way

What do testimonies offer the audience? They make the religious real tangible and offer a space to play with ambiguous experiences. A final effect of attending a testimony is that it teaches a new way to see the world. Testimonies offer religious knowledge: knowledge of God and Satan, which is revealed by the ex-Satanist, often in interaction with a pastor.

In the type of Christianity in which testimonies are shared, God is believed to act in this world. Signs of this divine intervention can be discovered, or 'discerned', as evangelical and Pentecostal Christians would call it. In *How God Becomes Real*, T.M. Luhrmann reflects on the research she has been involved in since the 1980s. In her first big research project, she studied a group of modern practitioners of magic in London and discovered that believing in magic requires training in interpreting events from the framework of magic (Luhrmann 2020:62–66). Later, in her research of American evangelical Christianity, Luhrmann made a similar discovery about the way these Christians spoke about the presence of God. It took them practice to feel God's presence or even hear God's answers to their prayers (Luhrmann 2020:66–69).

Testimonies of Satanism as sensational forms allow audiences to practise in the language and experience of a God (and also a devil) who is present in this world. According to Birgit Meyer (2013), sensational forms:

> [*T*]rain the senses so as to be able to feel the 'extra'-ordinary. [...] In this understanding, experience is both personal and social. In other words, personal experience is shaped through particular, religiously transmitted, and embodied filters of perception. (p. 9)

In the testimonies, an audience learns what the signs of a satanic affliction might be, and which products might be connected to the underworld. After a service in which a testimony has been shared, audiences may go home and start to see the influence of Satan all around them (Frankfurter 2006:168–169).

Luhrmann calls this process 'kindling', an awakening of a sense in which the body learns to experience certain events as spiritually significant. Learning to discern the meaning of these events has a multiplying effect: 'These events are important because they provide first-hand evidence that the claims of the faith frame are valid' (Luhrmann 2020:135). Testimonies provide audiences with an opportunity to learn to recognise signs of Satanism. In the responses to a testimony delivered on a radio programme discussed in the previous

chapter, it was clear that the audience applied the testimony to their situation. They started wondering whether their dreams may be a sign of involvement in Satanism or whether the behaviour of their niece may suggest that she is afflicted. These signs, when discovered, then further enforce the experience that Satanism is real.

◼ Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the processes and actors involved in learning and performing a testimony about Satanism. In the production of a testimony, the ex-Satanist is the most obvious agent, but as I have argued in this chapter, pastors are important sponsors and sometimes even ghostwriters or co-authors of the testimonies. The expectations of an (implicit) audience also play an important role in the production of testimonies.

In their storyline and in the jargon that is used, testimonies are adapted to the standards of the group for which they are performed. In testimonies of Satanism, the typical storyline talks about an initiation, followed by the execution of assignments that produce rewards. A failed assignment paves the way to deliverance and a new, Christian identity. Ex-Satanists learn to use this jargon and interpret their life story in the frame of the canonical narrative of Satanism by hearing other testimonies and, more significantly, in the process of deliverance.

Pastors play an important role in the production of testimonies by asking the ex-Satanists certain questions that help them to re-evaluate their personal history in the context of Satanism and by encouraging them to share their story with an audience. Pastors are also crucial as sponsors of the testimony, securing speaking arrangements for the ex-Satanists and adding meaning to their narratives. The pastors put such emphasis on narratives about Satanism because the testimonies act as living proof of spiritual warfare theology, as well as the power of the pastor to fight the forces of evil.

In the performance of testimonies, the battle between God and Satan is made tangible for the audience. The presence of God and Satan is embodied in the ex-Satanists who tell their stories in a religious setting. These narratives also provide a space for the audience to engage with ambiguous experiences brought about by changes in society. Finally, they teach an audience to see the world in a new way, as imbued with spiritual forces.

