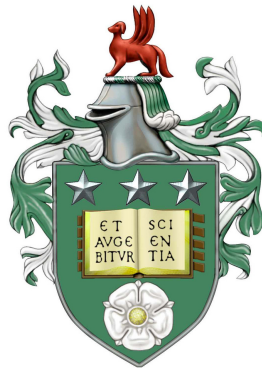


Linguistic power in mid-19th century
correspondence from the Church
Missionary Society Yorùbá mission



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Declaration

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To Sir Terry Pratchett, a truly risen ape.

(1948-2015)

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Abstract

This thesis explores how the religious encounter between 19th century missionaries of the Church Missionary Society and the Yorùbá in the Southwest of, what today is, Nigeria was shaped through linguistically constructed power dynamics in the missionaries' correspondence. The source material for this thesis consists of European and African missionaries' letters, journal entries, and diaries, which are archived in the Cadbury Research Library in Birmingham. In an inductive approach to these documents, I apply methods from the fields of translation studies, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and discourse analysis to the analysis of the construction and expression of linguistic power.

I explore the linguistic and religio-political considerations behind the commission of Yorùbá to writing and the choice of Yorùbá words for Christian concepts in translation work. They reflect that the missionaries had to relinquish some of the interpretational authority over their message in order to accommodate already existing linguistic forms. The linguistic remapping of the Yorùbá world meant a shift of control over the shape of Yorùbá Christianity, as the re-interpretation of elements of 'traditional' belief allowed them to be incorporated by converts into their new faith. I discuss the African agents' linguistic means of positioning themselves in the European-dominated missionary world. Negotiating their identity as African Christians by disaffiliating themselves from past relations, positioning themselves as part of the in-group of missionaries, and indicating their new group affiliations through intertextual links with Christian texts, they constructed a new space and agency for themselves. Finally, the source material is part of the missionary institutional discourse, to which generally only male missionaries and their superiors could contribute. These discursive gatekeepers excluded other voices, and made it possible to construct and tell a narrative of

missionary work as successful and necessary. The discussion of correspondence from two members of excluded groups shows that the social control exerted by means of these restrictions was not absolute, and allowed for alternative forms of agency.

I conclude that the power dynamics constructed and reflected in the missionaries' correspondence must be considered adaptable and responsive to individual and group agency.

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Glossary

Linguistic conventions and terminology

< >	grapheme brackets, indicating the written representation of a sound, or phoneme, in a given language
[]	phoneme brackets, indicating the smallest unit of sound in a given language distinguishing meaning
indexical sign	in Charles Sanders Peirce's theory of signs refers to a sign pointing to, or indexing, something, such as smoke pointing to fire or the personal pronoun 'I' indexing the speaker
langue	abstract, systematic rules and conventions of a language, independent of language users, distinguished from parole; concepts introduced by French linguist Ferdinand de Saussure
parole	concrete, individual instances of use of langue by language users, distinguished from langue; concepts introduced by French linguist Ferdinand de Saussure

Yorùbá terms

aláàfin	ruler of Ọyọ
àdúà Olúwa	Yorùbá term for 'Lord's Prayer'
àrokò	non-verbal Yorùbá communication system, consisting of symbolic gifts or colour codes
	Yorùbá diviner
Èlẹgbára	epithet of Èṣù
ẹṣẹ	one of the verses of the 256 <i>Odu</i> used in Ifá divination
ẹ̀sìn	Yorùbá term for 'world religions', such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism; not generally to Yorùbá rituals and beliefs
Èṣù	Yorùbá messenger deity, in Yorùbá Christian context reconceptualised as Christian devil
Ifá	Yorùbá divination system connected with the deity Ọ̀rúnmilà
ìfólé	expulsion of all non-African Christians from Abéòkúta in 1867, can be translated as 'house breaking'
ọ̀ba	title of Yorùbá rulers
Ọ̀lọ̀run	Yorùbá term for 'owner and inhabitant of the sky', epithet of highest deity in Yorùbá pantheon
Olúwa	Yorùbá term for 'lord' or 'master', epithet of highest deity in Yorùbá pantheon

onígbagbó	Yorùbá term for ‘believer’, used by Yorùbá Christians as a self-designation
oníbúkú	Yorùbá term for ‘book person’, used as an exonym for Yorùbá Christians
òrìṣà	deities in Yorùbá pantheon
Ọ̀rúnmilà	Yorùbá deity associated with Ifá divination
òyìnbó	Yorùbá term referring to white people, also by extension applied to Christians
saro	freed slaves migrating to, what today is, Nigeria in the 1830s

Religious groups and movements

BFBS	British and Foreign Bible Society, founded in 1804, non-denominational organisation aiming to make the Bible available throughout the world
CMS	Church Missionary Society, founded in 1799, associated with the Church of England, initially recruited agents from Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg, from 1815 sent English missionaries to the field as well
LMS	London Missionary Society, founded in 1795, non-denominational, overseas missions focussed on Africa and South Pacific
Pietism	religious reform movement founded in 17th century Germany, focussing on personal faith rather than doctrine and theology

1 Introduction

While “not all differences between persons imply a difference in power”, as Brown and Gilman (1960, p.228) remark, relations and encounters between people frequently involve power relations. These power relations are manifested, for example, in linguistic, religious, cultural, or political aspects of life, as a complex system of hierarchies, dominance, and empowerment. Following Joshua Fishman, “‘power’ [can] be simply defined as ‘control over scarce resources’” (2006, p.5). Control over access to, for example, food supplies or land, but also control over political decision making or interpretational authority evokes an inequality between the individuals or groups involved. The power imbalance between social groups becomes particularly obvious in instances when the encounter can be perceived by one side as invasive, such as political, linguistic, and religious contact during the time of British colonialism.

Let me focus here briefly on religious contact in the early colonial setting. Religious encounters between individuals or groups of different religions or denominations are social events. As such, they frequently involve the negotiation and expression of power relations. In the context of early British colonialism in the mid-19th century, the encounters were generally between individuals or groups of Christians, mainly missionaries closely related to a European tradition of Christianity, and the beliefs and practices of the local populations in the colonised areas. While the missionaries generally did not explicitly work with the colonial forces, they were nevertheless associated with their political and military power, and their endeavour of ‘civilising’ the local populations. The religious encounters, therefore, did not happen on an equal footing, but rather involved, from the outset, a power imbalance in favour of the Christian missionaries. One of the forms of social behaviour contributing to the construction and maintenance

of power relations is language. The association of language with prestige, social and political influence, and religious and cultural dominance, as English was in the mid-19th century setting, is referred to as ‘linguistic power’, denoting not simply intrinsic features of linguistic forms themselves, but the influence, status, and power of those using them (cf. Igboanusi and Peter, 2005, p.129). Linguistic power can be related to the prestige of the language itself as the language of the centre (cf. Phillipson, 1992, p.52) or to the potential of linguistic means to be employed in the construction and expression of ‘reality’, so, in Austin’s (1973) sense, “how [we] do things with words”. The analysis of language in a social setting, such as the religious encounters between Christian missionaries and the local populations, can, therefore, teach us about the power relations and the mechanisms of constructing and deconstructing social control.

1.1 Historical context and linguistic theory

In this thesis, I analyse the language in correspondence written between 1845 and the 1880s in the context of the religious encounter between the Anglican Church Missionary Society (henceforth, ‘CMS’ or ‘Society’) and the local Yorùbá population in what today is Southwest Nigeria . I explore the negotiation, expression, and maintenance of power relations in this setting of social and religious change.

1.1.1 Yorùbá mission

Founded in 1799, the CMS felt “it is the duty highly incumbent upon every Christian to endeavour to propagate the knowledge of the Gospel among the Heathen” (resolution passed at the foundation meeting, quoted in Keen, 1999a,

p.8). After the abolition of slavery in the British empire in 1807, those formerly enslaved in America and the Caribbean were sent to live in Sierra Leone on the West coast of the continent. The missionaries initially sent by the CMS to evangelise the liberated slaves in Sierra Leone were largely of German descent, with slowly increasing numbers of Englishmen (cf. Pugach, 2012, p.9). It is important to note that the Society sent both ordained and lay men¹ to the missionary field. Beginning in the 1820s, the Society also recruited promising young African men to support their work, frequently but not exclusively, born in Sierra Leone to parents who had been formerly enslaved.

A number of those now living in the diaspora had been displaced and sold into slavery from the Yorùbá area in the Southwest of what today is Nigeria. When those *saro* started to return to this area in the late 1830s, the CMS saw an opportunity to expand their missionary work. In 1845 then, a group of Europeans and Africans working for the CMS travelled to Badagry on the coast of the Yorùbá area to set up the CMS Yorùbá mission. While the Europeans sent by the CMS were generally regarded as ‘missionaries’ in the literal sense (cf. Stock, 1905, p.4), their colleagues of African descent were employed by the Society as ‘agents’. There is an argument to be made that the Africans arriving in Badagry, in order to set up the mission in the area, had also been *sent* to the Yorùbá area, and can thus be considered missionaries in this sense. In the literature (cf. for example, Peel, 2000), the two terms are generally used interchangeably, an approach which I adopt in this thesis.

The missionaries in the field corresponded on a regular basis with the CMS headquarters in London in letters as well as journals which they were required to keep and submit quarterly. The documents, today archived in the Cadbury

¹Women were only eligible to formally become missionaries for the CMS in the last two decades of the 19th century.

Research Library at the University of Birmingham, constitute the main source material for this study.

1.1.2 Translation and translatability of religious texts

The translation of religious texts, first of all the Bible, into the local languages of the missionary field has been, and is, at the heart of Protestant missionary activity. This follows Luther's notion of scriptural primacy, the idea that converts should be able to access the texts in their own language. In the 19th century, in particular, the idea was connected with "the concept [...] that only a person's first language was suitable for conveying Christian truths [and] the nationalist idea that each language is unique to a specific ethnic group" (Pugach, 2012, p.26). Apart from their translation work the missionaries frequently also pioneered the analysis, systematic description, and linguistic engineering (cf. for example, Fengyuan, 2004), such as the commission to writing of the local languages; this endeavour is still ongoing, for example, in the work of the Christian linguistics organisation SIL. In the multi-disciplinary field of religious studies there have been manifold contributions to the translations and translatability of religious texts (for example, Nida, 1969; Sanneh, 1990; Meyer, 1999) as well as studies into the history and long-term implications of missionary linguistics (most notably among them probably Pugach, 2012). What is lacking so far, is an analysis of the philological considerations and the weighing of theological and political interests behind translating religious texts in the respective contexts. A key issue of translation studies is the fact that, for example, Christian concepts, such as 'sin' or 'God' in the *singular*, did not necessarily have straightforward equivalents in the local languages. In exploring the intentions behind choosing one word in the target language of the translation over another, the researcher can uncover the intentions

of the translators, as well as the desired and actual effects of the translations. The words chosen in the respective languages and the concepts to which they referred, were given new meanings in the process of translation. In order to better understand how the local populations received the Christian texts translated into their native languages and how the translations, therefore, shaped the religious encounter and the emerging forms of Christianity, a closer analysis of the linguistic choices made is called for. In my thesis, I use excerpts from the CMS missionaries' correspondence on translation work into Yorùbá to discuss the socio-political implications of committing the language to writing, the considerations behind the choice of Yorùbá terms in the translation of the Bible, and the impact of the linguistic re-mapping of the Yorùbá world on the shape of 19th century Yorùbá Christianity.

1.1.3 Linguistic negotiation of religious identity

Personal faith and membership of a religious community are, to varying degrees, part of a person's identity, like gender or social class. As language users, we partly negotiate and express our identity by linguistic means. We determine, for example, our social group by using a common label, or by distinguishing 'us' from 'them' through the use of indexical, or deictic², markers, linguistic signs pointing to extralinguistic social relations, such as personal pronouns. The use of a particular language in itself, or a jargon typically used in a particular, often occupational, context, also indicates a desired affiliation with certain groups or an idea of the self as, for example, a Christian or a missionary, and is frequently linked to social power relations. While religion plays a role in sociolinguistic theory as one social dimension amongst others, such as gender, ethnicity, and education, there is a gap

²from the Greek δεικνύω, 'I show'

in the research concerning the linguistic negotiation of religious identity (cf. also Spolsky, 2006, p.7), particularly in situations of religious encounter. Pragmatic tools for analysing the referential use of language for negotiating in-group–out-group status (cf. for example, van Dijk, 1991) have been developed and described (for example, Atkinson, 1988; Meinhof and Galasinski, 2005; Coupland, 2007), but not systematically applied to the issue of religious identity.

Settings of religious encounter and the context of religious conversion, in particular, present a hitherto almost untapped wealth of insights into the dynamics of negotiating religious identity and the manifold relations with the power dynamics at play in social encounters. I explore in this thesis the linguistic strategies of negotiating and expressing religious identity and social belonging found in the correspondence of Yorùbá converts³ working for the CMS. In analysing their use of linguistic in-group markers, such as personal pronouns or a common label, their expressions of disaffiliation with their former social and religious groups, and how they referred to Christian texts in their writings, I show how these men created a new space in the missionary world and expressed their concept of themselves as part of the Christian narrative of evangelisation.

1.1.4 Discursive construction of religious encounter

Power relations established and expressed in connection with language are particularly prominent with regard to the participation in social discourse. Blom-

³The term ‘conversion’ is perhaps not entirely accurate to describe the process which meant that a number of Yorùbá people started to identify as Christians. It cannot be seen as the act one of embracing one religion to the exclusion of another; Yorùbá spirituality and practices were very much intertwined with local politics and social norms, and can, therefore, hardly be sufficiently described with the imported term of ‘religion’. I am going to use the term ‘conversion’ therefore, as heuristic category only here. The same applies to the term ‘religion’, which I explain in more detail in Section 3.4.

maert (2005) considers the ability to contribute to or critique social discourse a crucial aspect in how social inequality is linked with language. Power imbalances in his view derive from individuals or groups being granted or denied the ability to “engage in socially ‘placeable’ communication” (p.394). Therefore, the question of who can contribute to and critique a discourse of, for example, a political or a social nature, determines the power relations surrounding a particular discourse event, as well as the question of whose ‘story’ can be told and received. Restrictions to this engagement in discourse can derive, for example, from a lack of literacy, language skills, or knowledge about the issue, but also from social dimensions such as class, race, gender, and religious grouping. Critical discourse analysis discusses the issue of restrictions to discourse and the subsequent exclusion from social spheres (for example, Fairclough, 1999 and 2001; van Dijk, 2001 and 2002). The analysis of discourse constructing and telling the story of religious encounter has been neglected so far, however.

Answering the question of who can for which reasons engage in the discourse surrounding the setting of religious encounter and, perhaps more crucially, who *cannot*, can give the researcher a valuable insight into the power dynamics at work in this setting. I argue in this thesis that the CMS correspondence about the missionary efforts in the Yorùbá area constitutes an institutional discourse, which generally only the in-group of Christian religious professionals could contribute to, effectively excluding other groups, such as non-Christians and missionary wives, from the construction of the narrative of missionary work.

The current research situation in the areas of religious studies and linguistics neglects the analysis of the power of language to create, reflect, and interpret power relations and ‘reality’ in inter-religious contact. As Peel (2000) points out,

[so far the] theory embraces little sense of the uneven power relations and the bitter conflicts that have often attended on religious change, which arise from the fact that religions are not just ways of explaining and modifying experience but are formative of communities and the power structures within them (p.4).

Thus, what is lacking is a more synthesised account of African Christian history that reveals a complex system of religious and societal hierarchies embedded in language. Aspiring to initiate an interdisciplinary dialogue, my research is archival. The manuscripts of CMS missionary correspondence give a taste of the missionaries' religious and philological zeal, the often unpredictable complexities of the contact with Yoruba language and religion, spiritual and personal setbacks, and the socio-political impact of missionary work on the area. My research, therefore, takes an innovative step towards the analysis of power dynamics in scenarios of religious contact, thereby adding to existing anthropological, historical and mis-siological approaches to the CMS correspondence and missionary activity more generally. By applying linguistic methods to a field traditionally covered by religious studies, I reach across the disciplinary divide and highlight the importance of rethinking traditional boundaries of knowledge and methodology.

1.2 Research questions and structures

My thesis aims to give answers to the following three research questions developed in response to the gaps in academic research and scholarly literature:

- What were the effects of missionary linguistic engineering and translation work on the development and direction of Yorùbá Christianity in the 19th century?
- Which linguistic strategies did Yorùbá missionaries use to navigate and express their new identities as African Christians?

- Since only a limited number of people could contribute to and interact with the discourse of missionary correspondence, how did this affect the picture the documents painted of missionary work and life in the Yorùbá area?

My thesis is structured broadly by these principal research questions. In **Chapter 2**, I introduce my primary source material, discuss the rationale behind the time frame which my research covers, and the process of identifying my research questions. I also critically reflect on my qualitative methodological approach and its advantages and disadvantages, and elaborate on additional methodological tools which I used in my research. **Chapter 3** familiarises the reader with the geographical, historical, and religious backdrop within which this thesis is situated, and briefly introduces the key figures of the CMS Yorùbá mission, such as Samuel Ajayi Crowther and Charles Gollmer. **Chapters 4, 5, and 6** each address one of the research questions in detail. I discuss the commission of Yorùbá to writing and the standardisation required for a uniform orthography in **Chapter 4**. The chapter also investigates the philological and theological considerations behind the translation of Christian texts into Yorùbá, and follows the fate of the Yorùbá deities in this process. I highlight the dynamics of interpretational authority and the definatory power between the missionaries and Yorùbá converts effected by translation and linguistic engineering. **Chapter 5** explores the complex interrelations of language and identity. I show how the Yorùbá CMS agents in their correspondence used linguistic means to revisit their past, define and express the new boundaries of their African Christian identity, and establish links with the Christian tradition in their writing. I compare their negotiation of identity with that of their European colleagues, arguing that for the Yorùbá missionaries these linguistic strategies were the pillars of finding and writing a new space for themselves in the Christian narrative. In **Chapter 6**, finally, I

present my source material as a constitutive part of CMS missionary discourse in the Yorùbá area and thus an instrument of discursive power. I investigate which picture of the missionary efforts and the local population the contemporary, as well as the modern, reader was, and is, able to get from these documents. I argue that the fact that a considerable portion of the people involved and affected by missionary work, for example the non-Christian population and missionary wives, could not contribute to this discourse, resulted in a biased, one-sided depiction of the situation on the ground. My conclusion in **Chapter 7** summarises and synthesises the main arguments and themes discussed throughout this thesis, as well as presenting opportunities for future research.

The benefits of this research will primarily be the methodological contribution to the area of (post-)colonial studies and the study of African Christianity and religious contact. Outside of this field, the benefits of my research extend to linguistic audiences as I illustrate an cross-disciplinary approach.

2 Source material and methodological approach

My interest in the Yorùbá mission archives developed during the research for my Magister dissertation at the Universität Heidelberg in 2011. While reading and writing about present-day Nigerian language policies in education, more precisely about the issue of whether English or the local languages should be the medium of education⁴ in Nigerian schools, I first encountered literature about the missionary and colonial origin of these language policies, which dated back to the middle of the 19th century. It became clear that the choice of which language would be the medium of education as well as evangelisation had been far more than a mere practicality. The political dimension of this choice and its connection with power relations between missionaries, the non-Christian local population, African Christian converts, as well as the colonial administration towards the end of the 19th century, intrigued me.

These initial reflections on the central role of written and spoken language – sermons, Bible translations, literacy acquisition, pastoral conversations – for establishing and negotiating power relations between the individual groups involved in missionary activity, sparked an interest in examining other aspects of the relationship between language and power in the missionary context. An initial literature search on the issue yielded no satisfactory results. There seemed to be an abundance of research on missionary history of the area (cf. for example, Akintoye, 1971; Ajayi, 1974; Sanneh, 1983; Clarke, 1986; Peel, 2000) and a number of publications on missionary translation work (cf. for example, Sanneh, 1990; Meyer, 1999; Nida, 2001; Renju, 2004; Abdul-Raof, 2005). I consulted liter-

⁴Rather than calling the linguistic distribution in the country nowadays diglossic, it might be more accurate to follow Fasold, who suggests the term “superposed bilingualism” (1984, p.54) because English and the local languages are not related. The term *diglossia* classically refers to the use of two language varieties, a *High* and a *Low* variety, which are used in complementary domains of life (cf. Ferguson, 1959).

ature on language and power, especially in the colonial context (cf. for example, Bangboṣe, 2000; Igboanusi, 2005; Apter, 2007), as well as on the relationship between language and the expression and negotiation of identity (cf. for example, Meinhof and Galasinski, 2005; Edwards, 2009; Buchholtz and Hall, 2010). However, I was not able to find existing research combining these issues and providing answers to the questions at hand: how was linguistic power expressed in missionary work and what significance did it have for their success or failure in evangelising the local population? Simultaneously, I was pondering a PhD project to pursue after graduation which would involve my background in both linguistics and religious studies. Attempting to find an answer, or rather, answers to this question of linguistic power in missionary work, I felt, would provide me with the opportunity to bridge this gap between linguistic research and the study of religion. Since the CMS had dominated the missionary field in Nigeria in the middle of the 19th century, starting with the Yorùbá mission in 1844, it seemed like the logical conclusion that this particular missionary society should be in the focus of my PhD research.

2.1 Source material

In August 2012, even before officially starting my PhD, I then undertook the first of what would eventually be eleven trips to the Cadbury Research Library at the University of Birmingham. Tucked away in the basement of Muirhead Tower on Edgbaston Campus, the Research Library is exactly what one would expect an archive to be like; there is almost no natural light but a constant temperature due to air conditioning, and only pencils are allowed in the Heslop Reading Room to protect the valuable manuscripts and artworks kept there. Apart from the Records of the CMS, the archive houses the Chamberlain Papers, the YMCA

Archives, and the Mingana Collection, among others. Having communicated with the extraordinarily friendly staff beforehand, the registration procedure was comparatively straightforward. Only a letter of introduction from a supervisor or a member of staff at an academic institution and proof of identity are required to register, since the archive is open to the public.

The Records of the CMS comprise records of the Society's administrative departments in London, including the Parent Committee, also called the Committee of Correspondence, Finance, Candidates, and the records of Overseas Missions between 1799 and 2009. The Records, therefore, facilitate research into ecclesiastical and secular history, missiology, anthropology, as well as sociological and linguistic domains. Initially, the Society endeavoured to fulfil its duty of 'spreading the word' in Sierra Leone, to where former West African slaves and their descendants had been relocated by their British liberators. In the early 1840s, the Yorùbá born among the inhabitants of Sierra Leone started returning to their home, which subsequently led the CMS to establish the Yorùbá mission in order to further promote Christianity in the area (see Figure 1). The CMS Parent Committee was responsible for observing the agents' progress and conduct. As Peel remarks,

for most of the 19th century [the Society's] agents were [...] expected to write [quarterly] journals or 'journal extracts' for dispatch to [the] headquarters at Salisbury Square in London (2000, p.9).

In the second half of the 19th century missionaries started writing annual report letters, which were later standardised to provide information on the mission stations in a comparable format. Besides the journals and the annual reports, there are letters, and a small number of personal diaries. The journals sent to London consisted of pre-selected excerpts of more comprehensive records. The missionaries selected passages they thought might be interesting, entertaining,

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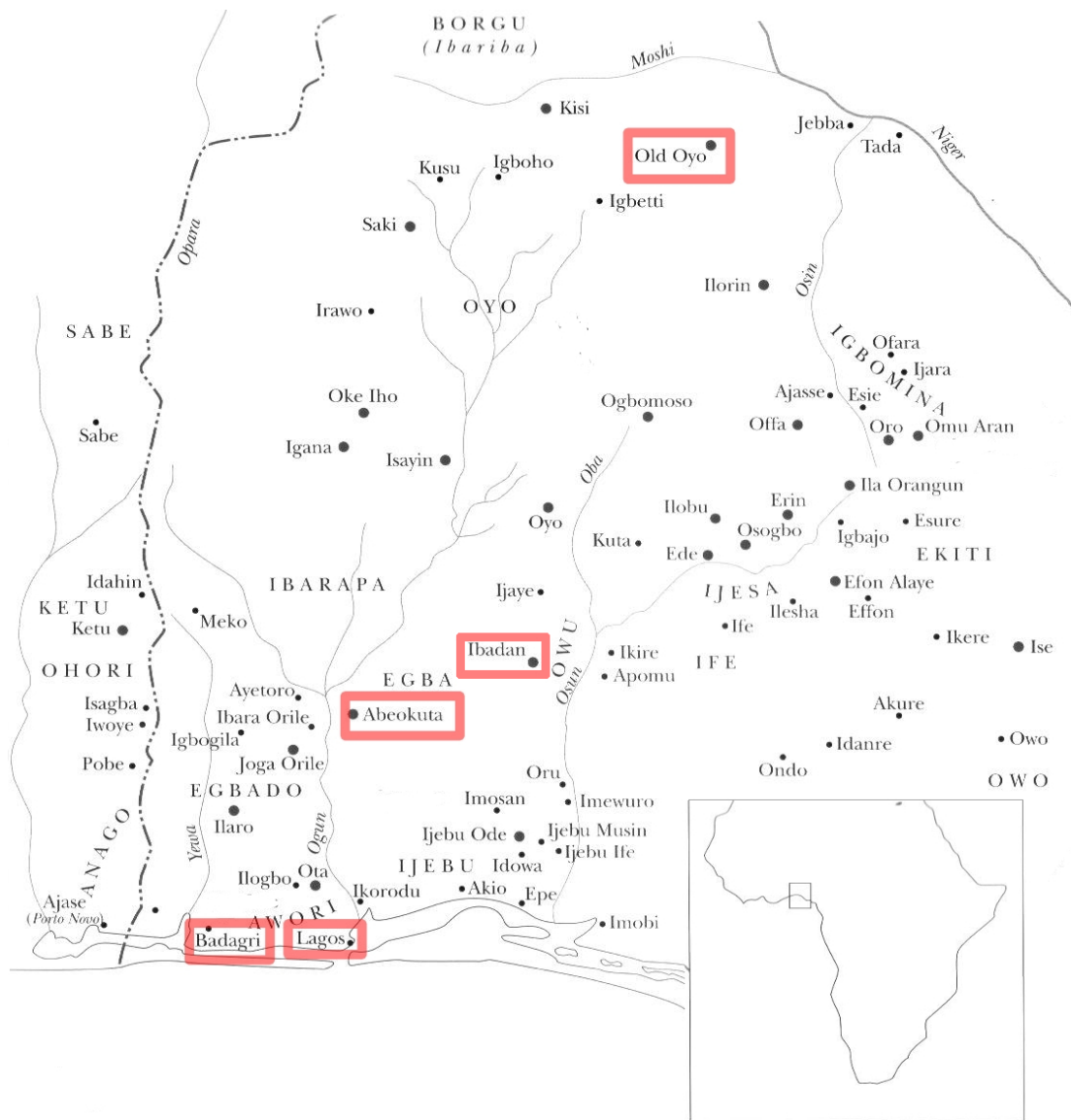


Figure 1: Map of Yorùbáland (adapted from: <http://www.randafricanart.com>) The red boxes mark the most prominent towns in the 19th century Yorùbá area.

or informative for their European audience. There are no extant copies of the original full documents (cf. Keen, 1999b, p.43).

In the Society's headquarters, the original copies of the incoming correspondence were filed and indexed. Also, "copies [...] were made by clerks at headquarters of quires of papers which were bound into mission books" (Keen, 1999a, p.17), which can be found in the CMS archive as well. The Parent Committee used the information in the journal excerpts

to inform its policy decisions [...]. [Also, the extracts] were edited and excerpted for publication in the periodicals through which the CMS kept in touch with its friends and subscribers at home and around the world (Peel, 2000, p.9).

After the *ifólé*, the expulsion of all whites from Abéòkúta in 1867, which forced them to seek protection in Lagos, the European missionaries, as opposed to the African agents, ceased writing journals. Peel points out that

after 1880, when Europeans were writing only letters with a few longer reports, some 80 percent of the most valuable material is provided by Yoruba authors (2000, p.11).

The Secretaries in London corresponded with CMS missionaries overseas by sending letters, both as official representatives of the Committee and on a personal level. These letters, too, were copied into letter books and thus filed and indexed.

The classification system for the papers reflects the historical development of the mission in West Africa. The earliest documents for the Yoruba area are "in the Sierra Leone mission [...], as that mission covered all work in West Africa until 1844" (Keen, 1999a, p.2). The CMS referencing system allocated index numbers to their individual overseas missions. Incoming correspondence from Samuel Ajayi Crowther during his time in the Sierra Leone mission, for example, is filed under CMS B OMS CA1 O79, where B indicates the CMS Foreign Division, OMS indi-

cates an overseas mission, CA1 indicates incoming correspondence from the Sierra Leone mission, and O79 is the index number for Samuel Ajayi Crowther's correspondence. In this thesis I use eight individual documents from the Sierra Leone mission, marked CA1 (see Appendix A). The information from these documents was particularly useful for a more in-depth understanding of the beginnings of the Yorùbá mission and early translation work into Yorùbá. The Yorùbá mission itself

was set up as an administrative unit in 1844 [...]. The CMS referencing system for archive material recognises the new place of activity of Samuel A. Crowther, Charles Gollmer, and Henry Townsend by filing their correspondence under CA2, the new token for the Yoruba mission (Keen, 1999a, p.2).

When initially planning my PhD project, I had to decide on a time frame for which I would consider the archive material relevant for my research. Since I planned my research to be concerned chiefly with missionary correspondence from the Yorùbá mission, the most obvious date after which missionaries' correspondence should be considered for my project, is the official starting year of the Yorùbá mission, namely 1844. A number of CMS agents, such as Samuel Ajayi Crowther and Charles Gollmer, who would become pioneers in the Yorùbá mission, had already worked in the Sierra Leone mission, however. Therefore, it became clear that I had to include certain documents from their earlier work in order to be able to trace the history of the Yorùbá mission and to demonstrate how these agents became involved in the new mission.

A feasible end point turned out to be considerably harder to determine. Initially, I had planned to research in depth the long-term ramifications of 19th century missionary language use, and to trace the link with early 20th century Yorùbá Christianity and the emerging Nigerian nationalism in the material kept

in the archive in Ìbàdàn. It would turn out that limited access to primary source material in the archive was not conducive to this endeavour. I decided to discuss this aspect of the research in the final chapter of this thesis in order to give a rounded historical picture of the effects of 19th century missionary work in the area.

A new end date for the consideration of primary source material still had to be determined. The increasing political and military influence of British colonialists in the Yorùbá area⁵ in the middle of the 1880s can be considered a possible factor. Intra-Yorùbá wars had several decades before already brought British military and political assistance to the area. In 1877, Ìbàdàn attacked Ègbá troops and found itself faced with an Ègbá-Ìjẹ̀bù alliance. This conflict led to almost a decade of warfare, which British troops finally broke up in 1886, thereby strengthening their military as well as economic position not only on the coast but also in the hinterland. So, slowly, as Peel points out,

colonial rule came to the Yoruba. They mostly acquiesced – whether from a feeling of exhaustion with the wars, or from a hearty regard for British power, or because they did not see where British ‘protection’ would lead before it was too late (2000, p.44).

This also entailed a paradigm change in missionary policy. While especially the European missionaries often had been forced in the past “to acknowledge that they were welcomed or tolerated for reasons other than the one that brought them, that of preaching the gospel” (Walls, 2007, p.96), they now collaborated more with the colonial rulers. An increased racial tension also entered the missionary world, as Ayandele (1966, p.205) remarks:

Never before had the Nigerian peoples been confronted with so menacing a European overlordship in Church and state as in these years.

⁵In Chapter 3, I discuss the geography of the area in more detail.

These were the years of military expeditions, of multiplication and extension of European commercial firms who elbowed out the African businessmen, of extension of British administration into the interior, and of the implementation of the concept, held by Europeans, of European racial superiority over Africans. The racial concept, by no means new, intruded into the Christian Church and unleashed on many occasions racial antagonism between the European missionaries on the one hand and the Ethiopians⁶ on the other (cf. also Sundkler, 2000, p.230).

After 1880, European missionaries – in contrast to their African colleagues – stopped writing journals altogether. McKenzie (1997, p.15) also points out that “[a]fter 1880 the CMS archives [...] changed their method of arranging the incoming papers from Yorubaland” (cf. also Keen, 1999b, p.43). While the change in writing style and choice of content in later documents certainly would merit closer attention, the changing role of missionaries in the newly emerging colonial world, the changing position of African agents in the increasingly European dominated missionary structures, and the changing nature of the source material eventually pointed to 1880 as a feasible cut-off point for the inclusion of source material in the research project.

The archive on the Yorùbá mission is comprised of 26 volumes, 21 boxes and 4480 individual documents for the period of 1844 until 1934. A catalogue search revealed that for the period relevant for my research, 1844 until 1880, there are 3 volumes and 4480 documents in the archive. The archive material has been partly digitised and is also in parts available on microfilm in the Cadbury Research Library. I use excerpts from 45 individual CA2 documents in this thesis (see Appendix A). Before working with the archive material for the first time, I

⁶The term here refers not to Ethiopian nationals but rather to the entirety of the African peoples. Ethiopianism as a movement was born out of the desire for political and religious independence from colonial powers. The origin of the term can be traced back to the founding of the Ethiopian Church in 1892, the first independent Christian church on African soil.

had decided that my focus would be on the correspondence written by missionary agents in the field. Their journal excerpts, letters, and reports present the ideal basis for analysing how language and power relations interacted in the missionary context. The agents lived and worked among the local population and were thus directly in contact with those they aimed to evangelise. It was their views on language use and translation work, but also their way of expressing their perspective on their work, the locals, and not least themselves, which I felt would yield the most comprehensive insights. While the archive also contains the Society's Annual Reports, documenting the Society's progress and development, as well as the minutes of meetings and policy decisions, my decision was to study the documents reflecting the perspectives of the missionaries on the ground, as they had a more immediate impact on the progress or failure of the work and the relationships with the local population.

My visits to Birmingham have also enabled me to establish a link with the Centre of African Studies and renowned Yorùbá studies scholar, Professor Karin Barber, who has kindly advised me on questions of Yorùbá language and culture throughout the three years of research. I also had a chance to sit in with Professor Barber's Yorùbá language course on a few occasions, which in addition to working with textbooks by Kayode Fakinlede, Professor Barber and Dr. Akin Oyètádé⁷, helped me to gain a working knowledge of the language and greatly benefited my research on translation work.

I found soon after starting my work with the archive material in the Cadbury Research Library that I needed more information on the translation work undertaken by CMS missionaries in the Yorùbá area. I decided to travel to Cambridge to consult the British and Foreign Bible Society's (BFBS) archive in the University Library in Cambridge. Like the CMS archive in the Cadbury Research

⁷I discuss the Yorùbá textbooks and learning the language further in Section 2.2 below.

Library in Birmingham, the BFBS archive is open to the public; however, a letter of introduction from and an affiliation with an academic institution is required to register as a reader. The archive proved to be a invaluable resource for my research. Founded in 1804, the BFBS, not unlike the CMS, was very much a child of its time, which saw the foundation of a number of mission and Bible societies (cf. Canton, 1904, p.3). Its objective in its philanthropy and catholicity was in accordance with its founders' efforts against the slave-trade, and for the spread of the Christian faith: "To print the Scriptures without note or comment, to scatter them broadcast, not only in [the British Isles] but throughout the peoples of the world" (Canton, 1904, p.4).

The BFBS archive in Cambridge, amongst others, holds Samuel Ajayi Crowther's and Charles Gollmer's correspondence with the BFBS on the Yorùbá translation of the scriptures, and also letters by the BFBS Editorial and Translations Department. The documents held in Cambridge were an indispensable resource for the reconstruction of the process of translating Christian texts into Yorùbá as they contain information on the translation timeline, the people involved in the various stages of the process, and financial and sales figures. Also, the BFBS archive holds the original translations of several chapters of the Bible into Yorùbá, which I was able to use in parts for the chapter on translation work in this thesis (Chapter 4). The records of the Editorial and Translations Department, which are most relevant for my research on translation, can be found in the BFBS referencing system under BSA E3. They contain 263 boxes, 102 volumes, three files, and one packet for the period between 1830 and 1996. The original translations can be found under BSS. The number of documents from the BFBS archive that I use in this thesis is limited. With the exception of the original translations, the BFBS documents mainly confirmed information found in the CMS material and

helped to establish a more coherent timeline of the translation work undertaken. I use five documents from the BFBS archive in this thesis (see Appendix A). It is important to note for future researchers that not all of the documents available in the BFBS archive in Cambridge can be found through the online catalogue⁸; I received invaluable support from assistant librarian Dr. Onesimus Ngundu in finding the documents relevant for my research during my two study visits in Cambridge.

Since originally, my research was intended to extend into the early 20th century, in order to explore the ramifications of 19th century missionary language use on religious coexistence and tensions of early 20th century Yorùbáland, and the rise of Nigerian nationalism in the same period, I planned a research visit to the Ìbàdàn branch of the Nigerian National Archive in April 2014. The branch

is very rich in official papers of all Federal, Regional, and State Governments; papers of native and local authorities; papers of semi-public bodies and institutions; papers of private individuals and families, as well as those of ecclesiastical bodies and missions. (Heap, 1991, p.159)

During this four-week visit I planned to access private letters and journals of prominent political and religious figures like Herbert Macaulay, the grandson of Samuel Ajayi Crowther and pioneer of Nigerian nationalism, as well as the brothers Alexander Babatunde Akinyele, CBE, bishop of Ìbàdàn, and HRH Isaac Babalola Akinyele, the second Christian *Olúbàdàn*, king of Ìbàdàn.

As expected, the research visit required a considerable planning phase, which started in October 2013. Dr. Frank Polzenhagen, a former mentor at Universität Heidelberg, facilitated contact with Professor Herbert Igboanusi at the University of Ìbàdàn. Professor Igboanusi kindly offered to host me in his family home during

⁸The online catalogue can be found here: <http://janus.lib.cam.ac.uk/db/node.xsp?id=EAD%2FGBR%2F0374;sib0=10>, (last viewed 7th April 2015)

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my stay in Ìbàdàn and supported my visa application with an invitation letter. I then successfully applied for funding for my travels to the Spalding Trust, which generously funded me with £1,900 to cover the costs for vaccinations, my driver from Lagos to Ìbàdàn and back, costs for the return flight from Leeds to Lagos via Amsterdam, hotel costs for my first and last night in Lagos, fees for the visa application, and the registration fee for the archive. The University of Leeds required me to fill in a Fieldwork Risk Assessment Form for high-risk fieldwork, which was accepted with no additions or changes required (see Appendix B).



Figure 2: Photo of Nigerian National Archive, branch Ìbàdàn

The archive in Ìbàdàn is housed in a pastel-coloured building in the heart of campus of the University of Ìbàdàn (see Figure 2) and holds archive material for the Western region of the country. Registration required a photograph and a letter of introduction. A conversation with the head of the archive about my research aims was also necessary. The negotiation about the registration fee was facilitated by my host; eventually I paid a registration fee of 10,000 Naira (about £50). De-

spite considerable difficulties in accessing archive material, I was able to obtain some information on the political dimension of 19th century missionary work, for example documenting conflicts between the CMS and newly emerging native churches, particularly concerning the questions of polygamy and the opening of native churches for those previously excommunicated from missionary churches. Reverend Melville Jones's correspondence (CMS Y 1 6 1) from the first decade of the twentieth century in particular proved insightful in this matter. Although Jones' correspondence is outside of my period of study ending in 1880, his writing helped me to understand the long-term religio-political repercussions of missionary work and actions in the 19th century. The archive also holds private correspondence between Jones and his wife (CMS Y 2 5 3), which was useful for the chapter on institutional discourse for this thesis (Chapter 6). The situation on the ground made it clear after a few days, however, that I had to change my initial research plans. I decided to focus on the publications available in the archive which shed light on the history of Nigeria, with a focus on the Ìbàdàn area (for example, Lloyd, 2009), and which discussed Yorùbá spirituality and rituals (for example, Dennett, 1968). They proved valuable for my thesis chapter on the historical and anthropological background in which my research is set (Chapter 3). I left Ìbàdàn after two weeks due to the limitations in accessing relevant material; the research visit nevertheless gave me an invaluable opportunity to experience present-day Christianity in the Yorùbá area, and a deeper understanding of the intertwined nature of the religious and the public sphere in the country.

Given the nature of the source material for my research project, a few words should be said about the editorial work my research entailed. The missionaries' correspondence consists of manuscripts written in English (see Figures 3, 4, 5). The only exception to this are documents which contain translations of religious

Lajos
Press Office
Nov. 26. 1910

Dear Miss Miller,

It has been
very disappointing to me that
I have been so long to see
through the receipt of your
very kind & welcome letter of
some loss & the parcel has

Figure 3: Document from CMS archives (ACC343 O3), detail

texts into Yorùbá. My archival work involved transcribing relevant passages of this handwritten material. In some cases this proved not to be a problem as the handwriting of the missionary in question was neat and easily legible (see Figure 5). At other times, the process was made more difficult not only by the poor quality of the agent's handwriting (see Figures 3 and 4), but frequently also by the fact that thin paper was used, which allowed the writing on the other side to be visible, as can be seen in Figure 5. As far as possible, I have kept the original orthography and punctuation in my transcripts in order to document contemporary and idiosyncratic language use. In cases where spelling or punctuation deviate considerably from modern standard English or render the passage incomprehensible or ambiguous, I have added the modern spelling or provided the context of the

could suggest, then, better of members
 they - local is with much pleasure
 & delight, especially as it refers
 sent to you in the preliminary with
 some to the preliminary with
 with what I have been advised
 to an important section of
 Southern Virginia, that the
 it is by earlier prayer, that the
 program & success of the great way
 contribute much toward spreading
 the knowledge of your cause
 in Virginia & the Carolinas, he
 many meetings to be in the Carolinas
 & the formation of a conference
 of Conference & Churches of
 Beulah & Home & Home
 may be a not your true blessing
 they especially upon the strong
 - they in abundant number of
 it as a refuge temporary for
 both prayer & success
 I include them or else to
 you under their blessing, however
 the Conference with the great
 was small, many of them
 God & your spirit of love, hope
 this & glory to be expected
 in regard to the situation since
 the work of the Holy Spirit
 a time they receive, but under
 the wish that they may be helped
 to receive their own share.

The number of people to be
 section with your school has
 since a while - have been
 rapidly shrank, but the new
 people seem to be growing
 taking on a more & more
 in the whole of your father
 it seems, & therefore he shall
 if you should be able
 to have a sale of work this
 year it would be very
 also but in the spirit of
 it is pleasure of prayer & joy
 in every respect, & the
 Ben F. D. & which is so
 a general interest in the work
 with members to reach the
 part again to them, private
 workers, prayer & the
 another upon which we have
 for blessing upon our people
 work, & it may of you - tell to
 more others to do for the Lord
 that we desire to do ourselves
 but which it may be circumstances
 prevent us from doing.
 The thing to be about 1000
 by work in my fellow laborers
 are being prayer for to far off
 beyond the Atlantic, & other
 Christians, many has of our
 through prayer to leave & lands.
 you ask for to furnish in
 regard to publications, etc.
 having with publication of

Figure 4: Document from CMS archives (ACC343 O3)

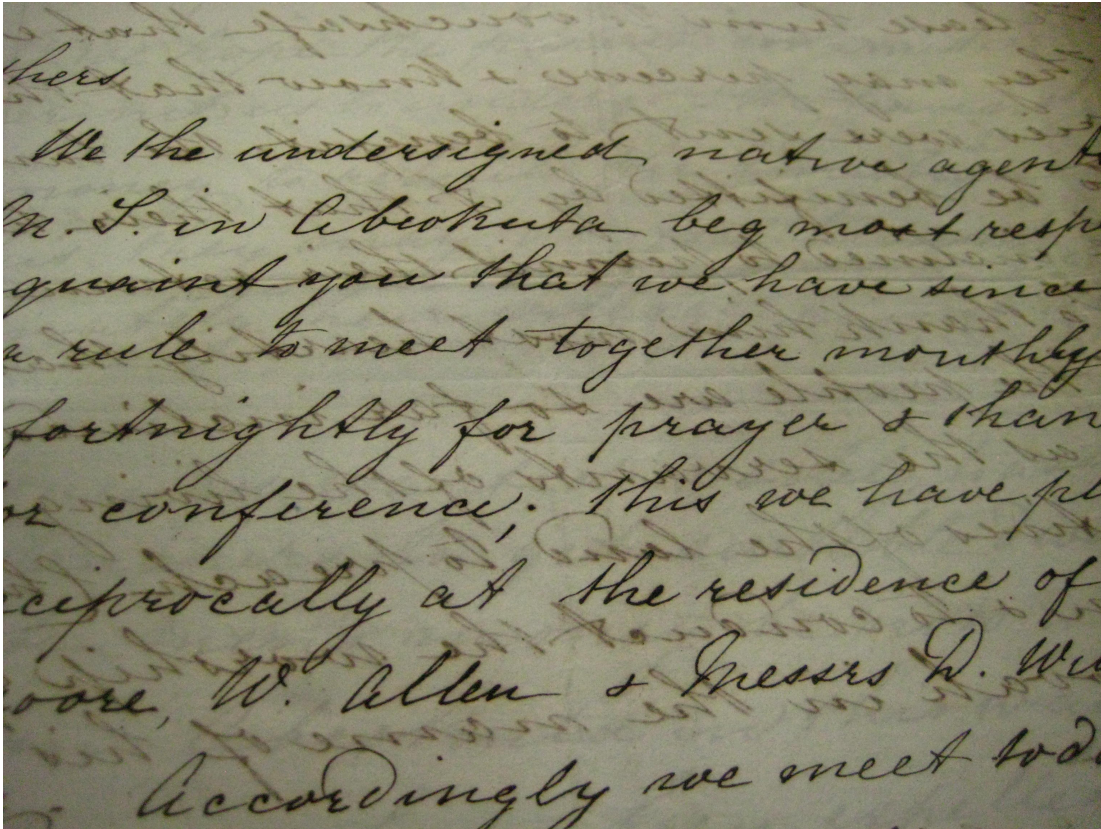


Figure 5: Document from CMS archives (CA2 O17 12)

passage for clarification. It should also be noted that for a large number of CMS agents in West Africa, English was a second language. The CMS recruited their missionaries not only in England but also in what today is Germany, and later also from the ranks of African Christians. For the correspondence this meant that the level of language proficiency varied considerably. When David Hinderer, for example, in a letter to Henry Venn argues that Muslims “are not excluded from our Mission to ,go into all the world’ to ,preach the gospel to every creature,” (CA2 O49 5, 16th July 1851) he does not use inverted commas to mark off his quotation but instead makes use of German punctuation rules. John Andrew Maser mentions “a narrow Greek of the [river] Ogun” as well as arriving in Lagos at “6 o gl. p.m.” (CA2 O68 111, 7th April 1853). The use of <g> instead of <c>

points to his Southern German origin, where in spoken German the difference between *voiceless* and *voiced* consonants is frequently blurred. In these cases I have also kept the original spelling, syntax, punctuation and lexis and have only occasionally added comments for clarification.

Equally, I have not adjusted the spelling of place names⁹ or personal names, for example of deities¹⁰, to modern Yorùbá spelling. No consistent written form of Yorùbá existed before the systematic commission of the language to writing by the CMS missionaries beginning in the late 1830s, although Ajayi hints at previous attempts by travellers to the area (cf. Ajayi, 1960, p.49). Standardised orthography developed throughout the 19th century, which means that particularly in early Yorùbá mission correspondence the spelling of proper names varies¹¹.

2.2 Methodological approach to the source material

I have chosen an inductive approach to my research, deriving from my source material generalisable inferences about the role of linguistic power for the construction and reflection of religious and socio-political reality in the context of the 19th century Yorùbá mission. My approach is consistent with Strauss and Corbin's (1998) notion that “[the] researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data” (p.12).

As Thomas (2006) remarks, “the inductive approach is a systematic procedure

⁹For example, in 1845, Crowther writes about the “**Abbe-Okuta** mission” (CA2 O31 89, journal excerpt), whereas Jones in 1903 talks about a female missionary “going up to **Abeokuta** for a few weeks to get a little beginning at the language” (CMS Y 1/6/1, Melville Jones, letter to to Mr. Baylis, 27th October 1903, Christchurch Lagos).

¹⁰For example, Charles Gollmer, on 10th October 1858, reports that “Among [a number of] Idols delivered [was] **Eṣu** the Devil” (CA2 O43 129), whereas in a 1857 collection of Yorùbá hymns the same deity is referred to as ‘**Eṣu**’ (CA2 O87 88 A/B).

¹¹I discuss the Yorùbá sound system and notation in more detail in Section 2.2.

for analyzing qualitative data” (p.238); thus focussing on a close reading, rather than the collection of quantitative data, naturally limited the percentage of the potential source material I was able to consult. A quantitative approach might have been useful, for example, for my research on the negotiation of identity by linguistic means – potentially yielding data on how often certain expressions were used by European missionaries and African missionaries respectively. However, I would like to argue that being able to pay close attention to the co-text and context of the material I read and selected, tremendously improved my understanding and made a more relevant data selection possible. This fact is aggravated by the fact that the majority of the source material is not available in digitised form. For a quantitative approach, this would have meant a, if not complete then at least large-scale, transcription of the CMS and BFBS archives for the time in question in order to be able to gather meaningful data, and would have been an impractical approach considering the limited time scale of PhD research.

Swinton and Mowat remark that “[a] good piece of qualitative research is like a detective story without a fixed ending” (2007, p.30), hinting at the close link between the inductive method with theory emerging from the data and the qualitative approach allowing close reading and in-depth engagement with the source material. In order to start in my very own detective story, I had to find initial leads on which documents might yield relevant data for my research. I, therefore, consulted secondary literature on West African Christian mission history. Saneh (1983), Meyer (1999), Peel (2000), and Ward (2006), in particular, indicated names of influential missionaries, dates of important events, and specific documents or passages in them which address linguistic issues. During a first visit to the CMS archive, I then pursued these leads, further explored the documents referred to in the secondary literature, and followed intertextual cross-references

in order to enhance my initial set of clues and create a sample of source material. Then, during several visits to the archives in Birmingham within the first few months of my research, I indiscriminately transcribed any passages from the documents which explicitly referred to language or language use or where linguistic means were used to act, or to interpret or construct power relations. After this initial period of hermeneutic reading, a list of possible topics for further research had emerged:

- language skills,
- ways to refer to the non-Christian population and customs,
- the ways in which the missionaries referred to themselves,
- (language) education,
- translation and linguistic engineering,
- argumentative techniques in evangelisation,
- language use in church services,
- denoting group boundaries.

As Swinton and Mowat point out, the process of data analysis involves “bringing order, structure and meaning to the complicated mass of qualitative data that the researcher generates during the research process” (2007, p.57). In order to bring more order and structure to my source material, more systematic research was necessary. Towards the end of my first year of research I could confirm that the topics initially discovered were indeed recurring in the CMS archive and could be linked to larger linguistic themes:

- translation, including the special status of religious texts, semiotic issues of translation, and language standardisation and linguistic engineering;

- negotiating identity, power and status by using linguistic means as markers of group boundaries;
- intertextual bonds to legitimate missionary activities and locate them in the Christian narrative of ‘spreading the word’;
- the status of the documents themselves as a means of controlling access to the institutional discourse of missionary work.

I eventually felt that these could be summed up in three major themes which I decided to pursue in-depth during the second and third year of my research, namely the philological, theological and cultural considerations behind translation work and its ramifications for Yorùbá Christianity (Chapter 4), linguistic means of negotiating identity and space, in particular for African missionaries (Chapter 5), and the meaning and consequences of the fact that the documents themselves constituted part of the institutional discourse of missionary work (Chapter 6).

Let me draw attention to additional methodological ‘tools’ used in this research. For my research on Yorùbá translation work it was crucial to be able to read the BFBS manuscripts containing original translations in Yorùbá. When I started my research I had no language skills in Yorùbá, so a substantial part of the first year of my PhD was dedicated to gaining at least a good working knowledge of the written language. Since no language classes were available in Leeds or the surrounding area, I decided to start by working through Kayode Fakinlede’s *Beginner’s Yorùbá* (2008). The book and accompanying audio CDs provide a good basis for learning the language by offering pronunciation exercises, substantial lists of vocabulary, and short, everyday practice conversations. I soon felt, however, that I was in need of a more systematic approach to the language to be able to analyse morphological structures and the etymological background for the words chosen in the missionaries’ translation work. *Yorùbá wuyì – A begin-*

ner's course in Yorùbá, devised by Professor Karin Barber and Dr. Akin Oyètádé, was of tremendous help in understanding the underlying structure of the language by giving crucial and ample information on the Yorùbá sound system, grammar, and vocabulary, as well as Yorùbá culture. In addition, Professor Barber was kind enough to invite me to her Yorùbá language classes at Birmingham on a few occasions. In private correspondence she was also prepared to answer specific questions arising from the source material.

Yorùbá is a language in the Volta-Niger branch of the Niger-Congo language family. In order to explain the notation of Yorùbá words in this thesis, but also to give the reader an initial insight into the language itself, let me briefly discuss the Yorùbá phoneme inventory and the accents and diacritics used for Yorùbá words. Yorùbá, like, for example, Thai, Mandarin Chinese, and Cantonese, is a tonal language, which means that intonation patterns distinguish meaning. First suggested by John Raban in the 1820s (cf. Ajayi, 1960, p.49) and implemented by CMS agents Samuel Ajayi Crowther and Charles Gollmer, accents mark the intonation patterns in written Yorùbá. The language uses an acute accent to mark the high tone, as in *ajá* (dog), and a grave accent to mark the low tone, as in *ojà* (market) (cf. Akinlabi, 2005, p.462). The mid-tone is mostly unmarked with the exception of syllabic nasals, as in *pañla* (stockfish) (cf. Akinlabi, 2005, p.459). The high tone and low tone also have variants, such as the rising tone in *àlá* (dream), and the falling tone in *ràrà* (elegy) (cf. Akinlabi, 2005, p.460). Accent markers in written Yorùbá, therefore, not only mark intonation, but are also crucial to determining the meaning of the word. The word *ìlù*, with low tones on both vowels, means ‘drum’, whereas *ìlú*, with a low tone on the first and a high tone on the second vowel, means ‘town’.

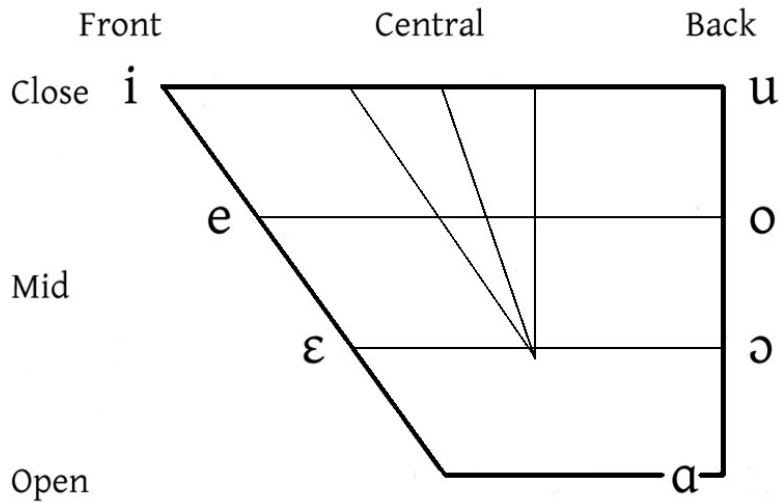


Figure 6: Yorùbá vowel chart

Yorùbá has seven vowels, which are represented in the vowel chart in Figure

6. The vowel chart is to be read in the following way:

The top-to-bottom dimension represents vowel height or openness, i.e. the higher positions on the chart correspond to a higher position of the tongue in the mouth [...]. The left-to-right dimension corresponds roughly to the front-to-back position of the tongue in the mouth (Akinlabi, 2005, p.455).

Also, the vowels /u/ (like in the English word ‘you’), /o/ (like in the French word ‘eau’), and /ɔ/ (like in the English word ‘bought’) are rounded, which means they are produced with rounded lips, whereas the remaining four vowels are unrounded: /i/, pronounced like the vowel in ‘me’, /ɑ/, pronounced like the vowel in ‘large’, /e/, pronounced like the first vowel in the French ‘payer’, and /ɛ/, pronounced like the vowel in the English word ‘let’.

In addition to the accents, missionary linguists also introduced the use of diacritics into written Yorùbá to mark vowel quality. Therefore, to distinguish the open phonemes /e/ and /o/ in written Yorùbá from close phonemes /ɛ/ and

/ɔ/ (cf. Figure 6), the latter are written with a diacritic mark under them: <ɛ̣> and <ɔ̣>.

The Yorùbá consonant inventory resembles that of English very closely, with the exception of the voiced and unvoiced labio-velar plosives /g̃b/ and /k̃p/, which are written as <gb> and <p>. They are articulated simultaneously at the lips (labial) and the soft palate (velar) by the sudden release of a constriction of the airflow (plosive). In modern Yorùbá spelling, the palatal fricative /ʃ/, like in the English word ‘shout’, produced by a partial constriction of the airflow (fricative) at the hard palate (palatal), is written with a diacritic marker, <ṣ>. In Section 4.1.1, I discuss in more detail the history of the notation of Yorùbá phonemes in the context of the missionary translation project. The research community does not seem to have agreed on a consistent notation of the Yorùbá language in the literature. While Peel (2000) and Salami (2006) use no accent markers and diacritics in their work, Ayandele (1966) and Awolalu (1979) mark tone and vowel quality in their writing. In this thesis, I use accent markers and diacritics except when quoting sources which do otherwise.

In order to facilitate my analysis of transcribed passages of CMS correspondence, I chose to use the open source software RQDA, which was created to assist in the analysis of textual data. RQDA lets the user create codes and mark themes and textual features in their files with these codes. Subsequently, the marked passages for a specific code can be retrieved, generating a list of all marked passages, which enables the user to easily group certain passages together according to themes and also see at a glance how frequently specific textual features occur in their source material as well as the context in which they occur. Thus, RQDA is a piece of integrated software for both qualitative and quantitative text analysis. On the left hand side of Figure 7, the list of codes used in my research

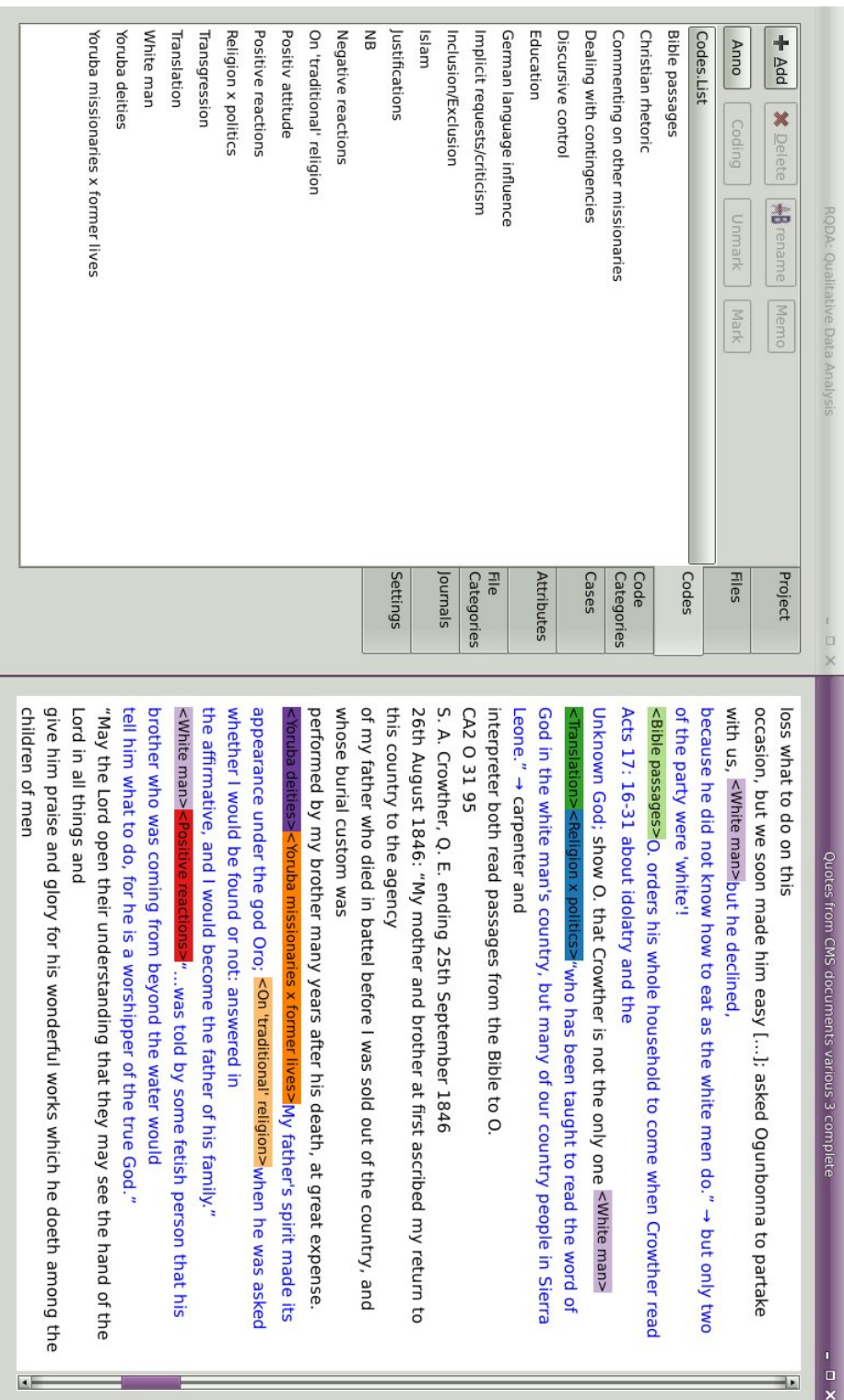


Figure 7: CMS transcript page marked with several codes

can be seen. ‘White man’, for example, refers to any mention of how Christians and Europeans were referred to. ‘Inclusion/exclusion’ marks linguistic means of negotiating group boundaries, while ‘Yoruba deities’ marks the explicit mentioning of Yorùbá deities and religion in order to analyse the way in which they are referred to. ‘Yoruba missionaries x former lives’ refers to any encounter of Yorùbá missionaries with their lives before their conversion in order to examine how these encounters are relayed to the target audience. The right hand side shows a page of Samuel Ajayi Crowther’s journal excerpts in 1846 with various colour-coded code markings indicating a number of categories which occur in his writing and which were relevant for my research.

Figure 8 then shows the retrieved coding for ‘white man’, the code marking any denotation of Christians and Europeans. Having all tokens for a particular code, that is, all passages marked with the code for a particular theme, grouped together in a comprehensive list, simplifies analysing the temporal, spatial, and situational context in which they appear, comparing individual tokens, and determining whether certain themes frequently co-occur in the source material. RQDA was of particular help for my research on the negotiation and expression of missionary identity and the construction of group boundaries (Chapter 5). In the research for this chapter, more than elsewhere, I relied on the analysis of individual lexemes. The use of self-identifications, such as ‘white man’, pronouns, such as ‘we’/‘they’, as well as words chosen to describe Yorùbá beliefs and practices, such as ‘superstitions’ and ‘idolatry’, could be easily grouped and visualised with RQDA. It is important to emphasise again that the missionaries’, as well as my own selection process, and the fact that only an incomplete corpus of CMS correspondence is digitised or available as a searchable database, prevents a reliable quantitative analysis of textual features. RQDA was, therefore, used as a piece

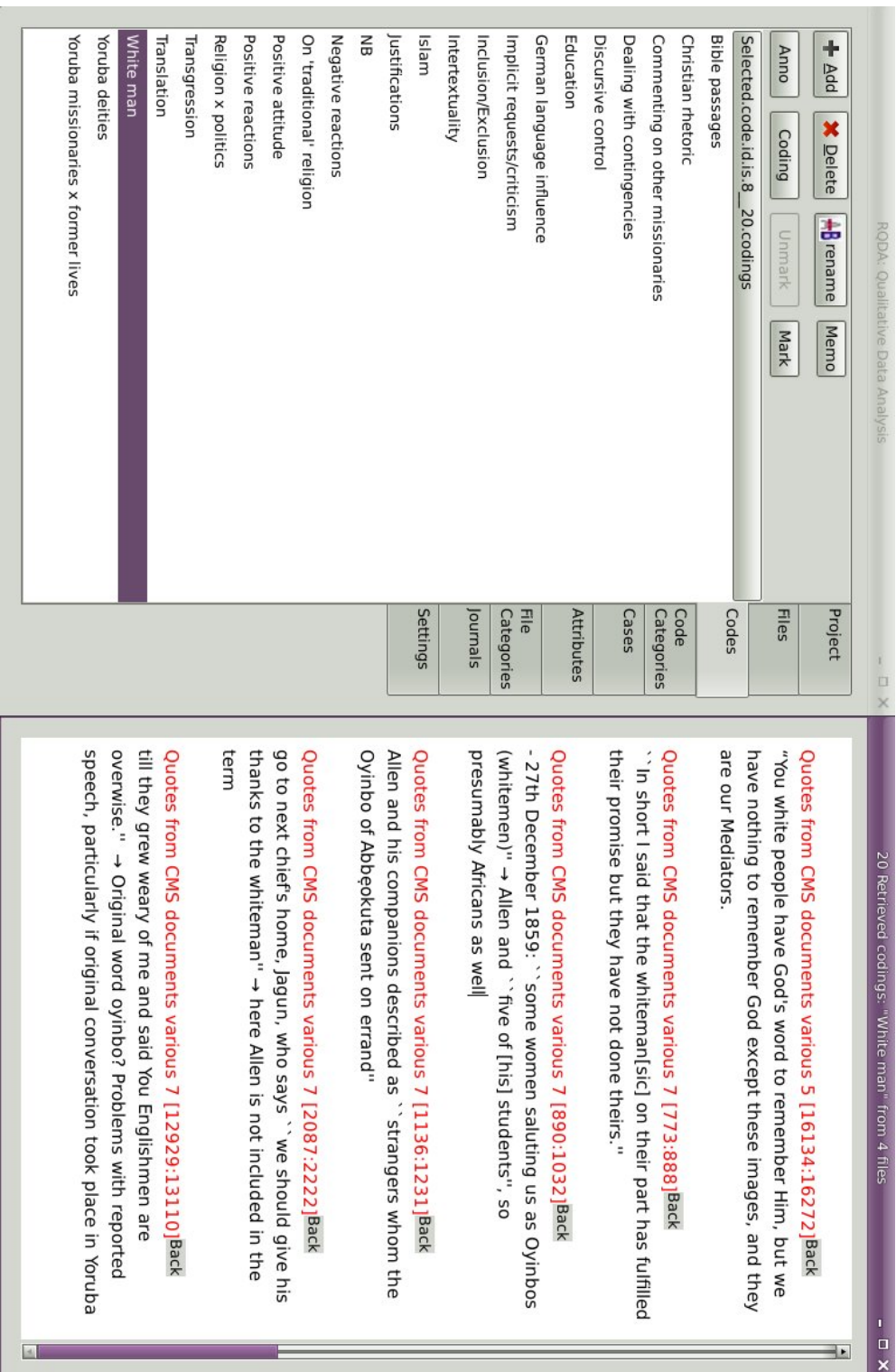


Figure 8: Retrieved codings from marked CMS transcript passages for 'white man'

of supporting software for my qualitative text analysis, rather than an essential tool, as would be the case in corpus linguistic research.

Let us now return to Swinton and Mowat's analogy of the detective story. The analogy is largely accurate, I feel, as it foregrounds the open-ended nature of qualitative research and the often unexpected turns the research can take when a new piece of information forces the researcher to change her mind. Swinton and Mowat themselves, however, correctly indicate the limitations of this analogy:

[U]nlike the detective the qualitative researcher does not seek to solve the problem or 'crack the case'. She is very much aware that neither is possible. The evidence can tell many stories, and all of them contain varying degrees of truth (2007, p.30).

My research involved a conscious selection and de-selection of passages from my source material. Maria Tambokou, in a paper on her research on Dora Carrington's epistolary archive, argues that "archives are not neutral sites within which researchers 'objectively' read, take notes and accumulate data" (2014, p.623). The archive holds many stories *in potentia*¹². I am aware that my research and this thesis tell *one* story, albeit from various angles, and in parts this story was influenced by my research questions. An important aspect of the approach I have chosen is, therefore, what Swinton and Mowat call "epistemological reflexivity" (2007, p.60), the continuing awareness that my research questions define what can be found in the source material. "The 'researcher's cut'," the selection and de-selection of individual pieces of information or data, Tambokou reminds us, "is thus an agentic intervention shaping the form of the research that will emerge" (2014, p.627).

If the research questions to a certain extent predetermine the results, the

¹²I thank Dr. Ian Fairley from the School of English, University of Leeds, for this particular insight on archival research.

same is true, perhaps to a larger extent, for the researcher. As Tamboukou succinctly puts it, “‘the knower’ and ‘the known’ are dependent on one another” (2014, p.625). As a researcher I am positioned in a certain way not only to my source material as such, but also to those behind it, the European and African missionaries who filled all these pages with their thoughts, their ambitions, their beliefs, their doubts, and their quarrels more than a century ago. My situated perspective as a white, non-religious, European woman and feminist, born in the second half of the 20th century, and privileged enough to have received an above-average education, certainly means that I could hardly be further removed from the lives and realities of these deeply religious 19th century men, some of whom had only received a basic education, and many of whom were of African origin. My research questions and my view on the archive material are necessarily influenced by this. Tamboukou compares the role of the researcher to the observing apparatuses in physical sciences: “The neutral role of the apparatus has [been] seriously challenged in quantum physics, but this challenge is clearly not restricted within laboratory experiments” (2014, p.623). My situatedness unavoidably means that I am not, and cannot be, a neutral observer of the phenomena found in the source material. I raise this point not to provide a solution to the issue, which seems inherently impossible, but rather because I want to make a point of emphasising my awareness of it. What I can know is necessarily entangled with my situatedness as a human and a researcher. It was and is crucial for the research process, and the results coming from it, to remind myself of this circumstance constantly.

I would now like to draw attention to the methodological difficulties arising from the very nature of my source material. Firstly, the documents in the CMS archive are not complete journals but mere excerpts of the full documents. The missionaries selected passages which presented their work and themselves in a

certain light and which they deemed interesting and informative for their target audience. For the reconstruction of the translation process, this selection did not present an immense problem because I was able to use supporting material from the BFBS archive. For other aspects of my research this selection process is more problematic. The missionaries' selections and the fact that there are no extant copies of the original journals leave us with an incomplete picture of the missionaries' world and their writing. Moreover, our perspective on missionary life and work is also restricted by the fact that the documents in question were written by Christians – predominantly male Christians at that – for a Christian audience. While I discuss this in more detail in Chapter 6, it is self-evident even now that the image we get of 19th missionary work and life in the Yorùbá area is far from comprehensive. It is also vital to keep in mind that the missionary world is mediated through the agents' writing. The 'mediatization' (cf. Thurlow and Jaworski, 2009, p.1; also, Fairclough, 1999) of their experience through the commission to writing is added to the temporal and spatial distance between the writers and their audience. This is true for the 19th century audience as well as the 21st century researcher. This research project is based on the written testimony of the missionaries' lives and work and not on ethnographic research. However, such is the nature of archival research that "you find nothing in the Archive but stories caught half way through: the middle of things: discontinuities" (Steedman, 2001, p.45) and the archival researcher does well to constantly remind herself of this.

The second methodological difficulty which I would like to bring up at this point is to do with the ethics of archival research. The University of Leeds requires research to be subject to ethical review, if it involves human participants and/or their data, which to a certain extent is the case for my research. It is important to keep in mind, however, that while the authors of the source material might

have living descendants, who might take issue with the use of these documents, the majority of the missionaries' correspondence was never intended to be private. Especially the journal excerpts were written with a public audience in mind because they were used to inform CMS policies and in the Society's publications, informing the readers about their life and work in the Yorùbá area. The authors' right to privacy, even posthumously, is, therefore, not violated. Moreover, the archival material is open to the public; a potential objection to the use of the missionaries' correspondence would, therefore, have to be taken up with the archives themselves. Lastly, the archival material has been used by other scholars in the field (cf. McKenzie, 1997; Peel, 2000; Ward, 2006). I, therefore, assume that no objections have been raised in the past and that I am free to use the archive material without compromising the ethical basis of research. Discussions on the matter with my team of supervisors and members of the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts, University of Leeds, have come to the same conclusion.

Before moving on to a brief summary of the geography, history, and religious background of the Yorùbá area, let me summarise the most important aspects of this chapter. The source material for this thesis comes from the CMS archives in Birmingham, the BFBS archive in Cambridge, and the National Archive Ìbàdàn. It provides the basis for my qualitative research into the construction and expression of linguistic power in the CMS missionary world. Through a process of close reading and transcribing the original manuscripts in English and, to a lesser extent, Yorùbá, I was able to identify and investigate the three key areas discussed in the analysis chapters (Chapters 4, 5, and 6) of this thesis: the philological and theological considerations involved in Yorùbá Bible translation, the negotiation and expression of missionary and African Christian identity, and the institutional discourse to which CMS missionary correspondence contributed. By linking these

themes to larger areas of research and scholarly interest in the context of language and power, this research project hopes to contribute to remedying the fact that there is no extensive work on religious history from a linguistic angle.

3 Geography, history, and religion of the Yorùbá area

The cross-disciplinary nature of this thesis draws on expertise from several different areas of study. In order to make this thesis accessible to scholars from various backgrounds, it is necessary to provide the geographical, historical, and religio-cultural context for the present project. This chapter, therefore, depicts a brief geographical overview of the Yorùbá area, a historical account of Africa's encounters with Judaeo-Christian history, starting about 1,000 years B.C.E., and the early days of European economic and political interest in West Africa, starting in the late 15th century. Also, the most recent political events in Yorùbáland before the Christian missionaries arrived in the 1840s are touched upon to illustrate the situation the agents came upon when they arrived in the area. It is also necessary to illustrate the most commonly shared religious beliefs and practices in the pre-Christian era of Yorùbáland. The chapter finally introduces the key figures of the Yorùbá mission whom the reader encounters in this thesis.

3.1 Geography and demographics of the Yorùbá area

The Yorùbá area in present-day Nigeria can be found in the Southwestern regions of the country (see Figure 9), including the federal states of Ekiti, Ògùn , Lagos, Òndó , Òṣun , Kwara, and Òyó, where the Yorùbá people are the ethnic majority. Samuel Johnson, in his *History of the Yorubas from the earliest times to the beginning of the British Protectorate*, published in 1921, describes the geographical location in more detail and in the ornate style characteristic of his writing:

The Yoruba country lies to the immediate West of the River Niger (below the confluence) and South of the Quorra (*i.e.*, the Western branch of the same River above the confluence), having Dahomey [today in Benin] on the West, and the Bight of Benin to the South. [...] The entire south [sic] of the country is a network of lagoons connecting the deltas of the great River Niger with that of the Volta [mainly flowing in Ghana], and into this lagoon which is belted with a more or less dense mangrove swamp, most of the rivers which flow through the country North to South pour their waters. It will thus be seen that the country is for the most part a tableland: it has been compared to half of a pie dish turned upside down. Rising from the coast in the South gradually to a height of some 5-600 ft. in more or less dense forest, into a plain diversified by a few mountain ranges, continuing its gentle rise in some parts to about 1,000 ft. above sea level, it then slopes down again to the banks of the Niger, which encloses it in the North and East (xix, highlighting in original).



Figure 9: Regional map of Nigeria (taken from: commons.wikipedia.org, published under CC-BY 3.0 license)

The CIA World Factbook on Nigeria states that, with more than 30 million people, the Yorùbá made up roughly 21% of the Nigerian population in 2013 (cf. Central Intelligence Agency, 2013). While sizeable groups of Yorùbá people can be found in other West African countries, such as Ghana, Togo, and Sierra Leone as well,

today there are also significant diaspora communities outside Africa, for example in the United States, the United Kingdom, and former centres of the slave trade, such as Cuba, Trinidad and Tobago, and Brazil.

The Yorùbá towns most significant for this research project are Badagry, Ìbàdàn, Lagos, Abéòkúta , and Old Òyó. In Figure 10, they are marked by red boxes:

Badagry, Ìbàdàn, Lagos, and Abéòkúta were the major centres of CMS activity in the 19th century, whereas Old Òyó was the centre of the Òyó empire, which dominated the area before its collapse at the beginning of the 19th century (see Section 3.3). Badagry was the original landing site of the missionaries in the Yorùbá area in 1842. In early 1852, after the *oba* Kosoko had been driven out of the town in December 1851 and replaced by his uncle and predecessor, the *oba* Akitoye, the CMS moved their base from Badagry to Lagos. Lagos would become a British colony in 1862. English missionary Henry Townsend ventured into Abéòkúta , a place of refuge for Ègbá people who had fled the crumbling Òyó empire, as early as 1843. Townsend negotiated with Šódẹkẹ , the founder and ruler of the town, about the opening of a mission station.

Due to the political situation and the internal wars in the area, the mission station was only opened in 1846. The mission station in Ìbàdàn was opened in 1851, spearheaded by German missionary David Hinderer. Like Abéòkúta , Ìbàdàn had been founded as a refuge for those fleeing the civil wars resulting from the fall of the Òyó empire. Making use of the structures of the original Ègbá town, Ifẹ and Òyó refugees were soon joined by wandering soldiers, which meant not only a rapid population growth of up to 100,000 people in 1851 (cf. Awe, 2009, p.14 but also a strong military force located in a strategically important position. This made Ìbàdàn into a noteworthy military power as well as a place of interest for the

3.1 Geography and demographics of the Yorùbá area

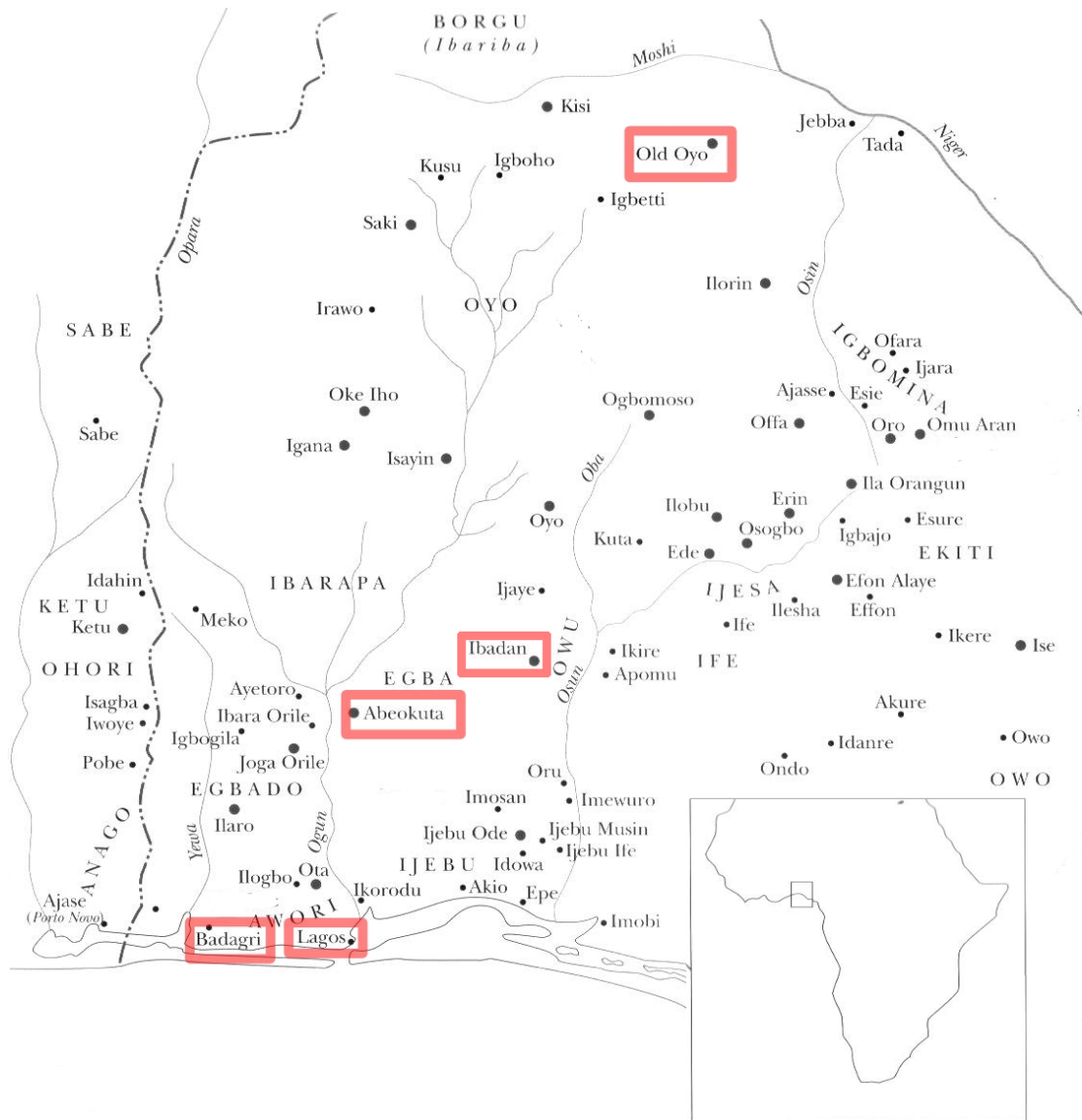


Figure 10: Map of Yorùbáland (adapted from: <http://www.randafricanart.com>)

CMS agents seeking to open mission stations inland. Therefore, both the stations in Ìbàdàn and Abéòkúta opened the paths for further missionary work inland, such as the mission stations in Ogbomoṣo, Ifè, and Oṣogbo (cf. Johnson, 1921, p.39).

3.2 Early Christian contact and the inception of the Yorùbá mission

Christianity is by no means a new arrival to Africa. The East of the continent and North Africa have been involved in Biblical history for 3000 years (cf. Bediako, 2004). The Ethiopian national epic, the *Kebra Nagast*, establishes links between Solomon and the Ethiopian monarchy in the figures of the Queen of Sheba and her son Menelik (cf. also 1 Kings:10). In the New Testament, we learn about “a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians” (Acts 8:27)¹³. The first Christian theological institution was founded in Egypt, and the Carthagian Tertullian in North Africa translated the Bible into Latin, the vernacular of the area. It is obvious, therefore, that “Christianity in Africa cannot be treated as a colonial leftover” (Walls, 2007, p.91), but should be regarded as part of African religious history.

With regard to more recent history, Sanneh dates the “first incontrovertible evidence of European presence” (1983, p.21) to 1471, when Portuguese merchants with both economic and religious interests came to what today is Ghana. By the middle of the 16th century, resources like gold, and ivory and West Africa’s potential role in the slave trade with America had attracted British tradesmen as well (cf. Schmied, 1991, p.6). In 1588, the Portuguese sold the Gambia to British mer-

¹³I use the King James Bible as the reference Bible in this thesis as it was the text which the CMS missionaries in the 19th century used as well.

chants. This event marked the starting point of British settlement on the coasts of West Africa (cf. Hansen, 1996, p.177). However, for the next two centuries the Christian influence, in contrast to that of European economic interests, remained marginal, mainly because Christians shunned cross-cultural contact. They by and large remained almost hermetically sealed off in forts and strongholds, such as Elmina Castle, originally known as São Jorge da Mina, on the so-called Gold Coast of Ghana. One of the forts on the Cape Coast of Ghana was the home of the Anglican Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, providing pastoral care for “transient European traders and the mixed-race community” (Ward, 2006, p.112). The first African priest, born in 1741, baptised Philip Quaake, was also Anglican; after his death in 1816, Methodist and Presbyterian influence in the area grew (cf. Ward, 2006, p.112).

In the last years of the 18th century, in Europe and America Christians became increasingly involved with abolitionist movements because they felt that slavery did not conform with Christian principles. This coincided with evangelical trends gaining strength and – in the UK – eventually resulted in the foundation of the Church Missionary Society in London in 1799. The Society started sending missionaries to Sierra Leone, a refuge for freed slaves, in the early 19th century. Initially, the Society struggled with finding British missionaries. Therefore, German Lutherans were sent to the field and only gradually British missionaries followed (cf. Sanneh, 1983, p.60). A fair number of formerly enslaved people encountered the Christian faith through the CMS’s missionary efforts in Sierra Leone. From among their number, African missionaries emerged. One of the most renowned among them was Yorùbá-born Samuel Ajayi Crowther, who later was to become the first African bishop. In 1838, the Yorùbá-born majority

among the freed slaves started to return to Yorùbáland, taking with them their ‘new’ faith.

In 1841, about 145 Europeans and five Africans, among them Samuel Ajayi Crowther, financially supported by returnees who wanted the Christian message to be spread (cf. Sanneh, 1983, p.81), set off for an expedition of the river Niger. Despite the devastating outcome as far as the health of the participants was concerned – 130 Europeans had incurred malaria, 40 of them died (cf. Sundkler, 2000, p.225) – the expedition was still seen to have “met with success, as far as it has been able to go on with its grand Object, the abolition of the Slave Trade” (CA1 O79 4a, Samuel Ajayi Crowther, 1842). Also, it meant that another step towards setting up mission stations in what today is Nigeria had been taken. In addition to this venture into the West African hinterland, the Ègbá chief in Abéòkúta , Šódeķe , requested much needed assistance against Muslim conquests from the North from Methodist missionaries on the Gold Coast. This marked not only the beginning of missionary activity in Yorùbáland but also points to

the [emerging] method of British expansion in Yorubaland. [...] The British [came to the scene] in the role of peacemakers, sending missionaries as envoys to negotiate peace terms (Ajayi, 1974, p.166).

In 1843, Samuel Ajayi Crowther mentions the Parent Committee’s instructions (cf. CA1 O79 10) to start preaching in Yorùbá, evidently in preparation for setting up a mission in Yorùbáland in due course. Henry Venn, CMS Secretary and paternal friend of Crowther, had great plans for the Yorùbá mission, which he wanted to become a self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating mission. He spoke of the eventual “euthanasia of the mission” (Ward, 2006, p.116), making the presence of European missionaries unnecessary. On the 18th December 1844, finally, “the day for [...] embarkation” (CA2 O31 89, Samuel Ajayi Crowther,

journal excerpt, 1845) came; 27 people constituting the “party connected with the Abbe-Okuta mission” (CA2 O31 89, Samuel Ajayi Crowther, journal excerpt, 1845), including, apart from Crowther himself, the Anglican missionaries Charles Gollmer and Henry Townsend, left Freetown for Badagry. There “they were compelled by the state of war between Dahomey and the Ègbá to remain there for a year and a half before proceeding to their destination at Abeokuta” (McKenzie, 1976, p.19).

3.3 Political situation in Yorùbáland in the middle of the 19th century

When the party of missionaries, accompanied partly by their families, interpreters and craftsman, thus set foot in Yorùbáland in early 1845, their progress to Abèòkúta was impeded by internal conflicts, which had rendered the area unstable. The late 18th century had seen the collapse of the Òyó empire, which had from the 16th century on served as a factor of stability in the area, consisting of a number of – in principle – autonomous states and kingdoms under Òyó administration and the supervision of the empire’s Šàngó priests.

The core political unit in Yorùbáland had been the *ilú*, the town or polity, designed with the palace of the *oba*, the ruler, at its architectural and cosmological centre (cf. Peel, 2000, p.31). The size of the *oba*’s retinue and thus his power had been determined by his family ties and the number of slaves he owned. While Òyó dominance over the smaller kingdoms had by no means meant cultural, religious, or linguistic homogeneity, old Yorùbáland had shared cultural and linguistic traits necessary for migration, trade and administration. The kingdoms and states in the Òyó empire had also shared a common recognition for Ilé-Ifè as the common

place of origin (cf. Peel, 2000, p.28) with the *Aláàfin*, the *oba* of Òyó, as sovereign tracing his descent back to Ilé-Ifè.

Ajayi attributes the downfall of the empire mainly to a

culmination of a deep-rooted and long-standing struggle for power between the *Aláàfin* and various groups of supporters on the one hand and lineage chiefs, provincial rulers and military leaders on the other (1974, p.141).

While the *Aláàfin* was increasingly seen as a ritual figure, remote from the actual daily business of administration and military activities, the *baṣòrun*, leaders of the council of senior chiefs, whose ritual importance meant a strong influence on the investiture of the *Aláàfin*, became ever more important. The military, especially the cavalry emerging in the second half of the 18th century, supported the chiefs rather than the *Aláàfin*.

Despite the attempts of various *Aláàfin*s to remedy the situation and reclaim power from the chiefs and military leaders, the empire, which had meant stability and – to a certain degree – political coherence, was in decline, heralding the start of a 70 year period of war in Yorùbáland before the start of active British involvement in Lagos in the 1850s.

On the 17th of January 1845, the CMS agents arrived in an area left in a power vacuum after the collapse of the Òyó empire. They found themselves in the middle of the late stages of a demographic reorganisation of Yorùbáland: mass migration southward, a military alliance of Òyó, Ifè and Ìjẹ̀bú troops raiding the Owu area around Ìbàdàn, increasing urbanisation, because people sought safety in numbers in towns like Ìbàdàn and Abéòkúta, and small but well-organised Dahomey pressing in from the West, while Muslim slave traders from Ilorin posed a threat from the North. It can hardly be surprising that Crowther, prior to his departure from Freetown, notes in his journal in December 1844 that

in fact, [many of the Yorùbá-born returnees] were quite frightened to leave the colony of Sierra Leone, until missionaries had gone first and put the country in good order (CA2 O31 89).

Figure 11 illustrates the most important dates of Christian and missionary history on the continent discussed in this chapter. It is crucial to keep in mind that the missionaries arrived during a time when the Yorùbá area was in political unrest and internally unstable. As we now move on to a brief summary of Yorùbá beliefs and practices it is also relevant to remember that Christianity was not a new arrival to the African continent. Christian history was intertwined with Africa from the onset and should not be thought without it.

3.4 'Traditional' Yorùbá religion

As Peel remarks, “[t]his was an uncertain and competitive world for gods as well as people” (2000, p.106). With many social norms overthrown, family ties torn, mass displacement and migration because of slavery and wars, and Muslim as well as – especially in the 1850s – Christian influence on the rise and in opposition to ‘traditional religion’, the existing religious framework was under considerable strain.

The term ‘traditional religion’ is of course deceptive. The body of source material on Yorùbá religion before the middle of the 19th century can be called sketchy at best. The lack of written Yorùbá documents before the 1840s, when the language was first given a consistent written form, means that most of the information about Yorùbá beliefs and rituals was documented from a Muslim or a Christian point of view. There was no written document, no holy scripture, as a starting point for analysis; hence, oral sources, such as proverbs, myths and sagas, as well as the *Èṣẹ* divination verses organised in the *Odu Ifá* had to suf-

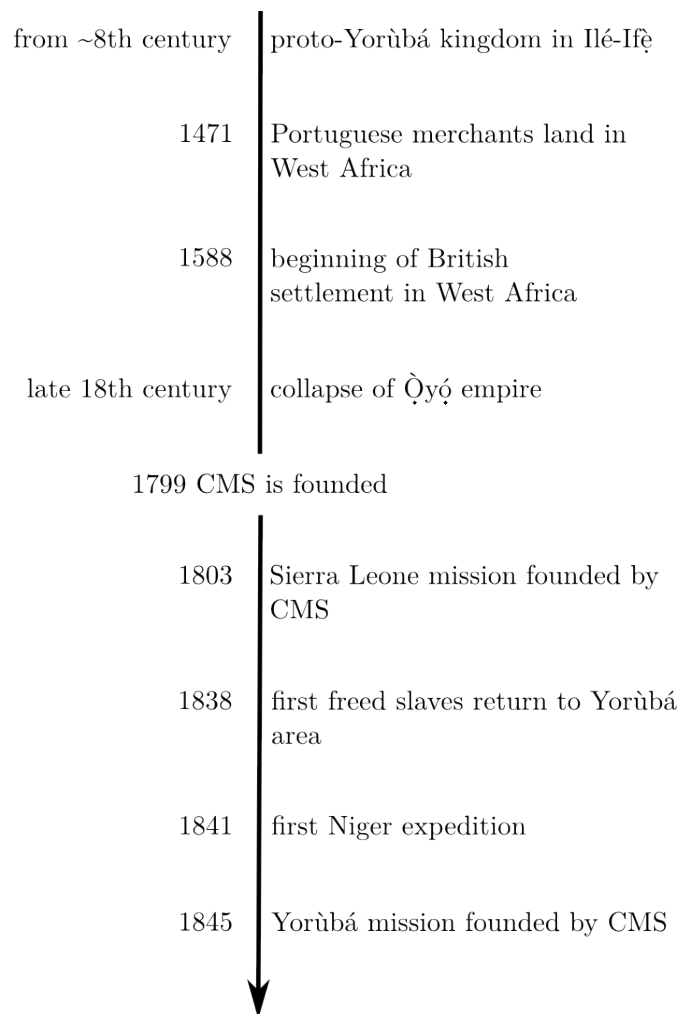


Figure 11: Timeline of African contact with Judaeo-Christian and European influence before the foundation of Yorùbá mission in 1845

fice as source material, eventually written down in order to overcome the fleeting nature of the spoken word. Also, Christian and Muslim influence in Yorùbáland could already be felt long before the middle of the 19th century. It is thus virtually impossible – and perhaps not even desirable – to discern which elements of the Yorùbá conceptualisation(s) of the world are there owing to encounters with other faiths. In combination, these two factors mean that the information available on supposedly ‘pre-Christian’ or ‘traditional’ rituals and beliefs does not paint an unbiased picture.

Even factoring out distortions inherent in outsider descriptions, a religious landscape presents itself which – due to the sheer size and complexity of its geographical and historical origin – presents a considerable obstacle to a generalised overview. Also, in Yorùbá tradition, 'religion' was not perceived as an area of human life separate from other areas. Even today, the Yorùbá term '*ẹsin*' refers mostly to the world religions rather than local practice (cf. Peel, 2000, p.89). Since an overview of Yorùbá beliefs and concepts is indispensable for the comparative aspect of the present research project, however, I now attempt to describe some of the more widespread and commonly accepted traits of 'traditional', 'pre-Christian religion' in Yorùbáland.

3.4.1 Ilé-Ifẹ̀

One common trait of the various sets of Yorùbá belief was Ilé-Ifẹ̀ as the place of origin for all humans. While the cosmogonic myths differ regionally, the most common element is the creation of the world at Ilé-Ifẹ̀. Ọlórún, the most senior deity, did not create the world himself, however, but sent variably one or two of his *òrìṣà*, Odùduwà and Òrìṣànlá, to do his bidding.

Odùduwà, who in the Southwest and the coastal area was seen as female, while in the Eastern part of Yorùbáland was perceived as male, created the earth. She, or depending on regional preference he, was variably identified with Ọlórún or seen as one of his aspects, perceived as one of his *òrìṣà*, or as an apotheosised military leader (cf. Awolalu, 1979, p.27; Bascom, 1969, p.9). The variety and also the nature of these different explanations begs the question whether this kind of theological thought was triggered by the encounter with other faiths or whether this already existing diversity was what made other faiths accessible to the local population.

Òrìṣànlá , associated with the colour white, created the first humans, and has been seen as responsible for the creation of humans ever since, reflecting the iterative nature of Yorùbá anthropogony (cf. Ahn, 1999, p.251). Ilé-Ifè as a shared place of origin also had political significance because kingship and power were, and to a certain extent are still today, associated with Ifè descent. The *Oni*, the ruler ('*oba*') of Ilé-Ifè, and the *Aláàfin* of Òyó legitimised their right to rule by tracing back their ancestry to Odùduwà and Òrìṣànlá .

3.4.2 Ọlórún

Ọlórún has already been introduced as the most senior deity. He was seen, his phrase name tells us, as the 'owner of heaven'. As such he was, if the Western terminology can be applied in this context, a *deus otiosus*, quite remote from human activities. No prayers were directed to him, no sacrifices ('*ẹbọ*') offered directly to him. He was also perceived to be apart from the *òrìṣà*; "God is not a god", as Peel puts it (2000, p.117). The latter was true at least in the Southwest of Yorùbáland. In the East, the terminological distinction between Ọlórún and the *òrìṣà* was less pronounced (cf. Peel, 2000, p.117). It is possible to attribute the prominence of Ọlórún in the source material on Yorùbá beliefs to the influence of Islam and Christianity, both decidedly monotheistic. The fact that Islam especially did not extend to the Eastern areas of Yorùbáland (cf. Peel, 2000, p.110), which tended not to make a clear distinction between Ọlórún and the *òrìṣà*, supports this idea.

3.4.3 Ọrìṣà

The deities known as *òrìṣà* were the recipients of sacrifices and prayers. Only a few *òrìṣà* could be said to belong to a pan-Yorùbá pantheon, such as Òrìṣànlá , Odùduwà in his or her varying aspects, Ògún, the deity associated with iron and

warfare, Èṣù, a trickster and at the same time divine messenger, Ọ̀rúnmìlà, deity of the Ifá divination and mediator of Ọ̀lórún's will, and Ṣàngó, associated with thunder and lightning, and worshipped less in the Eastern part of Yorùbáland. A person's place of birth or their family situation determined which *òrìṣà* they worshipped. The sacrifices offered to a person's *òrìṣà* were seen as a demand for reciprocity more than a sign of mere subservience. Thus, if times were hard or the worshipper's needs were not fulfilled, it was possible to take on another *òrìṣà* in addition to, or even as a replacement for, one's original *òrìṣà*. Each *òrìṣà* was associated with a certain object, artefact, or natural occurrence, the *òrìṣà* Ọ̀ṣun with river pebbles, Ọ̀gún with iron and weaponry, Ṣàngó with thunder. This led to interpretations of Yorùbá practices and beliefs in the spirit of Edward Tylor's animism theory¹⁴. Evidence of this can also be found in Samuel Ajayi Crowther's description of the non-Christian local population when he calls them "worshippers of thunder and lightning" (CA2 O31 89, journal excerpt, December 1844). However, Peel's interpretation of the objects and phenomena associated with the *òrìṣà* as "the natural source of [their] power" and his reference to "[the *òrìṣà*'s] anthropomorphic images [presenting] the complementary side of their being" (2000, p.94) seems to do more justice to the complexity of Yorùbá beliefs.