The topics discussed in this chapter can be conceptualised in terms of mediation (cf. Meyer 2012b, 2013, 2020). Mediation refers to the processes through which beliefs, traditions and other imaginaries become real to a community. A religious setting like a church service mediates the religious real, meaning that in and through the service, the religious beliefs of the congregation become tangible and real. In church services at a church that

follows modern spiritual warfare theology, not only the divine needs to be mediated; the demonic needs to be made tangible as well. This is where the testimonies of ex-Satanists become relevant. As a first-hand account, a testimony can mediate beliefs about God's intervention. Testimonies about Satanism add to that the tangible presence of demonic forces.

This chapter has discussed some criteria that make the mediating character of testimonies possible. A testimony can evoke the presence of the divine and the demonic if it follows the expectations of the community. The audience must deem the performance of a testimony credible. Testimonies that speak about God or the devil in unconventional ways will be doubted and thus fail to make the divine and the demonic real to their audience. Also, experiences are interpreted in the categories that are present. In Zambia, experiences of affliction and alienation are, as I have argued in the previous chapter, perceived as related to Satanism. These emotions and experiences are mediated through and embedded in the category of Satanism (cf. Meyer 2015:19).

The role of mediator holds some advantages for the ex-Satanist, such as the confirmation of one's position in the community or the status that comes with taking centre stage. However, as I have argued in this chapter, the best explanation for taking up the role of mediator of the divine and the demonic is the encouragement and sponsorship by pastors. Pastors make sure that testimonies follow the expectations of the religious community, they create opportunities for ex-Satanists to give their testimony and their interventions may even make the pastor a co-author of a testimony.

For a pastor, sponsoring testimonies about Satanism has distinct advantages. Mediating the religious real is the core business of the church in general. If testimonies contribute to that aim, which they do, sponsoring them is a sensible course of action. More specifically, testimonies mediate a special kind of religious real, namely a religious real that encompasses both the divine and the demonic. For churches following spiritual warfare theology, this is important in the context of competition with more secular views or views that contest the emphasis on the demonic. Finally, for the pastor, a testimony not only mediates the reality of God and the devil but also his role as a mediator of God's power. It is because of his access to God that the devil can be conquered. Because of the importance of testimonies for pastors in spiritual warfare churches, the pastor will work hard to advance the mediating role of testimonies by taking an interest in their production and by using media – radio, television, the Internet – to supply their audience with an edited message

'These things are real!' Satanism and epistemic anxiety

■ Introduction

As I have stated in Chapter 1, in Zambia, Satanism refers to a supposed organisation of human agents, commanded by Satan, who are dedicated to bringing evil and harm, especially to Christians. In narratives about Satanism, sacrifices to Satan play an important role. Road accidents, illnesses and other harm that befalls people can be interpreted as a sacrifice to Satan made by his agent, the Satanist. Stories about Satanism are shared in different contexts, for example between friends or colleagues, at the market or in school, but the most extensive accounts of Satanism come from testimonies of ex-Satanists. These testimonies are performed in a Christian setting, which is characterised by neo-Pentecostal spiritual warfare theology. This theology is not only prevalent in the Pentecostal churches, but also within denominations like the RCZ and the Seventh-day Adventist church.

Anyone can become a Satanist, although in Zambia two groups stand out: adolescents who confess that they have been Satanists in the past and adults from a limited number of professions connected to the urban world, like businessmen and politicians. For adolescents, accepting a gift from a friend at

school can be enough to initiate one into Satanism, even if the receiver is not aware of it at the time. The adults who are accused of Satanism are thought to have made a more conscious choice to use illicit means for personal gain in wealth and power.

In previous chapters, I have argued that Zambians are receptive to narratives of Satanism for several reasons. Firstly, these narratives about spiritual evil make cultural sense. A hybrid of traditional notions of witchcraft, possession and illicit accumulation, together with Christian theology, in particular of a neo-Pentecostal type, makes the idea that an organisation of evil exists plausible to Zambian Christians of a Pentecostal predilection. The notions of potentially harmful spiritual agents (such as witches and spirits) and spiritual means of causing harm (for example, to gain extraordinary wealth or power) have a long history, which has been introduced in Chapter 2. In missionary Christianity, all spiritual powers became connected to the Christian image of the devil. The fight between God and Satan has received new emphasis in contemporary neo-Pentecostal spiritual warfare theology. In Africa, spiritual warfare entails the idea that traditional spiritual beings and powers fight on the side of Satan. In Chapter 3, I have argued that this theological framework is disseminated by Western as well as African pastors operating on an international scale. Because the narratives about Satanism fit so well with these ideas, they make cultural sense and are deemed plausible by Zambian Christians.

Another way in which narratives about Satanism make cultural sense is through their relation to the urban and modern world. The professions, places and products that are singled out as dangerous in narratives about Satanism are all connected to the city and an emic conception of modernity. This local idea of modernity brings together Christianity and development in an imagined space where health and wealth are accessible for everyone. Roads, schools and hospitals are part of the necessary infrastructure to get to this promised land of modernity and enjoy its spoils in the form of consumer goods. As I have argued in Chapter 4, the dream of modernity can turn into a nightmare of Satanism. Narratives about Satanism turn the image of modernity as a promised land around. Politicians, government officials, businessmen, pastors and teachers, who are all connected to the city in the Zambian imaginary, are not leading the country to this promised land but bringing harm to its citizens. Roads, schools and hospitals are portrayed in the testimonies as threatening spaces instead of places where development takes place. The new products that can be bought in the international stores in the cities bring harm instead of joy. In Chapter 4, I have related the disenchantment with the dream of modernity to anxieties surrounding the moral consequences of becoming modern. Narratives about Satanism particularly reflect fears surrounding a growing individualism.

That the narratives about Satanism make cultural sense makes them plausible in the ears of contemporary Zambian Christians. But for some, the narratives also make personal sense. These learn to self-identify as Satanists, or rather, as ex-Satanists. For these ex-Satanists, mainly adolescents and particularly girls, Satanism is an affliction. It is not a conscious choice or a matter of conversion to a different religious ideology but something that inadvertently befalls someone. In Chapter 5, I argued that the diagnosis of Satanism is provided by neo-Pentecostal pastors or intercessors and is related to behaviour that is deemed abnormal as well as feelings of isolation and rejection. This diagnosis does not appeal to everyone. But for some, it becomes the basis for a new evaluation of one's life and a new life story. This life story gives meaning to events in the past, to the present situation and to one's plans and hopes for the future. If narratives about Satanism make personal sense, it is because they provide a meaningful interpretation of the lived reality of the ex-Satanists.

In the previous chapter, we have seen that the receptivity to narratives about Satanism is reinforced by their use in public religious gatherings. Testimonies are produced and performed in Christian settings, in which the ex-Satanists learn to narrate their experiences in a way that fits with the genre of testimonies of Satanism. Pastors act as important sponsors of this narrative by creating opportunities where ex-Satanists can share their testimonies while giving authoritative interpretations of these stories. For the pastors, narratives about Satanism have a clear appeal. Testimonies function as proof for the pastor's spiritual warfare theology and of his ability to wage war against the powers of Satan. In Zambia's competitive religious environment, this is a crucial matter. For audiences, testimonies make the divine and the demonic real. They also provide a space to play with ambiguous experiences, for example, the desires as well as the fears related to changes brought by development and contact with Western modernity.

To summarise, Zambians are receptive to stories about Satanism because they make cultural as well as personal sense. These narratives are deemed plausible, and they respond to lived experiences. They also have a place within religious practices that reinforce their credibility. In this concluding chapter, I want to discuss two general issues related to the narratives about Satanism in Zambia. Firstly, I will revisit discussions surrounding the reality of Satanism, and secondly, I will interpret fears around Satanism as a form of epistemic anxiety.

■ The reality of Satanism

'These things are real!' is an expression I have heard many times during my stay in Zambia. It is how my students would end stories about witchcraft or

other phenomena that are hard to grasp for a Westerner like me. It is also how pastors tend to frame narratives about Satanism and other spiritual dangers that threaten their flocks. But what does it mean to say that these narratives are real? What does it mean for me as a researcher, and what does it mean to a Zambian audience? This question has been present in the background of several discussions in this book, and in this final chapter, I want to return to it more explicitly. To address this question, I will make use of examples from contemporary literature and film that also deal with the thorny issue of reality. In this investigation, it is not my intention to make a philosophical statement about the nature of reality but to investigate how references to reality are used in narratives about Satanism and comparable stories.