3.4.4 Ifá divination

The *primus inter pares* among the *òrìṣà* was Ọ̀rúnmìlà, the deity of Ifá divination. Through the *babaláwo*, chiefly male priests, Ọ̀rúnmìlà could speak to humans, and act as a mediator between them and Ọ̀lórún or determine the source

¹⁴Tylor initially describes his theory in 1871 in *Primitive culture. Vol. 1. Religion in primitive culture*. In anthropology, animism has long been understood to be "the belief that inside ordinary visible, tangible bodies there is a normally invisible, normally intangible being" (Harris, 1983, p.186). An insightful critique of Tylor's theory is offered, for example, by Nurit Bird-David (1999).

of, and possible remedy for, misfortunes in everyday life. Abimbòla describes the process of divination as follows:

[It] begins when the client confides his secret problem to Ifa. [...] [Then] the priest of Ifa takes up the divination instruments and starts chanting certain poems to them. [...] If, for example, the Ifa priest chooses to use the divining chain, he takes it firmly in the middle and casts it on the ground [...] and reads the signature of the *Odu* [the part of the literary corpus relevant to the client's problem]. He then chants the *ẹsẹ* [verses constituting the 256 *Odu*] which he considers most representative of the character of this *Odu*. [...] When the client is satisfied that all his questions are answered, he tells the Ifa priest [his] actual problem [...] and the Ifa priest helps further by analysing the *ẹsẹ* he has chanted (1976, pp.32-35, highlighting in original).

The divination finally required *ẹbọ Ifá*, a sacrifice to Ọ̀rúnmìlà, either to give thanks for the good prediction or to ward off evil. Ifá divination was seen as the soul and centre of the relation between *òrìṣà* and humans, “reconciling the far and the near” (Peel, 2000, p.115), the remote Ọ̀lórún and human beings, the mythical past and the actuality of everyday life.

3.4.5 Ancestors

The final religious aspect which was to some extent present in all Yorùbáland was the powerful influence of the ancestors over the living. While the importance of one's elders during their lifetime was already very pronounced, seniority being the main criterion for power and influence in the community, it even increased after their death. Death rites varied geographically, just as the answer to the question of who could become an ancestor. The borderline between life and death was seen as permeable, which gave the ancestor the opportunity to interact with their living relative, while the living person could ask for guidance or help. The ancestors's bond with their living relatives was determined by how strong their

bond had been in life. Ancestors also served as an anchor point for family identity and helped establish a sense of coherence with the past. Thus, Peel suggests that ancestors were still part of the family and – as elders in a gerontocratic society – even venerated. He steers clear, however, of the term ‘worship’ “since [it leads] us to ignore the prosaic quality of the exchanges between the supplicant and his ancestor” (2000, p.95). In the transcendent hierarchy, ancestors were seen as ranging between the *òrìṣà* and mere humans; at the same time, the verb ‘*bọ*’ was used for offering sacrifices to both *òrìṣà* and ancestors, thus suggesting some sort of equality.

We have seen that Yorùbá religious life was and is not homogeneous, but varies significantly even within the Yorùbá area. We can generally say that Yorùbá beliefs and practices are based on a polytheistic pantheon with considerable regional variation embedded in a gerontocratic society. Religious contact with Islam and Christianity, in particular, has impacted on the shape and nature of the documentation of Yorùbá religious life. In conjunction with the internal variations due to the sheer size of the Yorùbá area, the inter-religious contact has considerable implications on my research project. In Chapter 4 the interplay between Yorùbá ‘traditional’ religion and missionary Christianity will become obvious in the context of the development of Yorùbá Christian vocabulary. How the missionaries described and related to local religious life becomes obvious when the negotiation of missionary identity and group boundaries are being discussed in Chapter 5. Also, in Chapter 6 the question of who can adequately speak in the name of the local population and represent their beliefs and practices will play a role in the discussion of the CMS’s institutional discourse.

3.5 Key figures in the Yorùbá mission

Finally, let me draw attention to some of the key figures involved in the founding and development of the CMS mission in the Yorùbá area. In order for the reader to get a more comprehensive picture of who the men behind the source material for this thesis were, this section provides a brief introduction to the life and institutional history in the CMS of the missionary agents featuring most prominently in my research. The information is largely taken from the *Register of missionaries (clerical, lay & female) and native clergy from 1804 to 1904*, published by the Society in 1905.

3.5.1 Samuel Ajayi Crowther

The abundance of literature on Samuel Ajayi Crowther, including Page (1892) and Ajayi (1967), makes it almost futile to write a biographical note on this eminent figure of Yorùbá Christianity. A “native of the Yoruba Country” (Register of missionaries, 1905, p.298), Crowther was taken from his home as a young man. A British ship intercepted the slave ship on which he was transported, and Crowther was brought to Sierra Leone, where he trained at Fourah Bay College and was baptised in 1825. He subsequently trained at the Church Missionary College in Islington and became a schoolmaster and catechist in Sierra Leone before his ordination as deacon and priest in 1843. Crowther accompanied the first Niger Expedition in 1841 and was among the founding fathers of the Yorùbá mission. He also contributed significantly to the development of the Yorùbá vocabulary and was eventually “consecrated Missionary Bishop of the Niger Territory by [the] Archbishop of Canterbury” (Register of missionaries, 1905, p.298) in 1864, the first African to hold the position of bishop. He was deposed during the so-called

Niger crisis (cf. for example, Ayandele, 1966) in 1890, which saw the introduction of European missionaries into a hitherto purely African-led Niger mission. These events led Crowther to “[pass] through a mental agony that finally sent him to the grave” (Ayandele, 1966, p.223); he died of a stroke in 1891. We will encounter Crowther’s correspondence with the Parent Committee in all three analysis chapters in this thesis with a particular focus on his work on the Yorùbá vocabulary and the Yorùbá Bible (Chapter 4).

3.5.2 Thomas King

“A Heathen rescued from slavery” (Register of missionaries, 1905, p.305), Thomas King trained at Fourah Bay Institution in Sierra Leone and subsequently became a catechist. After being made a deacon in 1854 and ordained as a priest in 1857, King officially joined the CMS later in 1857. During his time working for the Yorùbá mission, he assisted Samuel Ajayi Crowther in translating portions of the scriptures into Yorùbá. For most of the time he was stationed at Abéòkúta and eventually died at Igbein in 1862. In this thesis, we encounter Thomas King mainly in the chapter on translation (Chapter 4) because of his considerable contributions to the translation project. His experiences of displacement and relocation make his writing relevant for the chapter on the negotiation of missionary identity (Chapter 5) as well.

3.5.3 James White

James White was a Sierra Leone-born agent of Yorùbá descent (cf. Register of missionaries, 1905, p.42). He trained at Fourah Bay Institution and Freetown Grammar School, and subsequently took up the positions of catechist and schoolmaster at Waterloo and Wellington, Sierra Leone. In 1850, he was transferred to

the Yorùbá mission in Badagry. He also worked in Lagos from 1852 and in Otta from 1854. White was made a deacon in 1857 and a priest in 1864. He died in Lagos in 1890. White contributed to the translation of the Bible into Yorùbá by translating the Book of Joshua, the Books of Kings, and Chronicles. However, White appears in this thesis chiefly in Chapter 5, as his correspondence, similar to the writing of Thomas King, bears witness to his ongoing search for place as an African Christian and missionary agent.

3.5.4 Charles Gollmer

Born in Kirchheim unter Teck, in Württemberg (cf. Register of missionaries, 1905, p.58), Gollmer was one of the CMS agents active in the Yorùbá area who were of German descent and had a distinct Pietist background. Gollmer initially trained at the Basle Seminary and subsequently at the Church Missionary College in Islington. He became a deacon in June 1841 and was ordained as a priest in September of the same year. In October of 1841, Gollmer joined the Sierra Leone mission, from which he transferred to Badagry in 1845. In his 17 years of service in the Yorùbá mission, he also worked in Lagos and Abéòkúta before he retired to England in 1862. The co-founder of the Yorùbá mission was married three times; two of his wives died in the missionary field. Gollmer himself died in Margate in 1887. In the early days of the mission, Gollmer wrote an elaborate commentary on Samuel Ajayi Crowther's translation of the Gospel of St. Luke. His correspondence, therefore, plays a considerable role in the discussion of translation work in this thesis (Chapter 4). We also encounter Charles Gollmer in Chapter 5, where excerpts from his writing serve to demonstrate strategies for delineating group boundaries in the missionary world.

3.5.5 David and Anna Hinderer

Like Charles Gollmer, David Hinderer was a German-born missionary working for the CMS. Born in 1820 in Weisbuch, Württemberg, he also trained at the Basle Seminary and in Islington. After his ordination as deacon in 1848, he was ordained as a priest in early 1849. He was first stationed in Abéòkúta from 1849 on before he was transferred to Lagos. David Hinderer founded the CMS Ìbàdàn mission in 1853, where he stayed until his retirement in 1869. According to the Register of missionaries, “in 1874 [Hinderer] went out again, and founded the stations of Leke and Ode Ondo” (1905, p.73). After his final retirement in 1877, Hinderer was resident in Germany and Switzerland, where he died in 1890. David Hinderer’s writing was particularly useful for the discussion of the institutional discourse of which the missionary correspondence was a part (Chapter 6).

Anna Hinderer, who was married to David Hinderer, also plays an important role in this chapter. Working for a vicar in Lowestoft, teaching Sunday school, and taking care of administrative tasks as a young woman, she soon felt she was called to be a missionary herself. In a time when woman could not easily work in the missionary field on their own, Anna Hinderer’s missionary ambitions found an outlet when she moved to Ìbàdàn with her husband. Her journals and letters, published posthumously in 1881 as *Seventeen years in the Yoruba country*, in which she writes about her experiences and achievements as a missionary wife, as well as her views on the local population and the missionary effort more generally, are one of the few examples of women contributing to this institutional discourse.

3.5.6 John Christian Müller

John Christian Müller is the third key figure of German origin for this research project. Originally from Wildberg, Württemberg, he joined the CMS in 1841 after completing his training at the Basle Seminary and the Church Missionary College in Islington. He was initially stationed in Abyssinia, but joined the Sierra Leone mission in 1842. Müller was ordained as deacon in 1847 and as priest later in the same year before he joined the Yorùbá mission. He died after only nine years of service in 1850. Müller's correspondence has informed all three analysis chapters of this thesis equally.

3.5.7 Henry Townsend

Born in Exeter in 1816, Henry Townsend trained at the Church Missionary College in Islington and joined the Sierra Leone mission in 1836. In 1843, he transferred to the Yorùbá area, where he became one of the founding fathers of the Yorùbá mission. His ordination as a deacon and as priest in 1844 marked the beginning of almost 40 years of service for the Yorùbá mission, most of which he spent in Abéòkúta. Townsend died in his home town Exeter in 1886. Townsend compiled the *Yorùbá Primer* as well as a hymn book in Yorùbá. Therefore, we mainly encounter him in Chapter 4, where his argument with Charles Gollmer on the spelling of proper names in the Yorùbá Bible is of particular interest.

3.5.8 Other voices

I also use a few excerpts from CMS agents other than those introduced above. For considerations of space, as well as because of the fact that they play a less central role for my work, I do not introduce these agents in more detail. The

reader can find the most important information, such as their origins and the years in which they were active in the Yorùbá mission, in Figure 12 below. The reader should note that especially biographical dates are not easily available for the African CMS agents. As above, the information is taken from the *Register of missionaries (clerical, lay & female) and native clergy from 1804 to 1904*.

English:	<p>Valentine Faulkner (active in Yorùbá mission 1860-1883, mainly Lagos)</p> <p>George Meakin (active in Yorùbá mission 1856-1860, died in 1863)</p> <p>Isaac Smith (active in Sierra Leone mission 1837-1844, active in Yorùbá mission 1847-1855, died in 1894)</p> <p>James Benjamin Read (active in Yorùbá mission July-December 1877, died near Lagos in December 1877)</p> <p>Jonathan Lawton Buckley Wood (active in Yorùbá mission 1866-1893, mainly in Abéòkúta and Lagos, in charge of training institute in Lagos from 1867)</p> <p>William Young (active in Sierra Leone mission 1830-1857, died in 1858)</p>
German:	<p>John Andrew Maser (active in Yorùbá mission 1852-1884, died in Stuttgart in 1890)</p>
African:	<p>Samuel Pearse (born in Sierra Leone, catechist and schoolmaster at Badagry and Lagos, from about 1871)</p> <p>William Marsh (active in Sierra Leone mission 1844, active in Yorùbá mission 1845-1850)</p> <p>Thomas Benjamin Wright (pastor, active in Yorùbá mission 1864-1879, mainly in Faji)</p> <p>William Allen (pastor, active in Yorùbá mission 1856-1879, mainly in Abéòkúta)</p> <p>William George (schoolmaster, active in Yorùbá mission 1865-1879, mainly in Kemta)</p>

Figure 12: List of other CMS missionaries whose correspondence was used in this research project

4 Philological and religio-political debates behind the translation of Christian texts into Yorùbá

“A missiologist [...] is a theologian who is bilingual.” (Mazibuko, 2003, p.226)

Great names spring to mind when Bible translations are discussed: the seventy translators and eponym of the Septuagint, the Carthagian Tertullian, who in the earliest days of Christianity developed the Latin Christian vocabulary, and eventually Martin Luther, whose Bible translation into the vernacular was a seminal step during the Reformation. Yet, even from the very beginning, as David Jasper remarks,

the Bible has always been a translated text, and indeed, within its own pages there are already translations. In Mark 15:34, Jesus' last words from the Cross, ‘My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?’ are translated into Greek from Aramaic (2005, p.107).

In contrast, in Islamic history, the translation of the Qur'an has generally been eyed suspiciously. As a literally revealed text, seen as relayed to the Prophet Muhammad by Allah, the Qur'an is regarded “untranslatable since it is a linguistic miracle with transcendental meanings” (Abdul-Raof, 2005, p.162). Arabic is held as the indispensable medium for the revealed message. A perceived intrinsic relationship between form and meaning thus causes translations of the text to be ‘corrupt’ and has for a long time meant that Muslims across the world, irrespective of their native language, have encountered the Qur'an in Arabic. Here lies a significant difference between Islamic and Christian traditions; for the latter, the multilingual origins and composite nature of the scriptures have generally meant an, if not unchallenged, then at least receptive, approach to translation in order to ‘spread the word’. Thus, Christian missionary efforts and translation have

traditionally gone hand in hand. Annunciating the Good News to all nations, as Jesus requests of his followers in Matthew 28:19-20, has been understood to mean translating the scriptures and other Christian texts such as hymn books and prayer books into a formidable number of local native languages. It should be noted at this point that writing has not been the only medium to transport the Christian message. Writing from Lékí on the Lagos peninsula, British missionary J.B. Read refers to a “wordless book” (CA2 O79 4, letter, 23rd October 1877) with four coloured pages, black, red, white, and gold. The sequence of the colours symbolises Christian soteriology: black stands for the sinfulness of man, red for Christ’s sacrifice, white for sanctification, and gold for the eschatological promise of eternal life (cf. Peel, 2000, p.168). Alwyn Austin also mentions the wordless book in the context of the China Inland Mission. “It is a simple mnemonic device,” he writes,

[which] has been used for a century and a half in Britain and North America for the instruction of boys and girls, and around the world to teach non-Christian adults in the mission field (2007, p.5).

In China, the wordless book unfurled its potential as a powerful tool of evangelisation because it resonated with

the ancient Chinese color cosmology known as *wuxing*, the Five Elements, that assigned meanings to five colors — yellow, red, white, and black, plus green — correlated with directions, elements, seasons, *feng shui*, and human destiny. Each color has significance in daily life, from the color of an actor’s face in Peking Opera to the red envelopes presented to children at the new year (Austin, 2007, p.5).

In the context of the CMS Yorùbá mission, the book with the coloured pages also struck a chord with the local population. Initial verbal explanation was naturally required, but it was far from being reliant on verbal discourse or the literacy of the audience. The immediacy of the colour symbolism and the coincidence with

elements of Yorùbá colour cosmology – “black (*dudu*) as hidden or negative; red (*pupa*) as ambivalent, dangerous, or mediatory; white (*funfun*) as spiritual and positive” (Peel, 2000, p.169) – accounted for the great impact of the wordless book. The correlation with the non-verbal Yorùbá communication system of the *àrokò*, consisting of mostly symbolic gifts constituting and affirming the relationship between sender and recipient, aided also its success.

Despite such examples of non-verbal strategies, the written word, preferably in the readers’ mother-tongue, has traditionally been the main medium of evangelisation. For Protestant Christians, in particular, an individual’s immediate access to the Bible’s message has been of paramount importance, a legacy of the Lutheran notion of scriptural primacy. Luther’s principle of *sola scriptura*, ‘only through the scriptures’, emphasised the supremacy of the Bible in all matters relating to practice and doctrine and the paramount importance of the texts in the individual’s salvation. According to Sara Pugach (cf. 2012, p.37), for 19th century Protestant missionaries in Africa, many of them Germans with a distinct Pietist background focussing on personal faith, nothing could bring the Good News alive to the local population better than providing them with the text in their own mother tongue. Translation is not, however, a one-way street. Nor is it limited to linguistic aspects. Rather, the interdependency of linguistic forms and the culture in which they are developed and used, means that adopting the local native language is to a certain extent tantamount to adopting local cultural forms. In a process of “radical indigenization far greater than the standard portrayal of mission as Western cultural imperialism” (Sanneh, 1990, p.3), linguistic, as well as cultural connotations, etymologies, forms, and structures are transferred from the ‘receptor’ context to the translated message. The context of the 19th century translation of the scriptures and other Christian texts into Yorùbá presents no ex-

ception. As elsewhere, German and British missionaries worked on the translation supported by the linguistic and cultural expertise of African agents. As Lamin Sanneh accurately remarks, “it does not take long before what is a calculated, simple, short step brings the translator into the quicksand of indigenous cultural nuances” (1990, p.5). This chapter will give a taste of the missionaries’ dance on this quicksand by reconstructing the translation process using information gathered from CMS incoming correspondence of the Yorùbá Mission and letters to the General Committee and Editorial Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

4.1 Committing Yorùbá to writing

In early 19th century Yorùbáland writing was virtually non-existent. A “few scraps of Arabic writing” (CA2 O85 227), as Henry Townsend mentions in his journal on 25th March 1845, were not uncommon because they were felt to be charms with apotropaic powers. Presumably especially in the coastal regions traders were familiar with English writing (cf. Sanneh, 1983, p.129). The *babaláwo*, Ifá diviners, used ideograms and symbols on carvings and written in the sand during divination. A systematical, written form of the regional varieties of the language spoken in the area, however, did not exist and transmission and memorising of traditions and historical knowledge was oral. Initially, the European missionaries coming to Yorùbáland relied on interpreters for everyday conversations with the local population as well as in church services. On 18th May 1845, for example, Henry Townsend writes about his church service in Abéòkúta: “I then engaged in prayer. Mr. Marsh [an Ègbá catechist] following me in the Yoruba language” (CA2 O85 228, journal excerpt). Still in Bathurst, Sierra Leone, in 1843 Samuel

Ajayi Crowther started to translate the first chapters of the Gospel of St. Luke and the Acts for very practical reasons:

According to the Instructions of the Parent Committee, to commence preaching in the Yoruba language, in the Mission in Freetown, which I desire to put into practice as soon as possible, I commenced making some translations (CA1 O79 10, letter from Bathurst, 1843, exact date uncertain).

While these first attempts were initially meant to avoid *ad hoc* translations during service, there was an appeal to devising a standardised translation into the local language. Translator interpretations and insufficient language proficiency on the part of the European missionaries constituted a threat to a consistent evangelisation and dissemination of the Good News. Since the cultures in Yorùbáland were still by and large pre-literate in the early decades of the 19th century, the teaching of literacy and the essentials of a Western education came in close conjunction with the evangelisation of the local population. Basic literacy training was conducted by means of the *Yorùbá Primer*, first published by the CMS in 1849, which contained, for example, the newly devised Yorùbá alphabet¹⁵, translated passages from the gospel of St. Luke and the Lord's Prayer (*àdúà Olúwa*). The syllabus in the Abèòkúta mission station also consisted, for example, of lessons in scripture history, geography, arithmetic, and English grammar and syntax (cf. CA2 O61 42, Thomas King, journal excerpt, 26th December 1851). Learning to read the Bible and other religious texts was a central part of preparing prospective converts for baptism. "It [...] seems very likely," Peel explains, "that the large investment of effort required to become a 'book person' helped to fix converts in their new Christian identity" (2000, p.230). A less positive stance towards Western education existed as well. Certainly, the civilising mission inherent in introducing Western

¹⁵I discuss this in more detail in Section 4.1.1.

education could be seen to have an assimilatory effect, endangering African oral culture and introducing the West as the cultural and religious benchmark. It is hardly surprising that Samuel Ajayi Crowther, still in Sierra Leone, reports an attitude, particularly amongst older Yorùbá people, that “book learning [was] for white people” (CA1 O79 1, letter, 11th February 1837) only. While it remains debatable, therefore, “whether missionaries educated Africans to suppress them or to advance their welfare (there was indeed something of both)” (Sanneh, 1983, p.128), literacy, and also access to the scriptures in their own language, had an unquestionable impact on the interaction between the various social groups in Yorùbáland. Samuel Ajayi Crowther certainly felt it to be “a very high favour conferred on [his] nation, that they possess the word of God in their own tongue” (CA1 O79 10, letter from Bathurst, 1843, exact date uncertain).

4.1.1 “Clothing sounds into letters”

Crowther, therefore, took on the pioneering task of devising a notation system for his native language. For an African whose first language of literacy was English, choosing the Roman script for committing his mother tongue to writing seemed unquestioned¹⁶. The only alternative script in the area was Arabic. Its close association with Islam¹⁷, and the fact that there was no significant rate of literacy in Arabic in any case, would have made it an ahistorical choice not serving the Christian cause. As I explained in Section 2.2, the phonemic inventory of English is to a large extent similar to that of Crowther’s mother tongue. However, there

¹⁶My research so far has not discovered any correspondence or secondary literature in which the issue is explicitly adressed.

¹⁷In the case of Swahili, which already had a literary tradition before the beginning of the colonial period, this association with Islam led the Swabian missionary Ludwig Krapf to adopt the Roman script for his dictionary of Swahili. Mission schools subsequently continued to discourage the use of the traditional Arabic script.

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are a number of phonemes in Yorùbá which have no equivalent in English, for example the voiced and voiceless labio-velar plosives /g̃b/ and /k̃p/ as well as the nasalised vowels /ĩ/, /ũ/ and /õ/. Finding a graphemic equivalent in the Roman script proved a demanding task. Attempts were made to express the Yorùbá phonemes using several letters of the Roman script but initially in a very unsystematic manner, as Crowther’s first translation of Luke 2:14¹⁸ shows:

<p>“Ogo ni fu Olorung li oke-orung, ati li aiye alafia ife hin ohre si enia.”</p> <p>(16th January 1844, CA1 O79 11a, highlighting added)</p>	<p>“Ogo ni fun Olorun loke orun ati ni aye alaafia, ife inu rere si eniyan!”</p> <p>(modern Yorùbá Bible, highlighting added)</p>
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In the 1844 translation the nasal vowel /ũ/ is still rendered in two different ways: in one instance, the nasalised manner of articulation is not represented in writing at all (<fu>), in the other, it is represented by <ung>, the English graphemisation of the phoneme /ŋ/ (<Olorung>). Charles Gollmer, who in the first years of the Yorùbá mission edited Crowther’s initial translations and added an extensive philological and theological commentary in note-form, also struggled with the task “to ascertain the natural sounds, and to cloth [sic] them into the proper letters” (CA1 O103 12, journal excerpt 25th September 1844). He could draw on the phonemic and graphemic inventory of his native German for this task:

I was led by a plain and common sound [presumably the phoneme /ɛ/], to adopt the German [...] Vowel ‘ä’, which some sought to express by the letters ‘ai’, and others by ‘eh’ (CA1 O103 12, journal excerpt, 25th September 1844).

Gollmer aimed at a one sound to one letter representation for Yorùbá orthography. In his commentary on Yorùbá orthography from 1847 (CA2 O43 94),

¹⁸“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

he indicates that Crowther had initially rendered the phoneme /g^hb/, a sound “beginning with g, flowing over and finishing in b” (CA2 O43 94, 1847), as <gb>; Gollmer, however, in accordance with his own rule, preferred the notation , thus introducing the diacritical marks into Yorùbá orthography¹⁹. The phoneme /f/, however, Gollmer suggests, should be rendered as <sh>, “[a]s this sound is very common in the language and as it is desirable not to accumulate diacritical marks” (CA2 O43 94, 1847).

Another major philological achievement of the missionary from Swabian, South-West Germany, worth mentioning in this context, apart from introducing diacritical marks, is the notation of accents. Yorùbá is a tonal language and thus intonation patterns are relevant for distinguishing meaning. In 1847, Gollmer is still uncertain about a sensible strategy to fix intonation in Yorùbá orthography, but nevertheless offers suggestions:

acute Accent to denote Elevation, whilst the Grave accent points out depression of voice, [...] Syllables without without [sic] either of those two marks must be considered of the Even voice (CA2 O43 94, 1847).

I would like to draw attention to two details at this point. The initial orthographical and grammatical inconsistencies shown above eventually led, in Henry Venn’s words, to the

Establishment of a Missionary Philological Committee for certain purposes connected with the preparation of foreign versions of the scriptures, and for adopting an uniform [sic] system, as far as possible of orthography in these languages which are being committed to writing (BSA/E3/1/2/2 (General Committee letters Vol.2), 2nd June 1848).

The Philological Committee under the *aegis* of James F. Schön reviewed Yorùbá orthography and edited the translated passages where they felt it nec-

¹⁹The voiceless equivalent /k^hp/ Gollmer represented as <p>; it could not be confused with /p/ because the latter does not exist in the Yorùbá phonemic inventory.

essary. This step indicates that evangelising the local population encompassed the missionaries' meticulous and in the true sense of the word philological work of developing a less transient medium for the oral Yorùbá culture and studying and 'developing' the language by committing it to writing. Also, Charles Gollmer was a native speaker of German and only started learning Yorùbá in early 1844 (cf. CA1 O103 10, journal excerpt, 20th February 1844). In September 1844, he admits that "acquirement of the Yoruba language has taken up by far the greatest portion of my time during the quarter" (CA1 O103 12, journal excerpt, 25th September 1844). Yet, in the same year Gollmer remarkably feels up to the task of translating the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the first two chapters of the Gospel of St. Matthew. The erudite members of the Missionary Philological Committee as well Charles Gollmer's dedication and alacrity concerning the task at hand make telling examples of the considerable external, non-African influence on the commitment of the language to writing. The significance of the step of giving the dialects, which would later make up the Yorùbá language, a written form can hardly be overestimated. The act of fixing the language, its words, sentences and idioms, in a lasting medium certainly must be called a milestone in the region's language and religio-cultural history. The ephemeral spoken word received a stable form. Its content and meaning could now be transmitted across time and space. For Peel, this constituted part of the "intrinsic 'magic' of writing" (2000, p.223) and was closely connected with the use of writing and ideograms in Muslim and Ifá divination respectively. The stable and physical form of the written words pointed to the actually existing power of their content. Consequently, written Christian texts, for example the Bible or the *Yorùbá Primer*, were seen as desirable instruments for unlocking the Europeans' perceived power. Moreover, granting access to this power by teaching the willing how to read and write cer-

tainly sent, if not a shock wave, then at least a tremor through a hierarchical, gerontocratic society.

It should be mentioned at this point that the positive assessment of giving an oral language a written form presented here has an ideological counterpart in discourse history. This is closely linked with the notion of the primacy of the spoken word and evaluates committing a language to writing as an act of pruning. Sound and visual performance crucial for memorising and (re-)telling of stories and traditions in oral cultures are lost in writing. Authors like Vansina (1985) and Sindima (1999) have heavily criticised what they feel is a process of impoverishing oral cultures by ‘reducing’ a language to writing. Also, and this is particularly relevant in the present context, introducing a European writing system and thereby often eradicating already existing systems like ideograms and other non-verbal communication systems, such as the Yorùbá *àrokò*, has been criticised. It is in this spirit that Sindima remarks “[that] this ‘blessing’ Africa received through European writing must be seriously questioned, or at least seen from another perspective” (1999, p.113).

4.1.2 Setting the standard

In the light of Sindima’s criticism the socio-political implications of committing Yorùbá to writing cannot be ignored. In the early 19th century, no homogeneous language was spoken in the area today called Yorùbáland. Instead, regional varieties existed, which were to a certain extent mutually intelligible. Equally, the various ‘groups’ in the area did not think of themselves as sharing a common identity, let alone a common ethnonym. They referred to themselves by autonoms such as ‘Ègbá’, ‘Òyó’, or ‘Ìjèṣà’. The notion of a ‘nation’ in the European sense²⁰

²⁰Elaigwu and Mazrui, for example, offer a definition of the term as “a stable, historically developed community of people with a territory, economic life, distinctive culture,

with a common name could hardly have evolved in the turbulent early 19th century world of civil wars and slave raids. The situation was different, however, for those living in the diaspora in Sierra Leone, Brazil, Cuba, or Haiti. Cultural and linguistic similarities became more relevant than the differences. Àkú was the term used for and by formerly enslaved people originating from Yorùbáland²¹.

When Crowther published his *Vocabulary of the Eyo or Aku Language* in 1843, he took the meaning of the term ‘Àkú’ even one step further while at the same time narrowing it down: he treated the diaspora ethnonym ‘Àkú’ like a *totum pro parte* for the dialect of Ọ̀yọ̀; the appellation ‘Yorùbá’ would eventually perform the same task. Originally, Peel argues, the Hausa term ‘Yaruba’ was applied to the most Northern of ethnic groups in Yorùbáland, the Ọ̀yọ̀, with whom the Hausa-speaking population in the area of the upstream Niger were most familiar (2000, p.283). Samuel Ajayi Crowther and his colleague, the German missionary and philologist Jacob F. Schön, in their journals of the 1841 Niger Expedition speak of the “Yorriba” (CA1 O79 32, 3rd July 1841) and “Yaruba” (CA1 O195 72, 29th September 1841) respectively to refer both to the Ọ̀yọ̀ and the various groups inhabiting the wider geographical area of Yorùbáland. The influence of their writing and the fact that the appellation Àkú had to a large extent only been a diasporic nomenclature meant that “the term Aku hardly made it back to Yorubaland” (Peel, 2000, p.284). It is also worth pointing out that Crowther’s mention of “the border of Yorriba” (CA1 O79 32, 27th September 1841) adds a spatial dimension to the scope of the ethnonym: Not only the language of Ọ̀yọ̀ – and later the whole of Yorùbáland – and the people living in the area are subsumed under the term;

and language in common” (1993, p.437). Such a concept is clearly tailored to European political history and can only be applied with some reservations to the African context.

²¹Peel indicates that the appellation ‘Àkú’ originates from “their mode of greeting, ‘o ku” (2000, p.284).

a geo-political component was introduced. This development corresponds to Sara Pugach's observation that, in the light of contemporary European nationalism, "language was an external projection of the nation" (2012, p.26).

In the West African context however, the concept of a geo-political unit with a common language and shared culture was not readily applicable. The military conflicts in Yorùbáland after the fall of the once politically stabilising Òyó empire in the last decades of the 18th century had rendered the area war-ridden and disjointed. The missionary endeavour to develop a written standard for Yorùbá can, therefore, be seen as more than mere practicality. It had political intentions and effects as well. The sociocultural role or status of a particular language or variety develops through the language users. This development is not a conscious process. If, therefore, a conscious decision is made to influence this role, it is an act of linguistic engineering (cf. for example, Fengyuan, 2004), an "intervention in the self-adapting process of language" (Karam, 1974, p.106). The regional variety of the language on which the orthography and certain elements of lexis of the Yorùbá Bible and other Christian texts was based, was that of Òyó (cf. Peel, 2002, p.287), interspersed with elements from other dialects. With the not-so-distant memory of the Òyó empire still in people's minds (cf. Section 3.3), the variety was perceived as prestigious and possessing a purity that other varieties lacked (cf. Peel, 2000, p.286). These associations with the Òyó variety indicate that it was chosen as the desired standard for the missionaries' translations and the language-engineering work involved because language was recognised not only as a medium of communication but also as a societal resource and status symbol.

Other ethnic groups in Yorùbáland, especially the Ègbá, objected to the normative stipulations of choosing the Òyó variety as the written standard. The

double use of the term ‘Yorùbá’ as denoting both the Ọ̀yọ́ variety and people, *and* a larger group, which included the Ègbá, was a particular cause for discontent. They objected to the overtone of continuing Ọ̀yọ́ dominance, particularly in the light of the threatening rise of the Ìbàdàn empire in the late 1840s. With its rapid extension, Ìbàdàn was seen as the successor to the old Ọ̀yọ́ empire, and its important defeat of Muslim troops from Ìlọ̀rín in 1840 instilled in the “inhabitants of Ìbàdàn the attitude that they were the saviours of Yorubaland” (Ajayi, 1974, p.153). Ègbá discontent at being called Yorùbá and, through the term, being politically and culturally associated with their enemy Ìbàdàn remained a potential for conflict in the area, and was not lessened by the fact that the British administration sided with Ìbàdàn in the 1850s, increasing Ìbàdàn’s military power and political influence.

It cannot be denied that language standardisation generally has a unifying effect on the respective language community. The missionary influence on the Yorùbá language can thus be seen as a highly political matter rather than merely a linguistic one. The fact that this act of linguistic engineering was in part carried out by missionaries not local to the area serves, to underline its significance and provides an additional explanation of why the choice of the Ọ̀yọ́ dialect as the standard for written Yorùbá language did not sit well with the Ègbá. As we will see with the missionary development of the Yorùbá Christian vocabulary in the next section as well, this outside influence was remarkable considering the small number of missionaries involved in the philological work on the Yorùbá language. By crafting a standardised written language, the CMS agents contributed in a formidable way to what Peel calls “the making of the Yoruba” (2000, p.278).

4.2 Developing Yorùbá Christian vocabulary

Translating lexemes, units of meaning, is at a first glance probably the most straightforward aspect of translation. In many cases we ask ‘What does X mean in language Y?’ and we are able to consult a dictionary to find the direct equivalent. Problems arise in cases where no linguistic equivalent of an object or concept in the source language exists in the target language. In these cases in particular a translator might reach an impasse of a theoretical nature, namely the notion that translation should not be possible at all. The concept of linguistic relativity, in essence telling us that “each language has a distinctive way of segmenting its experience by means of words” (Nida, 1969, p.20), can be read to suggest that these differences in conceptualising the world and clothing these concepts in words rule out the possibility of equivalence between languages and, therefore, the possibility of translation. How then can we account for the fact that people nevertheless translate texts? Anthony Pym (2010, p.9) offers an avenue of escape out of this deadlock. “One suspects,” he states, “that equivalence was never really a question of exact values.” He invokes Eugene Nida’s notion of ‘dynamic equivalence’ instead. Rather than focussing on formal aspects of the translation, that is, on finding the direct equivalent, dynamic equivalence focusses on evoking effects and images in the reader of a translation which are similar to those of people reading the source text. Nida thus shifts the focus away “from the form of the message to the response of the receptor” (1969, p.1). In short, Nida suggests that a translation has the best effect if the target audience is familiar not only with the words used but also with the imagery they evoke. Nida’s approach has been heavily criticised, particularly by translators of religious texts, as “profoundly simplistic” (Prickett, 1993, p.8).

One does not, however, have to fully accept Nida's approach to recognise that if the recipients' cultural context is not respected in the translation, the scriptures become mere literature and cannot be interacted with in the way that the translators intend. Research by Peter Renju (2004) into Swahili Bible translation can serve as an example at this point. Renju explains that in initial attempts to translate the term 'covenant' a word in Swahili was used which represented a promise or pledge, however, without serious social or political consequences should it be broken. The Swahili term could not convey the binding nature of this covenant and the severity of a possible breach (cf. 2004, p.50). Correspondingly, the recipients of the translation could not be aware of the immense scope of God's covenant with Noah and the momentousness of the promise given in Genesis 9:9²² for the Jewish and Christian faith. It takes, therefore, translators who are acutely aware of the constructionist nature and relativity of meanings, and sensitive to the multi-layered nature of their source text to navigate their metaphorical ship through the rocky cliffs of target language vocabulary, reader response, and socio-historical origin of the source. Apart from their function to convey the denotational meaning, possible lexemes in the target language – particularly in ideological texts in the broadest sense – have to be considered with regard to aspects of their connotational meaning, like register, etymology, and reception history. In short, the translators position the target text, thus their message and implicitly themselves through the choice of lexemes in the target language.

In the following, I discuss these two aspects of lexeme translation; the necessity of culturally and linguistically aware translators and the connotational meaning of words in the target language, with regards to the translation of the scriptures into Yorùbá. The considerations behind this aspect of the translation

²²“And I will establish my covenant with you, neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.”

process were frequently not only of a philological but also of a theological and political nature. Already existing religious vocabulary from Islam and the local religion in the area presented opportunities for Christians to position themselves in relation to these religions by either accepting or rejecting the words in question as representations of Christian concepts. Where no Yorùbá words were found to be suitable, the translators went down the route of adapting Yorùbá lexemes, or attempting to express unfamiliar concepts through existing, familiar lexemes. I discuss the translations of ‘prayer’, ‘God’, and ‘Holy Spirit’, retracing the source material from which debates and discourses were relevant for the translation; and the philological, theological, religio-political explanations and justifications the missionaries gave to back their choices.

4.2.1 ‘Prayer’

One issue for the translators was the existence of Muslim religious vocabulary in the area, usually borrowed from Hausa, the language of Muslim troops invading northern Yorùbáland. The existence of a second Abrahamic religion in the region, despite its status as a scriptural monotheism and a shared religio-conceptual history, was not a welcome sight for Christian missionaries; in general, Islam was not perceived as a possible ally against the polytheistic ‘heathenism’ of *òrìṣà* worship. On the contrary, the missionaries liked to emphasise their moral and intellectual superiority over the Muslims they encountered. An exception to this rule was Edward Blyden. Born in the West Indies and migrated to Liberia, Blyden became not only an exponent of pan-Africanism but also developed unconventional ideas about the way in which Christianity in West Africa related to Islam. “Blyden’s main achievement as a religious thinker,” writes Wilson,

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was to liberate himself from the prevailing Western evaluation of Islam and paganism and, in the process, to suggest a new approach to the problem of Christianity in Africa” (1960, p.58).

Blyden himself writes in his treatise *Christianity, Islam and the Negro race*:

The Koran [sic] is [...] an important educator. It exerts among primitive people a wonderful influence. It has furnished to the adherents of its teachings in Africa a ground of union which has contributed greatly to their progress. Hausas, Foulahs, Mandigoes, Soosoos, Akus, can all read the same books and mingle in worship together, and there is to all one common authority and ultimate umpirage (1888, p.8).

Blyden thus advocated Christianity to look to Islam as a great force of cultural assimilation in the area. In many ways, Islam was more accommodating to traditional religious customs than Christianity, which led the missionaries to feel that “in the common practice of Yoruba Muslims [Islam] came [too] close to [...] paganism” (Peel, 2000, p.209). Also, the fact that the Qur’an was only available in Arabic to Yorùbá Muslims meant that the level of literacy and knowledge of the Qur’an was low amongst them, a state of affairs which the Christians used to expose and ridicule Muslims (cf. Peel, 2000, p.209). John Christian Müller, when a Muslim is pointed out to him, reveals thus not only his personal attitude when he “[tells] the people plainly this Mahommedan is no Messenger of God, neither does he know God himself” (CA2 O72 6, journal excerpt, 12th April 1848). While the missionaries might not have approved of Muslims in Yorùbáland, those involved in translation work, in particular, could not ignore the Muslim cultural and linguistic influence.

In his first translation of Luke 1:13, Samuel Ajayi Crowther translates the angel’s words, διότι ἐισηχοσθη ἡ δεησις σου, “Your **prayer** has been heard”, as “Ọlórún bho **adua** re” (CA2 O43 94, 1847, highlighting added), literally “Ọlórún/

God hears your prayer”²³. Charles Gollmer, when writing his critical commentary on Crowther’s translation, however, remarks in note-form “**Adua** Prayer Hausa used by the Mohammed[ans] perhaps **ibẹ̀bẹ̀** a begging here better” (CA2 O43 94, 1847, highlighting added). Gollmer expresses his dislike of the Hausa word ‘àdúà’, closely related to the Arabic ‘du’a’, ‘supplication’, and his preference for the Yorùbá word ‘ibẹ̀bẹ̀’, which translates as ‘begging’ or ‘beseeching’. Despite the absence of an explicit causal link between the Hausa origin and Muslim use of ‘àdúà’, and his suggestion of an alternative translation, it does not take a great leap of the imagination to come to the conclusion that Gollmer preferred ‘ibẹ̀bẹ̀’ because he wanted to steer clear of any associations with Islam. A second instance also points in this direction of interpretation: in Luke 1:10 Crowther translates “all the assembled worshippers were **praying** outside” as “bhobho ijjo enia pejo **nkiron** liakọkọ”. Again, Gollmer, after giving an etymological explanation of the contracted form “nkiron [<] ni ikiron have a praying – ikiorun – a saluting the sky or heaven” (CA2 O43 94, 1847), points out the Muslim use of the word ‘ikiorun’ and subsequently suggests the Yorùbá phrase word “ibaolorunso a talking speaking with God fr[om] i-ba-Olorun-so” (CA2 O43 94, 1847). Despite the anti-Islamic sentiments among the missionaries, however, Gollmer’s suggestions for new linguistic inventions were not particularly successful. Samuel Ajayi Crowther, in line with his use of ‘àdúà’ in Luke 1:13, in his 1850 translation of *The Book of Common Prayer* “settled on adura, which denotes individual petitionary prayer” (Peel, 2000, p.195), thus using the term the Yorùbá population must already have

²³The Yorùbá language does not express the passive voice in a verb form. It is possible to express passive-like meaning by using a generic subject like ‘a’ (‘we’) or ‘wọn’ (‘they’). In the case of Luke 1:13, however, the hearer cannot be expressed through a generic subject because Ọlórún/God is the only possible hearer. Therefore, the active voice is the only option to express the intended meaning.

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been familiar with. Furthermore, the modern Yorùbá Bible²⁴ also renders the two passages above as

“Gbogbo ijọ awọn eniyan si ng adura lode ni akoko”	“nitori ti adura rẹ gba ²⁵ ”
Luke 1:10, modern Yorùbá Bible (highlighting added)	Luke 1:13, modern Yorùbá Bible (highlighting added)

The early-twentieth century development of the Aladura churches, literally ‘one who prays’ (cf. also Marshall, 2009, p.68), in the area, which emphasised the power of prayer and faith-healing, also points to the longevity and persistence of Crowther’s choice. For Peel, the reason for the fact that the missionaries in their translations still used terms associated with or originating from Islam, was that in doing so the Christians could “take the full advantage of the semantic ground prepared by Islam” (2000, p.195), even if this meant the tacit admission of certain common elements in both religions, despite the explicit disaffiliation from Islam in the area. One could argue, therefore, that the missionaries partially relinquished their control over the translation process at this point in order to achieve a more successful reception with their target audience.

We could see that, while Charles Gollmer initially agonised over Crowther’s use of the Hausa word, eventually the use of the already familiar term prevailed in the Yorùbá translations. This compromise, accepting a Hausa word used in the Yorùbá Muslim context despite wanting to distance themselves from Islam in

²⁴Consulting British and Foreign Bible Society archive material on Yorùbá translations of Christian texts throughout the second half of the 19th century as well as more recent editions can shed additional light on the consistency of the use of ‘àdúà’/‘àdúrà’ compared to other possible terms.

²⁵‘Àdúrà’ is the subject rather than the object in this translation. Together with the verb ‘gbà’ (‘accept’) the sentence can be translated into English as ‘Your **prayer** has found favour’.

the area, meant accepting the supremacy of linguistic familiarity with the term among the local population over ideological thinking.

4.2.2 'God'

While the missionaries wanted to repudiate any association not only with Islam but also with the 'heathen' "foolishness and superstition" (CA1 O79 1, Samuel Ajayi Crowther, letter from Fourah Bay, 11th February 1837) of local customs and rituals, certain elements of the Yorùbá lexicon and conceptualisations of the world proved to be useful when developing the Christian vocabulary. Among the most crucial was certainly the choice for the Yorùbá name of the Christian deity. One of the few elements present among most regional varieties of Yorùbá beliefs and rituals was the notion of a creator god, a *deus absconditus*, quite apart from and above the *òrìṣà*²⁶. Depending on the region and which aspect of the deity the speaker wanted to emphasise, he was called by a different Yorùbá phrase name, describing him as 'supreme ruler' (Olódùmarè), 'lord' or 'master' (Olúwa) or 'owner and inhabitant of the sky' (Ọlórùn) (cf. Idowu, 1962, pp.33-37 *passim*). For the missionaries the concept of a supreme deity, irrespective of the question of whether it had been introduced by Islam, earlier Christian contact or had already existed before, was welcome. It would not only provide a basis for introducing the notion of a monotheistic faith on a conceptual level but also facilitate translation work.

The task at hand was to choose a Yorùbá name for the Christian God which would be recognisable and meaningful to the local audience yet would clearly

²⁶The view that "God is not a god" (Peel, 2000, p.117) was not widely held in the East of Yorùbáland. Significantly, Muslim influence in the South-East before the arrival of the missionaries had been negligible, which has been believed to suggest a connection between the elevation of a creator over the other *òrìṣà* and the monotheistic influence of Islam (cf. Idowu, 1962, p.37).

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distinguish the Christian God from the *òrìṣà*. In Luke 1:6, Samuel Ajayi Crowther translates

and they were both righteous before **God** [Greek: θεος], walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the **Lord** [Greek: κυριος] blameless.

as “Awon majeji si she oloso ni waju **Olòrun** nwon orhin ni bhobho ofin on ilamma **Oluwa** li aileghan”. Gollmer approves of the name *Ọlórún* for the Christian God because “*Ọlórún* he that has the sky or heaven the owner or possessor of heaven is applied to God the Creator of All things only” (CA2 O43 94, 1847). He admits that the local population might call “their idol” (CA2 O43 94, 1847), their chief deity, by this name, but the main argument in favour of the name was that it was solely reserved for one deity and not used for any other members of the ‘heathen’ pantheon²⁷. As already indicated above, in some areas in Yorùbáland *Ọlórún* was not necessarily seen as above and apart from the *òrìṣà*. In addition to the Muslim influence which Idowu suggests (cf. Idowu, 1962, pp.33-37 passim), the missionaries thus equated *Ọlórún* with the Christian God, thereby degrading the (other) *òrìṣà* to mere divinities. Gollmer, accordingly, was less pleased with the term ‘*Olúwa*’. Corresponding to the Greek term *κυριος* and the English term ‘Lord’, ‘*Olúwa*’ can be used to denote a secular ruler or person of rank. Therefore, when Crowther translates *τον ναον του κυριου* (Luke 1:9), “the temple of the Lord”, as “*ille ọlórún*”, “house of *Ọlórún*/God”, Gollmer indicates that he approves of this change because “*ille Olorun* is plainly understood ‘House of God’ whilst *ille Oluwa* might be thought the house of some other master or Lord” (CA2 O43 94, 1847). It becomes clear that Gollmer here wants to semantically separate the secular power

²⁷Samuel Ajayi Crowther uses ‘*ọlórún*’ with a lower case ‘*ọ*’ as a plural in his 1853 translation of Genesis 3:5, “and ye shall be as gods”: “*ẹnyin osi dabi ọlórún*” (BSS 467.E57). The use of the divine name with plural meaning resembles the plural in the Hebrew **כאלהים**.

of a this-worldly lord or ruler from the transcendent, other-worldly power of the Christian God, thereby steering the interpretation of who God is in the mind of the Yorùbá congregations encountering these translations.

4.2.3 ‘Holy Spirit’

“There is no word in the Yorùbá language to express Holy Ghost” (CA2 O43 94, 1847). While this statement by Charles Gollmer can hardly be surprising, it nevertheless presented a challenge for the missionaries involved in translation. Unlike the examples discussed above, in the case of ‘Holy Spirit’ the translators had to find suitable Yorùbá equivalents not for one but for two words, which would – used as a unit – have to convey the complex and thoroughly Christian concept of the Holy Trinity and the part in it played by the Holy Spirit.

The less problematic part of the translation was certainly the translation of ‘ghost’ or ‘spirit’. Rather than attempting to find a Yorùbá equivalent for ‘ghost’ or ‘spirit’, Crowther uses the Yorùbá word ‘ẹ̀mí’, which translates into English as ‘breath’, ‘breeze’ or ‘life’. ‘Ẹ̀mí’ thus corresponds with the Hebrew רִיחַ and the Greek πνευμα, which are both used in collocation with the Hebrew and Greek words for ‘holy’, קָדוֹשׁ (for example, Isaiah 63:10: אֶת-רִיחַ קָדְשׁוֹ) and ἅγιος (for example, Matthew 29:19: ἅγιου πνευματος). Moreover, the Yorùbá word ‘ẹ̀mí’ does not only denote breath or a light breeze as physical phenomena. In Yorùbá anthropology, ‘ẹ̀mí’ is the divine breath of Ọlórún given to a human being before they are born (cf. Abimbola, 1971, p.78), hence the third meaning, ‘life’. Both aspects, the correspondence with the original languages and the existence of a similar concept in Yorùbá culture, with which Samuel Ajayi Crowther was almost certainly familiar, must have made ‘ẹ̀mí’ the most straightforward choice. Translating the term ‘holy’ proved to be a more challenging endeavour. Chapman

(2005, p.578) describes ‘holiness’ as a property “associat[ing] an object with what is divine in the sense of giving to it an association with a power that derives from beyond this world”. Moreover, the concept has traditionally been seen to stand in opposition to the profane²⁸, the everyday experience²⁹ (cf. Jödicke, 2006, p.876). Apparently, the missionaries did not find a satisfactory Yorùbá equivalent for this concept in the linguistic frame of *òrìṣà* worship.

It would not do justice to the missionaries’ diligent and zealous work to dismiss this as deliberate ignorance, as Idowu does in claiming that “[t]he missionary had no use for the religion which he had pre-judged, before he left home, to be an expression of benightedness [...]” (1975, p.86). Even Yorùbá native speaker and former *òrìṣà* devotee Samuel Ajayi Crowther mentions in his translation of the Lord’s Prayer that Yorùbá lacks a direct equivalent of the Greek *ἅγιος* (cf. Peel, 2000, p.197). In his first service held in Yorùbá on 9th April 1844 in Freetown, he preaches from Luke 1:35³⁰: “Ohung **ohworh** ti aobih ni inoh reh li aomakpe li Ommoh Olorung (CA1 O79 11a, highlighting added). Here he still uses the word ‘ohworh’, in modern Yorùbá ‘òwò’, ‘honour’ or ‘respect’, to translate *ἅγιος*. Similarly, in his translation of Luke 1:49³¹ “...**owo** si li oruko re”, Crowther’s word of choice is again ‘òwò’, which Gollmer in his commentary translates into English as ‘esteemed’ (CA2 O43 94). It appears, however, that for Crowther ‘òwò’ did not convey the full meaning of the original and was thus not one of the Yorùbá words he felt was “very expressive of the Greek” (CA1 O79 10, letter from Bathurst, 1843; exact date uncertain). The missing element was the reference to the dis-

²⁸Prominently discussed by Mircea Eliade in his treatise on *The sacred and the profane*.

²⁹Rudolf Otto’s *The idea of the Holy* renders it an altogether irrational experience beyond human understanding. Otto’s approach has been challenged in particular by notable figures of the philosophy of religion like Friedrich Schleiermacher, who sought to emphasise the immanence of the Christian God in the world.

³⁰“...therefore also that **holy** thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”

³¹“...and **holy** is his name”

tinct nature of ‘holiness’, the opposition to the profane. Similarly as in the case of ‘Olúwa’, Samuel Ajayi Crowther felt the word did not set apart mundane honour and esteem from respect owed to God (cf. CA1 O79 10, letter from Bathurst, 1843; exact date uncertain). Also, the word did not convey the idea of an intrinsic property, but rather describes people’s conduct towards the object or entity referred to as ‘òwò’. Samuel Ajayi Crowther chose to use the word ‘mímó’ instead. Unlike ‘èmí’, ‘mímó’, far from being an immediate equivalent of the Hebrew (שׁוֹרֵף) or the Greek (ἅγιος), according to Gollmer translates as “clean, pure, holy, and [is] in [the latter] sense only applicable to God” (CA2 O43 94, 1847). It has a secular meaning and can be used to describe, for example, a clean surface or clean clothes. Beyond this secular use, Charles Gollmer points out, Yorùbá Muslims employ the word in combination with ‘òba’ (‘king’) to describe Allah. Apart from Luke 1:49, in which he decided to keep ‘òwò’, Crowther then uses ‘mímó’ throughout the Gospel of St. Luke. In Luke 1:70, τῶν ἁγίων προφητῶν αὐτοῦ, (“of his **holy** prophets”) is rendered as “woli re **mimo**”. The “**holy** covenant” in Luke 1:72 (διατηρησῆς ἁγίας αὐτοῦ) Crowther translates as “majemmu re **mimo**”. ‘Mímó’ in Crowther’s translation consequently co-occurs with ‘èmí’ to denote the Holy Spirit. ‘Èmí mímó’ fills both Elizabeth in Luke 1:41 and her husband Zacharias in Luke 1:67, as annunciated by the angel in Luke 1:35.

In Yorùbá, the Holy Spirit thus became ‘clean, pure breath or life’. This meant a considerable semantic shift towards Muslim thought, incorporating notions of ritual purity and cleansing into the Christian concept of holiness. Similarly, adopting an element of Yorùbá anthropology meant another step unto Sanneh’s quicksand of cultural nuances (1990, p.5). These concessions, for that it must have felt like to some of the missionaries, to Islam and *òrìṣà* worship aided the introduction of the Christian faith into Yorùbáland. Nevertheless, as Peel concludes,

“[e]mi Mimọ [...] must have seemed a very strange coinage to those Yorùbá who heard it for the first time” (2000, p.264).

4.3 Proper names in the scriptures

A further issue worth discussing is the translation of proper names in the scriptures. In 1866, Henry Townsend sends a letter from Abẹ̀òkúta in which he complains about the way the original translators rendered proper names occurring in the scriptures:

The proper names in the Yorùbá translations are as un-English as they can be, and in many cases unnecessarily so, which causes great confusion, for the natives imitate our pronunciation, and can as well say John, James, Moses, Peter and many others, as what is made for them in the translation (BSA/E3/1/4/4 (Editorial Department correspondence incoming), 3rd July 1866).

What he describes as “un-English” is the syllable structure of proper names in Crowther’s translations. Zacharias, for example, Crowther calls “Zakaria” (Luke 1:5), his wife “Elizabeti” (Luke 1: 5), and their son “Johnu” (Luke 1:13). These examples indicate that Crowther changed proper names in the Gospel of St. Luke so that their syllables ended in vowels, not in consonants. In the case of Zacharias, Crowther clipped off the final ‘s’, whereas in the cases of Elizabeth and John he added the vowels ‘i’ and ‘u’. In his commentary on Crowther’s translations, Charles Gollmer gives an explanation for these changes, namely that “[t]he Yorubas always end their words in a vowel, [and] agreeable to this, a vowel should be attached to every Proper noun” (CA2 O43 94, 1847). Thus, Samuel Ajayi Crowther and Charles Gollmer, as opposed to Henry Townsend, argue in terms of Yorùbá phonotactics, the rules restricting the combinations of sounds in a given language (cf. also Matthews, 2014). However, as Gollmer concedes, Crowther’s

method of adding or clipping vowels at the end of proper names must be called “quite arbitrary” (CA2 O43 94, 1847). ‘Zakaria’ and ‘Johnu’, both male names, were treated differently, as indicated above. Not even names ending in the same consonant Crowther treats alike: whereas he clips off the final ‘s’ in ‘Zacharias’, in ‘Jesusu’ (Luke 1:31) he adds a ‘u’. Gollmer, therefore, suggests a rule for proper names in Yorùbá translations:

Names of **Males** [are] to end in ‘**u**’ [...], **females** [in] ‘**a**’, **countries** and **towns** [in] ‘**i**’, **Hills, rivers etc.** [in] ‘**o**’ and ‘**e**’ [should be] reserved for all **other living things** should they not have a name in the language (CA2 O43 94, 1847, highlighting added).

Almost 20 years later, Henry Townsend’s comment on the ‘un-Englishness’ of scriptural proper names in Yorùbá sparked a heated argument with Charles Gollmer, which left a blazing trail in their letters to the Parent Committee and the Bible Society. As opposed to Townsend, Gollmer insists on arguing in favour of respecting “the natural organic formation of the Yoruba language which all can pronounce” because it is a “natural and reasonable principle and commonly followed in translation of foreign languages” (BSA/E3/1/4/4 (Editorial Department correspondence incoming), 14th November 1866). Rather exasperatedly, Gollmer then goes on to point out that Yorùbá missionaries and the CMS Parent Committee already discussed the issue

many years ago [...] and it was finally decided that the Scripture Proper Names should be adapted to the Yoruba language, and that in so doing we should take for our guide not the English, but the original languages [Hebrew and Greek] (BSA/E3/1/4/4 (Editorial Department correspondence incoming), 14th November 1866).

Gollmer raises a second important aspect here. Not only would he like the phonotactics of the target language to be the standard for the translated proper names, he also stresses the importance of the form of the names in the original source

languages, Hebrew and Greek³². Rather than arguing from an English-centred perspective, as Townsend does, Gollmer points to those languages in which the translators' actual source texts were written. Gollmer can be said to argue in terms of a different narrative of 'spreading the word'. His insistence on using as a guide the original languages of the Old and New Testament establishes a direct link from Yorùbá Christian vocabulary to Christian origins rather than binding it to the missionaries' European Christian tradition. Gollmer's plea can also be seen as a small-scale admission to the target language and its speakers to determine the conditions of their encounter with Christianity.

Missionary work, Andrew Walls remarks, means "liv[ing] on someone else's terms, [making] Christian affirmations within the constraints of someone else's language" (2007, p.43). The inter-dependent relationship of linguistic forms and the environment in which they are developed and used means these constraints are not limited to having to use a different language. Rather, cultural concessions have to be made. Far from being mere linguistic detail, therefore, the influence of Yorùbá linguistic restrictions on the translation process constituted a step towards 'indigenising' the text and thereby the message.

4.4 Old beliefs in new shape

The final aspect of translation I discuss is the fate of the *òrìṣà* in this process. Perhaps the most telling example is the story of the *òrìṣà Èṣù*. Originally, Èṣù was an ambiguous figure in the Yorùbá pantheon. He was seen at the same time

³²It should be noted at this point that syllable structure rather than the actual names are relevant here. As pointed out above, Ἰωάννης is translated as 'Johnu', in keeping with the English translation.

as an executor of divine will – hence his epithet Ẹ̀légbá(rá) ‘helper’³³ – and a “trickster who might spoil any sacrifice” (Peel, 2000, p.263). However, in his 1843 *Vocabulary of the Yorùbá language*, Samuel Ajayi Crowther lists Èṣù as “Satan, demon, adversary, fiend” and Ẹ̀légbára as “God of mischief, Satan”. How did this change come about? Èṣù-Ẹ̀légbára was an ambiguous, obscure, and not easily comprehensible *òrìṣà*, for his worshippers perhaps as much as for the missionaries who encountered him in the local population’s everyday lives. He was ascribed apotropaic power (cf. McKenzie, 1997, p.231), but at the same time enforced punishments for Ọ̀rúnmilà, deity of the Ifá divination, and mediator of Ọ̀lọ̀run’s will, for example if sacrifices were not offered as prescribed. Èṣù-Ẹ̀légbára was, therefore, dreaded as a force of chaos and the unforeseen (cf. McKenzie, 1997, p.101). His statues in the Èṣù area were often of an ithyphallic nature, showing him with an engorged penis (cf. Figure 13), whereas in other areas they could be aniconic, consisting of a rock or large stone (cf. McKenzie, 1997, p.60).

It might thus have been the shape of the statue in question which led the native Yorùbá Thomas King to write in his letter from Abẹ̀òkúta on 27th October 1857 about “a muddy demon of the most disgusting shape and form called Eṣu [sic] (devil)” (CA2 O61 1). Charles Gollmer refers to the *òrìṣà* in a similar fashion when on 10th October 1858 he tells the story of a Yorùbá man who

was [sic] decided to leave the service of Satan for the service of Christ and [who] now wishes to give up his Idols and join the people of God. [The man claimed] that the light of the Gospel had prevailed over Heathen darkness and that Faith in Christ had conquered the mighty Bulwork of superstition. Among the Idols delivered [was] Eṣu [sic] the Devil... (CA2 O43 129, journal excerpt).

³³McKenzie (1997, p.44) has the following to say about the *òrìṣà*’s name: “In the coastal area, Ẹ̀légbára seems to have been often preferred to Èṣù as a name for this *òrìṣà*. Another name for Èṣù-Ẹ̀légbára was Agba, The Old One”.



Figure 13: Statue of Èṣù (taken from: commons.wikipedia.org, published under CC-BY 3.0 license)

Èṣù was in the missionaries' minds and words reduced to his negative qualities of the trickster and force of chaos. This reinterpretation of Èṣù was not only restricted to how the missionaries referred to the *òrìṣà* in their English writing. The identification of Èṣù with the Christian devil entered into the active Yorùbá Christian vocabulary. A few examples from the 1857 collection of Yorùbá hymns *Orin, ati iyin, si ọlọrun* ('Songs and praise to God') with English translations (CA2 O87 88 A/B) can illustrate this:

“Gbagbara lọwọ Eṣu fu wa e.”	“Take away strength from the Devil for us.” (from Hymn 2, written by J. Pratt)
“Iwọ Eṣu , a bọ lọwọ rẹ o”	“Thou Satan! we are delivered from thee” (from Hymn 14, written by J. Pratt)
“Awa o ti b Eṣu la fọrun e;”	“We would no more with the Devil go to the other world” (from Hymn 6, written by Ayẹna)

Apart from this identification of the *òrìṣà* with the Christian devil, the sheer frequency with which *Èṣù* appears in the collection of Yorùbá hymns is remarkable. He is mentioned eight times in the compilation of 15 hymns of which a third are not longer than four lines. Indeed, the devil became a prominent element in Yorùbá Christianity. The prayer of the former *babaláwo* Akibode, reported by missionary Thomas Wright, shows the devil as an external, personal enemy with a strong physical presence and power in the mind of Yorùbá Christians:

It is just that when a strong man comes to another strong man’s house, and fight [sic] with him so much that the former succeed that of the latter. So that he take him away and tied [sic] him well with his chains, dig a pit and throw him in and then take the children and tied them separately but not so much as the father, so the father try [sic] chance and loose the children one by one, telling them to run away home till the children all gone, and only the father remains in the pit. When the strong man came and have a peep in [sic] the pit and found that the children are got out by the father he tied him more and more so that the father couldn’t move. So it is with me O Lord so it is with me, I found that thy word is true and send all my children to thee from the devil but I alone remain there. (CA2 O97 14, Thomas Wright, annual letter from Lagos, 25th November 1872).

Akibode here expresses his feeling of having been overwhelmed by an exceptionally strong man and – with his children – bound, carried off from his house and thrown into a pit. His prayer is reminiscent of Jesus’ words in Mark 3:23-27:

So Jesus called them over to him and began to speak to them in parables: “How can Satan drive out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. **In fact, no one can enter a strong man’s house without first tying him up.** Then he can plunder the strong man’s house (highlighting added).

Interpreting the biblical text to fit his situation and also evoking familiar images of displacement and slavery, Akibode in this physical, graphic description clearly refers to the devil spiritually binding him and his children and keeping him away from God. It would be interesting to see the original Yorùbá version of the prayer in order find out Akibode’s exact words. It is unfortunate, therefore, that Thomas Wright did not include the original Yorùbá version of Akibode’s prayer. Peel hazards a guess as to the Yorùbá rendering of ‘strong man’. He suggests the word ‘alagbara’ (cf. 2000, p.258). The word, apart from sounding remarkably like Èṣù’s epithet Èlégbára, etymologically also contains the word *Àgbà*, the name of an *òrìṣà* worshipped near Lagos, which Peel identifies with Èṣù (cf. also McKenzie, 1997, p.44). Akibode’s prayer as well the Yorùbá hymns quoted above thus lead us to two preliminary conclusions on the fate of Èṣù. Firstly, Èṣù as the devil played a prominent role in Yorùbá Christianity. His importance exceeded that of Èṣù in *òrìṣà* worship and that of the devil in the missionaries’ post-enlightenment Protestant tradition. This can be explained by the reinterpretation of not only Èṣù as the devil but, by the extension of the enemy stereotype, to the entirety of the *òrìṣà* as the “collective work of Satan” (Peel, 2000, p.264). Secondly, Yorùbá converts and to a certain extent the Yorùbá missionaries, who were naturally

considerably more familiar with *òrìṣà* worship than their European colleagues, perceived the *òrìṣà*, Èṣù in particular, as a real force to reckon with and one that was active in the world. This created a tension between “the modern view that *orisha* have no external reality” (Peel, 2000, p.260, highlighting in original), and the perceived continued reality of the world of the *òrìṣà*, kept alive by the linguistic identification of Èṣù with the Christian devil.

It is this tension that I would like to focus on now. Apart from the perceived spiritual benefits for the individual, converting to Christianity in 19th century Yorùbáland could have a number of this-worldly advantages for the convert. Prominent among these were the opportunity to receive a Western education, which became increasingly important with the rise of colonial influence on the area, and a welcome economic relief. Worshipping *òrìṣà* was a costly affair: one had to pay the *babaláwo* for their divination, sacrifices often consisted of expensive livestock, and buying statues could involve investing considerable amounts of cowries. In a time of slave raids, civil wars, and the resulting displacement and loss of property and land, the dire need for guidance was felt as much as the economic plight. One can only imagine, therefore, how welcome the sight of the missionaries preaching the “freeness of the gospel” (CA2 O69 7, George Meakin, journal excerpt, 11th April 1857) must have been in the eyes of many of the poor Yorùbá. However, converting to Christianity clearly also had disadvantages for the convert. The community elders and *babaláwo* in the hierarchical gerontocratic societies of Yorùbáland were less than happy when people broke rank. Conversion upset existing power structures and withdrew valuable income from the diviners. For many converts it also meant severing family bonds and exposing themselves to persecution by their own families. CMS correspondence abounds with cases like that of a young convert who was repeatedly poisoned by his own

family before finding shelter in the mission station (cf. CA2 O61 38, Thomas King, journal excerpt, 24th November 1850), or the case of a woman who “for refusing to associate with her husband in his idolatrous worship, was severely beaten by him [after he cut] her primer to pieces” (CA2 O61 1, Thomas King, letter from Abeokuta, 27th October 1857). For those in power, conversion could mean being denied the benevolence and support of other chiefs and elders, and losing divine legitimacy for their power, as the example of Oṣiẹḷe, chief of Akaṣi, shows:

With deep feelings of regret he spoke of the hindrances in his way, how that as a chief, he must come into contact with the request of the elders and babalawo. ‘My office and situation,’ he said, ‘is a great hindrance to me [...]’ (CA2 O61 38, Thomas King, journal excerpt, 1st October 1850).

Moreover, *òrìṣà* worship in the eyes of many could not easily be abandoned. Upon asking members of the public why they were unwilling to convert to Christianity, Henry Townsend had to acknowledge that “[they] have but one reason to offer, ‘it is their custom, their fathers did so and so must they’” (CA2 O85 229, journal excerpt, 25th July 1845). The customs and traditions of their forefathers offered people a cosmological and anthropological framework which could explain the world, account for contingencies, and give those referring to it a narrative of origin and purpose. So there were on the one hand the spiritual and this-worldly benefits presenting an incentive for prospective converts and on the other the fact of how deeply *òrìṣà* worship was woven into the fabric of community and family structure, and traditional patterns of explaining the world.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, to find a man in conversation with James White suggesting “he would worship God in conjunction with his other [sic] idols” (CA2 O87 34, journal excerpt, 9th June 1852). While White of course replies that “[no] man can serve two masters” (CA2 O87 34, journal excerpt, 9th June 1852),

the reinterpretation of Èṣù meant that the *òrìṣà* could still play a meaningful role in converts' lives. Demonising the *òrìṣà*, linguistically identifying specifically Èṣù with the Christian devil, made it possible for them to still be relevant, albeit in a new guise, now as bogeymen instead of objects of devotion. In fact, as Andrew Walls puts it, the “native significance of the divinity component [that is, the *òrìṣà*] is reflected in the very rigour of the rejection that demonizes it” (2007, p.125). In focussing their conversion experience on turning their backs to their gods as the ultimate enemy, Yorùbá Christians still interacted with the *òrìṣà* as points of reference. Meyer (1999, p.99) describes a similar situation for the Ewe in Ghana. The wish to turn away from the devil and ‘darkness’ became central to converts’ statements. Meyer goes on to point out that the Pietist missionaries in Ghana were thoroughly displeased by this focus on the devil and demons in their converts. The same was true for the Yorùbá mission. As mentioned above, the heritage of the enlightenment in – particularly the European – missionaries’ Christian tradition welcomed a more ethical, more abstract and internal approach to evil rather than the personalised, external figure of the devil. However, as Meyer remarks “conversion did not bring about what professional theologians and social scientists tend to expect, namely rationalisation and disenchantment” (1999, p.110). Rather, Yorùbá Christians integrated traditional aspects of belief into their new faith and the devil became a distinguishing element in Yorùbá Christianity. Possibly underestimating the continuing significance of the *òrìṣà* in the life of Yorùbá Christians, the missionaries, through the linguistic mapping of the devil onto Èṣù, rendered possible a link between the old and the new faith.

4.5 Who 'wrote' Yorùbá Christianity?

This chapter started by pointing out the differences between Islamic and Christian traditions of translating religious texts. The exceptional nature of religious texts as far as translation theory is concerned does not only lie in the notion of the texts as divine revelation or divinely inspired. As Long (2005), indicates it is also

their function as behaviour models for individuals, communities or whole cultures [which results in] the most compelling reasons for the translation process to be a serious and well-thought out undertaking (p.7).

Thus, the missionaries in Yorùbáland embarked on an ambitious journey when they set out to spread the word in Yorùbá. The CMS correspondence bears witness to the various considerations and debates, and the diligent and zealous work behind this undertaking. By way of conclusion, let me reiterate certain observations made during my research.

The first observation is that the group of people involved in the actual translation work was relatively small. Most prominently among them were certainly Samuel Ajayi Crowther and Charles Gollmer. Besides them, Henry Townsend was concerned with the process to a certain extent and the African missionary Thomas King contributed to the Bible translation in the 1850s. If we include the Philological Committee, who reviewed translations before they were printed, the number of people is still negligible compared to a local population of roughly two million³⁴ (cf. Peel, 2000, p.242). This small number of people, many of them non-native speakers of any Yorùbá dialect, nevertheless played a crucial role in committing a hitherto oral language to writing, and in choosing and developing

³⁴Peel refers here to the population in the 1890s. However, the number can still be used as a point of reference in the present context.

the standard for the written language. They also introduced a substantial part of the Yorùbá Christian vocabulary; even if one accepts a merely mildly relativistic position and admits that the words we use and the context in which we use them, shape our conceptualisation of the world, it becomes clear that this small group of people had a tool of considerable religious and political power in their hands.

A second observation at this point can be made when looking at the examples of ‘àdúrà’, ‘prayer’, and ‘Ọlórùn’, ‘God’. In these cases in particular the missionaries’ interpretational authority was curbed by the need to make concessions to the existing cultural and religious context. Instead of clearly distancing their faith and their teachings from Islam and *òrìṣà* worship, Crowther, Gollmer, and their colleagues were forced to make use of the semantic ground already prepared in order to make themselves understood and give the Christian message a tangible and meaningful place in Yorùbáland.

The third observation which can be made concerns the linguistic reinterpretation of Èṣù as the devil. Here, we saw plainly that the results of their translation work could backfire on the missionaries, or rather their original teachings, in unexpected ways. We saw in Section 4.4 that the fact that the devil became a significant element of Yorùbá Christianity was a thorn in many a missionary’s side. The missionaries, with their highly efficacious arsenal of moral authority and political influence which resulted in the capability to reshape the conceptualisation of the world, nevertheless surrendered part of this authority and influence through the translation process. Translation inevitably entails the transfer of the message into the target language’s cultural sphere. Concessions and adaptations to bridge the gap between the source language and the target language are necessary, as the example of the ‘Holy Spirit’, which became ‘pure breath’, demonstrated. The

translation process involves partly relinquishing control over the message to the speakers of the target language.

Furthermore, the debate and the final decision on the form of scriptural proper names in Yorùbá to a certain extent allowed for the target language in the translation process to determine the terms of how the Christian message would be conveyed. Without wanting to overemphasise this point, it seems valid to call it at least an illustrative example of how translation can allow speakers of the target language a more immediate access to the message. This access is empowering and can lead, as the example of Èṣù showed, to an emancipation process, which while not necessarily conscious, nevertheless means reclaiming a certain amount of control over how the message of the translated text is incorporated into the target language and culture. Thus, Andrew Walls (2007, p.91) is correct in saying that “Christianity in Africa cannot be treated as a colonial [or missionary] leftover”. While not denying the tremendous influence the Christian mission in Yorùbáland had not only on the religious and political but also on the linguistic landscape, it seems nevertheless appropriate to view the local population as target audience of the translation not only as recipients but also as creators of the message. Therefore, Charles Gollmer, in a letter from Abẹ̀òkúta, provides the appropriate closing words:

I am thankful to say there are many Yoruba-reading Christians here, our converts, who as much appreciate and love their Yorùbá scriptures (as far as they are translated), as a true English Christian can appreciate and love his English Bible. [...] I may say the Bible, the word of God, as everywhere so here, is the safe and sure foundation of our Missionary superstructure; and, therefore, the work stood firm whilst floods and winds of persecution vainly sought to overthrow it; and so it will endure beyond the decay of the builders, for it is eternity born and destined (BSA/GI/3/8/1857-1863, 1st December 1858).

The Yorùbá Bible translation did indeed ‘endure beyond the decay of its builders’. This was most certainly owed to the fact that the philological craftsmen responsible for this project to a certain extent learned to dance on Sanneh’s quicksand and accepted that they had to cede control over how their message was expressed, received, and ultimately lived by the Yorùbá converts. The impact of their dauntless efforts cannot be underestimated, however; by giving Yorùbá language a standardised, written form and not least its name, they contributed to a developing Yorùbá identity. Peel goes as far as calling “the very ethnic category ‘Yoruba’, in its modern connotation, [...] the product of missionary ‘invention’” (2000, p.278). 19th century Yorùbá Christianity was the result of a process at times called ‘inculturation’, “the embodiment of Christianity in the forms of a particular local culture, [...] a normal and repeated process in Christian history” (Peel, 2000, p.278). By employing Nida’s principle of ‘dynamic equivalence’ by expressing alien Christian principles in terms with which the local population was familiar, the missionaries made their message more easily accessible and relatable. Despite the fact that missionaries like Charles Gollmer expressed their discontent about this development, Yorùbá Christianity can thus to certain extent be said to have literally evolved ‘on its own terms’.

While this chapter explored the common efforts of European and African missionaries to transport the Christian message into Yorùbá language and culture, in the next chapter the discussion will focus, if not exclusively, on Yorùbá missionaries. Their strategies of negotiating their place as African Christians, finding ways to integrate their experiences of displacement and relocation into their new Christian identity, and of positioning themselves towards their past and non-Christian countrymen will be at the centre of the discussion. We will explore how Yorùbá CMS agents in their correspondence use linguistic means to

re-evaluate their past and place themselves within the Christian community by recontextualising their experiences, linguistically establishing new group boundaries, changing their names, and forging intertextual bonds between their writing and Christian texts. They employ language as a powerful tool for reinventing themselves as part of their new religion, and to signal to their superiors and their wider audience that they claim their place in the Christian narrative.

5 'Black white men' – (Re-)negotiating identity and place in Yorùbá missionaries' correspondence

In his novel *Things fall apart*, Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe tells the story of the warrior Okonkwo, who, after being exiled from his town Umuofia for several years, returns to what once was his home to find a place which feels unfamiliar, alien to him. In his absence, Christian missionaries had come to Umuofia and had brought with them not only their religion, but also a new form of government. Okonkwo feels lost, unable to navigate these familiar, yet irreconcilably changed waters:

The clan had undergone such profound change during his exile that it was barely recognizable. The new religion and government and trading stores were very much in the people's eyes and minds. There were still many who saw these new institutions as evil, but even they talked and thought about little else, and certainly not about Okonkwo's return. [...] Okonkwo was deeply grieved. And it was not just a personal grief. He mourned for the clan, which he saw breaking up and falling apart, and he mourned for the warlike men of Umuofia, who had so unaccountably become soft like women (2006, p.172).

Umuofia had changed due to the presence of the Christian mission and the political and economic influence that had come along with them. For Okonkwo, who had been absent for years, his home felt like a place almost unrecognizable, irreconcilable with the memory not only of his town but also of his own place in it. The tragic end of the novel, Okonkwo's suicide, is the climax and at the same time *dénouement* of the protagonist's estrangement and ultimate incapability to find a new place in Umuofia and a society with which he can no longer identify.

The starting point of this chapter will be experiences which would certainly have resonated with Okonkwo.

Anyone who has spent an extended period of time abroad or in a culture different from the one of their primary socialisation will upon their return have realised that the person who returns experiences their old environment differently from the person who left. Okonkwo attributes this experience to the fact that his home town Umuofia has changed in his years in exile. Of course, the person himself is changed by their changed surroundings. The degree to which a person changes naturally varies and these changes might or might not make it hard for the person to 'return to their old life', the old space in their social group. Different eating preferences or changes in dress might be easy to incorporate, for both themselves and their peer group, whereas a person's changed political or religious affiliations can present greater difficulties. The physical relocation thus can be said to entail a psychological, social, and, in the context of this thesis, even spiritual relocation. "Any cursory historical awareness," as John Edwards states, "will reveal that times of transition, whether welcomed or imposed, are always times of renewed self-examination" (2009, p.16).

What Edwards here calls self-examination is also a process of social re-positioning, of re-negotiation of identity and social membership, of determining, so to speak, in how far the newly rounded peg can fit the existing square hole. Perhaps one of the most powerful tools human beings have at their disposal to position themselves in relation to others and define their view of themselves, is language. Through the language we choose to speak, our choice of register, how we refer to others and to ourselves, the question of whose linguistic behaviour we emulate or disassociate ourselves from, we position ourselves in a social group, and constantly define and re-define the boundaries of our identity (cf. Davies and Harré, 1990,

p.47). As much as people position themselves through the ways they use language, they are also positioned by others. Social psychology recognises positioning as a discursive phenomenon, “the idea that people become located as they speak and write” (Wetherell, 2003, p.99; cf. also Apter 2003). Sections 5.4 and 6.1, in particular, will explore the impact of this notion on the analysis of the missionaries’ correspondence in more detail.

Let me insert here a brief comment on the issue of agency. Meyer remarks that there is a *caveat* for the analysis of language in a social context. “One should not,” she points out, “overemphasise the freedom of the individual to create meaning” (1999, p.37). Linguistic conventions are a social phenomenon and as such implicitly agreed upon by the language community of a particular language as a whole. I hold nevertheless that linguistic choice has a significant impact on the individual’s self-presentation and perception of others, as, for example, linguistic studies into gender identity and sexuality have argued in the recent past (cf. for example Motschenbacher, 2011, or Sellberg, 2009). In a similar vein, Edwards argues that

[if] context can determine linguistic choice, then, equally, language (or dialect, or accent, or style) choice can affect the social-psychological situation (2009, p.30).

I feel this applies to the individual as well as for the language community more generally. We, therefore, have to allow for what Davies and Harré call the “possibility of agency” (1990, p.60). Another question which needs to be raised at this point is that of how conscious language users are of *how* they make use of language. In this chapter, I discuss a number of linguistic strategies for the negotiation of identity in the African missionaries’ correspondence. The agents by no means used all of these linguistic means consciously or as rhetorical devices. However, as Asif Agha remarks, the impact of linguistic behaviour is “far more pervasive in natural language than is consciously grasped by [language users]” (2007, p.45). Linguistic

analysis of natural language is in the business of foregrounding and systematising that which might hitherto have been in the background and seemingly a random matter. “Looking at language critically,” Maria Talbot points out, “[therefore] is a way of ‘denaturalising’ it – questioning and ‘making strange’ conventions which usually seem perfectly natural to people who use them” (1992, p.174).

But let us return to the matter of social belonging. Of course, as Edwards points out, for many people their transition, or rather their re-positioning, is not a welcome, not a voluntary experience. Regrettably, violent displacement has been and still is in some parts of the world a not uncommon experience. While the European missionaries arrived in Yorùbáland as complete strangers, many of the African converts who returned to Yorùbáland faced a wholly different situation. They had been born in Yorùbáland and experienced displacement, slavery, and diaspora in Sierra Leone. Most importantly they had converted to Christianity at some point in their past. Particularly for those now working for the CMS – missionaries, scripture readers, school teachers – these experiences affected their social memberships. They identified as Christians, but were not Europeans. They were Africans, but claimed for themselves to have severed ties with the beliefs and practices of their social group and their forefathers. Their conversion and their explicit alignment with the ‘white men’, observable in their European dress, their changed social conduct, their ability and readiness to speak English, meant that they were not part of their former social group any more. In short, they found themselves in a religious and socio-cultural inter-space. Also, as part of their education, those who had the chance to be trained at the CMS school in Islington did not only learn English, but also Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, thus receiving a thorough training in the languages to which the Judaeo-Christian heritage is in-

trinsically linked. English was also part of the curriculum at Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone, where a number of missionaries trained.

I would like to dwell on the missionaries' language skills a bit longer at this point. As part of their education many of them did not only learn the scriptural languages in order to be able to read and understand the scriptures in their original version and – in the spirit of the Lutheran tradition – translate them into Yorùbá; it was of course essential for them to learn how to converse and write in English. It was the language used by those Europeans with which the population mainly had contact, namely the German and English CMS missionaries and the British military on the coast. It was the language of the centre (cf. Phillipson, 1992, p.52), closely associated with European prestige and power. By speaking and writing in English, the African missionaries associated themselves with this prestige and power. This association can be described, as Norma Mendoza-Denton and Dana Osborne (2010, p.116) do, as “brought-along meaning” and thus as a primarily indexical approach to identity. Indexical signs point to a reference point in the (con)text which is needed in order to interpret them correctly. “Language X”, they explain, “indexes an identity as an X-er, whereas the identity of a Y-er is achieved by speaking Y-ish” (2010, p.116). Carmen Llamas and Dominic Watt also point out the association with language choice and identity formation:

We can trace examples of the explicit description of the association of linguistic habits with group and individual identities back to antiquity. The story of the Gileadites and Ephraimites recounted in the biblical Book of Judges, in which tens of thousands of refugees were allegedly executed as a result of their non-native-like pronunciation of the initial sound of the word ‘shibboleth’, is proverbial to the point that the word now denotes the direct link between the groups we belong to and the way we speak (2010, p.2).

Despite their manifoldly displayed allegiance to the Christian cause and the European civilising mission, the African CMS agents were nevertheless faced with the racial prejudice of 19th century European thought. “As multicultural as the missionary world appeared,” Sara Pugach reminds us,

the playing field was not level. European Protestants were of similar status, but Africans were a different matter. European missionaries, whether German, British, or otherwise, regarded Africans as civilizationally inferior (2012, p.43).

Initially, in the 1840s, Henry Venn, CMS Secretary and paternal friend of Yorùbá missionary Samuel Ajayi Crowther, had great plans for the Yorùbá mission, which he wanted to become a self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating mission. While Henry Venn had initially dreamed about the eventual “euthanasia of the mission” (Ward, 2006, p.116), the increasing colonial influence towards the 1890s meant that the colonised areas, Yorùbáland among them, felt the severe impact of racial prejudice. The optimism of the beginning of the mission gave way to a more sceptical attitude towards African leadership among the newly arrived European missionaries. This development climaxed in what became known as the Niger crisis,

stimulated by a cocktail of overlapping factors and developments, including the re-ordering of the political and evangelistic environment by the establishment of new Protectorates [...]; damaging European criticisms of the Niger mission that called African capabilities into question and discredited Bishop [Samuel Ajayi] Crowther’s administration; [...] and the systematic introduction of Europeans into the hitherto all-African Niger Mission (Kolapo, 2005, p.69).

The crisis in the Niger mission had repercussions on other missions, including the Yorùbá mission. The take-over of mission leadership by white Christians was justified by the assumption that “the backwardness of Africa was due to distinctions nature had made between Africans and other races” (Sindima, 1999,

p.105), thus driving home the message that the African agents were felt to be intrinsically inferior and incapable of running the mission.

We will in the following sections explore a variety of linguistic strategies found in the African missionaries' correspondence which can be seen as attempts to level this uneven playing field and to negotiate and establish their new place in the missionary world.

5.1 Re-evaluating the past

While communication is generally a creative phenomenon, not every text or conversation is completely novel. As John Connolly points out, “[speakers] often draw upon material encountered within previous discourse-situations, and re-use it in their current discourse-environment” (2014, p.37). Narratives or events are taken out of their original temporal, spatial, or social context and given new meaning by being embedded in a new context. As a narrative strategy, this process called recontextualisation allows the narrator to attribute an alternative meaning to an event, often at odds with the meaning which was attributed to it in the original context (cf. for example, Sarangi, 1998; Maryns, 2005; Richardson and Wodak, 2009). In Yorùbá missionaries' correspondence, examples of recontextualisation can frequently be found. In the case of the African CMS agents, the narrative which is frequently recontextualised is that of their displacement and experiences of enslavement. In the light of their conversion and not least their work for the CMS, Yorùbá missionaries in their correspondence frequently re-evaluate these past experiences by recontextualising them, thus negotiating new meanings for these traumatic events in the light of their conversion. “[The] Heathen rescued from slavery” (Register of missionaries, 1905, p.305), Thomas King, in a letter

from Abèòkúta on the 27th October 1851, talks about the day of his capture in the following manner:

[T]hat **mournful morning** (but which I may now call a **happy day**) that I left my father's home in order [...] to get corn [...]. How many of this dealings [sic], which at present though [sic] **dark and gloomy** shall be a matter of **endless praises**, when unfolded in eternity (CA2 O61 1, highlighting added).

What is striking here, is the juxtaposition of antonyms in his description. “Mournful” is replaced by “happy” and what was “dark and gloomy” is cause for “endless praises” seen from an eschatological perspective. The traumatic experience of a boy taken from his family and his home to be sold into servitude is subjected to re-evaluation. In his account, King explores an alternative interpretation of this truly life-changing event. This alternative interpretation makes it possible to attribute meaning and purpose to his displacement and life in enslavement; these events, albeit horrible and “mournful”, led him to encounter the Christian religion in the first place and ultimately made it possible for him to become the man he is in 1851. In his journal of the 1841 Niger Expedition, King moreover feels moved to confess that the recollection of his capture “always produces in my heart the **warmest gratitude** to the wise Disposer and Director of all things” (CA1 O130 17, highlighting added). With what he feels is the wisdom of hindsight, King can now see his capture for what it truly meant: not, at least not merely, a negative event but rather an act of providence for which he feels grateful. One way to interpret King's recontextualised narrative would be to point out that his correspondence was meant to be read by his superiors in the CMS and thus naturally had to focus on the positive outcome of his traumatic past. King had been saved in more than one way by the efforts of European abolitionists, and his gratitude could be felt to be owed to them as well as to “the wise Disposer and Director of

all things”. I prefer a less cynical approach; the ability to, quite literally, rewrite the past cannot be seen as anything less than empowering. King’s strategy of embedding his capture, displacement, and enslavement into the context of his salvation for him meant a way of coming to terms with these events and prioritising what he felt was the positive ending over the “dark and gloomy” beginning of his story. In one of his journal entries, King also distinguishes between his childhood memories of the African flora and his contemporary attitude towards her human inhabitants:

reminding me of the pleasant sight and diversified prospect of trees and plants, in which in my childhood I used to take a fond delight. Here one cannot mistake the force of truth of those lines – that in Africa ‘Every prospect pleases, And only man is vile’ (CA2 O61 36, journal excerpt, ending 25th June 1850).

The lines which King quotes at the end of this excerpt are taken from a hymn by Reginald Heber, who would later become Bishop of Calcutta:

From Greenland’s icy mountains, from India’s coral strand; / Where Afric’s sunny fountains roll down their golden sand: / From many an ancient river, from many a palmy plain, / They call us to deliver their land from error’s chain. / What though the spicy breezes blow soft o’er Ceylon’s isle; / Though every prospect pleases, and only man is vile? (1827, p.139)

In the light of Heber’s hymn, King re-evaluates his past perception of his surroundings. He can still appreciate the stunning beauty of the flora around him but expresses his view that he can now, after his conversion, see the people in Africa more clearly. The excerpt from his journal shows that he has recontextualised his childhood memories of the country itself in stark contrast to the people living in it. It is worth mentioning that the hymn itself is also recontextualised. It is lifted out of its original context, in which it refers to a variety of places all over the world, into the more narrowed context of King’s re-evaluation of the situation

in Africa. We will encounter other examples of recontextualised Christian texts in Section 5.4.

Other aspects of the Yorùbá agents' past are also reinterpreted, if not in such a positive light. In 1845, William Marsh is reunited with his extended family in Abẹ̀òkúta. When he discusses his plans to return to Badagry with them, his family “ask counsel of Ifa the God of palm-nut, who tells of the evils that would happen, and what to do to escape them” (CA2 O67 5, journal excerpt, 7th December 1845). His resolute attitude not to bring charms with him to protect him because God protects him is “regarded by [his] friends as **childish** and as strange and peculiar opinions” (CA2 O67 5, journal excerpt, 7th December 1845, highlighting added). His disengagement from his family and their customs also becomes apparent when his family demands he should take off his English-style clothes and don African garments again: “‘I am not come to **learn your custom,**’ was the reply” (CA2 O67 5, journal excerpt, 15th June 1845, highlighting added). Marsh goes on to explain that

[t]hey often said, You had **known nothing** before you were lost; [...] without the least intention to mock them [I said] that I look at them as **very ignorant** people, who would rather believe a **lie** than the **truth** (CA2 O67 5, journal excerpt, 7th December 1845, highlighting added).

Marsh's account has a vividness to it that makes the scene he sets for the reader almost tangible. This is mainly achieved by his use of reported speech. He quotes, albeit in a translated form, the words of his relatives and friends; the reader does not have to rely on Marsh's account alone to imagine the scene but instead has his relatives' and friends' word for it (cf. Vandelanotte, 2006, p.139). Section 6.2 will discuss this effect of reported speech in the missionaries' correspondence in more detail. I would like to point out two aspects of this episode in Marsh's journal. The

first concerns his friends' reactions to his refusal to carry charms with him on his journey to Badagry. They call his behaviour 'childish', 'strange', and 'peculiar'. Although we can assume that this conversation would have been held in Yorùbá and we do not know the original words used, Marsh's account conveys a sense of alienation, even ridicule, on the side of his friends and family. They cannot comprehend his changed attitude to rituals and actions which for them are a matter of course, and presumably were for Marsh as well before his dislocation. The feeling of estrangement which befalls Achebe's warrior Okonkwo, after his return, in Marsh's case also befalls his friends and family. In their eyes, they had stayed the same while he had changed beyond recognition. Their perceptions of what is truth and what is lie, of what is strange and what comes naturally, have become dissonant in his absence, perhaps irreconcilably so. They quite literally speak different languages.

This ties in with the second aspect of Marsh's account that I find intriguing, which shifts the focus to Marsh's own sense of alienation. In the last excerpt, he refrains from commenting on his relatives' remark that he himself had 'known nothing' before he was sold into slavery. It does not become entirely clear what this remark refers to. It is possible that it refers to his young age and thus the fact that he had not been initiated into certain Yorùbá rituals. His relatives may have interpreted his inability to comprehend the importance and potency of these practices as a result of his uninitiated status. Alternatively, and in the context also more likely, it is possible that the remark refers to Marsh's own lack of knowledge about the Christian faith before his conversion. This interpretation renders the fact that he does not comment on this remark, but rather goes on to accuse his relatives of being ignorant, all the more interesting. He not only uses deprecatory terminology, such as "very ignorant" in his reply, thus drawing a clear

line between himself and his relatives and friends. A negative evaluation of one's opponent generally entails a positive evaluation of oneself (cf. also Atkinson, 1988, p.39), as we will see in more detail in Section 5.2.2. Marsh also does not comment on the fact that before his conversion he did not know “the truth” and believed what he now calls “a lie”. He expresses a sense of moral superiority in the light of his new faith, which is disjunct from his own past. The reinterpretation of past experiences in Marsh's case is not as much one of recontextualisation, as in King's case, but one of omission. We can find a similar strategy in the conversation about clothing. Marsh refuses to “learn” his family's dress customs, referring to them as if he had never known them himself. His alienation seems absolute here, the custom is “your custom”, not his or ‘ours’ any more, nor has it ever been. The manner in which Marsh presents his sense of belonging to the Christian faith in his conversation, and subsequently his journal, is one of absolutes and one of disconnection rather than reconciliation and continuity.

Samuel Ajayi Crowther's report on the Niger Expedition in 1841 bears witness to a similar attitude. Watching a group of Africans on the banks of the rivers, he writes:

Not more than two furlongs from us, are a **people who know no heaven who fear no hell**, they are **aliens from the covenants of promise**, being without Christ, and without hope in the world. How inexcusable art thou, O man, who art living in a place where the gospel of Christ is preached every sabbath, yet thou preferest to live in darkness (CA1 O79 32, 22nd August 1841, highlighting added).

Crowther rephrases and recontextualises words from Ephesians 2:12, thus applying them to his own context:

That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

It is curious that Crowther seems to see an irreconcilable difference between these “aliens from the covenants of promise” and himself. Crowther, who had himself been an assistant to a priest of the deity Ọ̀bàtálá before his capture as a young man, in his report does not comment on his former affiliation with non-Christian beliefs or rituals. Rather, not unlike in Marsh’s case, Crowther re-evaluates his past by means of omitting it from his account completely. It seems literally unspeakable for both Marsh and Crowther to attribute or recognise inherent value in the non-Christian traditions of their past.

We saw that Yorùbá missionaries’ correspondence frequently presents significant re-evaluation of past events and experiences. By recontextualising traumatic events, such as displacement and enslavement, the agents can rewrite the past, thus giving new and positive meaning to hitherto negative experiences. The selective view of the missionaries’ own past and the negative re-evaluations of past affiliations in their correspondence also expresses a strong wish to disassociate themselves from their former social memberships. The documents bear witness to a desire and determination to cut ties with the past in the light of the agents’ new faith and their duties for the CMS. It should be mentioned that the dissonance between the missionaries’ *de facto* experiences and the reinterpretations found in their correspondence can also at least partly be attributed to the fact that these documents were not primarily meant to be personal *aides-memóire*, as a way to “present the self to the self” (Barber, 2006, p.8), but mainly served as statements to their superiors in the CMS Parent Committee. The documents, therefore, are a way to present the self to others, as Section 6.1 explores in more detail. For now, let me point to Erving Goffmann’s notion of performance (cf. 1990, p.32). He argues that an individual appearing, or performing, before others will with her actions influence the perception the observers have of her and of the situation.

It seems reasonable to argue that in their writing, the missionaries to a certain extent performed before their readers, to whom they were accountable. Their documents were a way of performing the disaffiliation from their former social groups and their past lives. That is not to say that the use to which the agents' correspondence was put should necessarily lead us to question the genuineness of the expressed feelings of gratitude and estrangement. There is an aspect of empowerment in the act of re-inventing oneself, and it would not do justice to the life-changing nature of the Yorùbá missionaries' experiences to doubt the sincerity of their newly emerging identities. These converts, who had become missionaries, cannot simply be viewed passive objects of cultural change, as the notion of the colonisation of the consciousness, introduced by Jean and John Comaroff (1991), suggests. This metaphor of conversion-as-conquest has at its basis a philosophy of the mind which views the mind as a spatial, a territorial entity, which can be claimed and conquered (cf. also Roberts, 2012, p.279). "The appeal of [this] metaphor," Roberts argues,

lies in its focus on power. Yet the way power is conceived in this model is as a force that operates upon subjects from without. Specifically, power is epitomized as the subordination or subversion of an ideally autonomous subject (2012, p.276).

An alternative approach would be to take into account the converts' active participation which is involved in this process of conversion. In Chapter 4, I repeatedly pointed out the effort and commitment necessary on the side of the prospective converts in order to become Christians. To assume that religious conversion merely "amounts to an outside 'takeover' of the convert's consciousness" (Roberts, 2012, p.272), downplays the active part which the prospective converts played in this process, and understates the level of agency with which the Yorùbá missionaries were involved in creating their new identities.

The process of re-evaluating their past in their correspondence was a way for Yorùbá agents to assert their allegiance to their new faith and renegotiate their group memberships. In the next section, I explore various ways in which Yorùbá CMS agents navigated these uncharted territories. One way of establishing in-group–out-group boundaries is the use of a common name, a shared label. I explore how and to which effect the term *òyìnbó*, originally used to describe white people, was applied to and used by the African missionaries about themselves. Finally, I discuss the use of personal pronouns like ‘we’ and ‘they’. These pronouns are indexical signs; thus their reference changes depending on the communicative situation. In their correspondence, the missionaries use personal pronouns to signal flexible group boundaries. In this context I also explore how deprecatory terminology occurring in the missionaries’ journals and letters contributes to linguistic ‘othering’. By means of this terminology, the missionaries positioned themselves as associated with certain groups and constructed themselves as distant from others.