In the academic study of witchcraft and similar phenomena, it is quite common to see such narratives as an expression of anxieties surrounding other spheres of human life, such as economic exploitation, inequality and political power. The narratives are explained in terms of something else. Although the academic authors may not explicitly make any claim about the reality of witchcraft or zombies or Satanism, the fact that they feel the need to explain these phenomena shows that they are not taken at face value.

In the young adult fiction series *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children*, a similar frame is introduced. In the first volume, Jacob, the protagonist of the series, hears strange stories from his grandfather about monsters and a safe haven for magical children. Growing up, Jacob realises that these stories cannot be true in a literal sense: monsters and magic do not exist in this world. He concludes that his grandfather's stories are 'truths in disguise' (Riggs 2013):

> They weren't lies, exactly, but exaggerated versions of the truth [...] My grandfather was the only member of his family to escape Poland before the Second World War broke out. [...] He never saw his mother or father again, or his older brothers, his cousins, his aunts and uncles. Each one would be dead before his sixteenth birthday, killed by the monsters he had so narrowly escaped. [...] Like the monsters, the enchanted-island story was also a truth in disguise. Compared to the horrors of mainland Europe, the children's home that had taken in my grandfather must've seemed like a paradise, and so in his stories it had become one: a safe haven of endless summers and guardian angels and magical children [...] What made them amazing wasn't that they had miraculous powers; that they had escaped the ghettos and gas chambers was miracle enough. (pp. 21–22)

The monsters in the stories of Jacob's grandfather are the Nazis who killed his family, and the true peculiarity of the children he meets in the children's home is that they are Jewish. The elements of the grandfather's story can be deciphered so that they portray real events.

Narratives about Satanism can and have been read in this way as well. In this reading, when Satanists speak about sacrificing their relatives, this can be deciphered as follows: 'if you want to be a wealthy individual, you have to cut the ties with your extended family because otherwise, they will drain all of

your resources'. I do not know whether Jacob's grandfather intended to speak in riddles, but I would argue that the narrators of stories about Satanism do not have the intention to speak the truth in disguise. When Zambians are afraid of Satanists and Satanism, they fear an affliction, as I have argued in Chapter 5. The stories about Satanism resonate with changes in society, but they are not intended as poetic expressions of these changes.

In the movie *World War Z* (2013), the world is overrun by zombies. Israel, however, built a wall around the country early on and was able to stave off the zombie war. Gerry, the protagonist of the movie, wants to find out how Israel was able to take its measures in time. Jurgen Warmbrunn, a specialist in the Israeli intelligence agency, tells him the following: 'Since everyone assumed that this talk of zombies was cover for something else, I began my investigation on the assumption that when they said "zombies", they meant zombies'. The zombies in *World War Z* should not have been explained in terms of something else. When people talked about zombies, they actually meant zombies.

Interpreting narratives about zombies or witches or Satanists in terms of something else makes these narratives seem innocent and domesticated. But these narratives inspire actions that sometimes have grave consequences. Lessons may be suspended, children are kept at home or are sent away from school and teachers are sacked because of accusations of Satanism. Property is destroyed in riots that erupt after suspicions that relate local businessmen to the disappearance of a child from the community. Pastors can make their churches grow by appealing to the threat formed by Satanism or can find themselves under suspicion when their emphasis on the power of Satan turns against them. Spaces, professions and products, mainly those that are in the Zambian imagination related to modernity, acquire a new layer of meaning when they are related to Satanism. Individuals who somehow show deviant behaviour are diagnosed as Satanists and may become outcasts in their families.