5.2 Linguistic strategies of negotiating group membership

Identity is not only about who we are but also about who else is like us, “as the essence of identity is similarity” (Edwards, 2009, p.19). With this notion of similarity comes the notion of difference. The previous section explored ways in which the Yorùbá missionaries re-evaluated aspects of their former selves and rejected them because of their own perceived difference from former social equals. We are constantly negotiating who is enough like us to be admitted into our own social groups, and who is too different, in their appearance, their beliefs, their linguistic habits, their moral decisions, the way they dress, eat, live, or think, to be a member of these select circles. These boundaries are not static but must

be viewed as constantly self-renewing, processual social artifacts (cf. Cerulo 1997, p.387). One of the means by which we negotiate in-group–out-group boundaries is language (cf. van Dijk, 2002). Language users define and redefine the boundaries of their identity and their allegiance to social groups, for example, through “words, phrases, grammatical patterns, [or] patterns of discourse” (Johnstone, 2010, p.31). These linguistic means are indices, their use pointing to association with or dissociation from social groups.

The Yorùbá missionaries, as opposed to their European colleagues who had grown up with the Christian faith, after converting, and particularly after commencing their work for the CMS, had to renegotiate their social group memberships. While we have already encountered other means of achieving this – we heard from William Marsh, for example, that he started wearing European-style clothes –, we can confidently say that one of the most powerful – and most durable – tools at their disposal was their written correspondence.

5.2.1 *Òyìnbó* – Using a common name

We saw in Section 4.1.2 that the fact that the Yorùbá language was not only given a standardised written form by the missionaries involved in translation work, but was also given its *name* in the first place, contributed significantly to what Peel calls “the making of the Yoruba” (2000, p.278). The use of a common label aided the development of a Yorùbá identity. We will see in this section that in the African missionaries’ correspondence we can find another example of a common name or designation helping to build, strengthen, and express allegiance to a group. The 1913 CMS-edited *Dictionary of the Yorùbá language* includes the word ‘*òyìnbó*’. The dictionary gives the meaning as “people beyond the waters, applied mostly to white men, but also to natives who have adopted European

customs”, but unfortunately does not give more details about the etymology of the supposed translation. We can draw from the explanation in the dictionary that the term referred not only to non-Africans but also to Africans with strong European affiliations, influential Christians with roots in Yorùbá beliefs and practices. The word appears in Yorùbá missionaries’ correspondence, mainly as an exonym applied to them by someone with whom they had a conversation. We also find, more frequently, the designation ‘white man’ or ‘whiteman’. I argue in this section that the use of the terms was not only a way for the African agents of linguistically including themselves with the group of white, European Christians but also extended the meaning of the words to include them in the first place.

Samuel Ajayi Crowther mentions the use of ‘*òyìnbó*’ in reference to himself (CA2 O31 128, journal excerpts, 12th January 1853). John McKenzie also reports the frequent use of the term in this way (1997, p.300). The use of the word ‘*òyìnbó*’ with the added ‘*dúdú*’ (‘black’) can be found in the 1913 *Dictionary of the Yoruba language* as well. The meaning is listed simply as ‘black man’, distinguished from ‘*òyìnbó funfun*’, ‘white man’. While neither of the terms appears in the missionaries’ correspondence and I can thus not evaluate on this basis how widespread their use was, the distinction is nevertheless a curious one. It indicates that skin colour and origin alone did not make someone an *òyìnbó*. Once again, William Marsh’s new clothes come to mind; they were an outward expression of a mindset considered to be a preserve of Europeans.

We can also include features like having received a Western education with its literacy and language skills and, of course, the Christian faith as such in this list. In the context of the Yorùbá missionaries’ life, being an *òyìnbó*, therefore, had little to do with skin colour alone. The term, especially if we keep in mind the distinction between the ‘white white man’ and the ‘black white man’, neatly

captures the African missionaries' situation as socio-culturally in-between. The reference to Christianity, political and religious European values and affiliations, and the ability to read and write is reflected in the fact that in their correspondence we can read about occasions on which African missionaries are referred to as 'white men' by outsiders. In 1845, Samuel Crowther, for example, describes an incident at a local chief's house. Crowther and four of his colleagues pay a visit to Chief Ogunbonna, who struggles with the task of finding suitable food for his guests:

Ogunbonna was not accustomed to provide for **white men**, so he was at a loss what to do on this occasion, but **we** soon made him easy [...]; asked Ogunbonna to partake with **us**, but he declined, because he did not know how to eat as the **white men** do (CA2 O31 89, journal excerpt, ending 25th March 1845, highlighting added).

What is remarkable about this incident, is that out of the group of five missionaries at Ogunbonna's house only two are European, and, therefore, 'white' in the narrow sense of the word. Nevertheless, if we can rely on Crowther's renarration of the event, the local chief grouped the three Africans with their European colleagues, thus reflecting his perception of the Yorùbá agents as part of the European group. I would like to dwell for a little bit on the varieties of spelling of 'white man'/'whiteman' in CMS correspondence. No fixed orthography was in place for English in the 19th century. Nevertheless, the fact that, for example, William Allen on 8th May 1859 (CA2 O18 16), as well as Samuel Ajayi Crowther on 27th September 1841 (CA1 O79 32) wrote in their journals about the 'whiteman' instead of the 'white man', raises questions. I argue that the varieties of spelling and the accompanying change of morphology reflect semantic depletion. By this, I mean a process of semantic change during which "a lexical item becomes semantically depleted through [the] extension to a wide range of contexts

and/or occurrence in many collocations” (Norrick, 1981, p.112). The wider range of contexts in the case of ‘white man’ is the extension to include Africans who had received a Western education and were members of the Christian community. The use of the word in a wider context thus stretched the semantic content of the term. ‘White man’ is a lexical unit consisting of more than one word. Ladislav Zgusta argues that semantic depletion is a the core feature of multiword lexical units:

If we take an expression like the greeting good day!, we see that we cannot substitute, say, excellent day! Such an expression would not be a modification of the usual greeting, but it would not be understood as a greeting at all, i.e., its overall meaning would be changed. Therefore, such a set expression can be considered a multiword lexical unit though its overall meaning is not vastly different from that which is predictable from the lexical meanings of its single constituent parts. In this case, we could speak here [...] about a certain semantic depletion of the constituent parts of the expression (1967, p.580).

The spelling of ‘whiteman’ as one word could be viewed as a result of its waning reference to actual skin colour, and the increasing use as a reference to religion, cultural affiliations, and education. The term is used for a wider range of referents, and thus the constituent parts of this multiword lexical unit become semantically depleted. The Yorùbá term ‘*òyìnbó*’, which was originally used to refer to non-Africans, was gradually also used to refer to African Christians. It is possible that the changing reference of ‘white man’/‘whiteman’, and the co-occurring change of spelling, mirrors this semantic change in Yorùbá.

It is debatable if the following incident reported in Samuel Ajayi Crowther’s journal of the Niger Expedition on 18th September 1841 belongs in this list as well: “My Yorriba [sic] visitors being Mahomedans were surprised to see me, as they considered me an **English** mallam³⁵, drink country beer” (CA1 O79 32,

³⁵Muslim cleric, adapted from the Arabic *mu’allim*, ‘teacher’

highlighting added). Crowther's visitors certainly did not think of him as an Englishman in the sense of his origin or even nationality. The word "English" in this context seems, therefore, rather puzzling, unless the word used in the original exchange was 'òyìnbó'; in this case, Crowther's Muslim visitors probably alluded to his close association with the Europeans on the expedition and the fact that he was a Christian figure of authority. The latter, however, does not explain their surprise at seeing Crowther drinking beer. As a Muslim *mallam*, drinking alcohol would have been frowned upon, so it is possible that his visitors assumed similar dietary restrictions to be in place for Christian clerics³⁶.

While the term 'òyìnbó', as well as the translation 'white man'/'whiteman', were used in African missionaries' correspondence in a way that included them into the group of European missionaries, it has to be said that the Yorùbá agents did not actively refer to themselves in that way. They merely reported occasions in which they were referred to as 'òyìnbó' or as 'white men'. Rather than initiate the application of the term to themselves in their writing, they repeated, and thereby perpetuated, the extension of meaning. As part of the re-negotiation of their identity and group membership this might be seen as passive rather than actively getting involved. As a response to this, I argue that identity is constructed and reconstructed in interaction with others and cannot be seen as a process over which the individual has total agency or control. We are constructed by others as we construct ourselves. In this sense, Goffmann's notion of performance (cf. 1990, p.32), the presentation of the self to others, is only part of how our identity is constructed. After all, as Buchholtz and Hall remark,

³⁶In fact, the Church of England Temperance Society was officially founded only in 1862, even if the Protestant tee-totalism movement had emerged earlier (cf. also Blocker *et al.*, 2003).

identity [is] a relational and socio-cultural phenomenon that emerges in local discourse contexts or interaction rather than as a stable structure located primarily in the individual (2010, p.18).

This should, however, by no means be seen as an indication that the African missionaries had no influence over how their group membership was perceived. What is also remarkable about the use of ‘*òyìnbó*’ and ‘white man’/‘whiteman’ to refer to African missionaries, is that I have only been able to find evidence of this use in their own correspondence but not in that of European missionaries. It could, therefore, be said that African CMS missionaries, through documenting this use of the term, indirectly used it as a self-designation, thereby actively encouraging the perception of themselves as part of the European Christian community. The associations with Western education, the Christian faith, wider missionary values, such as ‘civilisation’, and not least the political prestige that came with the growing influence of European colonial powers in the area (cf. Roberts, 2012, p.274) were all clustered around the terms, and made it highly desirable and advantageous for the Yorùbá missionaries to be referred to as such. The group boundaries drawn and expressed by these terms clearly included the Yorùbá agents with their European colleagues, and disassociated them from the non-Christian local population.

We will see in the next section that the difference in the way African and European missionaries expressed and established their group affiliations extends to the way personal pronouns, especially ‘we’ and ‘they’, were used in their correspondence.

5.2.2 'We' and 'they' – Negotiation of in-group and out-group status through personal pronouns

I pointed out at the beginning of this chapter that African missionaries, particularly those returning from the diaspora or after experiences of enslavement and dislocation, grappled with finding their place in the changing and changed world which they inhabited. It was important to figure out their group affiliations and communicate them to both the people in their group, or groups, and those 'on the outside'. A particular way of doing this was in their use of language as a social tool. Edward Sapir, in his 1934 contribution on 'Language' to the *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* remarks "language is a great force of socialization, probably the greatest that exists" (p.159). Expanding on this notion of a close relationship between language and socialisation, Elinor Ochs indicates not only the tool-like functions of language in the socialisation process, but also its symbolic properties:

Both the symbolic and the tool-like properties of language are exploited in the process of language socialization. Language socializes, and in this sense it is a social tool. To a large extent, however, this socializing function relies upon the symbolic aspect of language. That is, among the many means through which language socialization is accomplished, symbolic expression looms large. In this sense, the symbolic function of language serves the social tool-like function of language (1990, p.288).

Part of this "social tool-like function of language" is certainly to convey socio-cultural information about the speaker. "[S]emiotic links between linguistic forms and social meanings" (Buchholtz and Hall, 2010, p.21) serve to convey information about the speaker's social status, origin, gender, role, relationships, epistemological stance, the conversational setting, topics, and so on (cf. Ochs, 1990, p.293). Linguistic forms which offer this kind of information are called indexical signs because they index the speaker's sociocultural position. The use of dialect words,

euphemisms, technical vocabulary, a certain tone of voice and register, or personal pronouns like ‘we’ and ‘you’ are examples of indexicality. As Buchholtz and Hall point out, therefore, “[t]his mechanism, known as indexicality, is fundamental to the way in which linguistic forms are used to construct identity positions” (2010, p.21). Ochs correctly remarks, however, that we have to distinguish between what she calls referential and non-referential indexical signs:

Whereas a referential index contributes to the denotational or strict referential meaning of a sentence uttered in a context, a nonreferential index does not. The pronouns ‘I’ and ‘you’ are referential indexicals (1990, p.293).

They refer directly to the speaker and her audience in the immediate conversational context. The ‘you’ in one conversation is different from the ‘you’ in another conversation because the conversational partner or the group referred to in such a way might be a different one. Equally, if speakers refer to themselves and others as ‘we’, this ‘we’ can refer to different groups of people depending on the conversational context. Another way to express this, is by referring to a change in the deictic centre. For spatial or temporal indexical signs, the deictic centre is the point in time and space to which the indices refer. In a conversation, for example, we assume that ‘now’ refers to the present time, which forms the deictic centre for this conversation (cf. also Marmaridou, 2000, pp.100ff *passim*). If we read a journal entry which was written two years ago, the word ‘now’ in this journal entry does not refer to the reader’s but to the writer’s present time, two years in the past. The reader and the writer thus have different deictic centres. For indexical signs referring to a person’s in-group or out-group status, such as ‘we’ and ‘they’, the deictic centre also changes depending on the speaker.

Thus, personal pronouns can function as a means of negotiating context-dependent in-group–out-group boundaries. Who belongs to ‘us’ and does not, who

is part of 'their' group and who is not, changes depending on the conversational situation and context. Another differentiation can be made between the inclusive and the exclusive use of 'we' to determine group boundaries. This notion, known as first-person plural clusivity (cf. for example, Wieczorek, 2013), describes the difference between a use of 'we' which *includes* the addressee or reader³⁷ and a use which *excludes* her. Unlike a number of other languages (cf. for example, Bickel and Nichols, 2005), English does not have two different words to express clusivity; instead, the meaning is conveyed on the level of pragmatics, leaving it dependent on the context.

Language socialisation is not only a part of primary socialisation but also plays a role for second-language learners and in particular for people who find themselves in a new social environment, in which social position might be negotiated by other indexical means than those one is used to. Ochs refers to people who have to adjust to a new social environment and thus undergo the process of renewed language socialisation as "novices" (1990, p.304). In many ways the European as well as the African CMS missionaries can be seen as such 'novices'. The Europeans found themselves in a different social environment to their primary socialisation, having to cope with the climate, illness, and, at least in the beginning, with a lack of language skills in Yorùbá. While their position, therefore, required them to be highly adaptable and flexible in a new environment, their circumstances nevertheless differed significantly from those of their African colleagues.

Not only did learning English mean that the Yorùbá agents had to learn new ways of expressing themselves and determining their social position. In the changed and changing world to which they returned from the diaspora or which

³⁷I would like to point out in passing the use of the inclusive 'we' in this thesis. Flottum *et al.* (2006, p.101) indicate the frequent use of the inclusive 'we' in academic texts as a means of engaging with the reader rather than merely lecturing them.

they entered after converting to Christianity and starting to work for the CMS, the African missionaries played entirely new roles: they were literate Africans, black Christian converts, associated with the influence of European missions and the English language, as well as former ‘heathens’. As Norman Fairclough remarks, “the socialization of people involves them coming to be placed in a range of subject positions” (2001, p.85). These various subject positions find expression in the ways speakers use indexical signs to negotiate their social position. The use of Ochs’ referential indices, such as ‘we’ and ‘they’, in particular is indicative of the varying subject positions and groups in which the writers found themselves. But here I am anticipating. I would like to introduce another approach to the negotiation of in-group–out-group boundaries. In his 1995 paper on *Ideological discourse analysis*, van Dijk raises the issue of ideologies in connection with group affiliations. As people belong to different groups, van Dijk argues, and share in different ideologies, they will have to negotiate their affiliations accordingly, depending on discourse and social context (cf. p.138). “Thus, a black woman journalist in the United States,” he adds,

may have to combine the ideological systems of gender, ethnicity, profession and nationality, and conflicts between these are obvious, and this will also affect her social activities, her news reports and her other discourse, depending on the social situation (e.g., in the newsroom she will be expected to be professional – and American – first of all, and her other identities and allegiances may be marginalized, suppressed or otherwise restricted) (p.142).

One strategy to manage the competing – at times possibly even incompatible – ideological affiliations is by establishing a polarisation between ‘us’ and ‘them’, thus indicating a person’s allegiance to one social group and their distance from another at a certain point in the discourse in a specific social context. As we will see in this section, in the African missionaries’ correspondence this polarisation

between 'us' and 'them' contributes to the negotiation of social belonging. As van Dijk indicates, these allegiances can at times be conflicting; individuals, as we will see below, can in one context, for example, focus on their belonging to the group of missionaries, while in another referring to an aspect of their identity as a former slave, or convert. Thus the shifting poles, the changing deictic centres of their in-group–out-group distinction, is indicative of the composite, constructed nature of human identity. We will see that the African CMS agents adopted highly versatile, intersubjective, and multi-dimensional subject positions.

Let us look a second time at an excerpt from Samuel Ajayi Crowther's journal of the Niger Expedition, which we encountered first in Section 5.1. On 22nd August 1841, he describes the encounter with a group of the local population on the banks of the Niger:

Not more than two furlongs from **us**, are a people who know no heaven who fear no hell, **they** are aliens from the covenants of promise, being without Christ, and without hope in the world (CA1 O79 32).

Crowther here uses the first-person pronoun 'us' and the third-person pronoun 'they' to demarcate the two groups from each other. 'We' are the group of Christians, both Europeans and Africans converts, on their boats and canoes travelling down the Niger in order to promote Christianity and sounding out the area for suitable places to build a mission station. 'They' are a group of people local to an area near the banks of the Niger, not Christians but "without Christ", not far away from the expedition group – about 400 metres – but apparently spiritually unfathomably distant. The physical boundaries between the two groups – one on a flotilla of barges on the river, the other on the banks of the river – coincides with the spiritual boundaries; both are represented in Crowther's use of referential indices. Remember that Crowther makes use of words from Ephesians 2:12:

That at that time **ye** were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

Crowther's distinction between 'us' and 'them' echoes Paul's use of the second-person pronoun 'ye', sanctioning his group boundaries by placing them into the context of nearly 1900 years of Christian history of thought. Crowther naturally includes himself into the group of 'us', referring to the group of his fellow Christians, both African and European. We could call this a Christian 'we', therefore. Incidentally, the next verses in Paul's Epistle are:

But now in Christ Jesus **ye** who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is **our** peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the **middle wall of partition** between **us**.

In Paul's Epistle, the exclusive 'ye' dissipates into the inclusive second-person pronoun 'us' and the possessive marker 'our' in the context of the Christian faith. The boundaries which Crowther erects in his journal can only be broken down by 'them', the non-Christian local population, becoming part of 'us', the Christian community.

Matters are different in the case of Thomas King's journal entry from 24th February 1850. During his passage from Sierra Leone to Badagry, King preached to the mainly African ship crew about his gratitude for "liberating **us** by the instrumentality of the **Friends of Africa**" (CA2 O61 36). King's deictic centre when he uses the pronoun 'us' is fundamentally different from the one in Crowther's journal. While it does not become entirely clear from the context if he refers to physical liberation from enslavement and diaspora, or spiritual liberation in the sense of having been given the chance to convert to Christianity, we can safely say that he includes only Africans when he uses the first-person pronoun 'us'. We can, therefore, assume that the first-person pronoun in this case indicates

liberated African converts.

There is another difference to Crowther's manner of establishing group boundaries. King does not use the second-person pronoun 'you' or the third-person pronoun 'they' as the complement to 'us'. Rather, he explicitly uses the unambiguous noun "Friends of Africa", indicating a set expression probably used frequently at the time, by which most likely he referred to European Christians promoting abolition and evangelisation³⁸. As such, the term does not have the same indexical properties as a pronoun; there is no deictic centre which can shift depending on the context. In other words, avoiding the pronoun altogether makes the referent explicit. The meaning of the counterpart to King's 'us' is more or less fixed, making it easier to determine who is included – non-African Christians and abolitionists – and who is not – everyone else, King and the ship's crew in particular. Nevertheless, all in all, opposed to Crowther's clear-cut Christian 'we', King's 'we' is more ambiguous because it is not obvious if King refers to physical or spiritual liberation or possibly both; we can provisionally call it an African convert 'we'.

There is a *caveat* to this idea, however. It is not unlikely that King, for the purpose of evangelising his African audience on the ship, adopts a position in which he would not normally see himself. In order to reach them more effectively with his words, he uses the inclusive first-person pronoun, thus aligning himself with his audience in solidarity. Another example from King's journal can possibly bring more clarity on this last point. On 25th September 1850, he expresses "**our** great happiness that God has sent **white men** to teach **us**" (CA2 O61 37). As we saw in Section 5.2.1, the term 'white men' did not necessarily only refer to skin colour but was also used in reference to religion, status, and education. In King's journal entry the 'white men' are clearly viewed as counterparts to 'us', rendering

³⁸A great number of non-profit organisations of the same name, involved in promoting human rights, good governance, wildlife preservation, and education exist even today.

‘us’ the non-Christian Africans without Western education. Again, King includes himself, or rather his past self, in this group, thereby retroactively excluding himself from the group of the *òyìnbó*. We could argue that King was aware of the imbalance in prestige in favour of white missionaries and European Christians respectively, and intended to humble himself before his European audience by excluding himself from their group. Whatever his motive, he employs indexical means to establish an in-group–out-group boundary with the effect of putting a distance between himself and his fellow Africans, and the ‘white men’. Again, therefore, we could refer to the personal pronoun as an African, possibly a convert ‘we’.

A third example from Thomas King’s correspondence sheds light on another aspect of African missionary identity, namely that of the former slave. When writing about his feelings regarding his return to his home, King mentions the “ardent expectation of beholding the faces of **our** friends again, a thing which **we** did not at all expect” (CA2 O61 36, journal excerpt, 24th February 1850). From his remark that “we did not at all expect” to return to friends and family, we can infer that he uses the first-person pronoun to refer to a group of people who have been subject to displacement and life in the diaspora. From his personal history (cf. Section 5.1) and the context it is clear that King in this case positions himself among those formerly enslaved who were relocated to Sierra Leone and have now returned from the diaspora. The pronoun here, therefore, can be said to have been used as a liberated slaves’ ‘we’.

The last example I would like to discuss here is from a slightly later period than the others. In the aftermath of the *ìfólé*, the persecution and violent expulsion of whites and African converts from Abeókùtá in the autumn of 1867, James White writes the following in his Annual Letter to the CMS Parent Committee:

In conclusion, **we** would request **the Committee** to take the spiritually forlorn state of Abbeokuta into their consideration and make it a matter of prayer at the throne of grace that the LORD [sic] may have mercy upon her, that by withdrawing His blessing she may feel her want of it, and learn to appreciate it better should it ever please God to restore it to her (CA2 O87 96).

The group of people for which he speaks in his letter, which he refers to by the first-person pronoun 'we', is likely to be the group of missionaries who left Abẹ̀òkúta after the *ifólé*. Before this conclusion to his letter, White tends to refer to himself by the singular personal pronoun 'I'. It is interesting to see that White in his request to the Parent Committee shifts to the plural form, 'we', therefore, shifting his identity from the singular individual to part of a group. White here uses what we could call a missionaries' 'we'.

We can also find an element of what Andrew Apter has to say regarding shifting identities in Yorùbá rituals. Apter describes how religious specialists adopted various roles during a single ritual, thus "shifting [...] speaking subjects between devotees, deities, and various social actors and categories" (2007, p.71). He argues that the "shifting grammatical subject [provided] them with immunity" (2007, p.71). The implied collective, expressed by the plural form, gives White's request, and also the rest of his letter – this being the final, concluding paragraph –, more authority, a more insisting and louder voice than the singular pronoun possibly could. White also shifts the grammatical subject from 'I' to 'we' when formulating his request in order to shift accountability for his request – and possibly the rest of his letter – to the collective 'us' and away from himself as an individual. It could be argued that this indicates a feeling of insecurity about the effect his request for support and prayer might have if he had chosen to continue to perform as an individual rather than implying that he communicates the request of a group. The plural pronoun in this case emphasizes that White does not only speak for

himself but for the implied collective of missionaries evicted from Abẹ̀òkúta.

So far, in this section I have focussed on the use of referential indices as in-group–out-group markers by African missionaries, arguing that their socio-cultural in-between position as black Christian converts meant multiple group allegiances and thus a feeling and expression of social belonging which varied according to the communicative situation. We have encountered Crowther’s use of the Christian ‘we’, King’s different uses of ‘we’ to indicate alignment with African converts, former slaves as well as non-Christians without a Western education, and finally White’s use of ‘we’ to imply his status as a member of a larger group of missionaries, both European and African. Depending on the context, therefore, the deictic centre of the personal pronoun shifted, indicating adaptable and flexible group boundaries in the Yorùbá agents’ correspondence. ‘We’ does not refer to a single group but rather refers to the variety of groups with which the Yorùbá agents felt a bond. This variety reflects the physical and spiritual journey of those Yorùbá missionaries who had experienced displacement and enslavement; rather than merely identifying with their subject position as missionaries for the CMS, the writers indicate their multi-faceted social position in the missionary world.

Let us now briefly examine the negotiation of group boundaries in the correspondence of European missionaries. What becomes apparent when analysing European missionaries’ language, is that we can by and large only talk about their use of personal pronouns for in-group–out-group demarcation in terms of its absence. It is a rare phenomenon, particularly compared to the abundant and varying use in African missionaries’ letters and journals. I have selected two examples from European missionaries’ journals which can perhaps help us to get to the bottom of this issue. In 1848, the British missionary Isaac Smith recounts in his journal an incident which had occurred when goods were being transported

overland and part of the loads were stolen. The thieves were apprehended and the goods returned, but Smith thinks that “had it not been that, that [sic] these loads belonged to **us Europeans**, they would never have been seen again” (CA2 O82 12, ending 25th September 1848). Smith here uses ‘us’ to refer to the group of European missionaries, as he makes explicit with the next word ‘Europeans’. The use of ‘Europeans’ disambiguates the meaning of the indexical sign. It is similar to the fact that King in his journal talks about the ‘Friends of Africa’ rather than ‘them’ but here both the pronoun and the proper noun are used. Smith leaves no doubt about the group boundaries he is drawing and indicates that the European missionaries enjoyed a privileged status compared to the African population because their goods were returned to them and the thieves apprehended and punished. On 15th April 1848, the German missionary John Christian Müller writes in his journal about his visits to local families in Abéòkúta. Together with his interpreter William Goodwill, they were “spreading the word [...] respecting **our** most holy faith” (CA2 O72 6, ending 20th June 1848). ‘Our’ here clearly refers to the Christian faith, which Müller and his colleagues have come to Yorùbáland to propagate. Müller includes himself, as well as William Goodwill and, if we assume that ‘our most holy faith’ was a set phrase used in a conventionalised manner, even the intended readers in the Christian community. The use of the inclusive possessive marker here is a curious point. In the examples discussed in this section so far, ‘we’, ‘us’, and ‘our’ were used in an exclusive manner, not including the readers. In her 1992 paper on *The construction of gender in a teenage magazine*, Mary Talbot describes the purpose and the effects of *including* the readers as follows: “[The writer] minimises the social distance between herself and her readership, claiming common ground and a social relation of closeness” (p.189). Müller establishes this closeness, if not explicitly, through his use of the posses-

sive marker ‘our’. We will see in Section 5.4 that other means of establishing this closeness can be found, such as using Bible quotations to indicate a shared knowledge and spiritual and cultural common ground.

These two telling examples from European missionaries’ correspondence mirror the small number of occasions in which personal pronouns were used to mark group boundaries in European missionaries’ correspondence; the white CMS agents hardly ever negotiate their group affiliations and hardly ever have to do so and when they do, their allegiance almost exclusively lies with their European origin and their Christian faith. I suggest that this is the case because the European missionaries had no desire or aspiration to associate themselves with Yorùbá society. As opposed to the African agents, who felt that there was something to be gained by positioning themselves in close association with the Europeans because of the prestige and the politically advantageous position of identifying or at least associating with Europeans, the white missionaries had no motive to renegotiate their identity or their group affiliations. Also, they had come to Yorùbáland with the clear mission to evangelise and spread the word, not only of the Christian God but also of the progress and civilisation which came along with this belief. Their explicit mission to convert “poor blind people [whose] only Desire is to live and [whose] only fear is to die” (CA2 O43 129, Charles Gollmer, journal excerpts, 12th August 1848) and the inherent idea of moral superiority over local Yorùbá customs and deities, which they felt were “easy to attack, to expose, [and] to ridicule” (CA1 O195 72-74, James F. Schön, journal excerpts, 10th October 1841) left no doubt about their allegiances.

One remarkable exception to the European missionaries’ identification with the European Christian community is the correspondence following the *ifólé*, during which white missionaries and converts were driven out of Abéòkúta. The Par-

ent Committee subsequently criticised the missionaries' decision to leave Abẹ̀òkúta despite threats and violence. This led to a change in how in particular the white missionaries expressed their social belonging. Jonathan Lawton Buckley Wood, for example, writes in an irate letter to CMS official John Mee:

I am also much surprised that after seeing Mr. Maser [a German CMS agent] **the Committee** should be in any doubt as to **our** having done right in leaving Abeokuta. For myself I have never yet had a doubt that **we** could have done otherwise (CA2 O96 46, Lagos, 27th January 1868).

Similarly, David Hinderer, in a letter to Henry Venn and his wife from Ìbàdàn, complains:

...it appears that **the Committee** are completely unable to understand the character and position of the Yoruba mission inland, as well as the character of the people in general and the Converts in particular, say or write what **we** may" (CA2 O49 69, Ìbàdàn, 24th April 1868).

In both letters the authors use the personal pronoun 'we' to include the missionaries, both African and European, in the field; Wood refers to the group of missionaries in Abẹ̀òkúta in particular, whereas Hinderer expands his reference to the whole "Yoruba mission inland". Just as in James White's letter following the *ifólé*, the complement to the missionaries' 'we' is the CMS Parent Committee. Apparently, the fact that the missionaries felt criticised and even questioned in their integrity and truthfulness, led to a solidarity of the missionaries in the field *versus* the Parent Committee in particular and the European CMS in general. The common experience of violence, destruction, and expulsion from Abẹ̀òkúta, was by no means unique but certainly extraordinary in its vehemence. This, as well as the reproachful and accusatory reactions by the Parent Committee, echoed in the missionaries' correspondence, meant that at least in the temporal and topical

context of the *ifólé*, missionaries tended to foreground their allegiance with their colleagues in the field rather than their identification with European Christianity.

It goes without saying that the European CMS agents had multi-faceted identities just as their African colleagues; they, as well, had a number of subject positions, which they filled: they were fathers, husbands, missionaries, Christians. However, while living in West Africa certainly meant having to adapt to certain conditions, such as the climate, the language, or to some extent the eating and living habits, an influence on the white missionaries' self-perception as European Christians can at least not be detected in their correspondence. One notable exception to this is Henry Townsend, who, according to Emanuel Ayandele, was a member of the *Ogboni*, "a Yoruba freemasonry and 'senate' of the Eḡba. [Townsend also] became a secretary to the *Alake*, the titular head of the Eḡba, in 1850, a position he held for over ten years" (1966, p.11). But, as Ayandele goes on to say,

Townsend was a dreamer. His vision was one thing, reality another. Indeed he exaggerated his influence with the Eḡba, and did not perceive that he and the other missionaries were, for the Eḡba, only a tool for the advancement of purely Eḡba interests (1966, p.12).

For the African as well as the European missionaries, their written correspondence was a way of presenting themselves to their superiors and their European audience. Naturally, the missionaries were aware of this and mindful to the performance they gave before their audience. Nicolas Coupland remarks that "identities are not fully controllable, [but nevertheless are] subject to strategy or management" (2007, p.111); this is reflected in the use of personal pronouns in both the African and the European missionaries' writing.

We saw in this section that the Yorùbá missionaries associated themselves with a number of groups, ranging from the community of Christians or missionaries, to the group of liberated African slaves. Their deictic centre shifted more

than was the case for their European colleagues, indicated by the various referents of 'we' outlined above, which varied according to their respective communicative situations and possibly also what they stood to gain from the association with a specific group. Their group boundaries, therefore, can be said to have varied frequently, reflecting the African missionaries' status as socio-cultural 'novices' in the world they now inhabited. As a contrast, we saw that European missionaries tended to be less variable in their expression of social belonging through referential indices. I have argued that this was the case because their mission and the sense of civilizational superiority meant that they, despite the fact that they were Europeans now living in Africa, were not, in Ochs' sense, 'novices'. Their group affiliations were considerably more rigid and straightforward than those of their African counterparts. However, in the correspondence following and involving the *ifólé* we could see that the missionaries expressed a solidarity and amity with their fellow missionaries in the field rather than foregrounding their identity as Europeans. 'We' in the writing concerning the *ifólé* presented the missionaries in the field, both European and African, in stark opposition to their superiors in Europe. The spatial distance is reflected in the distance between 'us', living and working in West Africa, and 'the [Parent] Committee', living and working in Britain. The correspondence expresses a sense of indignation and frustration about not being understood and not being taken seriously by the members of the Committee, who are physically but apparently also emotionally and mentally remote from the dangers which the *ifólé* had posed to the work and life of the missionaries in Abéòkúta. In a sense, the missionaries express that 'we' had been there and 'the Committee' had not; the physical presence in the face of threats and violence trumps the spiritual bond with the CMS Committee which the European agents would otherwise have felt.

To conclude this section, let me point to a linguistic strategy for establishing and expressing group boundaries which abounds in the missionaries' correspondence and is closely linked to the use of personal pronouns as in-group–out-group markers. While the use of personal pronouns in this context is a frequent phenomenon, the distinction between 'us' and 'them' or 'us' and 'you' respectively does not in itself contain a value judgement about the individual groups. Group boundaries become explicitly attached to value judgements if they are not established by indexical signs such as personal pronouns but by the use of lexical items, such as deprecatory language to describe the 'outsider' or praising language to describe the 'insider'. "Praiseworthy evaluations of 'our side'," Max Atkinson (1988) remarks,

involve speakers in comparing 'us' favourably with 'them'. If 'we' are virtuous, resolute and full of good intentions, then presumably 'they' must be wicked, weak and full of bad intentions. (p.39).

By the same token, a negative evaluation of 'them' entails a favourable evaluation of 'us' and further separates the two groups. In his 2002 work on *Discourse and Racism*, van Dijk also refers to discourse structures in the context of racist language. Besides the use of rhetorical devices, such as 'us' and 'them', he also points the speaker's lexical choices, such as the well-known example of 'freedom fighter' and 'terrorist' (cf. p.274). These evaluations construct those referred to in a deprecatory manner in the mind of the recipient of such language as 'other' (cf., for example, Zuckermann, 2006), as 'not like us'.

Evidence of such 'othering' language abounds in both European and African missionaries' correspondence. We hear from Charles Gollmer, for example, in his journal on 12th August 1858 that he regards the non-Christian local population as "poor blind people" (CA2 O43 129). If, in Gollmer's words, the non-Christian population is 'blind', this means, by Atkinson's logic, that he and his colleagues

are able to see. Their eyes are open to perceive how the world 'really' is, whereas those who are not Christians, or at least not yet, are somehow defective or at least limited in their perception of the world.

The Yorùbá pantheon is also targeted. William Allen recounts in his journal an encounter in a market place during which he preached that “an idol is nothing” (CA2 O18 16, 11th May 1859). In his journal in the summer of 1859, William Allen even goes so far as to collectively vilify the deities worshipped by his conversational partner as the Christian devil. He advises him “that he should forsake the devil, who is a liar, and deceiver; who would say peace, peace, when there is no peace” (CA2 O18 16).

Yorùbá beliefs and practices are frequently referred to in missionaries' correspondence as well. We hear from Thomas King's encounter with a local chief who had gathered “many superstitious things around him” (CA2 O61 36, journal excerpt, 24th March 1850). King also speaks about the local population's “strange and diverse vanities” (CA2 O61 37, journal excerpt, 7th April 1850) and during the 1841 Niger Expedition, he feels determined “to moralize and evangelize the interior of our degraded continent” (CA1 O130 17). Samuel Ajayi Crowther, finally, hopes his countrymen will overcome their “foolishness and superstition to serve God” (CA1 O79 1, 11th February 1837). These negative references to non-Christian Africans can of course hardly be surprising in the context of a mission in which religious confession is intrinsically linked with morality and civilisation. They do, however, nevertheless serve an important function as linguistic markers of an insider–outsider division in the missionaries' correspondence. They mark the very discourse as othering. The creation of identity as a constantly self-renewing, processual social artefact (cf. Cerulo, 1997, p.387) involves the creation of 'otherness'. By drawing a clear distinction between “these poor and benighted people”

(CA2 O98 10, William Young, journal excerpt, 25th April 1875) and themselves, the missionaries expressed and renewed their underlying sense of superiority in terms of both morality and civilisation.

For the African missionaries this ‘othering’ of non-Christian Africans, played a particular role in negotiating their identity. As former ‘heathens’ themselves, the linguistic act of vilifying Yorùbá beliefs and practices meant explicitly reinforcing their disaffiliation from the group of the ‘other’. When Thomas King in his journal of the 1841 Niger Expedition expresses his intention “to teach the ignorant and deluded natives morality and civilization” (CA1 O130 1), he, therefore, forcefully avows himself to his new faith and the group of those who share it.

Part of our self-concept, Henri Tajfel (1978) remarks, is “derived from [our] knowledge of [our] membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (p.63). By renegotiating their group memberships and marking the boundaries of these social groups through the use of personal pronouns and ‘othering’ language, the African missionaries constructed part of a new self-concept, disaffiliated themselves from their former social groups, and explicitly embraced their new sense of belonging. It is also important that excerpts from the correspondence was used in CMS publications distributed to the Society’s supporters. As we will see in more detail in Section 6.2, the documents, therefore, contributed significantly to how the local population was constructed for the readers.

One of the most explicit ways in which the Yorùbá agents expressed and even celebrated their inner, spiritual change was by adopting a new name at baptism. As we will see in the next section, this new self-identification can be said to have been an outward marker of not only a new sense of self but also of religious and social belonging.

5.3 What is in a name? – The significance of Yorùbá

missionaries' baptismal names

In their correspondence, the Yorùbá missionaries used a variety of ways to construct themselves as distant from their past lives and social groups, as Section 5.1, in particular, explored. In the following, I discuss perhaps one of the most personal and rigorous ways in which the African CMS agents expressed the life-changing nature of finding and committing to their new faith: the adoption of a baptismal name. The names we are given, the names we give ourselves or others have social significance. As John Jackson Jr. points out,

we are all preoccupied with names, not just anthropologists and literary critics. It begins early in the prenatal process. Boys' names? Girls' names? Catchy, shortened nicknames and pet names? There is our overfamiliarity with celebrity names [...]. There is the obvious embarrassment of forgetting names attached to social acquaintances (2005, p.205).

In works of fiction, authors generally pick their characters' names carefully and with an ulterior motive in mind. Not for nothing did J.K. Rowling in her Harry Potter series name one of the teachers at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry Remus Lupin – he does turn out to be a werewolf after all. His first name refers to the twin brothers Romulus and Remus of the Roman foundation myth, abandoned by their mother and brought up by a wolf. His last name, Lupin, is a play on the Latin word for 'wolf', *lupus*. The name, one could say, tells the reader who or what Lupin is. Equally, we associate certain physical features or character traits in people with a certain name. We might say things like "She does not look like an Erica." or "He is too nice to be a Peter.", and refer of course to our own associations with the names or people bearing the names in question, rather than the names themselves. Naming a child after a relative serves to establish fa-

miliar continuity and after all, as the proverb goes, a man is not dead if his name is still spoken. Phrase names, for example in the Yorùbá context, can have an explicit meaning that goes beyond that of the often semantically depleted names³⁹ in the Western context. Phrase names consist of a combination of, for example, noun phrases, verb phrases, or pronouns, often forming sentences⁴⁰. A Yorùbá boy named Babatúndé, ‘Father has returned’, is considered to be the nominal reincarnation of a male forefather. If twins are called Táyéwò, ‘Taste the world and see how good it is’, and Kéyìndé, ‘one who arrives behind’, someone familiar with Yorùbá naming practices is able to determine that Táyéwò was born before Kéyìndé (cf. Barber and Oyètádé, 1999, p.10). We can say, therefore, that names are given social meaning that at times extends beyond their literal meaning, and can transcend the person to whom they refer.

A remarkable aspect of African missionaries’ changing and changed self-identification – and that of African Christians in general – is, therefore, the choice of a new name. “The replacement of existing [African] names by European ones was very common, something that typically occurred when a child first went to school”, Edwards remarks (2009, p.36). I have to point out that the nominalisation (‘replacement’) in Edwards’ remark obscures the level of agency involved in this act of renaming. While it does not become entirely clear from my source material *who* chose the new name for the individual convert, it is clear that it was officially given to them during baptism. Converts adopted or were given European names; for the reader not familiar with West African missionary history

³⁹When someone is named Sophie, the fact that the name comes from the Greek word for wisdom, *σοφία* was not necessarily a relevant factor for their parents’s choice. Equally, the Biblical references are not likely to be the main factor for naming someone David or Rachel.

⁴⁰Harrison Adéníyì (1997) argues that, while a Yorùbá phrase name may appear to be a sentence, it is treated more like single lexical unit, which is reflected, for example, in spelling and the fact that no single component of the phrase name can be taken out or changed as would be the case with a syntactical unit (cf. p.116).

it is virtually impossible to discern whether an Englishman or an African is the author of a journal or letter by merely glancing at the name. Is William Allen of Yorùbá or British origin? Is Thomas King a European or an African?

As one would expect, the adopted names were generally of biblical origin (Daniel, James, Samuel, Thomas, Isaac) or those of British monarchs (Andrew, George, William). Changing their names meant, therefore, taking on the identity of a Christian, closely connected not only with Biblical tradition but also with English tradition more generally in the shape of the monarchs. For the most part, this also meant giving up their former names, part of their former self-identification. These new names served as a form of social deixis, indexing their changed sociocultural position. The change of name thus meant aligning with their new faith and those who represented it. When Saul became Paul, he also changed more than a mere letter in his name. When adopting a Greco-Roman name – *nota bene*, in addition to his former name, Acts 13:9 only states that Saul is now also called Paul –, the apostle indicated his new religious allegiance and a renunciation of the past.

Not unlike Paul, a few African agents kept their Yorùbá names in addition to their newly adopted names. The missionaries Daniel Olubi and Isaac Oluwole, for example, chose a Christian name as their first name, but kept their Yorùbá names as last names⁴¹. Jackson Jr. quotes Henry Louis Gates' work on naming in Afro-America when he refers to this as “a metaphor for black intertextuality” (2005, p.204). The missionaries draw on both their old social group affiliations and their newly emerging identity by using their Yorùbá names as well as their baptismal names, quoting in their names aspects of both cultures they feel associated with.

⁴¹While Olubi and Oluwole had in common that they had not experienced displacement or slavery, I have not been able to trace a pattern that would lead me to conclude that this fact influenced their choice of name.

This suggests a blending of identities as opposed to a complete replacement of the old by the new. There is an interesting parallel with the missionaries' bilingualism acquired by learning English as well as speaking their native tongue. While their written correspondence with the CMS and their every-day communication with European colleagues was in English, conversations with the local population would have most likely taken place primarily in Yorùbá. It can be argued that in a similar way to this additive bilingualism, using their second language in addition to their native tongue instead of replacing the latter with the former (cf. for example, Plüddemann, 1997), the agents retained their old name and used it in addition to the new one.

The fact that Yorùbá names are frequently phrase names also played a role in the choice of new names. “More than a few individuals,” Edwards remarks, “rejoiced in names like ‘Fight-the-Good-Fight Jones’ and ‘Fear-the-Lord Smith’” (2009, p.35). In these cases, the basic structure of names as a phrase is kept but transferred into English and enriched with Christian vocabulary. A well-known modern case of this naming practice is the previous Nigerian president, Goodluck Jonathan.

Samuel Ajayi Crowther is certainly a special case in this regard. He did not only keep his Yorùbá name, Ajayi, as a middle name. He was also named after a CMS official and Vicar of Christ's Church, Newgate in London, named Samuel Crowther (cf. Nnaocha, 2010, p.257). He took on the name at his baptism in 1825 when he was already enrolled in a CMS school in Sierra Leone. The connection was with the CMS directly and less with the Christian tradition in general. The name was a gift as much as an obligation. It certainly served to pre-determine the path of a young African at the beginning of his academic and clerical career. With this explicit connection with a high-ranking CMS official, it would have been

unthinkable for Crowther to become a carpenter or a farmer. The case of James White resonates with this last point as well. While he did not keep his Yorùbá name, his baptismal name is the same as that of an English CMS missionary. While we do not know much about 'the other' James White, we *do* know that in 1841, German CMS missionary James Frederick Schön married Catherine White, the widow of an English CMS agent called James White (cf. Register of missionaries, 1905). While the Register does not give accurate information on when the African agent who would adopt the same name was baptised, it is not unlikely that he chose to name himself after the deceased English CMS missionary. Like in Crowther's case, this certainly only served to strengthen White's ties with the CMS. Adopting somebody else's name must be one of the most powerful ways to identify not only with the person herself but also with what they stand for and who they represent. By adopting the names of European agents, Crowther and White can be said to have made an explicit point of associating themselves with the *òyìnbó*, the 'white men'.

The Yorùbá missionaries' inner, spiritual change through conversion and eventually baptism, we could say, was represented in a changed self-identification. Naming, John Jackson Jr. remarks, can be seen as "a form of performative magic" (2005, p.218), in that it transforms the person in question by giving them a new name according to their new identity. With regard to modern African-American music culture, Jackson Jr. makes a point which also applies to the choice of new names among African missionaries:

Hip-hop artist 50 Cent defines his own name, playfully, as literalization of the metaphoric: '50 Cent is a metaphor for change[...] for his own 'change', that is, marking just how far he has travelled from his previous life (2005, p.199).

5.4 Intertextuality as a means of negotiating authority, status, and place – Forms, contexts, and effects of quotations of Christian texts

The ‘journey’ for many of the Yorùbá agents was not merely a metaphorical one. Their experiences of displacement, enslavement, and life in the diaspora, as we saw in Thomas King’s recontextualisations at the beginning of Section 5.1, could be said to have culminated in their encounter with the Christian faith. These genuinely life-changing events were ‘literalised’ in their adoption of a new name.

The close reference to Biblical and Christian figures of authority in the African agents’ baptismal names, leads us to the broad variety of ways in which excerpts and quotations from Biblical and Christian texts more generally were used in the missionaries’ correspondence. We will see in the next section that these texts played a significant role in the way the Yorùbá agents in particular negotiated their place in the Christian community and asserted their position as figures of authority and knowledge regarding the Biblical and Christian traditions.

5.4 Intertextuality as a means of negotiating authority, status, and place – Forms, contexts, and effects of quotations of Christian texts

The documents in the CMS archives were by and large not primarily personal journals or private letters. We could say that the missionaries’ correspondence displayed their work and conduct to their superiors in London, who in turn could use the writing to evaluate and, if necessary, discipline the missionaries in the field for what was considered immoral behaviour or quarrels with colleagues. Excerpts from the missionaries’ journals sent to London were also used in CMS publications and thus available to a larger audience of supporters. While for the European agents their correspondence meant writing *back* to an audience with whom they were at least personally familiar and who had sent them to Yorùbáland in the

first place, for the majority of Yorùbá missionaries, who had not been trained in Britain, it was an act of writing *away* to an audience unknown to them and to whom they as well were unknown. Building rapport with the Parent Committee and their wider Christian audience, establishing their status and their authority as Christians and missionaries, in short, negotiating and affirming their place, was, therefore, crucial for the African CMS agents. The missionaries worked under conditions which made it necessary for them to prove and express their piety to their readers. Both European and African missionaries wrote not only for an audience but moreover in a framework of accountability, surveillance, and evaluation, in which expressing and exhibiting their piety was expected. There can be no doubt about the fact that this influenced the selection and narrative presentation of events that can be found in their correspondence. While I will discuss this in more detail in Section 6, I focus on one aspect of this influence in this section in order to show how quotations from Christian texts were used by the missionaries to position themselves as theologians and religious figures of authority.

In both Yorùbá and European agents' correspondence, quotations and imagery, vivid, metaphoric language, from the Bible and other core Christian texts, such as *The Book of Common Prayer*, John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and Isaac Watts' hymns, can frequently be found. This collection of texts can be said to have been the linguistic and spiritual centre around which the English-speaking European Christian community of the mind gathered. The English version of the Bible used in the Anglican church at the time was the King James Bible. This translation, combining and adding to former translations into English, was commissioned and authorised by James I and first printed in 1611. The translators aimed to remain as faithful as possible to the original texts, rendering its language in places rather unidiomatic in the English language of the time. While

the text did not necessarily coin a large number of new phrases, it was able, not least because of these idiosyncrasies, to serve as a conduit of Biblical imagery and references into everyday language (cf. for example Crystal, 2010; McGrath, 2001), which can still be seen in the present-day use of phrases like ‘the powers that be’ (Romans 13:1) and ‘the blind leading the blind’ (Matthew 15:13). Familiarity with this collection of texts can be said to have been a matter of course, resulting in what we could call a unifying effect on the English-speaking Christian world in Europe at the time.