Perceptions of what is real are not the same all over the world. In Zambian church services in which testimonies are presented, audiences learn to use the concept of Satanism in their definition of what is real. If a teenager in the Netherlands prefers to stay in her room and read a book, this is not interpreted as deviant behaviour. Maybe the teenager could do with some training in social skills, but otherwise, introversion is nothing to worry about. If a teenager acts stubbornly and antagonistically towards their parents, this is, within limits, also seen as appropriate behaviour for someone of her age. In Zambia, however, this behaviour is perceived as abnormal and prompts suspicions of Satanism. Likewise, a person who hears voices will in Europe generally seek help from a psychiatrist, but in Zambia, traditional or Christian healers may diagnose this person as possessed or involved in Satanism. What these examples show is that people in the Netherlands and Zambia have different imaginaries that allow them to interpret and talk about events in different ways.

These imaginaries are mediated through narratives and practices. Neo-Pentecostal churches, where there is space for testimonies and where sermons are based on spiritual warfare theology, teach people how to live in a world with Satanists – a world in which God is at war with Satan and where Satanists are threatening one's surroundings and even oneself. For those who share this imagery, Satanism is a plausible cause of affliction, a source of threat or an explanation of misfortune. One may say that, quite literally, 'speak of Satan and he appears'.

In scholarly discussions that explain narratives about Satanism in terms of something else, a focus on how Satan and his agents become real and the consequences of this perceived reality is lacking. What does it mean to accept Satanism as a reality? The ontological turn in contemporary anthropology attempts to take narratives and beliefs that are hard to grasp seriously by seeing them as belonging to ontologically different worlds (see Holbraad & Pedersen 2017). Such phenomena should not be rejected as superstitious or interpreted and explained away in other terms but should be taken at face value. When people say Satanists, they mean Satanists. As I have argued elsewhere (Kroesbergen-Kamps 2020a), this position has problematic consequences. Portraying phenomena like Satanism as belonging to a different ontological reality may have an unwanted effect of othering people for whom Satanism is real (Geschiere 2013) and also makes it impossible to take a critical stance towards these beliefs (Geschiere 2010; Niehaus 2018). Whatever Zambians mean when they say that Satanism is real, I would not want to place them in a different ontological world because of it.

T.M. Luhrmann points out that in different contexts, reality may be conceptualised in different ways (Luhrmann 2012b). For evangelicals in the USA, the reality of God will 'feel' different than it does for Zambian Christians. Still, it is interesting to compare the American and the Zambian perspectives. Luhrmann's research on the evangelical experience of God has taught her that American evangelicals can act as if God were a real presence in their lives. They perceive God as present even in their kitchen – without, however, expecting that God would want a cup of tea or that he would actually drink it. Luhrmann describes this conceptualisation of the reality of God as playful and not without humour. Speaking about God in Zambia seems different, more serious, a matter of life and death even.

For me, a movie clarifies this difference. In the movie *Monster Trucks* (2016), huge, custom-built SUVs race against each other on difficult, off-road terrain. The twist in the movie is that the protagonist's monster truck is literally a monster truck: instead of an engine, it contains a monstrous creature that powers the truck. Here, a play on words – taking the monster in *Monster Trucks* literally – playfully invites audiences to imagine a world in which the things we say are more real than we had expected. In her study of American evangelicals,

Luhrmann (2012b) labels this playful imagination that the expressions of their belief may be true as hyperrealism.

Testimonies of ex-Satanists sometimes seem to play with words in the same way as the movie *Monster Trucks*. They explain, for example, that the type of sausage known as Hungarian is actually made out of people from Hungary. If you eat a Hungarian sausage, you are literally eating a Hungarian. This message, however, is much more serious than the proposition of the movie. It is presented not as an invitation to just try to see the world in this way (Luhrmann 2012b) but as a revelation about how things really are.

For Luhrmann, this difference between contemporary American evangelicals and Christians in Zambia can be traced back to the presence of a secular mindset in the USA and the absence of this mindset in Africa. She describes the African context, as well as the contexts of Melanesia and Indonesia, as 'never-secular' (Luhrmann 2012b:380–381). It has been questioned whether the distinction between religious and secular is apt in an African context (Engelke 2015). It is clear that atheism is a worldview that many Zambians are unfamiliar with, and that is different from the contemporary context in the USA and Europe. However, this does not mean that there is no doubt or scepticism in Zambia. There is a popular consensus that spiritual beings exist and that human agents such as witches or Satanists can use spiritual forces to inflict harm or cause misfortune. But this consensus is by no means ubiquitous. In schools, pupils and students are taught according to Western models in which causality is not attributed to the spiritual world. In mainline churches, issues like Satanism are present mainly among the youths but rarely addressed by ministers or the leadership. Are things like Satanism real? Contemporary Zambians are confronted with more than one answer to that question. Calling them never-secular or placing them apart in their own ontological world denies the presence of this diversity.