Often, quotations from and allusions or indirect references to these texts in the missionaries’ correspondence were used in the context of setbacks in the mission or sad news like the death of a missionary or a convert. Agents also used quotations and allusions in contexts when they wished to express a point emphatically or wished to indicate a Biblical precedent for their current situation, thus giving them guidance on how to respond to the situation or highlighting that they stand in the tradition of the Christian narrative. In all of these instances quoting from the scriptures or other Christian texts creates an intertextual bond between the original text and the missionaries’ writing and recontextualises the original text in the context of the correspondence. Intertextuality describes the interrelationship between texts. “In its most obvious sense,” Norman Fairclough writes (2001, p.39), “intertextuality is the presence of actual elements of other texts within a text – quotation”. In a more abstract sense, it can refer to elements of other texts like allusions, indirect references, and imagery, metaphoric language, within a text. It can mean the original text influencing the reading and interpretation of the quoting text, for example, because it adds an interpretative dimension that the quoting text does not exhibit otherwise. It is also possible that the use of a quotation transforms the reading of the original text. Taken

out of its original context, the quotation is recontextualised in a new interpretative context, thus allowing new approaches to reading and reconsidering meaning (cf. Fairclough, 2001, p.51). Quotation and other forms of referencing can thus be seen as a form of dialogue between the texts (cf. Orr, 2003, p.132). In the missionaries' writing these intertextual bonds thus do not only mark the events in the quoted text as precedent for the missionaries' present and serve to lend an air of objectivity by reference to an outside source; they also connect the writer of the quoting text with the original text and context. They link their writer with the narrative tradition and the reception history of the original text.

The forms, uses, and effects of quotation and referencing have been described and discussed in a variety of disciplines and from a variety of standpoints. I can only give a preliminary sketch at the start of this section as an in-depth analysis would be outside the scope of this study. A discussion of the instances of quotation and allusion in the missionaries' correspondence then follows. I explore the use of direct quotations, clearly marked off by quotation marks, and indirect quotations, less obviously standing out from the agents' writing. The missionaries' use of intertextuality in direct quotations served to identify them as faithful agents and proficient theologians well-versed in the Bible, while the use of indirect quotations more implicitly placed them in the Christian narrative of evangelisation and proselytism; the Christian audience was, and could be, expected to recognise the use of Biblical language and imagery, which meant the absence of explicit quotation marks and references established a more subtle, but not less powerful link between the agents and their readership. While all of this is true for both European and African missionaries alike, the Yorùbá agents in particular employed intertextuality as a means of negotiating and expressing their new identity and place as converts, as African Christians. The Yorùbá missionaries, more than their Eu-

European colleagues, had to establish their place in the narrative of their adopted religion in the eyes of their audience. In addition to the external examination by their superiors in London and the wider Christian audience, they also had to negotiate a new space for themselves as Africans and Christians at the same time. I, therefore, discuss both European and Yorùbá missionaries' correspondence in this section but with an emphasis on the use and effect of intertextuality in the African agents' writing.

5.4.1 Theories of intertextuality and recontextualisation

When European missionary Isaac Smith rather despondently writes in his quarterly journal from Yorùbá country: "...this is a Heathen place; where darkness covers the land and gross darkness the people" (CA2 O82 10, ending on 25th March 1848), he refers to Isaiah's prophecy that "the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people" (Isaiah 60:2). The text – note the Latin root of the word, *texere*, to weave or to plait – of Smith's journal weaves the two threads – his own writing and the words from the Old Testament – together. We could also say that Smith brings another voice into his text (cf. Fairclough, 2001, p.41), namely that of Isaiah.

Bakhtin (1986, p.69) suggests that intertextuality presents various ways of interacting with this other voice. The writer can build on them, for example, polemicise with them, or simply assume that they are already known to their reader. Jonathan Culler suggests that a quotation must propose a modification and elaboration of the context in which it is used (cf. 1976, p.1380), while Orr remarks that a quotation "can be a homage, an authority or a complex shorthand [...]" (2003, p.130). As we will see below, these functions indeed apply to the missionaries' use of quotations and allusions. I argue, however, that this

use of intertextuality also served the overarching purpose of establishing a strong bond between the writers and the Christian tradition, identifying them as “professional Christians” (Peel, 2000, p.12). In fact, different levels of ‘professionalism’ existed among the CMS agents. While people like John Christian Müller were fully ordained, the British agent George Meakin was a lay evangelist; the Yorùbá agents James White and Thomas King, for example, while ordained as priests, were classed as ‘native pastors’, and others were catechists, scripture readers and school teachers. What they had in common, however, was that evangelising the Yorùbá was their profession in every sense of the word. Not only did they feel it their calling, but they were of course also employed by and had to answer to the CMS. In their capacity as the Society’s agents their personal beliefs became an integral part of their professional life, blending their personal and their professional identity.

Mary Orr also makes the crucial observation that

[a]s both a work of distillation and accretive multiplicity of viewpoints and shared experience, [...] quotation singles out in one short encapsulation a reference combining many (2003, p.132).

Smith, therefore, not only connects his writing with the Old Testament but also gives his readers a reference point by which they can navigate when trying to understand his present situation in a ‘Heathen place’ by evoking the imagery of spiritual darkness and forlornness of Isaiah’s prophecy. In Smith’s case a further dimension of intertextuality comes into effect, namely that of recontextualisation, which we have already encountered in another context in Section 5.1. When a text is quoted or referred to in another text, the meaning of the original text changes. When its voice is added to another text, it is

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re-set in a new contextualising universe and becomes a new [text] – but we do drag along with us the baggage of the history of contextualisation/interpretation of the text (Blommaert, 2005, p.46).

If we adopt the stance that the meaning and interpretation of a text is not stable, but dependent on the historical and social reference point of the reader and interpreter as well as the context in which it is read and interpreted, we come to the conclusion that by applying the words from Isaiah to Yorùbáland, his temporal and spatial reference point, Smith reinterpreted Isaiah. Taken out of their original context of writing, that of the historical and social reality of the writer of the Book of Isaiah, the words become inserted into a new context, that of Smith's present.

What Blommaert calls the 'baggage' of the history of Isaiah, shines through in Smith's text, however. It is this history of production and the original context of interpretation which makes this quotation such a powerful tool for Smith to describe his situation. Through the process of recontextualisation, Smith links to the prophecy of Isaiah his own experience of living in what he perceives as a country covered in darkness and among people who he feels as being covered in darkness, thus seeing the prophecy fulfilled in his present. "Meaning," literary theorist Graham Allen remarks,

becomes something which exists between a text and all the other texts to which it refers and relates, moving out from the independent text into a network of textual relations. The text becomes intertext." (2000, p.1).

This applies to the text actively referring to another text, the missionaries' writing in our case, as well as to the text to which it refers, in our case the Bible or other Christian texts. Texts can, therefore, be said to respond to what has already been written and in turn are "calculated to be responded to in kind" (Voloshinov, 1973, p.72). These responses, for example in the shape of quotations and refer-

ences, establish intertextual bonds, a web of interrelationships between the texts (cf. Kristeva, 1980, p.69). It is within this rich and yielding, if by no means unified, research context of intertextuality and recontextualisation that this section is situated. Let us now turn to the question of how and to what effect intertextuality was used in the missionaries' correspondence.

5.4.2 Contextualising distress

The first – and probably the most obvious – context in which quotations can be found in the missionaries' writing is the use of Biblical verses and images when talking about situations of distress. As Isaac Smith's journal already showed, everything did not always go as planned for the missionaries. Among their converts were frequent backsliders⁴² and there were those among the local population who openly opposed evangelism and scorned the CMS agents. The European missionaries were often ill-equipped for the West African climate and tropical diseases. Therefore, both the African and the European missionaries' correspondence frequently bears witness to the authors' setbacks in evangelising the Yorùbá population or the sad news of deaths or severe illness. When writing about such setbacks and contingencies in their journals and letters to the Society, the authors often made use of Bible passages or imagery. As devout Christians the writers derive comfort from the word of God. They reassure themselves, and, equally importantly, their intended readers, that their frustration, their pain, and

⁴²I use a term here which was, apart from its original context in the books of Jeremiah and Hosea in the King James Bible, prominently used in John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*. In the book, originally published in 1678, two characters, the Christian and Hopeful have a conversation about a third man, who, so the Christian, "told me once that he was resolved to go on pilgrimage, as we go now; but all of a sudden he grew acquainted with one Save-self, and then he became a stranger to me". Hopeful replies: "Now, since we are talking about him, let us a little inquire into the reason of the sudden backsliding of him and such others" (1853, p.85).

their suffering have a meaning and a context – that of the Christian tradition represented by the scriptures. At the same time they highlight the importance the scriptures play in their everyday lives.

Yorùbá agent Samuel Ajayi Crowther explains in a letter from Fourah Bay on 11th February 1837: “Christian perseverance will have its fruits at last [...] and **with joy** they will bear the sheafs [sic] of their seeds which they **sowed in tears**” (CA1 O79 1, highlighting added). Crowther in his writing employs imagery from Psalm 126:5 – “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.” – thus reassuring himself and his audience that a future generation will benefit from the trials of their present. Here, Orr’s observation applies that a quotation from an existing text – even if it is as in this case not clearly marked as one – elaborates on the current writing in “a complex short-hand” (2003, p.130). The passage from the psalm serves as a short-hand for Crowther’s confidence that eventually his perseverance will prove worthwhile. In the light of Crowther’s own history as a former slave, the use of this particular passage becomes particularly noteworthy. The psalm starts with the line “When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream” (Psalm 126:1). The explicit reference to Israel’s experience of exile and captivity will certainly have resonated with Crowther.

So we could say that he recontextualises Psalm 126:5 in two ways. On the one hand, he brings it into the context of his own experiences of displacement and captivity, taking heart in the fact that “the Lord hath done great things” (Psalm 126:3) for him as well. On the other hand, he takes the psalm out of its original context of the people of Israel and applies it to the context of struggles faced by Christians. He highlights a perceived continuity of the Old Testament writings in his faith and life. The fact that Crowther does not use his own or words or images from an arbitrary source, but the source which in his understanding –

and that of his readers – holds a singular position of moral and historical authority also serves to add weight and emphasis to his words. The psalm passage suggests that the positive outcome is a certainty, underlining Crowther's words and also "[lending] an air of objectivity to the account" (Holt, 1996, p.242). This objectivity means that the reader does not even have to take only Crowther's word for it; it is presented as a matter of course, as a deeply held belief that this will be the case. The missionary here, therefore, calls upon outside evidence to strengthen his point that the present strife has not only a purpose but will ultimately turn out to be for the greater good. Similarly, in his journal ending on 25th March 1844, Samuel Ajayi Crowther writes:

I was desponding and low spirited. I was not sick, but Mrs. Crowther was obliged to go out of the church being unwell. Had engaged to take the evening service, but my frame of mind being heavy and dull, I was unequal to the task. Truly **we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.** What a gracious thing it is, to be taught to feel this. (CA1 O79 11, highlighting added)

Here he uses words from 2 Corinthians 4:7: "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." Crowther feels "desponding and low spirited" but derives solace from the notion that he himself, the earthen vessel, is not important but that instead the treasure stored or even hidden inside of him, the grace of God, the message which he has to spread, is crucial. Just like above, he could easily have expressed this notion in his own words rather than relying on the Biblical text. We could, therefore, ask again what then motivates him to choose to use words from the Biblical text in an indirect quotation. I think that, apart from deriving solace from the words of the apostle, had he simply used his own words, his testimony would have carried less weight. By linking his own experience back to the perceived truth written

in the scriptures and sanctioned by tradition and faith, Crowther underlines his feelings and emphasises his connection with the Christian tradition represented by the text from which he quotes. The final example comes from the pen of British missionary George Meakin, who, on 6th March 1858, writes in his journal about the death of a fellow missionary: “May this warning be sanctified to each of us, and not put our trust **‘in vain man whose breath is in his nostrils’**, and be ever ready with our loins girt, and lights burning, as them that wait for their Lord” (CA2 O69 9, highlighting added).

The passage marked as a quotation within the journal is taken from Isaiah 2:22, in which the prophet ends his vision with the words: “Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils”. The vision describes a day when “the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted [...]” (Isaiah 2:17), a day, in other words, when this-worldly concerns are no longer as important or relevant as they might seem now. As Culler (1976, p.1380) describes, Meakin uses the reference to Isaiah to modify his own situation and give it a different interpretation. He qualifies his grief and loss by putting it into the context of ‘the last days’ (Isaiah 2:2), drawing away attention from his present, projecting forward into an eschatological future. For Crowther and Meakin as Christians, the Bible is the default source of comfort and meaning, which they and their colleagues, expectedly, turn to in order to put their trials and frustrations into context, and project to their readers a sense of interconnectedness between what they are experiencing and writing about and the stories in the scripture.

5.4.3 Proving themselves as devout and studied Christians

The majority of the quotations from religious texts found in the missionaries' correspondence are indirect quotations without quotation marks, as we saw with Crowther's use of words from 2 Corinthians 4:7. There are, however, a few examples in which they are clearly marked as such, making them the exception to the rule. As Elke Brendel *et al.* remark, if quotation marks are used in what is then called a direct quotation, the author explicitly indicates that the utterance "has been originally produced in a different context" (2011, p.2) and is now transferred into a new context. In this act of recontextualisation, the original context, however, shines through in the quotation, so that the new context cannot totally be read separately from the old context. Thus, the quotation influences how we read the sentence into which it is embedded, enriching it with elements from the original context of the utterance. Samuel Ajayi Crowther, in his letter from Fourah Bay on 11th February 1837, with a positive outlook on the mission's progress writes:

The increased number of inquirers after the way to Zion, leads us often to reflect on the veracity of the word of him who has said, '**So shall my word be that goeth forth of my mouth, it shall not return unto me void**'" (CA1 O79 1, highlighting added).

Crowther here explicitly uses a passage from Isaiah 55:10-11:

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: **So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void**, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. (highlighting added)

'He who has said' these words in Isaiah is God himself, who in Isaiah 55:3 promises that he "will make an everlasting covenant with" the people of Israel to make them

prosper and thrive. In keeping with the notion that in Genesis 1 God created heaven and earth through his word alone, in Isaiah it is again his word which is sent out to provide and nourish. It is a promise and a firm statement of intent and capability.

We could, therefore, read Crowther's letter in two ways. The first interpretation would see the passage from Isaiah as an explicit reference to this promise made by God, which Crowther sees as fulfilled in the fact that more and more Africans are seeking spiritual prosperity and growth by becoming Christians. It is God's will, God's word, which made this happen. The second interpretation has more to do with Crowther's own words, which he uses to evangelise his fellow Africans. He recontextualises the words from Isaiah in his own context of preaching and speaking about the Christian faith to the people in Sierra Leone. Crowther introduces the quotation in the sentence reflecting on the 'veracity' of the passage he quotes, thus explicitly evaluating it as truthful and giving a clear indication for why he uses the quotation in the first place. The words from Isaiah support his own positive feelings about his missionary work, promising and simultaneously confirming that the endeavour to spread the word is successful, which can be seen by the "increased number of inquirers after the way to Zion". If we combine these two readings, Crowther's use of the quotation from Isaiah highlights at the same time the realisation of God's promise to make the faithful thrive and prosper, and an expression of Crowther's own positive feelings about his missionary activities, ultimately made possible by and dedicated to God. It is an expression of thankfulness for the promise that was made and fulfilled and an explicit reminder that the missionaries' work and success is linked to this promise.

The second example of direct quotation is taken from Yorùbá agent James White's Annual Letter from 1868, in which he asks the rhetorical question:

Has not my heart often turned with the same desire and zeal as that which burned with [sic] the Apostle [Paul] and which constrained him to say as regards his Countrymen **'My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved'**? (CA2 O87 97, to be posted before or on the 30th November 1868, highlighting added)

White chose words from Paul's Epistle to the Romans 10:1, showing that he himself feels as the apostle felt when encountering non-Christians. Like the apostle, the Yorùbá missionaries yearned for their people to be saved from their 'superstitions' and brought into the Christian fold. This desire fuelled the Yorùbá mission and formed part of the very justification for the mission itself. I will elaborate on the Yorùbá agents' view on the apostle later in this section. For now let us focus on the fact that these examples stand out from the missionaries' correspondence in that the quotations are highlighted by quotation marks instead of being integrated into the text. As Orr remarks,

quotation marks placed around any utterance highlight, separate and distinguish it from surrounding phrases. [Direct quotation] therefore, is both extraneous ornament and reference of the most overt and saturated kind (2003, p.130).

What is key in Orr's observation for the examples above, is certainly the aspect of highlighting and overtly referring to another text to point to a precedent, thus transferring elements of the context of the original utterance into the new context. Paul's experiences are recontextualised in the context of White's own life. Like Paul, he feels the need to evangelise his countrymen. He sees his own path reflected in that of the apostle and feels a resemblance between Paul and himself. He expresses the idea that his tasks and his purpose equal that of the apostle, thus mapping Paul's experiences on his own.

A few examples of this can be found in European missionaries' correspondence as well. The German CMS agent John Christian Müller, for example, in

his journal in the summer of 1848 discusses his experiences when preaching the word of God and encountering people in Abéòkúta, who are willing to pay him for his services. He ends this account with a passage from Matthew 10:8: “,Freely ye have received, freely give” (CA2 O72 6, ending 20th June 1848). As I have remarked in Section 4.4, worshipping the *òrìṣà* was a costly affair and involved paying for sacrifices and divination. Müller in his journal clearly refers to this, in his opinion, deplorable practice and juxtaposes with this the message from Matthew 10, namely that receiving the Christian message is free and is expected to be passed on without taking payment of any sort for it. The missionary refers to the passage from the Gospel as to a rule book, repeating it by quoting it. Charles Briggs describes quotations as “powerful rhetorical [devices] for disguising normative messages as simple repetitions of the words of others” (1996, p.26).

Müller here uses the quotation to convey a desired norm and increase its authority by linking it to a passage from the text of ultimate authority. Müller’s use of Matthew 10:8 allows him to establish and express interpretative authority over the situation which he describes. He calls upon the Gospel, the source of his beliefs and principles, to justify them. He also makes it clear to the local population through the use of the quotation how they can benefit not only spiritually but also materially from Christianity, thus justifying his continued work. The sheer need for these words, namely the fact that the local population offer him recompense for his work, moreover shows the CMS audience, to whom he is not least financially answerable, that his work is still needed, displaying how deep-seated the non-Christian local population’s ‘misconception’ of faith as a transaction is. At the same time, Müller shows that he and his colleagues are in control of the situation and always know the right words at the right time.

These direct quotations in the missionaries’ writing are clearly marked as such

and, therefore, identify the missionaries as theologians who are well-versed in the Bible and see their lives as closely linked to the scripture and the word of God. They express the events described and the messages relayed in these passages as precedent and testament to their own situation and experiences.

5.4.4 Establishing links with the audience

More often than not, however, the quotations, allusions and images are woven seamlessly into the text, without an explicit indication that a quotation is being used. These references, integrated into the missionaries' writing, foreground the implicitness of the Bible as a source of meaning and context in the missionaries' world, which allows them to forego the need to explicitly mark a piece of writing as a quotation or allusion. In the case of these so-called indirect quotations, we rely, therefore, on other means in order to identify the quoted sentence or sentence fragment. In spoken language, many paralinguistic markers can be used to signal that the content is quoted, for example,

prosodic markers like a rising or falling voice, accentuation, and/or pauses [drawing] attention to the quotation. Gestures, like air quotes, or mimics, like raising eyebrows, are further means for signalling quotation (Brendel *et al.*, 2011, p.9).

In the case of missionaries' correspondence we do not have these markers to signal quotations. Therefore, in the present context, we, like the Christian audience reading the missionaries' correspondence, rely on a thorough knowledge of the Bible.

Samuel Ajayi Crowther, for example, describes a conversation with an Ifá diviner in Sierra Leone in the days after the first service had been held in Yorùbá:

I told him that the white men preached against [Ifá divination] many times in the churches, but it appears that the **sound was not distinct enough for them**, so that they did not take alarm, but now [that services are held in Yorùbá] **the trumpet gives a certain sound so that every one prepare himself to the battle** (CA1 O79 11, journal ending 25th June 1844, highlighting added).

He reports that he tries to tell the Ifá diviner in a metaphor that, while there might have been an excuse for the local population not to rally around the Christian message when the sermons were still in a language which many of them did not understand, now that the services are held in Yorùbá, or Àkú as it was called in Sierra Leone at the time (cf. Peel, 2000, p.284), this excuse is no longer valid. The metaphoric imagery which Crowther claims to have used in this conversation originates from 1 Corinthians 14:6-9:

Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine? And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they **give a distinction in the sounds**, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? **For if the trumpets give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?** So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air (highlighting added).

Now that the trumpets give a certain sound, now that the people are spoken to in their own language, they can and are expected to prepare themselves for battle, that is follow the Christian message. Again, Crowther could have simply explained this to the Ifá diviner in his own words, which certainly would have been easier to understand for the diviner, who almost certainly was not familiar with the passage from 1 Corinthians. So again, we have to ask ourselves why he did not resort to this option. I would argue that in this case we cannot take for granted that Crowther used these exact words, or even the Yorùbá equivalent. Even if Crowther did make use of the Yorùbá translation of 1 Corinthians, we cannot be

sure that the diviner would have been able to understand it. While trumpets and other wind instruments were not unknown as war paraphernalia in the Yorùbá world, the exact context and imagery of 1 Corinthians would probably not have been known to the diviner. Also, it is important to keep in mind that at the time no homogeneous language was spoken in what would be called Yorùbáland. Instead, regional varieties existed which were only to a certain extent mutually intelligible.

Peel's "hermeneutic of deep suspicion" (2000, p.12) seems in order when analysing the missionaries' correspondence because these documents were written to be read by a Christian audience in Europe, among them not least the very people who employed the missionaries. Peel goes on to explain that we often find what he calls an "engaged narrative [with a] tripartite structure" (2000, p.19) in the missionaries' journals: we learn about the missionary engaging with the local population, then about the people's response, and finally about how the missionary reacted to the response and his comments on the situation. The most important element of this tripartite structure is the last one: what the missionaries want to convey to their audience is their own response to the argument or situation. It shows that they confronted perceived ignorance and did not recoil when they were confronted. This helped to establish or highlight the missionaries' status in the Christian community of the mind, however spatially remote they may have been from their audience and their superiors. References to the Bible or other Christian texts at this point served to highlight their thorough knowledge of the texts, how they can be applied and how meaning can be derived from the texts in their present situation. The Biblical text was shown to have relevance even in a context historically and socially different from that of its original production, thus indicating that the Biblical events can offer guidance and a pattern

of behaviour to follow even in a radically different situation.

Another important aspect is that we only ever hear the event described by the missionary himself and have to rely entirely on his version of the event. More often than not, the version of the event we can read about in the missionary's account, therefore, is what Rebecca Clift calls a "'my side' telling" (2006, p.582) and presents him as having the upper hand in the situation. This "reassertion of discursive control in the narrative," Peel remarks, "served to restore faith in the mission itself" (2000, p.19). If we apply this to Crowther's alleged use of 1 Corinthians 14:6-9 in the conversation with the diviner, we necessarily come to the conclusion that it seems unlikely that he actually did use these exact words. The conversational circumstances make such a choice of words impractical because his conversational partner would have been unlikely to have understood the allusions Crowther claims to have made. It seems more likely that in re-telling the story in his journal, Crowther coloured the conversation accordingly in an attempt to theologise the encounter with the Ifá diviner. He consciously inserted Biblical imagery, thus establishing an intertextual bond between the text from which he had taken his imagery, and his own response to the Ifá diviner. This certainly served the purpose of identifying him as a Christian with a thorough theological understanding, an eloquent man with a quick tongue, and of establishing a sense of discursive control over the situation. It is worth mentioning that by relying on the audience to be able to identify the Biblical imagery and indirect quotations, Crowther bestows on them the same status as knowledgeable Christians that he claims for himself and wants his audience to bestow on him. The shared knowledge and familiarity of the collection of core texts which are quoted and referenced in the missionaries' writing establishes and nurtures a sense of cohesion within the English-speaking European Christian community

which both the missionaries and their audience are part of. Moreover, by linking these present-day experiences back to events and prophecies written down and canonised in the past, his missionary work, and that of his colleagues, becomes part of the Christian narrative of 'spreading the word'.

A third example comes from the journal of Yorùbá agent Thomas King. King recounts his meeting with an *òrìṣà* devotee on 10th October 1850:

Met with a worshipper [...] to day [sic] who was collecting cowries from the people and pronouncing blessings on them in the name of the prince of darkness, whom, like the **Athenians**, she is **ignorantly worshipping** (CA2 O61 38, highlighting added).

King then goes on to describe his interaction with the woman and how, expectedly, he gains the upper hand in the short exchange between them. What is significant for our discussion is his comparison of the woman with "the Athenians". We find the term in Acts 17:19-25, in which the apostle Paul encounters the inhabitants of Athens and speaks to them about the Unknown God:

And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. (For all the **Athenians** and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.) Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, To The Unknown God. Whom therefore ye **ignorantly worship**, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things (highlighting added).

King's exegesis of Acts 17:19-25 is rather unusual and not entirely in keeping with what the apostle refers to in his speech. Paul sees the Athenians' Unknown

God as an indication of the Christian God's presence, albeit hidden and veiled, in the people's consciousness. Thomas King refers to "the prince of darkness", the devil, in the disguise and shape of the local deities. As we saw in the case of Èṣù in Section 4.4, this was not an unusual line of argument. Birgit Meyer, in her research on the Pietist Basel Mission among the Ewe of Ghana, also mentions that among the missionaries the devil was frequently seen as the "Lord of 'pagan' gods and ghosts" (1999, p.41). For a number of Pietist missionaries the devil was still present despite approaches to conceptualise him on a more psychological level instead of a personal one. For Ewe converts, Meyer remarks, turning away from darkness and the devil was similarly central to their conversion statements (cf. 1999, p.99).

King here embodies both the Yorùbá convert and the missionary, so it is not surprising that the idea of a single, personal principle of evil seems still entrenched in his thinking. King also does not exactly quote from Acts 17. Rather he draws on the language of Acts 17 to explain the present in terms of the past, again employing a Biblical *motif* as precedent for the missionaries' situation and task in Yorùbáland. Just like Paul had to point out to the men and women of Athens their 'ignorant worship' of the Christian God, the missionaries had the same duty towards the people in Yorùbáland regarding their alleged worship of the devil in the shape of the *òrìṣà*. King's application of this *motif* to his present and his tasks implicitly shows his knowledge of the Biblical text and connects him with the traditional narrative of 'spreading the word' among non-Christians. Not one but several layers of intertextuality can be found in Thomas King's journal entry on 24th March 1850. King begins by talking about a meeting with Chief Mewu, who has "many superstitious things around him". He then goes on to talk about the general situation concerning the local chiefs, whom he would like to see con-

verting to Christianity, and ends by inviting them in his journal to “come and sit at our Emmanuels [sic] feet” (CA2 O61 36).

The imagery in this last passage is borrowed from a hymn written by Isaac Watts in the early eighteenth century. The hymn called *Go, worship at Immanuel's feet* begins with the following lines: “Go, worship at Immanuel's feet, / see in his face what wonders meet! / Earth is too narrow to express / his worth, his glory, or his grace.” Immanuel, to whom King and Watts refer, repeatedly features in the Bible in both the Old and New Testament. In the Old Testament he most prominently appears in the Book of Isaiah. When the kingdom of Judah is under threat from Israel and Syria, so the story goes, King Ahaz seeks advice from the prophet as to what to do. Isaiah suggests Ahaz should put his faith in God instead of relying on a political and military alliance with Assyria. In these circumstances, Isaiah utters the prophecy concerning Immanuel: “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin⁴³ shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14). The son's name translates from the original Hebrew עִמָּנוּאֵל as ‘God with us’. In 1890, Edward Curtis writes about Isaiah's prophecy:

[H]e presented in connection with it the promise of a future king of the line of David. [...] Either typically or really He was the destined king of Israel, the One who, in some mysterious manner, would be the pledge, if not actual realization, of God being with His people (p.278).

In the New Testament, the evangelist Matthew forms an intertextual bond with the Old Testament when he picks up Isaiah's prophecy. He tells the story of Joseph, who is visited by an

⁴³I would like to mention in passing that the term in the original Hebrew (הַעֲלִמָּה) does by no means suggest a ‘virgin’ in today's sense but rather a young, possibly unmarried woman. The Septuagint here uses the word παρθενος, which means ‘a virgin’, greatly influencing not only the use in Matthew but moreover the Christian tradition as a whole.

angel of the Lord [...] in a dream, saying [to him], Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name **Emmanuel**, which being interpreted is, God with us (Matthew 1:20-23, highlighting added).

Matthew, so writes Delbert Burkett, “takes the name of the child in that passage, ‘Immanuel’ [...], to mean that Jesus represents the presence of God with his people” (2002, p.186). As we can see here, in the Bible itself instances of quotation and references can frequently be found. Explicit references to the Old Testament, for example, are not an unusual find in the New Testament. When Matthew writes “It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4), one does not have to look far to find a similar passage in Deuteronomy 8:3:

And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that **man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live** (highlighting added).

Equally, when Paul preaches to the Ephesians that “[f]or this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh” (Ephesians 5:31), then surely the apostle referred to Genesis 2:24, where we can read: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh”. Due to the composite nature of the Bible and the understanding of the New Testament as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies, these references and quotations are a common occurrence, forming a strong coherence between the two collections of texts. Non-

conformist minister Watts, therefore, extends these intertextual bonds between Isaiah and Matthew to his own writing when he refers to the figure of Immanuel as announced in Isaiah and realised in Matthew. He thus draws on the cumulated authority of both sets of texts to write his hymn and underline this aspect of the figure of Jesus.

As an Anglican missionary, Thomas King knew Watts' hymn and was certainly aware of the origin and meaning of the name Immanuel. He uses this powerful image, sanctioned by three instances of religious authority in the English-speaking European Christian world, to express his wish for the chiefs to worship Jesus, whom he, like the evangelist and Watts, believes to be Immanuel as prophesied in Isaiah. What is also remarkable in this case is that King clearly quotes from Watt's hymn rather than the scriptures directly. He shows that he is not only familiar with the Bible but with cultural products inspired by and referring to it, thus expanding and strengthening the ties with his chosen religion. The aspects of not clearly marking the quotations as quotations and at the same time using the Biblical words and images to signal a close connection with the Christian tradition are by no means contradictory.

The absence of quotation marks and clear references as we would expect them, for example, in an academic text, in fact made it possible for the missionaries to self-identify – and be identified – as “professional Christians” (Peel, 2000, p.12) because it can be seen as an indication that Biblical texts and imagery have permeated the writers' everyday language. These indirect quotations can be described as forms of social deixis, indicating the writers' professional status. In our case, therefore, the implicit use of references to the Bible and the notion that the texts and images have entered the writers' everyday language can be said to index their status, their desired sociocultural position, as representatives and

agents of Christianity in Yorùbáland. The lack of quotation marks also establishes and strengthens a common ground with the audience, who are apparently expected and – being members and supporters of the CMS – *can* be expected to be well-versed in the Bible and be able to decipher the messages in the missionaries' correspondence without any difficulties. It invokes the notion of the Christian community of the mind with the Bible and texts like Watts' hymns at its centre.

It is Roland Barthes' sense of the '*déjà-lu*' (cf. 1977, p.1), the 'already-read', which creates the intertextual bond between the source texts and what the audience is reading. This close intertextual relationship between the source text and the missionaries' writing serves as an in-group marker for the missionaries, who were spatially but, as their writing implied, not spiritually remote from their audience.

5.4.5 Becoming African apostles

The points I have made so far on the relevance of intertextuality for the missionaries' writing and its reception apply to both European and African missionaries. Let us focus now on why these intertextual connections played a particular role for the African missionaries in creating and consolidating their place in the Christian community. The European missionaries, English and German agents alike, were born and raised into the European Christian tradition. They had an implicit, a patrimonial place in the European Christian community, which was only strengthened by their position as missionaries, as representatives of this community in a foreign country, even if the spatial distance from their audience made it necessary for them to re-affirm this place. While the strong intertextual bonds between their own writing and the Christian texts outlined above served to reassure the European missionaries of their place in and the continuity of the

Christian community of the mind, for the African missionaries they were relevant in a more fundamental respect. They helped establish a visible, almost tangible relationship between the writing of a convert, of a former 'heathen', with the Christian narrative, which was new to the African missionaries and to which they were new as well. They meant an explicit avowal and commitment to the religion of the Book.

Something which the attentive reader has perhaps noted already is the fact that in African missionaries' correspondence, the number of intertextual bonds with and recontextualisations of texts written by or about the apostle Paul clearly predominates that of quotations from any other Biblical book or author. It is worth wondering why this is the case. From what we know and can gather about African missionaries' histories, it seems plausible to hazard an educated guess that Paul, himself a convert and missionary, in many ways was perceived as a positive role model. The first aspect which seems relevant here concerns Paul's change of name, which I have already remarked upon in Section 5.3. Stanley Marrow remarks that

[i]t is quite evident that, from Acts 13:9 on, the [pharisee] hitherto called 'Saul' [...] becomes 'Paul'. It seemed, therefore, quite natural to suppose that, with the commencement of the apostle's first missionary journey and at an important turning point in his career, the change of name from the very Semitic 'Saul' to the Greco-Roman 'Paul' should signal a far more significant change for the history of the world (1986, p.7).

Paul's act of adopting a new name must have resonated strongly with the African agents, who themselves had adopted this new form of self-identification. The second aspect relevant for the African missionaries' affinity with Paul is his conversion. Saul, as we can read in Philippians 3:5, was a "Hebrew born of Hebrews" and felt that he "beyond many of [his] age among [his] people, [was] so extremely

zealous [...] for the traditions of [his] fathers” (Galatians 1:13-14). According to Marrow (cf. 1986, p.18), it was in the year 35 that the pharisee and persecutor of early Christians was on the way to Damascus when “suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” (Acts 9:3-4). The following exchange between the apostle and Jesus, who appears unto him on the road to Damascus, has such an effect on the former that he is blinded and remains so for three days. After his blindness is cured by one of Jesus’ disciples in Damascus, Ananias, Paul “straightaway [...] preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God” (Acts 9:20). While most of the African missionaries do not have such an elaborate conversion narrative to tell, it seems likely that they could relate to his story of a perceived radical break with the past as narrated in Galatians 1:11-16:

For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen.

It is this desire to save his fellow countrymen, this zeal, expressed so emphatically, as already discussed, in Romans 10:1, and Paul’s subsequent missionary activity, which certainly was a third factor making him important to African missionaries. Between his conversion in 35 and his death about 25 years later, Paul preached, among other places, in Arabia, Syria, Galatia, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth and Ephesus. His activity in the Aegean meant a westward shift of Christianity. His missionary policy

[required] the planting of local churches to serve as self-propagating cells in those areas. His plan involved pioneer evangelism, preaching the gospel, as he said, 'not where Christ has already been named' (Romans 15:20-21), but laying the foundation himself (Bruce, 1993, p.687).

All this makes Paul, in James Dunn's words, one of the three "absolutely crucial figures in the first generation of Christianity [who] probably played the most significant role in shaping Christianity" (2011, p.119). His significance as a paragon of Christian missionary work in general can hardly be overestimated. The prevalence of quotations from and intertextual bonds with his Epistles and Acts in African missionary correspondence, however, points to the particular importance of this former 'heathen'-turned-missionary and his writings for the African converts following in his footsteps.

Establishing bonds with the scriptures and Christian texts meant, in Culler's words, "[the] taking up of a position in a discursive space" (1976, p.1382). We could say that the African agents, through the frequent references and quotations to the authoritative and essential Christian texts, appropriated a part of and literally wrote themselves into the Christian narrative. By recontextualising the quotations, the agents made the words meaningful to their own context, indicating not only their relevance in their lives, but also the fact that these texts, central to the English-speaking European Christian tradition, applied to them as African Christians just as much as they did to their European colleagues and audience. The agents actively and visibly engaged with the Christian literary corpus with the Bible at its centre, thus establishing a connection between the history and continuity of these texts, and their own writing, assuring themselves and their audience that they were claiming their place in this tradition. The notion of continuity, finally, brings us to the connection between intertextuality in African missionaries' correspondence and their identity as African Christians. Edwards

argues that the notion of continuity can be seen as the cornerstone of identity, and in-group identity in particular. “At a personal level,” he argues, “[continuity] is what reassures me of my on-going integrity; at the level of the group, it is connectivity born in history and carried forward through tradition” (2006, p.19). It is their connection with and the pursuit of the continuity of central Christian texts and imagery, which identifies the African missionaries as members of and active contributors towards a Christian tradition, made visible in the engagement with the core literary corpus.

The examples of intertextuality in the missionaries’ correspondence discussed in this section showed that the missionaries used quotations from the Bible and other Christian texts for various functions. As George Meakin’s use of Isaiah 2:22 and Samuel Ajayi Crowther’s quotation from Isaiah 55:11 showed, the intertextual bonds between the original texts and the missionaries’ writing served to modify and elaborate on the new context in which they were used. Missionaries derived solace and meaning from Biblical texts, putting their own suffering and distress into the greater context of the Christian narrative of ‘spreading the word’. The examples from John Christian Müller’s and James White’s journals showed that intertextuality was also used to draw on the authority of the Christian literary corpus and to refer to precedents to the missionaries’ own situations. Whereas direct quotations surrounded by quotation marks made the intertextual link explicit and visible, thus highlighting the connection between the two texts and strengthening the missionaries’ professional status, indirect quotations presuppose a thorough knowledge of the original texts in the reader and thus an implicit understanding of a shared cultural and religious narrative between the missionaries as authors and their audience. The quotations, allusions and use of imagery enriched the missionaries’ writing and linked back their own experiences to a religious tradition

and history which transcended and simultaneously contextualised their present.

In the case of the African agents in particular we also saw that this had the effect of identifying them as dedicated to the narrative of evangelisation and the 'religion of the Book'. The creation of intertextual bonds between their own correspondence and the Christian literary corpus and the application of passages from Christian texts to their own context contributed to their emergence as "quintessential cultural middlemen" (Peel, 2000, p.8). These links placed the African agents into the continuity of the Christian narrative, thus actively creating a discursive space for the converts.

5.5 Writing a new space

This chapter started out with the premise that experiences of physical, psychosocial, or spiritual relocation entails a re-negotiation of personal identity and group memberships. For Yorùbá missionaries, their experiences of imposed relocation, through displacement, enslavement, and subsequent conversion, left traces in their use of language in letters and journals. We saw that the agents re-interpreted their traumatic experiences of capture and displacement in the light of their encounter with the Christian faith. Thomas King put his physical journey in the new context of his spiritual development, thus allowing him to terms with his experiences as a young boy. The excerpts from Marsh's and Crowther's journals showed a lack of recognition of their former group allegiances to the effect that the missionaries distanced themselves from their social groups in favour of their new faith and the social groups associated with them. This emphasized the missionaries' willingness to sever old ties and join the European missionaries in their evangelisation efforts.

The African CMS agents also reported the use of the terms *òyìn bó* and 'white men'/'whitemen' in reference to themselves. The spelling of 'whiteman' as one

word points to semantic depletion of the term as its use shifted to refer less to actual skin colour and more to the attributes associated with it. This association with the Christian faith and European values, expressed by a different way of dressing, the ability to speak English, in particular, and Western education more generally, led to an extension of the word's meaning to include Africans who aligned themselves with those of a lighter skin colour. I have not come across an occasion in which a Yorùbá agent actively refers to himself in such a manner; the fact that we can read about the use of these terms in reference to non-Europeans considerably more frequently in their journals than in those of their European colleagues, leads me to suggest, however, that the African missionaries did not as much initiate this use as perpetuate it, indicating their new sense of social belonging.

The brokering of new group boundaries is also reflected in the flexible use of personal pronouns, in particular the inclusive first-person 'we'. The African CMS agents in their writing use 'we' to express membership in a variety of social groups, ranging from the Christian community as a whole to the group of freed slaves living in the diaspora, as opposed to their European colleagues who use 'we' to mainly express their social belonging to the group of European Christians. We can discover in the shifting references of the indexical 'we' the variety of constantly shifting, adaptable identities which the Yorùbá missionaries inhabited. The tremendous change which they had undergone on their, physical and spiritual, way to conversion is perhaps reflected most prominently in the adoption of new names upon baptism. Not unlike in the case of the apostle Paul, the change of self-designation for Yorùbá agents expressed their new allegiance explicitly. While the choice of biblical names and those of English monarchs seem fairly common, the choice of names of European CMS officials and missionaries,

as in the case of Samuel Ajayi Crowther and James White, in particular, stand out. The identification with a member of the missionary society for which they now worked and which they represented expresses a strong sense of belonging and allegiance to their new identity as Christians.

Finally, we saw that the Yorùbá missionaries established strong intertextual bonds between their own writing and the scriptures. They quite literally inscribed themselves into the continuity of the Christian tradition and the Christian community of the mind, marking their part and their place in it by explicitly and implicitly linking their work and their experiences to biblical precedent and history. Similar to the linguistic strategies discussed in the earlier sections of this chapter, the missionaries here positioned themselves as members of the Christian community and wished to be perceived as such. Naturally, the use of language was not the only way to broker and communicate a new sense of social belonging. Towards the local population, who had no access to the agents' writing, other, more material means of communication were perhaps more crucial, as the reaction of William Marsh's relatives to his new clothes indicated. Nevertheless, I argue that in the context of the correspondence, which was crucial for the CMS agents involved in the Yorùbá mission, John Joseph's remark that "our very sense of who we are, where we belong and why, and how we relate to those around us, all have language at their centre" (2010, p.9) holds true.

To conclude, let me offer a few comments on how this variety of ways to (re)negotiate identity and place impacted the Yorùbá agents' status in the missionary world. Yorùbá missionaries can be said to have written for themselves a space in the psycho-social consciousness of their contemporaries. The linguistic strategies of negotiating and expressing their new identities and sense of social belonging were omnipresent in their correspondence with their superiors and the

Christian audience in England. It from this liminal space, created by flexible and shifting, multi-faceted identities, that the Yorùbá agents were able to exert considerable influence on the Yorùbá mission in the 19th century. “In Africa they tell the story,” comments Schaaf,

that the missionaries came and said, ‘Let us pray.’ After the Africans had finished praying, they opened their eyes and saw a book in their laps; it was the Bible. But their land had gone. The Europeans, however, did not realize that the Bible was also the time-bomb with which one day the African would in turn blow up their colonialism (1994, p.166).

Schaaf points out that there were two sides to the missionary story, that of outside religious and political influence initiated by European missionary societies and eventually colonial forces, and that of an African Christian population who would, empowered by their faith and the education they had received, turn against this European influence. Men like Edward Blyden, who towards the end of the 19th century pioneered the idea of pan-Africanism (cf. for example, Wilson, 1960 or Ayandele, 1970), and James Johnson, who tirelessly advocated an indigenous African church independent from European influence and control (cf. for example, Ayandele, 1970 or Ewechue, 1991) come to mind. The Yorùbá missionaries’ negotiation and expression of an identity, situated in this liminal space between an ‘African’ and a ‘European’ identity, laid the ground work not only for men like Blyden and Johnson, but also for their own considerable influence throughout several decades of the 19th century. The *òyìnbó dúdú*, the black white men, were at the forefront of evangelisation amongst the population of Yorùbáland. It can hardly be surprising that, as McKenzie points out, “Crowther’s polemical sermons in Yoruba were felt to be more damaging to traditional religion than those preached by the white men in English” (1976, p.19). In their correspondence, these “quintessential cultural middle-men” (Peel, 2000, p.8), brokered their new

identities and group allegiances, thus writing their very own space and identity in the missionary world and the Christian narrative of evangelisation.

The potential of language as a tool to define and re-define the self and construct a narrative of one's place in the world becomes particularly noticeable in social settings in which not everyone has the opportunity to make use of this potential. In the context of the missionary efforts in the Yorùbá area, only 'professional Christians' working for the CMS were able to construct and tell the story of the missionary world in their correspondence. In the next chapter, I explore how this affected the picture of the Yorùbá area and missionaries' work painted for the readers of missionaries' correspondence.

6 Whose story? Missionary correspondence as institutional discourse

The missionaries' correspondence which serves as the source material for my research was, in Peel's words, "composed in the light of the great story [the missionaries] wanted to write into the lives of the Yoruba" (2000, p.2). The beginning of this great story can be traced back to Matthew 28:19:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

We saw in Section 5.4 that the missionaries closely linked the writing in their journals and letters to the narratives of Christian texts, thus indicating their status as proficient theologians, highlighting the continuity of the narrative of evangelisation, and generally emphasising stories of success, of conversions, and of progress. The documents of which my source material is comprised, the quarterly journals and letters in particular, by design rather than individual decision, present the reality of missionary life and work from a certain perspective, namely that of the agents themselves. This necessarily results in a picture that is missing information which would be found in a thick ethnographic description. The encounters with the local population about which the CMS audience could read, for example, are generally told in a manner which leaves the missionaries with the last word in a conversation, "[conveying] the conviction (which often flew in the face of the evidence) that the missionaries controlled events" (Peel, 2000, p.14). This notion, that the missionaries' correspondence was a means of influencing which and whose story was told to the CMS officials and the European audience, is the starting point for this chapter.

The documents constitute a part of what Michael Agar (1985) calls institutional discourse. It comprises the manner, means, and content in and about which an organisation or institution communicates. Almut Koester (2010, p.6) points to Sarangi's and Roberts' (1999) distinction between 'professional' and 'institutional' discourse:

A professional, as a member of a vocational group, is someone who has certain skills and knowledge. An institution, on the other hand, is not associated with a group of people, but rather with systems, regulations and the exercise of authority. [...] institutional discourse is comprised of genres which are socially sanctioned by the institution.

I, however, understand the two as being connected and not as clearly distinguishable as Sarangi and Roberts seem to suggest. Agar's remark that the notion of institutional discourse is inextricably linked to "a socially legitimated expertise together with those persons authorized to implement it" (1985, p.164) points in a similar direction. Discourse, here, is used in the way in which van Dijk (2002) understands it, namely as "a specific communicative event, in general, and a written or oral form of verbal interaction or language use, [or] collections of talk or text" (p.146). The missionaries' writing is, therefore, a part of the institutional discourse of the CMS, in that it is a collection of texts in which, and through which, the – exclusively male – missionaries as members of an institution communicated with other members of the institution and, albeit indirectly, with people outside of the institution. The institutional discourse of the CMS was thus centred in the Society itself, as it communicated within to its members, but also outwards to non-members.

The missionaries were naturally aware of the fact that their correspondence was used not only to inform their superiors, but also the wider Christian audience of CMS supporters. The audience did by no means exclusively read about

the positive aspects of missionary life. The agents included stories of setbacks, of mockery, and of – at best – indifference. While these setbacks were seen and portrayed as an integral part of a long-term success story, the fact that they found a place in the missionaries’ writing at all contributed to the impression of the authors’ integrity and their striving to succeed in the face of adversity. This does not, however, diminish the relevance of the selection process, in which the missionaries decided which events and stories were interesting, informative, and diverting enough for the audience to read.

The fact that the missionaries’ correspondence was not only part of, but also contributed to this institutional discourse necessarily affected the reliability and the extent of the information contained in them, as well as the selection process. Drew and Heritage (1992) refer to this fact by pointing out that institutional discourse is generally oriented towards the goals of the institution (cf. p.22). The goal which the CMS pursued above all was written explicitly into the resolution which was passed at the Society’s foundation meeting in 1799, namely to “to endeavour to propagate the knowledge of the Gospel among the Heathen” (Keen, 1999a, p.8). This goal was what the missionaries in the field worked towards and what their correspondence reflected. Drew and Heritage also remark that “[institutional participants’] conduct [is] in particular [shaped] by organizational and professional constraints and accountabilities” (p.23). This is certainly true for the CMS agents as institutional participants, as the selection process and composition of their correspondence shows. Schlegloff (1992) explains that “shape, form, trajectory, content or character of the interaction that the parties conduct” (p.111) is influenced by these constraints and accountabilities, and the orientation towards the institution’s goals. In this respect, the missionaries’ correspondence was a powerful means of expressing and, through the selection process, construct-

ing their work in the field as striving towards the Society's goal. Excerpts from the missionaries' journals in particular were used in the Society's publications. The editors of these publications, such as *The Church Missionary Gleaner* and *The Intelligencer*, selected passages from the missionaries' writing and included them in their articles in order to give their readers more detailed information on the everyday life and tasks of the agents. The articles also served the purpose to gather support and illustrate the Society's agenda of evangelisation. We can, therefore, say that here another selection process took place. The editors, in a manner of speaking, selected 'sound bites' from the agents' writing to use them in their articles. So, as we will see in more detail in Section 6.1, the reader could learn about the Society's goals or agenda from these selected passages and how they were incorporated into these articles, which formed another part of the CMS's institutional discourse.