Narratives about Satanism play an important role in the apologetic debates between different worldviews. Pastors fulfil the role of revealing the secrets that lie behind the obvious reality that people perceive and testimonies about Satanism and other spiritual issues are their evidence. A movie that gives the same sense of apologetic argumentation as narratives about Satanism is *The Conjuring* (2013), to which a sequel appeared in 2016. In these movies, Ed and Lorraine Warren help families who are terrorised by an evil presence in their homes. The movies have all the twists of standard horror movies: dark, creepy rooms, terrifying sound effects, et cetera. They add to that the assertion that this is a movie based on a true story, namely the case files of the real Ed and Lorraine Warren, who operated as exorcists in a charismatic Roman Catholic environment. The *Conjuring* movies are enjoyed by audiences who like horror movies as well as by Christians who see in them a confirmation of their spiritual warfare theology. In the last shots of the movie, a quote by Ed Warren appears

(cited in Pasulka 2016:542): 'Diabolical forces are formidable. These forces are eternal, and they exist today. *The fairy tale is true*'. This is exactly how narratives about Satanism and similar occurrences are often framed. Zambian testimonies confirm the existence of spiritual forces in Zambia and at the same time introduce non-Pentecostal audiences who listen to narratives about Satanism to the ideas of spiritual warfare theology.

If Zambians say that Satanism is real, what do they mean? And how should this reality of Satanism be evaluated by scholars? In this section, I have argued that narratives about Satanism are not intended as disguised truths. They are also not 'hyperreal' in the sense of T.M. Luhrmann's description of the evangelical experience of God, nor is it helpful to see them as belonging to a different ontological reality. Rather, the reality of narratives about Satanism is used as an apologetic instrument. As I have argued in Chapter 6, conceptualisations of reality in contemporary Zambia are contested, and narratives about Satanism are used to enforce a position in the debate about whether harmful spiritual forces exist. At the same time, the narratives are not merely a rhetorical foil. They spark emotions and may have grave consequences in the world, which should not be overlooked by scholars. In this book, I have tried to do justice to the different ways in which narratives about Satanism are real to their audiences: as stories that make cultural as well as personal sense.

■ Epistemic anxiety

Contemporary Zambia is a place full of insecurities. Economically, Zambia experienced growth in the first decade of the 21st century, but as global copper prices dropped, Zambia's economy stagnated again. Poverty remains widespread in Zambia. For many people in Zambia's urban centres, the spoils of wealth have come close. In advertisements and on huge billboards along the main roads, everyone can see what money can buy. The billboards communicate the prospect of international travel, of owning the newest smartphone, of drinking the trendiest beverages. These prospects may be visibly close, but they are by no means attainable for everyone. For many Zambians, life is a struggle to make ends meet and to find the money for school fees, medical bills, funerals and other emergencies. They live in insecure material conditions, lives that James Ferguson (2015:94) has characterised as 'improvisation under conditions of adversity.'

Insecurities may also be related to health and well-being. Zambia has been hit hard by the HIV and AIDS epidemic. But well-being in the Zambian context goes further than the absence of medical problems. As I have shown in Chapter 5, many Zambians worry about the question 'what is wrong with me?' Illness, misfortune, problems in relationships and lack of business success are all connected to a deficiency in well-being that can generate insecurity.

There is also an element of insecurity in Zambians' relations with others. In Chapter 4, it became clear that there are many uncertainties about what to expect from family members. Will relatives be willing to help out in case of illness or emergencies? Will they take responsibility for the education of nieces and nephews? The African extended family is an imaginary construct that is not necessarily present in everyday reality (Ferguson 2015:96). A similar thing can be said about the nuclear family. In reality, few children grow up in a household that consists of two parents and their children. What, in this situation, is the role of the father? Can he be the provider? How should parents treat their children and children their parents? Chapter 4 discussed the insecurities related to these questions.

Economic insecurity, worries about health and well-being and uncertainty concerning family ties make life in Zambia difficult. These practical insecurities are exacerbated by what I will call epistemic anxiety. According to several scholars, the combined forces of colonialism and modernity have brought about epistemic anxiety (Ashforth 1998; El Fadl 2015; Stoler 2010). Epistemic anxiety refers to uncertainty towards ways of knowing the world that used to be self-evident. Adam Ashforth describes how in contemporary South Africa there exist multiple modes of understanding spiritual experiences. Western science, cultural or traditional notions, and Christian churches all offer distinct interpretative frameworks. As Ashforth (1998) writes:

> No one here lives in a single consistent system of interpreting signs emanating from unseen powers, and for every scheme of interpretation there is another, equally plausible and diametrically opposed, way of making sense of the world. (p. 59)

The question of which scheme of interpretation is the right one is present for anyone living in this postcolonial context.

In matters of affliction, we have seen in Chapter 5 that many Zambians try out different options from different systems. This multiplication of options increases a sense of uncertainty. Moreover, the different options are often mutually exclusive. If an affliction is caused by a biomedical cause like a virus, it cannot be caused by a spiritual agency. If all spiritual agencies are demonic, an affliction cannot be interpreted as the call of an ancestral spirit to a path of mediumship. So which interpretative knowledge system is right? The uncertainty surrounding different knowledge systems and their frames of interpretation is one form of epistemic anxiety.

It is not only medical knowledge that has become insecure. Moral knowledge concerning the right action to take or how to be a good person is fraught with uncertainty as well. Questions like 'who am I?' and 'what will I become?' or 'how should I behave and relate to others?' are very common, especially in adolescence. The answers to these questions become harder to find in societies that are globalised and uprooted from their past, such as

postcolonial Africa. The imaginary of Satanism provides Zambian adolescents with a special answer to these questions. In the song 'Within', the French duo Daft Punk (2013) expresses insecurities surrounding identity in a way that seems familiar to the experiences of Zambian ex-Satanists:

> There are so many things that I don't understand. There's a world within me that I cannot explain. [...] I can't even remember my name. I've been, for some time, looking for someone. I need to know now; please tell me who I am. (n.p.)

Like the 'I' in the lyrics, Zambian adolescents who experience Satanism find a world within them that they do not understand. They feel isolated, as if they do not belong to their families or with their friends. Like the 'I' in the lyrics, the Zambian adolescents also long for someone who can tell them who they are, as traditional role models are no longer sufficient. Pastors and intercessors who give the the diagnosis of Satanism do exactly that. They teach adolescents that their experiences signify an involvement with Satanism and give them the tools to reconstruct their life story – and with that their identity and place in the world – as ex-Satanists.

Even expectations of the future are uncertain. A good life should be a life without material worries, a life lived in health and well-being, a life of harmonious relationships. In Zambia, this image of the good life is often connected to the emic concept of modernity. But life as people experience it is not as it was expected to be. The promised land of modernity has not arrived. Worse, places, professions and products associated with modernity are perceived as threatening in the narratives about Satanism. Where will we go from here? Will we ever reach that modernity where life is good, or will this mean that we have to become ruthless, egotistical individuals with no regard for our elders and our relatives? Like the knowledge about afflictions, the spirit world and the moral universe, the expectations of the future have become a source of anxiety.

Narratives about Satanism – or possibly narratives about evil Others in general – tend to latch on to epistemic uncertainties such as those present in contemporary Zambia. When there are gaps between expectations of the future and lived reality, when identities are uprooted from the past and when competing frames of interpretation are present, narratives that assume the existence of hidden agencies and require specialists in revelation seem to become popular. This is a suggestion that requires more investigation.