The notion of what Agar calls "socially legitimated expertise" (1985, p.164) in relation to institutional discourse necessarily entails that there were those who were considered not to have this expertise and who could, therefore, not participate in any way in the CMS' institutional discourse about missionary work and life in the Yorùbá area. In order to understand the implications of this fact, it is necessary to have a closer look at what it means to be able to access a certain discourse. In his influential volume *Language and Power*, in which he discusses questions of social equality in connection with language and discourse, Fairclough remarks that "language is the commonest form of social behaviour" (2001, p.2) and thus, as a social practice "does not merely 'reflect' a reality which is independent of it; [it] is in an active relationship to reality and it changes reality" (2001, p.31). For the analysis of the missionaries' correspondence this implies that while the documents reflected the reality of missionary life and work, they

also at the same time constructed it. The selection of passages to include into the journals sent off to the CMS headquarters, as well as the linguistic strategies, for example of positioning, as we saw in Chapter 5, or representing the voice of the local population, as I discuss in Section 6.2, contributed to this construction of reality in the text production. The socially sanctioned expertise of those involved in institutional discourse, and their power not only to reflect, but to construct, reality, leads us to the discussion of the inextricable link between language and social power. Fairclough, in his discussion of this link (2001), critiques Saussure's model of *langue* and *parole*. Saussure, Fairclough reminds us first,

regarded *langue* as a system or code which is prior to actual language use, which is the same for all members of a language community, and which is the social side of language as opposed to *parole*, which is individual. For Saussure, *parole*, what is actually said or written, is determined purely by individual choices, not socially at all (p.17).

With regards to this latter point, Fairclough points out that it is based on an inaccurate assumption of how individuals and groups access and *can* access communicative resources; namely,

[Saussure] assumes that everyone in a language community has equal access to and command of its *langue*, whereas in reality access to and command of its standard languages are unequal (p.18).

The non-Christian population in the Yorùbá area, for example, did not have generally access to the *langue*, to basic literacy or learning English, as these skills were only taught in the mission schools in preparation for baptism. Robert Phillipson, in his seminal work *Linguistic imperialism* (1992), makes use of a spatial metaphor to distinguish between the dominant language of the centre and the dominated language(s) of the periphery in an imperial setting (cf. p.52). In the context of the Yorùbá mission, English was the language of the centre, whereas Yorùbá itself

was one of the languages of the periphery. The missionaries' correspondence was written almost entirely in English, with the sole exception of documents including Yorùbá translations, despite the fact that English was not the mother tongue of the sizeable group of German and Yorùbá missionaries. Therefore, learning how to read and write English would have been a crucial requirement for anyone wanting to receive or contribute to the missionary institutional discourse.

It is clear, therefore, that unequal access to learning the language of the centre in a particular setting, or basic literacy skills more generally, such as was the case for the non-Christian population in the Yorùbá area, can lead to marginalisation and exclusion from participation in social and political activities (cf., for example, Bamgboṣe, 2000). Someone who does not speak the dominant language thus might not be able to access the political discourse about a certain issue – they cannot easily read or hear about it, form an opinion, voice that opinion, or make their opinion heard. Discourse of a, for example, political and social nature is thus controlled by those who *can* access it. It is their prerogative, in other words, to determine the

contents, in what is said is or done; *relations*, the social relations people enter into in discourse; [and] *subjects*, or the 'subject positions' people can occupy (Fairclough, 2001, p.39, highlighting in original).

Command of the dominant language is only one factor contributing to who can or cannot receive, contribute to, or critique the discourse in a certain context or about a particular issue. It is very much the case that predominant "social conditions determine properties of discourse" (Fairclough, 2001, p.16), thus restricting the access of certain groups by criteria like education, race, gender, age, sexuality, religion, and so on. The relationship between social status and access to discourses is, therefore, reciprocal – an individual's or group's social status can restrict their

ability to receive and interact with a discourse, but their restricted access can of course also lead to further marginalisation and social exclusion.

Those who were not able to access the institutional discourse surrounding the missionary world, such as non-Christians, converts not affiliated with the mission, or missionary wives, therefore, faced a power imbalance, in that they were not generally able to make their views heard in order to, for example, voice criticism or influence CMS policy decisions. It is worth asking, therefore, whose perspectives the audience *could* read about in the correspondence from Yorùbáland. The authors of the majority of the correspondence sent to the CMS headquarters in London were male Christians employed by the mission. As the purpose of the journals, reports, and letters to the CMS was to hear from the missionaries on the ground, this can of course come as no surprise. It does, however, neglect the perspectives of those who could not access this channel of discourse.

This does not mean that the local population, for example, does not feature at all in the missionaries' correspondence – quite the contrary. The missionaries frequently write about the people whom they encounter, often even seemingly quoting them. This mediate representation of the 'others' voice by indirectly voicing their opinions for them, and the fact that there is no way to verify that the words of praise or criticism were actually uttered by the people to which they are attributed, however, cannot be said to make the local population's representation in the discourse any stronger. Besides non-Christians and converts, there was third group of considerable size which did not generally have access to the institutional discourse channels of the CMS. Despite the fact that most missionaries were married, there is, apart from a few notable exceptions, only little correspondence by their wives, which could have contributed to the discourse about missionary life and work in Yorùbáland. Anna Hinderer's biography (1881), comprised of a

collection of journal entries and letters to friends and acquaintances within the CMS, presents one of these exceptions, as I discuss in Section 6.3. The women also do not feature largely in their husbands' correspondence. As Scott McKenzie remarks,

[the] written source material is penned exclusively by men steeped in patriarchy. Its focus is upon a religion and society in the 19th century where women are often 'players' but where men on the whole predominate (1997, p.7).

Naturally, the journals and letters sent to London constituted part of a professional discourse, reflecting on the agents' professional lives and work; it is, therefore, only to be expected that private and family matters should be by and large excluded from their writing. However, the virtual absence of voices other than the male missionary's can be said to affect the picture that was painted and received by the CMS audience.

It is a daring undertaking to describe and analyse, let alone criticise, social structures and relations *a posteriori*. Here, even more than in other contexts, the researcher's situatedness in her own historical and social setting becomes obvious and relevant, and here, perhaps more than elsewhere in this research project, it is crucial to be sensitive to the properties of the institution and society our research is concerned with (cf. Fairclough, 2003, p.26). Agar's research on institutional discourse warrants a closer look at this point, as it can contribute to a clearer and, in Fairclough's sense, more sensitive understanding of the barriers faced by the aforementioned groups. As Mayr explains (2004),

Agar's definition also includes the conception of institutions as involving asymmetrical roles between institutional representatives or 'experts' and 'non-experts' (p.4).

In our context, we could, therefore, provisionally include the missionaries and their superiors, as well as their European Christian audience as far as they were involved with the Society, with the former group. They were ‘experts’, in Agar’s sense, in that they were entrusted with the Society’s task of spreading the word. If we agree with this clear-cut dichotomy, non-Christian locals, Yorùbá converts not working for the mission, as well as the missionaries’ wives – despite the fact that they were involved in mission work as well to some extent – would have to be included with the ‘non-experts’; they were not officially members of the institution which produced and controlled the discourse in question. This distinction between ‘experts’ and ‘non-experts’ constitutes and expresses what Mayr calls “covert power asymmetries” (2004, p.8).

In the context of missionary life and work, male missionaries and their superiors, while not necessarily being on an equal footing with one another, held discursive power over other groups because they could contribute to and influence, but also maintain and uphold the institutional discourse. At the same time, they could access the discourse precisely because they as experts held this discursive power. The two dimensions reciprocally influence one another. In other words, “discourse structures are deployed in the reproduction of social dominance” (van Dijk, 2001, p.354), while at the same time “social conditions determine properties of discourse” (Fairclough, 2003, p.16). We have to ask, therefore, how reliable the institutional missionary discourse is as a source of information on the missionaries’ work and everyday life, but also on the local population and their beliefs and practices. “A hermeneutic of deep suspicion,” Peel remarks,

can hardly be more appropriate than where virtually all the evidence about one religion comes from its sworn enemy, and all the testimony of religious encounter comes from one of the parties to it (2000, p.12).

I argue in this chapter that from this follows that the missionary correspondence can be seen as an instrument of discursive power. Power, Julie Diamond argues, does not necessarily involve coercion but “[also involves] the ability to interpret events and reality, and have this interpretation accepted by others” (1996, p.13). The missionaries were, by and large, the only people whose interpretations of events and stories were relayed to the European audience because of their sole access to the institutional discourse. I argue that the missionaries used this discourse channel to tell a particular story, one, in general, of success: of conversions, of their work as part of the Christian narrative of ‘spreading the word’, of the “divinely mandated success story” (Peel, 2000, p.17), which neglected actual interpretations and views from other groups of actors, thus effectively linguistically discriminating against them (cf. also Abudi *et al.*, 2011, p.52) and – more or less successfully – silencing them.

Therefore, the story that the majority of my source material tells can be said to be far from comprehensive, a fact which I attempt to remedy in Section 6.3, in which I discuss correspondence from John Nottidge, an African Christian estranged from the CMS mission, and Anna Hinderer, who contributed in her own way to the successes of her husband’s work in the Yorùba mission.

6.1 Written for the audience – The use of missionaries’ journals in CMS publications

What makes the CMS archive stand out as a source for missionary history, is the fact that not only did the missionaries write letters⁴⁴ and keep private

⁴⁴Interestingly, but perhaps not surprisingly, letters, in which personnel and financial matters were frequently discussed, were mainly written by European agents. The Yorùbá missionaries tended to be content with submitting their journal excerpts (cf. also Peel, 2000, p.10).

diaries; the CMS demanded of their agents to write and send journals to the Parent Committee in London, reporting about their progress, notable events, and missionary life in general. These documents, the journals in particular, were thus generally not written as an *aide-memoire* or private correspondence between a missionary in the field and a single recipient in London, but rather to inform CMS policy decisions and for publication in the Society’s periodicals. Although, as Peel points out, it was “never clearly specified in a general regulation” (2000, p.9) what the journals are supposed to contain, we can gather that more than mere ethnographic information on the local population was expected; in line with evangelical thinking of religious experience and conversion being ultimately an internal, rather than an external, affair, the missionaries’ religious feelings and thoughts were considered crucial in the journals. Peel summarises the main types of information contained in the journals as follows:

the activities, and particularly the evangelistic encounters with non-Christians, of the missionaries themselves; the life of the Yoruba Christian congregations, of which the missionaries had pastoral charge; the broader social setting, that is, the villages and towns where the mission operated; and the political situation throughout the region, where frequent wars affected mission activity (2000, p.11).

From the wealth of their everyday encounters and experiences, the agents had to choose those which best reflected and constructed their work as a means to achieve the Society’s institutional agenda of evangelisation. Negative events and experiences, where they are included, are generally given an interpretation in line with the positive narrative of evangelisation and overall success of the mission. This constitutes a form of discursive control over the picture which was painted for the European audience. Asserting this discursive control, thus serving to uphold faith in the mission itself, was vital in the face of an audience to which the authors were spiritually, and not least financially, accountable.

Here, Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of addressivity, "...the addressee's influence on the construction of the utterance" (1986, p.96), also comes into play. The process of selecting which events and experiences to include in the writing and *how* to present their daily life, successes, setbacks, and grievances to their addressees was no doubt influenced by the impression the authors wanted and needed to convey in their writing. We saw examples of this influence in Section 5.1, in which I describe Yorùbá missionaries' strategies to re-interpret their experiences of dislocation and enslavement in the positive light of conversion, and in Section 5.2.2, in which I describe linguistic strategies of negotiating group boundaries in order to establish missionary identity. In a similar vein to Bakhtin's addressivity, Allan Bell (1984) brings forward the notion of 'audience design' with regard to style in spoken language. "In audience design, speakers accommodate primarily to their audience," he argues (p.194). While the source material here consists, of course, of written, rather than spoken text, it is interesting to note that there are no particular differences in terms of style between the missionaries' journals, which the agents were required to write to the Parent Committee, and the letters, which the agents generally wrote spontaneously and in which they discussed more practical matters such as finances. The letters are on average shorter (cf. also Peel, 2000, p.11), whereas the journals generally had more room for elaborate narratives, as we will see below. It also important to note that the 'audience' of the missionaries' journals is not as straightforward a notion as Bell makes it out to be in relation to concrete speech events. The primary audience were the agents' superiors in the CMS Parent Committee, who then used excerpts from these journals for

their publications, such as *The Church Missionary Gleaner* and *The Intelligencer*, whose readers, the Society’s supporters, can be called a secondary audience⁴⁵.

The missionaries were naturally aware that especially their journals were not private correspondence, but rather fed into the Society’s policy decisions and were used as ‘sound bites’ for publications, in a manner of speaking. The notion of ‘sound bites’ here, I feel, is an illuminating one. Let me draw attention to Geert Jacobs’ work on press releases (1999), tellingly called *Preformulating the news*. With reference to the title of his book, Jacobs points to the idea that “press releases are indeed meant to be ‘continued’ as accurately as possible” (p.1), which means that in the process of writing them, their authors conveniently prepackage the information so it can ideally be re-used in other publications. The writers of press releases thereby try to control the way the content is used and also perceived in the future. In the case of the missionaries’ correspondence and their relationship with their audiences, the selection process before sending the journal excerpts off to the Society’s headquarters resembles what Jacobs calls ‘preformulation’. The agents prepackaged the information for their primary audience so they could use it in the publications, which were then distributed to their secondary audience, the Society’s supporters. They thereby steered the way their documents’ contents were perceived by their secondary audience, and contributed to the construction of their work as part of the narrative of evangelisation. It can, therefore, be argued that the missionaries’ journals worked in a similar fashion to corporate or organisational press releases. As Jacobs remarks,

press releases are not just aimed at the journalists, who have to retell them, but, crucially, also at the journalists’ own newspaper readers, TV viewers, etc. (1999, p.22).

⁴⁵As we will see below, the missionaries themselves also received the publications; this meant their journals completed a cycle and were returned back to them, making them a tertiary audience.

Similarly, the missionaries' writing was not just aimed at their superiors, but also at the readers of the Society's publications, in which the CMS as an organisation aimed to highlight its agenda and efforts towards achieving their goals.

Let me now present two examples of how and to what effect the journals were used in CMS periodicals. In the June 1854 issue of *The Church Missionary Gleaner*, for example, we find an article of four pages, entitled *What have I to do any more with idols?*. An unnamed author describes the story of a Lagos woman called Ige, who converted to Christianity and handed in her statues of the *òrìṣà*. An introduction, giving the context for the article, describes the issue at hand, namely the debatable opinion

that they who co-operate in the Missionary efforts now put forth [that] the evangelization of distant lands may unmake a few idolaters, but rarely make a Christian (p.63).

The article then counters this opinion with the following:

Whole nations have cast away their idols: this every one knows who has ever thought it worth while to look into the subject. And if there be many that have renounced idolatry, who should take it upon him to say that there are few real Christians among them? (p.63)

Supporting this idea, the article then launches into a one page excerpt from James White's journal, which is introduced in the following manner:

If an individual has found a better faith and a better hope, we can understand his surrendering his idols, and enduring patiently the taunts and persecution of relatives [...]. Yet these are the circumstances in which our converts from heathenism are being continually placed. [...] The following account [is] of a poor heathen led to see under the illuminating influence of the gospel, the vanity of idols, and the preciousness of Jesus as a Saviour (p.63-64).

White's journal excerpt from 6th April 1853 then begins:

Having been requested by one of my Sunday scholars, by the name of Ige, to come and take away her idols, and informed that she had obtained her mother’s and husband’s consent, because they had contributed towards procuring them, I went, accordingly, with Mrs. White, two of our converts, and our school teacher, to her house. We found that she had assembled her relatives together, and we read and prayed with them; and after encouraging her, she brought me her Shango, Eḷẹgbara, Osoyin, Ọbatala, and Ifa. Notwithstanding the violent opposition of her enemies, she stood firm and undaunted in her faith [...] (CA2 O87 37).

Ige subsequently had to withstand persecution and threats, but, according to White’s journal excerpt, did not waver. The article then goes on to introduce an excerpt from Charles Gollmer’s journal in the following way:

No doubt [Ige’s] bearing and deportment showed that she had not merely cast away her idols, but that she had got something [...] that made her happy and peaceful in herself, and kind and obliging to others. [...] The circle of her influence has been extended beyond her own family and connexions (p.65).

Gollmer’s journal excerpts describes Ige’s influence in more detail:

One of our young neighbours – one of our Lagos converts – came, with his wife, to deliver, unasked for, their orishas (gods) to me. The old father brought his Ifa, with all the accompaniments, some of which were rather the worse for wear and tear, which with other signs, indicated long service. The old man said, ‘For many years I have worshipped these, and put my trust in them; but I now know they cannot save, and, therefore, I desire to put my trust in Him and His Son Jesus Christ’ (CA2 O43 120, 9th July 1853).

White’s and Gollmer’s first-hand accounts from the field make up half of the article, the whole of Charles Gollmer’s journal entry filling roughly one page and the excerpts from James White’s journal filling another page. They not only bring to life Ige’s story for the reader, a story of success in the missionary world; the article also relies heavily on the journal entries in order to make its point. Missionary

work was not only still necessary but could also be fruitful. Interestingly, the article then concludes

How wonderfully Christian influence, real Christian influence, extends and propagates itself from heart to heart! Reader, there are other idols besides material idols. In countries like our own, [men] have idols in their hearts. May the eyes of poor sinners be opened to see the preciousness of Jesus, that they may be willing, after Ige's example, to give up the sins which they have loved and served (p.66).

The article, therefore, reminds the reader to put their own house in order, in a manner of speaking, as idolatry is not merely an issue in those parts of the world where Christianity has not been present before. In addition to highlighting that the Society's missionary efforts were still necessary, the excerpts from missionaries' first-hand and first-person accounts were crucial in making this argument in the article. In being recontextualised, they shift the focus of the article from the third-person style into the more immediate first person, giving the normative message of the article an air of objectivity and authority (cf., for example, Briggs, 1996, p.26, and Matoesian, 2000, p.884). While the recontextualisation of their journal excerpts in the Society's publications meant that the missionaries surrendered control of how their correspondence was subsequently used, in parts at least, the stories in the missionaries' correspondence were, therefore, in Jacobs' words, "told [...] to be retold" (1999, p.1).

Another example can help illustrate this point even further. In Section 5.1, we saw an excerpt from Thomas King's letter in which he describes the day of his capture as follows:

[T]hat mournful morning (but which I may now call a happy day) that I left my father's home in order [...] to get corn [...]. How many of this dealings [sic], which at present though dark and gloomy shall be matter of endless praises, when unfolded in eternity (CA2 O61 1, 27th October 1851).

In 1850, King had already written a coherent and elaborate account of his capture, his time in captivity, and eventually being reunited with his mother (cf. CA2 O61 36). In the issue of *The Church Missionary Gleaner* in April 1850, we find this “brief narrative of his capture, and subsequent treatment at the hand of the slave-dealers” (p.138). The article begins with a brief third-person opening introducing King’s first-person account:

In our last Number we related the joyful meeting of Mr. Thomas King with his aged mother, from whom he had been separated for twenty-five years. [...] Some years ago, and nothing seemed more likely [...]. How could they expect it? for they knew there was no pity in the slave-traders and their agents. [...] It is thus Mr. Thomas King, on returning to his own land, seems to have looked back on his eventful history (p.138).

The article then launches into King’s narration. Its opening lines are:

On the morning of that unhappy day that I was separated from my parents – about the year 1825, in the beginning of November – I left home about eight o’clock for farm [sic], about three miles distant from home, in order to get some corn (p.138).

We also learn about the fate of his family; his father had escaped the slavers, but was killed in a battle, while his mother

had been in hard servitude under six or seven different owners, and would probably have died under the same, had it not been for the arrival of the Missionaries here a few years ago, when her redemption [...] was effected by their means (p.140).

According to King, it was Samuel Ajayi Crowther, who had paid the ‘redemption money’ for his mother, as well as his brother. The whole article runs over roughly three-and-a-half pages with Thomas King’s account taking up about half of this space. The article in the introduction frames his account by also talking about former slaves reuniting with their friends and families in the Yorùbá area as a

result of the relentless efforts of mission societies and the Royal Navy's West African Squadron to end the slave trade and stop slaver's ships on the coast of West Africa. "England," the article concludes in the third person again,

has indeed redeemed the character of the White Man in the eyes of the African. There was nothing that the slave so dreaded, as the moment when he should be brought into the presence of the White Man; when this oppressor of his race should place his hands and yoke upon him, to lead him away in hopeless bondage (p.141).

King's account also emphasises this point towards the end:

Could the friends of Africa witness the heart-melting sight of the parents that have those children restored again to their bosoms whom they have given up for lost, after the expiration of twenty-five years, they would know how their services are acknowledged here (p.140).

There is also a copper engraving of the very moment of King's capture (Figure 14), which takes up about half a page of the article. The engraving vividly illustrates the violence and the horrors associated with the slave trade: a young boy, his face contorted in anguish, trying to escape, is grabbed by his hair by a tall, muscular man, a fierce expression on his face, his other hand holding a musket. In the background, we can see another man with a musket approaching under a partly darkened sky. Together with the use of the engraving, King's first-person account of his physical and spiritual journey from a boy in a Yorùbá village to the coast of Sierra Leone, and finally back to the Yorùbá area, now as a Christian and a missionary agent, underlined and illustrated the key point of the article: the efforts against the slave trade by both the Royal Navy and the CMS, which by extension included the audience of the Society's periodical and their supporters, had helped to improve the perception of "the White Man" in West Africa, and, therefore, to promote the Society's missionary agenda in the area. Similar to the recontextualisation of White's and Gollmer's journal excerpts in the article from



Figure 14: Copper engraving of Thomas King being captured by a slave trader, by J. Johnston, *The Church Missionary Gleaner*, April 1850, p.139)

June 1853, King's first-hand experience shifts the focus of the article away from the third-person framing in order to convey this key point of the article more vividly to the intended audience.

In some instances, the agents explicitly refer to the fact that the stories in their correspondence are frequently used in the CMS publications. After being criticised by members of the Parent Committee for leaving Abéòkúta in the wake of the *ifólé*, David Hinderer feels that his motives had been misrepresented to the CMS audience. He argues in a letter to Mr. and Mrs. Venn that leaving the

city was necessary and did not mean abandoning his post without a reason, but through the way the Parent Committee portrayed the events,

your own unprejudiced English Readers of late Intelligencers etc., I mean friends of the Society, read it so, and your African readers read and understand it so as well (CA2 O49 69, 24th April 1868, Ìbàdàn).

Apparently, Hinderer wishes to correct the way he himself and his work is perceived by the readers of the CMS periodicals, and thus makes explicit the fact that his writing was and will be used to inform the “friends of the Society”. Interestingly, this can serve as an indication of the fact that the missionaries relinquished their discursive control to some extent to their superiors. In a similar fashion, Thomas King expresses his concern about how what he perceives as a poor display of literacy skills in his journal of the Niger Expedition will be seen by the European audience:

Full of errors and frivolous accounts as the contents of [the journal] are; I doubt not but it will be impertinent to the intelligent and learned gentlemen, whom I beg to excuse my incomplete ability [...] and rectify those ungrammatical parts of this journal (CA1 O130 17, 1841).

This awareness of an audience, an audience even wider than merely the original recipients of the journals in London, we can find even more prominently in King’s journal from 19th May 1850. In here he retells a scene in Ìgbèìn, part of the town of Abéòkúta, of catechumens “receiving the sacrament of baptism, [...] [the] adults descently [sic] dressed in white, both men and women” (CA2 O61 37, journal excerpts ending 25th September 1850). He concludes the narration as follows:

Scarcely did I ever witness a scene more gratifying. My joy was truly inexpressible. The only language of my heart was ‘O that **the friends of the Africans** could witness this, **they** would beyond all doubt be assured that **their** prayer and services are had in remembrance in the sight of the Lord, by the what the Great Head of the Church

is accomplishing among our benighted country men!’ (CA2 O61 37, journal excerpts ending 25th September 1850)

This passage stands out particularly because King here indirectly, through the use of the third-person pronoun ‘they’ and the possessive marker ‘their’, addresses the audience. The more direct form would contain the second-person pronouns and possessive markers, ‘you’ and ‘your’; so the passage would be something along the lines of: ‘O that **you, the friends of Africa**, could witness this, **you** would beyond all doubt be assured that **your** prayer and services are had in remembrance in the sight of the Lord...’ Note also the phrase “friends of the Africans”, which is similar to Hinderer’s “friends of the Society” in the example above, in that it addresses and embraces an audience wider than merely the Parent Committee. While King only uses an indirect form, this passage is nevertheless intriguing, as King seems to turn to his readers after his description of the people receiving baptism, to involve them in the scene he just described. A similar technique is known in film and theatre as ‘breaking the fourth wall’. Katherine Thomson-Jones describes this technique as

[this] is where dramatic conventions governing the separation of real and fictional worlds are deliberately violated so that, for example, a character comments on story events in an aside to the audience or an omniscient narrator reports story events directly to the audience as fictional events (2007, p.91f)⁴⁶.

In an indirect way, by using the third-person instead of the second-person pronouns, King thus breaks the fourth wall and involves his readers in a considerably more immediate way into the baptism scene with its crowd of people, dressed all

⁴⁶The term ‘direct address’ is also used in the literature, although Tom Brown criticises the term because “[looking] at the film audience is clearly never ‘direct’ in any material sense; it is also rare that its effect or meaning is as obvious as ‘direct’ implies. ‘Address’ is scarcely better, as it implies the communication of some statement [...], and follows on so clearly from ‘direct’ as to risk being tautologous” (2012, p.x). Brown uses the term nevertheless as a heuristic approach to his work.

in white, becoming members of the Christian community, of which the audience are also members. Thomson-Jones remarks upon the violation of the separation of the real and the fictional world in the context of film and theatre. A similar effect takes place in King's – indirect – address to the audience. Rather than blurring the boundaries between real and fictional worlds, however, by turning to his readers, King blurs the boundaries between the world of his primary and secondary audience, and the world of his narration. The two worlds were different in both a geographical sense – most of his audience would have been resident in the British Isles, while King wrote from his mission station in Abéòkúta – and regarding the horizons of experience. The missionaries in the field were not merely physically remote from their superiors and their audience but worked and lived under fundamentally different conditions. They had to rely on their journals to convey to their superiors and their readers a sense of what their everyday lives, often painted by abnegation and struggle, their work, and their surroundings were like. These journals thus worked as an attempt to bridge the geographical and experiential gap between the agents in the field and those to whom they were answerable. Thomas King in his journal entry takes this step in a straightforward manner by breaking the fourth wall, by pulling the audience into the scene in addressing them, wishing them to be physically and spiritually present in this moment, thus endeavouring to make more tangible and immediate a scene that otherwise remains inaccessible to them.

As we could see, the journals written and sent off by the missionaries to their superiors and ultimately their wider, secondary audience of CMS supporters have the purpose of informing the readers of the agents' experiences and work in the field and construct their stories as part of the institutional agenda of evangelising the local population. The fact that these documents are the means by which

the writers convey the stories and events they experience to their audiences, thus constituting the image the audiences get of their work, necessarily influences the selection of and manner in which these stories and events are told. “These journal narratives,” Peel remarks, “are more than just evidence of the past; they are constitutive of [the] subject matter” (2000, p.2). This is also highlighted by the fact that the missionaries’ excerpts were in the Society’s periodicals embedded into articles which served to further the CMS agenda. The first-hand accounts from the field were recontextualised in the articles, serving to support the authors’ arguments as authoritative sources and constructing the Society’s work as both necessary and effective for the publications’ audience.

For the readers in their time, the journals and their use in the CMS periodicals were the key tools of painting the picture of missionary efforts along the lines of the narrative of evangelisation and successful proselytism. This also left the missionaries themselves in a curious position. They functioned at the same time as filters and doorways to the missionary field. The manner in which they chose to write their stories, controls the manner and amount of information that the audiences received. We have to keep in mind, however, that the same time, when sending off their journals, the missionaries relinquished this control to the members of the Parent Committee and the editors of the Society’s publications. As we could see in the example of Thomas King’s 1850 journal excerpt, however, there was also a desire to make the missionary experience more immediate and tangible for the audience. In a manner of speaking, “like the wooden frame of a picture,” to quote Goffman, “[they] are [...] neither part of the content of the activity proper nor part of the world outside the activity but rather both inside and outside” (1974, p.252). As writers, they assumed positions of discursive gatekeepers, governing and managing the flow of information which their readers

received, while handing over this control as their writing became recontextualised in other authors' articles. Once again, similar to what I described in Sections 4.4 and 4.5, the power dynamics in the missionary world cannot be considered fixed or absolute.

In Section 5.4, we saw how the narrative of missionary work and life was influenced by intertextual bonds through quoting from religious texts and narratives. By means of these bonds between the passages from and allusions to Christian texts and their own writing, the agents were able to attribute meaning to their everyday experiences, but also exhibited their theological proficiency, their ability to cope, and their membership in the Christian community. Similarly, we saw in this section the use of excerpts from missionaries' journals in the Society's periodicals as a means to bring to life and make more immediate missionary work and goals. The next section discusses how quotations from the local population were incorporated in the missionaries' accounts in order to present the situation on the ground more vividly and more objectively to their readers.

6.2 Harnessing the local population's voice

As we saw in the June 1854 issue of *The Church Missionary Gleaner* in the section above, the readers of the CMS publications could learn from the missionaries' journals, more than from any other source, about the local population's lives, beliefs and practices, and not least attitudes and opinion. Towards the end of Section 5.2.2 I discussed othering language, such as William Allen's description of an *òrìṣà* as an 'idol' (cf. CA2 O18 16, journal excerpt, 11th May 1859) or Thomas King's calling the local population 'deluded' and 'without morals' (cf. CA1 O130 1, Niger Expedition journal, 1841). This kind of language conveyed a certain, overall negative image, of the non-Christian Yòrùba population in the missionaries'

writing. In this section, I explore the ways in which quotations taken from conversations with locals were used in the correspondence. Despite the fact that certain groups, for example the non-Christian population or converts not involved in the mission, did not actively contribute to the discourse *about* themselves, they nevertheless appear as indirect actors in the documents constituting this discourse, albeit through the pen of the missionaries. Their voice was, in a manner of speaking, appropriated by the agents who wrote about conversations and arguments in their journals and letters. Blommaert (2005) defines voice

in general as the ways in which people manage to make themselves understood or fail to do so. This capacity to make oneself understood [...] is a capacity to generate an uptake of one's words as close as possible to one's desired contextualisation (p.68).

As we will see in this section, the missionaries took control of this ability to influence how one's words are understood, received, and dealt with when they quoted the Yòrùba population's words in their writing.

The writers frequently presented the local population's views in direct quotations in their texts. Matoesian (2000) remarks that

direct quotes [appear] more epistemologically privileged, more authoritative, and more objective because the quoting speaker appears as a mere animator who presents an exact wording of the quoted speech rather than his/her own moral stance (p.884).

In the summer of 1848, German missionary John Christian Müller reports in his journal a conversation with a group of non-Christian locals. The conversation is presented as concluding when “all agree **‘We know our worship is wrong and we are tired of our Gods’**” (CA2 O72 6, journal excerpts ending 20th June 1848, highlighting added). Müller here uses quotation marks in his journal, indicating that he directly quotes his conversational partners. Vandelanotte (2004) remarks

that “the Speaker in direct speech/thought representation [...] dramatically yields the floor to the Sayer/Cognizant” (p.491). In our example, Müller is the Speaker, providing the present speech event, and the group of locals with whom he converses are the Sayers or Cognizants, providing the speech event which Müller quotes. The quotation marks, therefore, graphematically indicate the point when Müller yields the floor to the group of local people, albeit only momentarily in order to make use of their voice in his writing. He uses their voice in order to show that during the course of the conversation he was able to convince them of the error of their ways. The readers seemingly hear this directly from the people’s mouth. The use of the direct quotation in Müller’s journal can, therefore, serve as an example of the attributed objectivity which Matoesian mentions (2000, p.884). Müller takes up the role of the animator, repeating his conversational partners’ words. Let us examine a second example to explore how quotation marks can also indicate a grammatical shift typical for direct quotations. Samuel Pearse re-narrates his encounter with a local woman in 1871 in a letter to Henry Venn:

In answer to a question **I** put to her she said, – ‘**I** turn from **my** vanities to serve **my** God with all **my** heart, if they kill **me** on this account, **I will** die for God’s sake, and then **my** Spirit **will** go and tell God that they have killed **me** for His sake.’ **I** little thought this **would** actually come to pass (CA2 M6, Badagry, 10th January 1871, highlighting added⁴⁷).

The highlighted personal pronouns and possessive markers in this excerpt from Pearse’s letter (‘I’, ‘me’, ‘my’) are indexical signs. If we did not know that Samuel Pearse is the author of the letter, we would not be able to understand who the first ‘I’ refers to, for example. Samuel Pearse, therefore, forms the personal deictic

⁴⁷Unfortunately, Pearse does not elaborate on the actual question. It is likely that he did not see the need to mention his question. What he describes reminds the reader less of a conversation to which both contribute equally but rather of a formal setting in which he asks questions and reports back her answer.

centre for his writing, as we can safely assume that whenever he uses a form of the personal pronoun or possessive marker in the first person singular, he refers to himself. However, this changes when he uses a direct quotation like the one in our example above. The quotation marks indicate the shift of the deictic centre from Vandelanotte's Speaker, who in this case is Pearse, to the Sayer or Cognizant, the local woman. In the direct quotation, every instance of the personal pronoun or possessive marker in the first person singular uses the local woman as a reference point, rather than Pearse. The deictic centre is thus tied to her rather than to him, thus allowing two 'I's in the text to co-occur with two different references (cf. also Vandelanotte, 2004, p.492). We can see another shift back to Pearse at the end of the passage after the second quotation mark: "I little thought this would actually come to pass." It becomes clear not only by the inverted comma, marking the end of the quotation, but also by the foreshadowing, that Pearse is now the deictic centre of the text again. This sentence actually begins the narration of the woman's persecution, which indeed ended in her death⁴⁸. The grammatical shift from the woman's 'will' to Pearse's 'would' and the foreboding tone of "little did I know" clearly indicates the perspective of hindsight, which the woman at the point of her utterance could not have taken.

This shift of the deictic centre and the speaker yielding the floor to the sayer or cognizant of the quoted utterance, links back to what Matoesian has to say about direct quotations. Müller and Pearse as the quoting speakers, in Matoesian's terms, repeat or animate the quoted speakers' utterances, opinions, and attitudes. They enrich their own writing by providing another's perspective on Christianity

⁴⁸It is telling that even though Pearse's narration about this particular woman's fate, who through her persecution and death becomes a martyr, a witness for Christ, runs on for several pages, the reader does not learn her name. Pearse's story-telling seems to focus on the historical continuity of the persecution of Christians, rather than this woman's particular case.

and on their work. The positive attitudes towards Christianity and, implicitly thereby, towards the missionary presence and work, conveyed by these quotations seem to come directly from the members of the local population, plucked from their mouths and hearts, and only written down by the missionaries. The deictic shift distances the writer from the quoted words in the sense that they are not his views or interpretations, but are presented as genuinely those of the person originally uttering the words. The audience for the missionaries' correspondence is the CMS, and ultimately its supporters, and its main purpose is to communicate their success in working towards the Society's goal of evangelisation; therefore, the missionaries ensure that, when reading about the positive, life-changing impact of their work, their audience does not only have to take the missionaries' word for it, but can hear directly from the mouths of those whose lives were changed by the agents' efforts.

The objectivising function of direct quotations can also be applied to the next example. In hard times, members of the local population appear to offer support and encouragement to the missionaries. During the

yearly festival of the Kesi people when most of them come home [and he] went there [...] to cast the soul-catching net of the Gospel (CA2 O61 37, journal excerpts ending 25th September 1850),

Thomas King faces a particularly hostile group of *òrìṣà* worshippers. While we do not hear about the actual insults King has to face, we learn from his journal that another group of people approaches him afterwards: “‘Continue to speak,’ said some of them, ‘you shall have many join you hereafter, whom you do not think of now’” (CA2 O61 37, journal excerpts ending 25th September 1850). By offering a direct quotation, rather than rephrasing the words of others or giving his subjective view, King makes it clear that he is merely the mouthpiece, the animator through which these words are conveyed to the CMS audience. The

words seem to directly reflect the opinions of the members of the local population who approached him, apparently unadulterated by rephrasing.

It is also by no means the case that these quotations are only used to lend an air of objectivised praise to the correspondence. During the Oro⁴⁹ festival in 1850, Thomas King is confronted by the male participants in a parade:

‘Are you one of those the come [sic] from the white man’s land⁵⁰ to spoil Egba country?’ I replied by saying, we come by no means to spoil the country but to make it good. **‘You come to make it good when you say that we must cast away our Ifa and Orisa.’** It is not we who command you to but God. Highly enraged by this reply, he rode up to Dalley and I, commenced beating us with the handle of his horse tail [which] was in his hand. [...] **‘A day is coming when you all will be devoured by Oro’** (CA2 O61 37, journal excerpts ending 25th September 1850, highlighting added).

Interestingly, King here only marks the warriors’ utterances as quotations whereas his own replies are not marked in this way. He does introduce his first reply with the clause “I replied by saying,” but his second reply does not even have this introduction. We can, however, clearly see that he is quoting himself because of his use of ‘you’, which here refers to his opponents in the reported event and not his CMS readers. The deictic I–you axis is, therefore, grounded in the reported speech event and not the present one, in which he tells his audience about the incident (cf. also Vandelanotte, 2004, p.491). When events like the one recounted by Thomas King appear in the missionaries’ writing, they often read like scenes from a drama. The reader can easily see the scene before her inner eye, with a setting,

⁴⁹William Marsh describes the Oro festival after the death of Šodeke, the ruler of Abéòkúta, in his journal: “No service was kept this day because Oro the god of Custom took the whole part of Abbeokuta; [...] This Oro returned from the the [sic] world of spirits in honour of Shodeke who himself is said to reappear also” (CA2 O67 5, 15th June 1845).

⁵⁰King was a Yòrúba missionary and clearly not European. While the question can, therefore, only have been rhetorical, it indicates the close association between Christian education and faith, and “the white man’s country”, as discussed in Section 5.2.1.

alternating lines for the characters, and even stage directions or descriptions of what the characters are doing during their speeches. This form of dramatisation, while probably based on an actual incident, raises the suspicion that possibly the event might not have happened in exactly this way. Tellingly, the following passage from 1 Kings is even reminiscent of the general structure of the conversation reported by King:

And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, **Art thou he that troubleth Israel?** And he answered, **I have not troubled Israel;** but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim (1 Kings 18:17).

Similar to the question “Are you one of those the come [sic] from the white man's land to spoil Egba country?”, Ahab challenges the prophet by asking “Art thou he that troubleth Israel?”. King, like Elijah, responds by denying this accusation. As discussed in Section 5.4, the adaptation of biblical writing is not unusual in the missionaries correspondence. In this example, the parallel structure of the passage from 1 Kings and Thomas King's journal, in addition to connecting his story with the biblical trope of the prophet under duress, contributes to the dramatisation of the scene described. This can be a means to achieve a vivid and easily readable style of writing, but can also strike the reader as artificial and contrived, often presenting the missionaries as full of repartee and eloquence when faced with confrontational situations.

However, they also show – and there is an element of this in the example taken from King's journal – the missionaries in situations where they are seriously challenged and physically threatened or even attacked. The documents tell tales of the missionaries' trials and tribulations, but also of the fact that they withstood these challenges. Peel argues that the fact that the texts sometimes “speak against

their authors” (2000, p.13) contributes to a feeling of authenticity. Clearly, the men’s hostility towards and rejection of the Christian faith and its ambassadors in our example do not indicate a positive attitude towards missionary work. Thomas King nevertheless included the exchange in his journal. It is interesting to note that there is Biblical precedent for this. In the description of the crucifixion in the Gospel of Luke, for example, we find the Roman soldiers and one of the two men crucified next to Jesus mocking and challenging him:

And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, and saying, **If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.** And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, This Is The King Of The Jews. And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, **If thou be Christ, save thyself and us** (Luke 23:26-39, highlighting added).

The author of the Gospel here presents two quotations by Jesus’ tormentors and adversaries. This can also be found in Luke 5:19-24, where the pharisees are quoted directly when they comment on Jesus healing a man who is unable to walk:

And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, **Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?**

The author of the crucifixion scene also adds an element of dramatisation by the climactic structure of the two quotations. The Romans ask Jesus to save himself if he really is the king of the Jews, but the crucified man asks Jesus to save himself *and* the two men on the crosses on either side of him. What we can find in the missionaries’ writing is, therefore, something like a Christian trope; letting the opponents speak and thus either exposing the inferiority of their position, as in the example of the pharisees, who are shown to be oblivious to Jesus’ powers, or emphasising the strength of the opposition and, therefore, the endurance required

to withstand it. In the case of the missionaries' correspondence, these instances are, therefore, integrated in the dominant narrative of missionary progress; they were hurdles on a road that was laid out before the writers, difficulties that had to be overcome but did not – on the surface – change the general course of action⁵¹.

Returning to the question of the “epistemologically privileged” (Matoesian, 2000, p.884) status of direct quotations, let me point to Vandelanotte's general point about what we could call the representation fallacy:

[A] tenacious view on the difference between direct and indirect speech/ thought representation is that in the former, the Speaker is committed to a verbatim representation of the Sayer/Cognizant's ‘original’ wording, whereas in the latter, the Speaker is only supposed to accurately represent the meaning of such an ‘original’ wording. This seems to be an oversimplification or overstatement of the case: it is only in certain registers that truly verbatim representation is to some extent likely to be achieved (academic, legal, and, to a lesser extent, newspaper reporting come to mind) (2004, p.493).

In the context of the Yorùbá mission documents, this representation fallacy becomes particularly evident when we take the specific communicative situation into account. We can assume that the conversations reported in the agents' correspondence did not take place in English. European missionaries made a distinct effort and were in fact required to learn Yorùbá, as George Meakin's journal entry in 1856 shows:

Commenced reading Yoruba, with Mr. Hardisty. I trust that the Lord will give us perseverance, that we may speak to these people in their own language, of the unsearchable riches of Christ (CA2 O69 5, 29th December 1856).

⁵¹No doubt the missionaries *de facto* had to respond to the everyday experiences and contingencies of living among the very people they sought to convert. While Islam in its religious encounter with the Yorùbá is said to have been considerably more accommodating than the Christian agents (cf. also Peel, 2000, p.209), the missionaries were, and had to be, nevertheless, at the core practical men. This does not mean, however, that the need to adapt fundamentally changed their guiding narrative.

Those who were not yet fluent in the language made use of interpreters, such as the aforementioned Mr. Hardisty. We can, therefore, safely assume that both Müller and Pearse were themselves able to speak Yorùbá or had someone at their side to interpret their words to the people to whom they spoke and in turn convey their replies to the missionaries. In the case of Thomas King, who was a *saro*, an educated Christian returnee from Sierra Leone, but originally from the area, the matter is even less controversial because he very likely spoke a dialect of Yorùbá as his native language. However, if the exchanges took place in Yorùbá, what the missionaries wrote down in their correspondence were not direct quotations at all. They are, at best, translations of what was said in Yorùbá. Where the missionaries themselves were fluent in the language, they wrote down their own translations; where they made use of interpreters, there even was a third party involved, a third source of potential errors in translation and understanding, of a potentially biased and distorted version of what was actually said. This issue is of course not limited to seemingly 'direct' quotations which have been translated. Jacobs offers a worthwhile insight on this conundrum:

It should be noted, however, that, even if such examples indicate that the quotations in press releases are not wholly reliable, they come no way close to a method for 'linguistic fingerprinting' [...] providing conclusive evidence that the quotation was never verbalized by the named source. The reason for this is of course that it is one thing to demonstrate that there are differences between a quotation and the anterior speech event it draws from, yet quite another to definitely prove no such speech event ever took place (1999, p.162).

By no means do I, therefore, want to suggest that interpreters or the agents themselves deliberately or intentionally gave a wrong translation of their conversational partners' utterances, or that the positive, supportive attitudes towards Christianity and the missionary presence were necessarily exaggerated; in order to assess the reliability of these documents, however, it is vital to understand that what

appear to be direct, literal quotations, indicated by quotation marks and syntactically embedded, are by no means that. As Vandelanotte points out, “what is attained in terms of mimetic (or verbatim) representation is, consequently, at most an illusion of mimesis” (2004, p.493). We should, therefore, accept at best that what we read, and what the CMS audiences read, conveys the general idea of what was said, but is necessarily to some extent distorted by translation and even the author’s memory.

Similarly, as we saw in Section 6.1, the very nature and purpose of these documents should urge us to view the use of these quotations critically. Missionaries in the field were accountable, financially as well as spiritually, to the CMS Parent Committee and the more general Christian audience who read the CMS periodicals. We can, therefore, safely assume, without insinuating deliberate deception, that the writing process itself and the process of choosing which journal excerpts to send to London was to a certain extent a selection process. We saw from the example of King’s 1850 journal that the use of direct quotations contributes to the construction of objectivity because the writer distances himself from the content of the utterance by transferring authorship to the person whom they quote. The quotations are brush strokes in the picture of missionary success and positive attitudes towards Christianity among the people with whom the missionaries live. A dimension of objective authority is added to this picture, which elsewhere consists of explicitly subjective evaluations of the situation, when the authors add a third person’s view to their writing by using direct quotations. By making use of the voice of their conversational partners, the missionaries managed to put a distance between themselves as the speakers and the messages contained in the words of the original sayer. This distance contributed to a seemingly more objective narrative of missionary work and success.

In addition to the clearly marked-off direct quotations, we can also find examples of a more indirect way of including the opinions and views of the local population in the missionaries' writing. In his annual letter for 1867, James White describes the attitude of the locals towards the upcoming refurbishment of the mission house in Otta. According to White, in September of 1867 people started voicing the attitude that the building work

is intended for a hostile purpose, and that it is **our** intention to bring the town under subjection of the English, and a motion was made by many **ill-disposed heathens and Mohammedans** [sic] to excite the king and his chiefs to expel **us** from the town, and destroy **our** work (CA2 O87 96, to be posted before or on 16th December 1867, highlighting added).

White does not use inverted commas to mark the quotation here. As opposed to the direct quotations discussed above, we can see in this example that the personal deixis 'our' refers not to the sayers or cognizants – the people who feel that the refurbishment means more influence of the English in the town – but rather to the speaker, White himself, and by extension his missionary colleagues. The deictic centre, therefore, does not shift but stays the same throughout the writing. “The reported clause,” or indirect quotation, Vandelanotte explains,

therefore does not re-enact the original speech event, but gives rather the current Speaker's perspective on the original Sayer or Cognizant's words or thoughts (2006, p.139).

White's perspective on the locals' words can be found in the expression “ill-disposed heathens and Mohammedans”, which clearly presents his evaluation of the original sayers. This evaluation is also a means of distancing himself from what has been said. We can find an even more explicit example of this distancing language in Jonathan Lawton Buckley Wood's letter to Henry Venn on a similar matter in September 1867:

According to them [the local population], the Governor has evil designs against this town and what he is doing now is only preparing to [sic] what he intends to do (CA2 O96 40, 4th September 1867, from Ake, Abẹ̀òkúta, highlighting added).

The phrase “according to them” does not only introduce the indirect quotation syntactically; it serves almost as a disclaimer, making sure that it is understood that the following words are not the current speaker’s views, despite the fact that they are not marked off with inverted commas. Accordingly, Matoesian remarks that

[indirect quotations index] the reporting speaker’s footing or moral agenda [...], while appearing to maintain a strict separation between the quoting voice and quoted utterance (2000, p.883).

Sometimes missionaries talk about an encounter with non-Christian Africans and in their account refer to the other person’s attitude towards Christianity or the mission more generally. In December 1850, Thomas King preaches to a group of people in Lagos. When he writes about this in his journal, he draws the conclusion that “...many before I left **were seriously impressed**” (CA2 O61 38, journal excerpts ending 25th December 1850, highlighting added). Two years later, in June 1852, King has a conversation with a non-Christian local man in Lagos. King talks to him about adopting the Christian faith, while the man apparently does not admit that he has changed his mind. King later concludes his retelling of the encounter in the following manner: “He **seemed** convinced, **though he would not own it**” (CA2 O87 33, journal excerpts ending 25th June 1852, Lagos, highlighting added). In both cases King tells his readers about his conversational partners’ feelings and attitudes. Unlike the examples discussed above, King here refers to something that was never explicitly expressed, as we can tell from the phrase “though he would not own it”. This becomes particularly evident in the use of the word “seemed”. King presents aspects of the man’s behaviour or response

to his words in a way that makes it seem like he believed that the man was in fact convinced by his words.

A similar expression can be found in Isaac Smith's journal in 1848. He writes about a group of people to whom he had preached: "They are **evidently** under the evidence of Truth" (CA2 O82 12, journal excerpts ending 25th September 1848, highlighting added). Here, the use of the word "evidently" seems to refer to the people's behaviour or reactions to his words, but Smith does not elaborate on this. Perhaps the people nodded or otherwise showed assent, but we do not read about this in Smith's writing. Smith, similarly to King in the examples before, seems to evaluate their attitudes for the reader, and shares his own assessment of the situation. Martin and White point out that "a given attitude can be realised across a range of grammatical categories" (2005, p.10). King uses the verb 'seem', whereas Smith makes use of the adverb 'evidently'. Both instances are aspects of modality as they evaluate the likelihood of the rest of the sentence. We can also find a similar example in Jonathan Lawton Buckley Wood's letter mentioned above when he uses the phrase "according to them", with which expresses his own attitude to what has been said implicitly. According to Martin and White, these verbal strategies

attend not only to issues of speaker/writer certainty, commitment and knowledge but also to questions of how the textual voice positions itself with respect to other voices and other positions. [T]hese meanings are seen to provide speakers and writers with the means to present themselves as recognising, answering, ignoring, challenging, rejecting, fending off, anticipating or accommodating actual or potential interlocutors and the value positions they represent (2005, p.2).