Narratives about Satanism and other evil Others may serve to curb epistemic anxieties. According to what Bill Ellis has called the Rumpelstiltskin principle, the act of naming may make an undefined problem easier to handle. Satanism can give a name to a previously vague sense of insecurity and threat. It also gives meaning to insecurities of living conditions by revealing their cause. Take, for example, the idea that Zambia is not simply poor because of historical coincidence; it is poor because the devil is strong

and needs to be conquered. This explanation does not take away poverty, but it incorporates poverty into a meaningful framework, thereby alleviating some of the insecurity that poverty may cause.

On the other hand, narratives about Satanism can cause at the same time an increase in anxiety. Someone who had not thought of Satanism in connection with their own life may be inspired to do so after hearing a testimony. Starting to see Satanists in one's environment can solve some tensions, but it may also cause other fears and uncertainties: now that the undefined fear has a name, people start to be afraid of Rumpelstiltskin. Pastors in Zambia and other parts of Africa can attest to this: often, the pastors who are most vocal in the struggle against evil spiritual forces are also the first to be accused of Satanism themselves. Spiritual warfare is a dangerous instrument that can blow up in the pastor's face.

At the beginning of this book, I gave the example of a girl who confessed that she was a Satanist during an all-night prayer meeting in a church in a provincial town in Zambia. The girl reportedly said, 'I am a Satanist, sent here to this all-night prayer to bring confusion'. Confusion is a very negatively charged word in contemporary Zambia, so causing confusion is a serious threat. But in this final reflection on narratives about Satanism, it has become clear to me that this girl did not need to bring confusion; the confusion was already there. The participants in the all-night prayer already lived in a world that did not live up to expectations, a world in which appearances can deceive and where there are alternative conceptualisations of reality. The girl who confessed that she was a Satanist did not cause that confusion. Before her confession, the world was already hard to understand, uncertain and contested. Speaking of Satan not only makes the devil appear, but it also expresses the confusions and anxieties of life in contemporary Zambia, sometimes appeasing them and at other times aggravating them.

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Index

Studies and research about Satan in the world have in the past focused on abstract theologies, such as demonology; and often espoused a Western hegemony about the discourse. Quite often, demonology lacks the contextuality and real-life experiences of the people affected. Essentially, it carries particular Western ecclesial baggage that muddies an African understanding of Satan and his activity in the real world, forgetting that an African worldview is not simple. Books on the topic of Satanism are few on the continent of Africa. Here is a study that integrates the depths of theology, church history, and real African experience of Satanism in a complex African worldview. Rarely do you come across a book in Africa about Africans on Satanism that is teeming with narratives, case studies and real-life stories by Africans who have lived the experience of having participated in the underworld and been delivered. The integration of demonology and lived experiences brings about a lived-theology which has been lacking in the African Church for so long. I strongly recommend this book to scholars in African Christianity or African religious studies, as well as to seminary academia in African institutions of higher learning who are preparing pastors for Church ministry.

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◆

Speaking of Satan in Zambia is a thought-provoking, magnificently crafted, and eloquently articulated piece in an area to which scholars have not given much attention. Weaved with a narrative thread from a parade of anti-Satanic discourses, Kroesbergen-Kamps offers a fascinating study of how Christians process and give meaning to perceptions of Satan and Satanism in postcolonial Zambian modernity. She first clears the debris of scholarly discourses on the concepts of Satan and Satanism. Through implicit metaphysical realism and epistemic empathy, Kroesbergen-Kamps guides the readers to anti-Satanism discourses in Zambia. She argues that indigenous religious background conjoins witchcraft notions and experiences and invests the ideas of Satan and Satanism with culture-loaded meanings, which conceptually enable Christians to make sense of the imponderable fluid and contradictory aspects of modernity. Embedded within a religio-secular informed society, Christians narrate and express the meanings of Satan and Satanism as determined by indigenous cosmologies and equivalent categories and simultaneously retain their global dimensions. This excess interpretation overcomes spatiality and legitimates the singular global influence of Satan and Satanism while affirming particular manifestations of evil. This book gives a fresh perspective on anti-Satanic narratives and reminds the reader that more is happening in the hearts and thoughts of Christians than may be construed by all scholars put together.

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