Wood, by qualifying the local population's opinion by prefacing it with "according to them" distances himself from their voice and makes it clear that he does not necessarily agree with the statement. Smith's use of the adverb "evidently" also is

a means of positioning himself in relation the rest of his statement, namely that his conversational partners “were under the evidence of Truth”. By emphasising his assessment of the situation, he expresses his sincerity that this was actually the case. The word “seemed” in King’s journal points to the fact that the lack of a verbal confirmation (“he would not own it”) meant that the missionary could not be completely certain that his conversational partner had actually been convinced. There remains a small element of doubt or uncertainty, expressed by the use of “seemed” instead of a simple and more definite “was”. The excerpts from the three missionaries’ journals can, therefore, serve as examples of verbal strategies with which the writers, using “the textual voice” (Martin and White, 2005, p.2), positioned themselves in relation to the voices which they report and write about.

In some cases it is hard to tell whose attitude and opinion the authors actually express. James White writes about a convert called Matthew in his annual letter and describes him in the following way:

Matthew is a **very devoted and conscientious Christian**. He states, that **he became a convert some twenty years ago, and that he was one of the very first converts at Abbeokuta**. He talks of the **sad** occurrences in 1867 at that place with deep regret and feels **that he cannot reconcile himself to a return to Abbeokuta after the departure of Messengers of the Gospel from that town** (CA2 O87 98, to be posted before or on 30th November 1869, highlighting added).

The description of Matthew as a “very devoted and conscientious Christian” is clearly White’s evaluation of the man. This is followed up by an indirect quotation of Matthew’s conversion story, during which the deictic centre does not shift and White remains the reporting speaker. Matters get a bit more difficult in the next sentence: “He talks of the sad occurrences in 1867 at that place with deep regret.” White here refers to the *ifólé*. We have to ask, however, whose opinion is expressed by the word “sad” in this case. From the phrase “with deep regret”,

we could guess it is Matthew's perspective, but White is certain to be distressed and saddened by the events as well. He could, therefore, refer to a shared feeling of sadness and regret. Similarly, we do not know if the clause "and feels that he cannot reconcile himself to a return to Abbeokuta after the departure of Messengers of the Gospel from that town" is another indirect quotation of Matthew's words or White's evaluation of how the man feels.

With indirect quotations the readers are even more dependent on the authors', the reporting speakers', reliability and their assessments of the individual incidents described – and the situation in the field more generally – than with the direct quotations discussed above. This brings us back to the issue of discursive control and the question of whose views and opinions the readers can learn about in the Yorùbá mission documents. The stories and experiences shared in the missionaries' writing informed the perception of and discourse about missionary work among their audience. The narrative of missionary work, which, despite all its obstacles and hardships, aimed at and, at least partially, succeeded in bringing members of the local population into the fold of the Christian faith, was the underlying theme of the correspondence sent to London. In order to give an impression of objective success, missionaries used quotations from the local population, which generally painted a positive picture of their work. Even where criticism or antagonism is mentioned, it is done so in the context of the dominating narrative. They painted a part of the picture of missionary work by using the local people's voices, making use of the perceived objectivity and authority which can be derived from direct quotations, in particular. The original statements – if we assume the quotations were as close as possible to what the sayers and cognizants actually said and felt – were in this process taken out of their context of utterance and inserted into a new textual environment. In such processes of

de- and recontextualisation (cf. also Maryns, 2005, p.177), as Blommaert remarks, “all kinds of mappings are performed, often deeply different from the ones performed in the initial act of communication” (2005, p.76), as we saw in Section 5.4 with regards to quotations from Christian texts. We could, therefore, say that the missionaries appropriated the words of those whom they quoted. The use of quotations caused the impression that others speak through the missionaries’ writing, with words either full of praise and gratitude, or hostility, and, sometimes, indifference. Those whose words the missionaries used, however, had no way of condoning, disputing, or correcting the way in which what they said was woven into the institutional discourse. The voices of the local population were, therefore, not silenced in the sense of being ignored, but rather appropriated and utilised for a very specific purpose. While the locals’ views and opinions can, therefore, be said to have been represented in the missionaries’ writing, the process of selecting which quotations or incidents to include in their correspondence, and thus the decision who is represented and how, remains firmly in missionary hands. The Yorùbá mission documents, therefore, can be seen as discursive gatekeepers with the missionaries in firm control over who gets to contribute to and be represented in this line of institutional discourse. The missionaries, in using the local people’s voice, had the ability to control how their words and actions were represented and received, harnessed this voice in their writing, and aligned it with the Christian narrative of evangelisation and overcoming persecution.

Nevertheless members of groups, whose voice was not generally actively present in the missionaries’ correspondence, ‘non-experts’ in Agar’s sense, were at times able to pass these discursive ‘gates’ and gain access to the CMS’s institutional discourse. In the next section, we will explore how John Nottidge, an African Christian, and Anna Hinderer, the wife of missionary David Hinderer, actively en-

gaged with and contributed to the institutional discourse surrounding the Yorùbá mission.

6.3 “Breaking the cycle of domination” – Members of excluded groups contribute to and critique missionary discourse

In the case of the discourse of missionary work and life in Yorùbáland – and other areas as well for that matter – access to this discourse channel by contributing to it or critiquing it, was reserved mainly for the missionaries themselves, for the first four decades of the mission almost exclusively male agents⁵², their superiors, and their English-speaking Christian audience in Europe. Other groups, such as non-Christian locals, Yorùbá Christians not immediately involved in the mission, and not least the missionaries’ wives, who lived and worked with them in West Africa, by and large, did not actively contribute to this discourse. This is not to say that some missionary wives did not contribute informally to their husbands’ writing by commenting on their work, proof-reading their letters, and so on. We will see in Section 6.3.2, however, that these contributions cannot necessarily be seen as on a par with their husbands’ work in terms of volume and reception.

⁵²Jocelyn Murray remarks that it is difficult to determine when the first female missionaries were employed by the CMS because very frequently women who were involved in the missions were related to male missionaries, and “[often] were only taken into CMS connection on the death or retirement of the father, so that a separate allowance could be paid” (1985, p.110). In the first 87 years since its foundation, the CMS enlisted 103 women as missionaries, with almost half of them having been related or married to male missionaries. Within the same time, a total of 1,041 male missionaries were employed by the Society (cf. Murray, 1985, p.111).

For the non-Christian population, the main barrier to overcome was that of literacy. Acquiring literacy in English and, once it had been committed to writing by the CMS agents, Yorùbá as well, was largely a prerogative of those on the way to baptism, among converts tellingly called ‘*gbà buku*’⁵³, ‘taking book’ (cf. Peel, 2000, p.223). CMS missionaries required their catechumens, their candidates for baptism, to learn how to read the scriptures and other Christian texts, and provided them with teaching material closely related to these texts. The *Yoruba Primer* includes reading exercises in Yorùbá using short sentences like “Jesus i Ọmmọ Ọlọrun ni” (‘Jesus is the son of God.’) and short excerpts from the Gospels (Townsend, 1849, pp.11-14). This close link between literacy in Yorùbá and even English explains the phrase ‘taking book’, and exhibits the way these skills were limited to those who wished to become ‘book people’⁵⁴.

For those who *could* read, so many Yorùbá Christians and, of course, the missionaries’ wives, the barriers were of a different kind. As they were not officially connected to the CMS, they could not be institutional participants of the discourse. They lacked what Bourdieu calls symbolic capital, a “degree of accumulated prestige, celebrity or honour, [which] is founded on a dialectic of knowledge (connaissance) and recognition (reconnaissance)” (Johnson, 1993, p.7). In the context of the CMS’s institutional discourse, they, therefore, did not have expertise, in Agar’s sense, and were generally not included in the group of professionals able to contribute to and critique the discourse.

⁵³‘*Buku*’ is not the standard word for ‘book’ in Yorùbá (‘*iwé*’), but was transliterated from the English word.

⁵⁴Peel (2000) mentions the term ‘*oníbúkú*’ (p.223), ‘book people’, which was frequently used to refer to Christians. As Peel also points out, the word used by Yorùbá Christians themselves is *onígbàgbó*, ‘believers’. It is worth mentioning that similar expressions to *oníbúkú* exist elsewhere as well. The Buganda catechumens, for example, are called ‘*basomi*’, ‘readers’.

This section is concerned with the rare instances when members of groups which were not usually represented in the institutional discourse or did not have access to it, *did* gain access and contributed in some way to the discourse of missionary work and life. The first example I discuss is that of an African Christian called John Nottidge, who in his letters heavily criticised the mission in Yorùbáland in the immediate aftermath of the *ìfólé* of 1867. The second example builds on excerpts of letters and diary entries from Anna Hinderer, who had followed her husband, the German CMS missionary David Hinderer, to Yorùbáland. She wrote extensively about her role as a missionary wife, which included educating and looking after local children, as well as maintaining social relationships with members of the congregation. We will see that as exponents of otherwise ‘silent’ groups, Nottidge and Hinderer nevertheless offered contributions to the discourse, and frequently added an otherwise neglected dimension to our knowledge about the Yorùbá mission. In the course of this section, I suggest that Agar’s binary distinction between male missionaries as ‘experts’, and the Yorùbá population, converts, and missionary wives as ‘non-experts’ might not be as clear cut. We will see that aspects like literacy, education, conversion, and, in the case of Anna Hinderer, even informal and indirect involvement in the mission, served to lead them out of the ‘non-expert’ group to form an in-between category we could call ‘semi-experts’. Nottidge, as an African who was not officially a missionary was equally subject to power asymmetries as Anna Hinderer as a 19th century woman, who furthermore was not a single ‘lady’ missionary; they were, nevertheless, exponents of privileged groups quite distinct from non-Christian Africans and many women living in Europe at the time. Their contributions to missionary discourse can, therefore, be seen both as self-emancipatory acts helping to “break the cycle of

reproducing domination” (Janks and Ivanic, 1992, p.305) and examples of agency in groups frequently perceived as passive and silenced.

6.3.1 John Nottidge: Comments on the *ifólé* and criticism of missionary practice

The letters of John Nottidge were one of the serendipitous finds that make long hours of archival research rewarding and worthwhile. In the CMS archives in Birmingham, in a folder named *Miscellaneous letters to secretaries at headquarters, 1850-1879*, nine letters are filed, written by this African Christian, whose name does not appear elsewhere in the mission archives. We, therefore, know regrettably little about the author of these letters, apart from what he tells us in his writing. Not only do these isolated pieces of writing remind the researcher of Steedman’s comments regarding the fragmented nature of archival research and the fact “you find nothing in the Archive but stories caught half way through: the middle of things: discontinuities” (Steedman, 2001, p.45); Nottidge’s letters also present a rare opportunity to read about external criticism of the mission. This section analyses the voice of dissent that can be heard in his letters written in the year 1867 commenting on the events of the *ifólé*, occurring in Abéòkúta in the same year.

In the 1860s, the political situation in some areas of Yorùbáland was problematic. As Ayandele remarks,

from 1861 onwards anti-British and anti-missionary feelings began to gain ground among the Egba. These feelings infected all Yorùbá chiefs at the occurrence of the chief event of 1861. The chiefs became convinced that the supposed friends – the missionaries – who had been courting their favour with exciting European articles like silk umbrellas, looking-glasses, patent velvets, sugar and biscuits, were wolves in sheep’s clothing (1966, p.13).

The influence of the CMS and the regard for white men was on the decline, as the original backers of the mission in the area, such as Abéòkúta’s *balógun* Sódéḳe, had died, and Britain seemed to show no inclination to support Abéòkúta against Ìbàdàn, the “great war polity of the interior” (Peel, 2000, p.133). Lloyd remarks that the British “adopted a policy of friendship towards Ibadan, whom they regarded as the object of victimization by [the Ìjẹ̀bú and Ègbá]” (Lloyd, 2009, p.22). Even after the end of the Ìjáyè War between the expanding power of Ìbàdàn and the polities of Abéòkúta and Ìjáyè, which had lasted from 1859 until 1862 and was formally ended in 1865, the Ègbá felt threatened by Ìbàdàn’s military power and felt that they lacked support by the British (cf. Peel 2000, pp.38-42 *passim*). In 1867, these conflicts came to a head over the unresolved issue of granting British troops access to a road into the interior, which had been controlled by the Ègbá and Ìjẹ̀bú, and escalated in Abéòkúta in what came to be known as the *ifólé*, the ‘breaking of houses’. British missionary Valentine Faulkner’s letter from 1868 gives an insight into the events at the time:

It began with [German missionary] Mr. Lieb being beaten in one of the public streets. This was followed by repeated insults to white men, though not to the same extent. Then came a bolder step, the closing of our place of worship by those in authority; this was closely followed by the breaking down of our houses and the plunder of all we possessed even to the extent of some personal clothing worn at the time. Lastly to make a full end they order us to leave the town because they consider our work there to be completed (CA2 O37 16, Lagos, June 2nd 1868).

The verbal and physical assaults seemed to have been aimed particularly at Europeans, and not at Christians in general. Initially, the missionaries as well as the *saro*, the Sierra Leone returnees, were still allowed to go to church; Yorùbá converts, however, were kept from going to church. Eventually, when the churches

were plundered, most of the European missionaries left Abéòkúta (cf. Peel, 2000, p.135).

From what I have said so far in this chapter, we would expect to find only the missionaries' description and analysis of the situation in 1867 in the CMS archive material. It may come as a surprise, therefore, that at least one other voice demanded to be heard. In late 1867, CMS secretary Venn receives a series of letters from an African Christian called John Nottidge, who comments on the *ifólé*:

I advise that the characters of your missionaries have just met a correspondence, in the treatment upon their station and property in Abeokuta. The Bashorun war boys have taken away the church windows and benches and the missionaries' private property; this deed if done in obedience to the Bashorun, is but a copy of the examples set before the Abeokutans by your missionaries (CA2 O16 40, Lagos, 29th September 1867).

From the information which can be gathered from his letters, Nottidge was a former student of Fourah Bay College, an educated African Christian, who "was [as he describes it] separated from the mission" (CA2 O16 38, letter to the Secretaries of the CMS, Lagos 17th August 1867) by circumstances he only vaguely hints at. He calls himself a "native agent" (CA2 O16 39, letter to the Secretaries of the CMS, Lagos, 5th September 1867), but his name does not appear in the documents on the Sierra Leone mission or the Yorùbá mission apart from the letters to Venn. Nevertheless, we can assume that Nottidge had been involved in the Sierra Leone mission in some capacity, perhaps as scripture reader or catechist. The following excerpt from one of his letters points to this as well. It appears that Nottidge had had an altercation with British missionary Lamb upon the former's arrival in Lagos. "I am his superior in age," Nottidge writes,

and his superior in science, knowledge and Christian experience. In [sic] my arrival in Lagos in 1862, Lamb asked me to join a catechising class, composed of heathen converts and Sierra Leone parties, I refused it being a disregard to my position. From hence I was humbled and evilly [sic] treated. [For] I am now a beggar in Lagos (CA2 O16 40, letter to the Secretaries of the CMS, Lagos, 29th September 1867).

It is obvious that Nottidge harboured personal resentment against Lamb because of the way he felt he had been treated by the European missionary. In the same letter, he also attacks Lamb for his supposedly immoral behaviour because apparently “during his unmarried state he was always visited by Miss Lemon yet would not marry her” (CA2 O16 40, letter to the Secretaries of the CMS, Lagos, 29th September 1867). While it remains unclear who Miss Lemon was, we can hazard a guess that she was a local convert involved in the mission in some way. It is apparent that the ‘visits’, which Nottidge mentions, in his opinion involved extramarital intercourse, which in his eyes was deplorable moral behaviour and discredited Lamb as a missionary and Christian.

It also becomes clear from his letter that Nottidge was a very outspoken and educated man, whose personal experience with individual missionaries but also with the missionary enterprise as a whole had been far from positive. He expressed his contempt for Lamb in no uncertain terms and in graphic language – note his use of words like ‘refuse’, ‘evil’, or ‘beggar’. This is part of what Coupland (2007) calls “styling, [that is,] the activation of stylistic meaning” (p.2). By choosing strong words to describe his situation and the way had been treated by Lamb, who represented the mission, Nottidge styled, or constructed, himself as someone who deserved recognition but had been unfairly excluded from the mission.

We can also find a cluster of Latin phrases in the following passage from his letter from 17th August 1867:

“...most of the clergy are displaying most baneful ignorances in governing **in occultum** their church under the hard precepts of the Levitical laws, some venture to assail the laws of England as unscriptural. The church and converts being ignorant and this administration being lethargic give them the position advantage and privilege of [?] fathers in their community **in toto**, whence there is now existing **in latenti** patriarchal governments in your clergy and some old men, as the chief magistrate and other africans [sic], under which the administration is submissive” (CA2 O16 38, letter to the Secretaries of the CMS, Lagos, highlighting added).

Learning Latin, which in Europe had for centuries been the language of the Catholic Church, of learning and sophistication, was in the education of 19th century African converts, by and large, the prerogative of those aiming to join the mission. Nottidge’s frequent, if at times erratic, use of Latin in his letters to Venn thus underpinned his claim to a higher status. He styled himself as an educated individual, whose opinions, for example on the *ifólé*, were to be taken seriously. This follows Robin Lakoff’s (cf. 1975, p.10) notion that the adoption of a higher-status dialect or, in this case, language raises the speaker’s perceived status. John Nottidge styled himself as someone qualified to speak about these matters.

In a later letter Nottidge made a more general and wide-ranging complaint about the connection between the mission and colonial powers:

The **Apostles had no possessions** in Rome, Asia minor, Rome though usurping had none in France, England, Germany and which had been Christenize [sic] by her; yet in every round [sic] east, west, north and south Africa, **Europe seized possession** in oppression, commands and governments. What can justify taking possession and establishing governments over us in our own homes and miscellaneously employing ad commodum eorum foreign Africans into foreign places when the people are competent, mostly severally, to fill the posts! Are there posts held in Great Britain held by Frenchmen, Dutch or Spanish! Sierra Leone was ceded for afording [sic] residence for liberated Africans and hence (then) of another question: The characters of our British rulers here are arguments against the philanthropy

of Great Britain (CA2 O16 38, letter to the Secretaries of the CMS,
Lagos 17th August 1867).

What John Nottidge criticises here, is the perceived conflation of the mission and the colonial undertaking. He compares the apostles as the earliest missionaries in Christian history with “Europe” as the *totum pro parte* of British colonial efforts in the area, “seizing possession in oppression, commands and governments”. While Nottidge was a Christian and most likely had found his way to the Christian faith through the CMS’s missionary efforts in Sierra Leone, at the time of writing he nevertheless had a distinctly negative view of the mission and not only its connection with politics, but also its ongoing influence on African Christianity.

This becomes even more explicit later in his letter when he remarks how “[the] Paul-like humble ones most exclaim under these evils – O Yoruba converts who are able to bewitch you that you cannot perform the truth!” (CA2 O16 38, letter to the Secretaries of the CMS, Lagos 17th August 1867) Here he refers to a passage from Galatians 3:1, in which Paul writes

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey
the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth,
crucified among you?

Nottidge apparently felt that the influence of missionary Christianity and its connection with European colonialisation had a detrimental effect on Yorùbá converts and the emergence of an indigenised form of Christianity, free from ties to mission churches and their agents.

His political attitude probably finds its expression most explicitly in a letter only a few weeks later, in which he remarks “in the words of Sir [Thomas] F. Buxton – ‘if Africa must be raised it must be raised by her sons’” (CA2 O16 39, letter to the Secretaries of the CMS, Lagos, 5th September 1867). Thomas Buxton had in the 1820s formed the *Society for the Extinction of the Slave Trade*

and advocated the abolition of slavery in the British empire. In Sections 5.4 and 6.2, I discussed at length the ways in which direct quotations were used in the missionaries' writing for a variety of effects. Matoesian points out that one of the effects of using a direct quotation can be to give the writer or speaker a more authoritative voice (cf. 2000, p.884). Nottidge, in quoting Buxton, made use of this dynamic. His readers were familiar with Buxton's name and status as politician and abolitionist. In quoting Buxton, Nottidge not only showed that he was an educated man, but also profited indirectly from Buxton's status as an authority figure. It is interesting to see that Nottidge, in the late 1860s, already expressed sentiments which were more widely held only towards the end of the century. The resistance against colonial powers and the notion of formal and spiritual independence from the mission churches flourished particularly in the last decade of the 19th century:

When we look for no manifesto from Salisbury Square, when we expect no packet of resolutions from Exeter Hall⁵⁵, when no bench of foreign Bishops, no conclave of Cardinals, 'lord over' Christian Africa, when the Captain of Salvation, Jesus Christ Himself, leads the Ethiopian host, and our Christianity ceases to be London-ward and New York-ward but Heaven-ward, then will there be an end to Privy Councils, Governors, Colonels, Annexations, Displacements, Partitions, Cessions and Coercions. Telegraph wires will be put to better uses and even Downing Street [will] be absent in the political vocabulary of the West African Native (Mojola Agbebi, 1892, quoted in Ayandele, 1966, p.174).

Nottidge's anti-missionary sentiments thus marked him as an early advocate of what would become the Nigerian nationalist movement. It is not unlikely that Nottidge was influenced by early exponents of pan-African thought, or 'Ethiopianism',

⁵⁵The World Antislavery Convention of 1840 was held in Exeter Hall, London. The convention unanimously condemned slavery and those political and religious leaders who had not spoken out against it (cf. for example, Temperley, 1972 and Skylar, 1994).

like Edward Blyden, who at Nottidge’s time had been “advocating this brand of African nationalism for more than a decade” (Ayandele, 1970, p.61f); Nottidge makes no direct reference to Blyden, however, so the connection can be called tangential at best. Another influential figure of this school of thought, James Johnson, only arrived in what today is Nigeria in 1874 (cf. Ayandele, 1970, p.108), but had been, like Nottidge, educated in Fourah Bay Institution in Freetown. Again, Nottidge makes no direct reference to Johnson in his letters so we cannot be certain if he was acquainted with Johnson’s ideas. These nationalist sentiments towards the end of the 19th century were born out of the discontent with the frequent intertwining of the mission and colonial forces and the desire to not only partly self-govern the churches and eventually the area but also to nurture and support a form of Christianity that would no longer be “London-ward” but meant instead for the “Ethiopian host”⁵⁶.

What Nottidge, therefore, brought to the discourse in these letters to Secretary Venn were not only the views of Scott’s “disillusioned mission boy [who is] always a graver threat to an established religion than the pagans who were never taken in by its promise” (1990, p.106). He not only pointed out that the *ifólé* could be seen as a direct consequence of missionary behaviour and not an unprovoked act of aggression by local authorities; he also confronted the CMS with profound criticism of their missionary politics and approaches, which foreshadowed the developments of the years to come when “ironically the Christian missions who heralded British rule in Nigeria also began the process of its termination. For the Church became the cradle of Nigerian nationalism” (Ayandele, 1966, p.175).

⁵⁶It is important at this point that not all Yorùbá churches wanted to sever ties with the mission. Breadfruit church, situated in Lagos, preferred to remain affiliated with the Anglican church and is today called St. Paul’s Anglican Church Breadfruit.

We can also frequently find references to the Bible in Nottidge's letters. As pointed out above, he drew a parallel between the Galatians in the apostle's letter and the Yorùbá converts; he expressed his feeling that, like the Galatians, local converts were subject to some external influence – in this case the mission churches – which kept them from “obeying the truth”, which he perceives as creating an indigenised form of Christianity independent from the missions. It is also worth noting that he implicitly included himself in the “Paul-like humble ones”, thus at the same time suggesting that there were others who thought like him and identifying with the apostle himself. Both Nottidge's use of Latin phrases, as well as his Biblical knowledge displayed here, serve as social indices, linking linguistic forms with social meaning (cf. Ochs, 1990, p.293). They point to the fact that Nottidge, a *saro* returnee, was part of an African Christian elite who had had access to Western education and whose understanding of the scriptures, although he was an African and not strictly speaking a missionary, was on a par with that of his European audience. His education is part of Bourdieu's symbolic capital. Nottidge uses his *connaissance* in order to gain *reconnaissance* with the recipient of his letters. We should also note that Nottidge, a convert himself, used the scriptures against the mission. He used the words he had been taught by the mission. In a manner of speaking, he fought the Society's discursive power with the power gained through his own symbolic capital. This irony cannot have been lost on himself or the addressees of his letters. As I pointed out when discussing the missionary translation project in Chapter 4, translating the Bible and other Christian texts, thus making them available to the local population, meant partly relinquishing control over the reception and interpretation of the texts (cf. also Sanneh, 1990, p.5). To those who received a more thorough Western education,

the ability to read the holy texts in Greek and Hebrew presented an even more powerful instrument with a strong emancipatory potential.

Scott’s description of autonomous slave religion is useful here. He remarks that often at the core of what he calls “offstage Christianity” (1990, p.110) the themes of emancipation, deliverance and redemption could be found. “Autonomous slave religion,” he continues, “was not merely a negation of the style of official services; it contradicted its contents as well” (1990, p.110). What Scott describes for slave religion, reverberates in Nottidge’s rejection of mission churches. He contradicts the contents of missionary Christianity by making use of the tools handed to him by the agents of the very same mission. His expression of early pan-African ideas and the notion of self-governance, of an indigenised form of Christianity, reflects the themes of deliverance and emancipation mentioned by Scott. We have to concede, of course, that the situation of Yorùbá Christians as well as the non-Christian local population was considerably less dire than that of those living in enslavement; it, nevertheless, holds true that Nottidge apparently felt it necessary to openly advocate his form of “offstage Christianity”, and to this end made use of a very particular interpretation of the scriptures, which he was only able to make and express precisely because he was a Christian and had received a Western education by the very mission he now felt was intrusive and superfluous. Therefore, as a Christian fluent in English, as well as Yorùbá, and well-versed in the scriptures, his status made it possible for him not only to write these letters to Venn in a language his addressee could understand but to develop his critical ideas in the first place and connect them with the Biblical text, thus making use of his symbolic capital and positioning himself as an insider in the Christian community.

It becomes clear that Nottidge was one of the very few cases in which someone not directly associated with the mission, was able to access and attempt to disturb the institutional discourse of missionary work and make the European audience aware of criticism and dissenting perspectives. His status as an educated African Christian and his ability to express his views so elaborately in writing, highlight that he does not clearly fit into either one of Agar's categories of 'expert' and 'non-expert'. Rather, the binary distinction here must make way for a third, in-between category, which we could call 'semi-expert', making him different from both the non-Christian local population and the CMS agents with their "socially legitimated expertise" (Agar, 1985, p.164). While his letters, therefore, present a remarkable insight into the views of those who could not easily participate in painting the picture of missionary work, we have to keep in mind that as a *saro*, his position and means were by not necessarily representative of those of other African Christian converts or the non-Christian Yorùbá.

6.3.2 Anna Hinderer: Experiences and duties of a missionary's wife

Fiona Bowie writes in her introduction to *Women and missions*, a collection of interdisciplinary papers on the matter, "missionary was a male noun" (1994, p.1), for the best part of the 19th century denoting a male sphere and male agency. It is not surprising, therefore, that, as a rule, women did not feature as actors in the missionaries' writing. Local women, as well as missionaries' wives, were more generally talked *about*, the former as objects of the missionaries' evangelisation efforts, while the latter were generally mentioned in the context of either education or health matters. On 19th June 1849, for example, German missionary David Hinderer writes in his journal that he "offered a woman, who was selling country beer, salvation without money and without price" (CA2 O49 95). Also, one of

the only times we hear about the wife of German missionary Charles Gollmer, for example, it is when he writes about her death in his journal in March 1844 that “it pleased God in his mysterious dispensation to take her unto himself” (CA1 O103).

Single female missionaries were a rare, and, for the CMS, which only started recruiting single women in the last two decades of the 19th century, a late occurrence. Deborah Kirkwood describes an

early reluctance [in the CMS] to engage single women as missionaries, although the work of women as wives, sisters, daughters and female members of missionaries’ families was greatly valued, especially for the purpose of furthering female instruction. In 1815 the Society received the first offers of service from single women but these were declined (1994, p.34).

Nevertheless, a small number of single or widowed women did work in the field, and “[when] in due course a Ladies Committee was formed, [eventually in the] 1880s ‘a new race of CMS women missionaries’ appeared” (Kirkwood, 1994, p.35).

The role of women in the mission is closely tied to the history and development of the missionary marriage. In her 2013 contribution to a field which had rather surprisingly not received a lot of attention in academic research before, Elizabeth Manktelow retraces the history of the missionary marriage and family in the context of the work of the London Missionary Society (LMS) in southern Africa. Initially, she tells us, single male missionaries were sent to the field and it was not uncommon, even encouraged, for them to marry local women, thus “contributing to the universalist culture that marked South African evangelicalism” (2013, p.34). Intermarriage was seen as a useful tool for a variety of reasons. Not allowing it would have meant “leaving young male missionaries unprotected against the seemingly peculiarly acute temptations of the local women” (2013, p.30); intermarriage introduced an element of legitimate missionary sexuality, while at the

same time leading to conversions because, in order to be able to marry a missionary, the prospective wife would have to become a Christian. Children resulting from this union could be brought up as Christians and at the same time serve as examples and ambassadors of an integrated, ‘indigenised’ Christianity in South Africa. Intermarriage also meant that no European women would have to be exposed to the health concerns connected with travel, living in the hot climate, and the risks surrounding child birth (cf. also Bowie, 1994, p.7). This positive outlook on intermarriage slowly changed during the course of the 19th century, however. Manktelow points out that

[despite the] initial success [...] integration ultimately collapsed in the face of a colonial culture increasingly inimical to universalist racial politics, and a new generation of missionaries whose arrival signalled the rising importance of commerce and civilisation to Christian conversion (2013, p.35).

This led to the “rise of the missionary wife” (2013, p.30). Manktelow marks 1818 as the year in which young European women, individuals with a certain missionary zeal and vocational ambitions, officially started entering marriages with male LMS missionaries and went to the missionary field with them (cf. 2013, p.38). Kirkwood describes the missionary marriage as one following traditional gender roles, which for the wives meant fulfilling their role “as providers of conjugal comfort and as homemakers” (1994, p.25), whereas the husbands were responsible for the ‘actual’ mission work, such as preaching to the local population, education, translation work, and not least physical work like erecting and maintaining the church buildings. For the missionary effort this arrangement had a thoroughly positive effect, Kirkwood goes on to argue:

Missionaries were encouraged to take their wives with them for a variety of other reasons. Their presence could be interpreted by the host society as an indicator of peaceful intention and this gave the mission-

aries hope that they would be received as friends. [...] Secondly, it was believed that wives would serve as models of female behaviour, and with their husbands demonstrate the merits and virtues of the monogamous family (1994, p.26).

The missionary marriages also complemented the single male missionary’s mobility, thus offering two models of Christian life (cf. also Manktelow, 2013, p.30). Manktelow points out that, while this arrangement was certainly somewhat frustrating especially for those women who felt the missionary calling themselves and now found themselves confined largely to domestic chores, their position did by no means imply that they simply assumed a passive role in the missionary world. Rather, the wives of missionaries throughout the 19th century developed a twofold mission theory for themselves:

On the one hand, housekeeping became the pragmatic facilitation of male vocation, removing at least this one non-spiritual activity from his pantheon of secular missionary projects. On the other hand, missionary women came to an understanding of their role as wife [as] enacting spiritual agency through domesticity (Manktelow, 2013, p.63).

So we can see that, while these women were “not only ‘married to the job’ but often married for the job” (Kirkwood, 1994, p.27) and their domestic chores had priority over ‘actual’ missionary work, they were for the best part of the 19th century not merely housewives, but effectively, and in their own understanding, an active part of the mission⁵⁷.

With this in mind, we can now concern ourselves with the representation, or rather lack thereof, of missionary wives in the institutional discourse of missionary correspondence and publications. With the exception of a few

⁵⁷This changed when then single ‘lady’ missionaries finally arrived in the mission field. In the LMS context this was from 1875 onwards (cf. Manktelow, 2013, p.24); in the context of CMS work, the number of single female missionaries increased significantly from 1887 onwards (cf. Bowie, 1994, p.111). The development led to a marginalisation of the missionary wife in favour of women who could spend considerably more time and energy on their missionary work.

more forceful personalities, such as Christina Coillard [...] and Mary Moffat, and those who sent their own reports and letters to the various missionary society journals (Kirkwood, 1994, p.28),

these women remained by and large invisible in the official correspondence and publications about missionary work. Their husbands, who were, as pointed out above, ‘experts’ in Agar’s sense, were the people who wrote official reports, letters, and journals to the respective missionary societies at home, talking about the political situation in the field, setbacks and successes, missionary strategies, and so on.

Certainly, their correspondence was to a certain extent influenced by their wives, who perhaps proof-read their writing⁵⁸ or whose opinions and assessments of a particular situation might have influenced what their husbands reported to their superiors. But missionaries’ wives did not, by and large, actively and visibly contribute their views, their experiences, or their emotional assessments of their situation to the institutional discourse, or visibly influence policy decisions in their missionary society. They formed an in-between group, neither expert nor non-expert, and, much like the African Christian educated elite, benefited from their status as educated Christians; their relationship with and influence over their husbands, and in many cases their literacy skills, which many of the women in Europe at the time did not have, awarded them a privileged position, which made them stand out, but at the same time did not mean they could exert direct influence over or generally offer contributions to the missionary discourse.

One of the few notable exceptions to this rule was Anna Martin Hinderer. The biography of the woman

⁵⁸We can only speculate about this but especially for those European missionaries whose native language was not English, as was the case for many CMS missionaries in Yorùbáland, this seems likely.

who was married to the Rev. David Hinderer, of Schondorf, in the kingdom of Wurtemberg, who had been labouring since 1848, in connection with the Church Missionary Society, in the Yoruba country in West Africa (Hone, 1881, p.12)

was compiled by friends of the family after her death in 1870. Besides personal recollections, personal letters and diary entries, we hear from editor and personal friend Richard Hone, the sources for the biography are comprised of a

[journal], in the form of letters, transmitted regularly to her dearest then surviving friend on earth, the late Rev. F. Cunningham, vicar of Lowestoft, [and] papers and letters which have appeared in periodical publications (Hone, 1881, v).

As we can read in the introduction to her biography, “[the] subject of these Memorials was no ordinary person” (Hone, 1881, v). Apparently, Anna Hinderer was in contact with British Christian notables of her time and also, interestingly, contributed to the Society’s publications. While the biography does not always specify what type of source a specific quotation comes from – and we, therefore, cannot easily tell which parts of her correspondence were of a personal nature and which were written for a wider audience to read – her biography nevertheless constituted a valuable addition to the missionary discourse of her time and highlighted the role and duties of the missionary wife. As a young woman, Anna Hinderer had worked for Lowestoft vicar Cunningham and had early felt the calling, as she writes, to “be a martyr, to be one of that “noble army” [of missionaries]” (Hone, 1881, p.4). Accordingly, after getting married to David Hinderer in 1852, there was no doubt in her mind that she wanted to go to Yorùbáland with him: “The decision once made that she was to be a missionary’s wife,” Hone writes, “she fearlessly and trustfully went forth” (1881, p.13). We hear from her that

[notwithstanding] all, my old desire for a missionary life would never leave me, and, though so much of my work at home was of a missionary

character, yet I felt that to heathen lands I was to go (Hone, 1881, p.13).

We can see here that Anna Hinderer was indeed one of the women who became “married for the job” (Kirkwood, 1994, p.27) and grasped the opportunity to follow her missionary calling, albeit vicariously. Anna Hinderer set off from her home with her husband in December 1852, travelling, as she writes, to Lagos via the Gambia and Sierra Leone, on to Abéòkúta, “ up the River Ogun in canoes. There was much to enjoy; the scenery was magnificent; such banks, foliage, flowers, scented shrubs, exquisite little birds” (Hone, 1881, p.29). Her biography’s editor remarks that in her writings she offered information about the local culture and people

in the tone of kindness as well as truthfulness with which she noticed alike the faults and the virtues of the native character (which she always upheld as having much in it to be admired and recommended) (Hone, 1881, vi).

We also learn about local geography and customs from her:

The Yoruba country, with a population estimated at about three millions, speaking one language, but comprising many separate tribes, occupies a region stretching inland from the Bight of Benin to within forty miles of the Niger, and bordered on the west by the kingdom of Dahomey. [The] religion is a system of **idolatry**, in which a multitude of orishas, or **idols**, above all, Ifa, the god of divinations, who is represented and consulted by means of palm-nuts, are worshipped as mediators between the people and the Supreme God whom they acknowledge. Their religion is laden with **foolish and cruel superstitions**, even human sacrifices being offered to some of the gods on special occasions (Hone, 1881, p.19, highlighting added).

While her choice of words, of course, showed the Christian and European bias characteristic of her time and, in her eyes, emphasised the need for missionary work, it is worth noting her interest in her new place of activity and her passion

for her new duties. We learn about her first weeks in Abéòkúta, which were shaped by homesickness and a feeling of being overwhelmed, but also a fierce determination and not least curiosity on her side, as well as the local population's. In April of 1853, the Hinderers moved on to Ìbàdàn. Anna soon started looking after the little congregation's children. Four months after arriving in Ìbàdàn, she wrote:

It was a real pleasure to me to see them getting on so nicely, four of them now begin to read the Yoruba Testament; all have learned Watt's little catechism, which has been translated, and the commandments; two are also learning the English primer; they extremely like to learn English sentences, and names of things. I am always saluted by them with 'Good-morning, ma'am.' When walking out with my four boys, they tell me Yoruba names of things, and then ask for the English in return, and they remember the English name much better than I do the Yoruba (Hone, 1881, p.81).

Hinderer seemed to be pleased about how willingly the local children engaged with the Christian education, both inside the classroom and outside. Apart from literary and religious instruction, Hinderer taught the children practical skills and also engaged with them socially. "I am teaching them," she writes,

to sew and to knit, for I want occupation for them, as the school only lasts from nine to twelve. From five to six we generally walk, play ball, and all sorts of things, and Iya [mother] must play with them as well as work; their great delight is truly doubled when my husband will run and let them catch him. So with one thing and another, **you can believe, I have not much idle time.** [...] The other day, one was with us in a compound, where a man told us 'God was good, for He gave them orishas,' the child instantly replied, 'No, God did not, the devil gave us orishas' (Hone, 1881, p.82, highlighting added).

Hinderer clearly delighted in her successful instruction of the child, who felt confident in correcting the adult man in a theological matter. It is not unreasonable to assume that the child even interrupted the man's speech; Hinderer hints at this

by her use of “instantly”.

The next excerpt also indicates that Anna Hinderer took considerable pleasure not only in instructing the children, but also in their occasional mischievous and unruly behaviour. During the rainy season in the summer of 1856, Hinderer set out to visit one of the rice farms with a group of children. On their way, they had to cross a brook. “There was a large stone on which the people wash clothes,” she prepares the ground for her narration,

[and] this stone was placed in the middle of the brook, and by it I could step nicely across. There was a little boy there, a stranger to us, watching the whole affair, who seemed to think it very extraordinary I could not walk through the water like other people. Now their little black skins are as full of **roguery and mischief** as any little boy at home, so in our absence he prepared an adventure for our return. There lay the stone, but underneath, the little **urchin** had placed a smaller and uneven one, so when I stepped on it, **over it goes, and plump go my feet into the water**, and then he comes forward with his salutation of sympathy, ‘**Pele, pele, pele o.**’ — ‘**Softly, take care, don’t hurt yourself.**’ We should not call this very civil, but I could not help thoroughly enjoying the bit of fun for the little rogue (Hone, 1881, p.141).

Hinderer describes the scene in great detail and with a certain amount of self-irony. She clearly feels a considerable amount of affection for the children under her care, even this little boy who played a prank on her and whom she kindheartedly calls a “rogue”, an “urchin”, and “mischievous”. Her language here is particularly vivid and evokes a clear scene before the inner eye of the reader. She shifts from past tense – “so when I stepped on it” – to present tense – “over it goes, and plump go my feet into the water” – when describing the incident and even uses onomatopoeic language – “plump” – to make the scene more tangible. There are clues in her writing that make it likely that this story was included in a letter not a private journal entry. Her explanation of the boy’s Yorùbá words would hardly

have been necessary for her personal notes⁵⁹. Similarly, in the previous example, the phrase “you can believe” suggests an addressee for her writing. Both examples present her to her audience as an active, kind, and humble woman with a sense of humour, and joy of teaching and interacting with children. These examples from her writing show her as a woman who was deeply passionate about her work. Nevertheless, fulfilling this “old desire for a missionary life” (Hone, 1881, p.13) would not have been possible outside of a missionary marriage.

Anna Hinderer also frequently interacted with the women in Ìbàdàn. Her report of the encounter with one of the female political figures of authority in December of 1854 can be particularly instructive regarding this aspect of her work, but also her status in the town:

These Yoruba people have some very nice arrangements about their form of government. I found out that there was an ‘Iyalode’ or mother of the town, to whom all the women’s **palavers (disputes)** are brought before they are taken to the king. She is, in fact, **a sort of queen**, a person of much influence, and looked up to with much respect. I sent my messenger to her, to tell her I should like to visit her. She sent word she should be delighted; so on Monday the 18th, I went with the children, and we found a **most respectable motherly looking person**, surrounded by her attendants and people, in great order, and some measure of state. I told them why I came to this country, and entreated them to come and hear the Word of God for themselves, and send their children to us to be taught. We two Iyas made strong friendship, by my giving, and her receiving, a fine velvet head-tie, and a silk bag; and the lady settled that **we were to be the two mothers of the town, she the Iyalode still, and I the ‘Iyalode fun fun,’ the white Iyalode** (Hone, 1881, p.110).

There are several aspects in this account that I find remarkable. The passage from Hinderer’s memoirs is reminiscent of similar accounts from male missionaries’ correspondence. In Section 5.2.1, we read about the visit of Samuel Crowther and

⁵⁹It is interesting to note that we do not know if she formally learned Yorùbá or ‘only’ learned it more or less by communicating with the local population.

a group of other missionaries to Chief Ogunbonna's house, who receives them and struggles to find suitable food for his guests (cf. CA2 O31 89, journal excerpt, ending 25th March 1845). Similarly, in Section 5.2.2, I discussed Thomas King's retelling of his meeting with a local chief, who to King's dismay was surrounded by non-Christian paraphernalia (cf. CA2 O61 36, journal excerpt, 24th March 1850). Similar to the passage about the boy who played a prank on her, Hinderer, here, translated non-English terms in her writing, like the Nigerian Pidgin word '*palaver*' and the title '*Ìyálóde*', indicating an audience to which her writing is addressed. Hinderer presented her visit to the influential "mother of the town" in a similar way as the male missionaries discussed their own work. Not only did she visit the Yorùbá dignitary, but she also talked to her about her reasons for coming to Africa in the first place, and invited the woman to "come and hear the Word of God". What Hinderer did here was missionary work *par excellence* and on a par with that of the male CMS agents, who usually dominated the institutional discourse concerning the mission.

Hinderer, also, did not only visit the *Ìyálóde*, but was treated by her as an equal, as "Iyalode fun fun". This episode, therefore, also tells us about her status among the local community and the women, in particular. It becomes clear that Hinderer was a well-respected woman and held in high esteem. Hinderer's own missionary work and her good relationship with the women of Ìbàdàn made her a valuable asset to the mission in the area. Manktelow points out that missionary wives contributed significantly to the missionary success by approaching female locals and engaging them in Christian education (cf. 2013, p.30). What makes the case of Anna Hinderer special, is that her contemporaries, as well as readers and researchers today, could, and can, actually learn about her important work through her correspondence.

Hinderer’s writings also give a general insight into her everyday life, which apart from caring for the local children and engaging with the women in Ìbàdàn, involved entertaining guests, housekeeping with the help of servants, looking after the sick, and generally supporting and deputising for her husband when David Hinderer went on one of his frequent journeys. While she greatly enjoyed her work, it becomes clear that her life was by no means easy. Frequently, we can read about illness, feelings of homesickness and exhaustion, as she writes here:

Our home life is one of privation, and often of trial and difficulty, but a very occupied one, and one of much hope and interest. I have not time to be idle, truly, and I think never a night has come without my being thoroughly tired; but the worst of it when night comes, not to get sleep, to wake by twelve or two o’clock, and then have no power of my closing eyes again, either from the heat, or from being overtired in body or mind (Hone, 1881, p.116).

Towards the end of her life, the emotional and physical strains of missionary life became ever more apparent in her writing:

My dear husband has lately had a sharp attack of fever, which is general at the commencement of the hot season; which trying season we have now to look for, through the next six months; but perhaps, before the end of that time we may, through mercy and love, have reached the rest where storms shall never burst, suns shall never smite, and the inhabitant shall no more say, ‘I am sick.’ The weight upon us is sometimes very great, and but for the sustaining Hand we must sink (Hone, 1881, p.305).

The Hinderers did not die in West Africa, after all, but eventually returned to Europe in 1869.

In the seventeen years Anna Hinderer spent in West Africa, she described historical events, discussed the progress of the mission in Ìbàdàn and in other parts of Yorùbáland, gave her readers an insight into daily life in the mission compound and her duties, as well as into her emotional life, in colourful detail and with great

candour. Other forms of active evangelisation such as preaching, holding services and formal teaching in the mission school was of course not in her range of duties; however, she, like many other missionaries' wives, nevertheless contributed significantly to the progress and ongoing success of the mission station, supported her husband and his colleagues through providing company, housekeeping and medical assistance, and looking after the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of the mission's wards. The fact that some of her experiences and thoughts were received by a wider audience at home and added to the discourse about missionary work and life, bears witness to the value and contribution of these otherwise underrepresented women to the Society's work. Not unlike John Nottidge, she, therefore, was one individual whose experiences resembled that of many, but who, in contrast to those who could not or would not make themselves heard in the wider missionary world, broke into the institutional discourse, and, to certain extent, claimed her place and her voice in it.

By way of conclusion, I would like to once more draw on Manktelow's research. She remarks that, while there were no doubt

difficulties and frustrations faced by missionaries' wives in navigating structures of patriarchy, it has [...] recently been [suggested] by historians of missionary women [that] wives were nonetheless able to reinscribe a notion of vocation into their domestic endeavours (2013, p.58).

This was frequently achieved by developing a mission theory for their own position and duties in the missionary world – fulfilling domestic duties, providing emotional comfort, and not least looking after local children and women, thus providing a model of Christian life for the local population. As the example of Anna Hinderer shows, there were some missionary wives, however, who moved outside the domestic sphere into the public sphere. Hinderer even entered the

sphere of political power by engaging with and being acknowledged by the *Ìyálóde* of Ìbàdàn, thus gaining, in Bourdieu's sense *reconnaissance* and symbolic capital. It was thus possible for some women to more literally 'inscribe' themselves into the missionary discourse by making use of this symbolic capital, contributing journal entries, letters, and short reports, which were even at times published in the missionary societies' publications.

In contrast to Nottidge, Hinderer did not criticize missionary activity explicitly but rather offered an alternative perspective on the otherwise largely androcentric missionary world. This rather more practical notion of female agency in the missionary world, highlights the fact that Agar's clear distinction between 'experts' and 'non-experts' does not fully explain the dynamics of power and agency in this institutional discourse. Rather, Hinderer, in writing extensively about her life and work, not unlike Nottidge, contributed to the construction of an in-between group of self-made 'semi-experts', whose symbolic capital was bestowed upon them by education and literacy skills to begin with, and subsequently earned and expressed by the levels of agency they were able to display.

6.4 Powerful voices

To conclude, let me reiterate some of the issues discussed in this chapter. As part of the CMS, the missionaries in their correspondence produced and contributed to the institutional discourse of the Society as an organisation. This influence on and control over the physical distribution channels through which interpretations of events or concepts were voiced, resulted in considerable influence on the discourse generated and reinforced by the letters, journals, and reports sent back to London. Moreover, the documents in question were written for an audience. Thus they were to a certain extent designed to present the missionary

work in the light of the narrative of evangelising the local population, not only to the missionaries' superiors, but also, and perhaps especially so, to the audience of CMS supporters. While the process of selecting which story to include in their writing and how to write about a certain event, is not transparent or explicitly mentioned, it is clear that the missionaries were aware of the use to which their correspondence was put and make. The missionaries and their writing thus functioned as discursive gatekeepers.

The fact that interpretational authority over the events discussed in the missionaries' writing lay largely with the agents themselves is particularly notable in the way they used quotations from conversations and arguments with the local population. The missionaries harnessed the voice, the ability to influence how one's words are used and perceived, of the people whom they quoted, to the effect of supporting their own narrative of missionary success and the continuity of the Christian narrative.. It was at the discretion of the writers to include or leave out locals' responses to or interpretations of missionaries' actions, thereby selectively filtering the non-Christian voice through their writing. The 19th century readers, as much as the present-day reader and researcher, had no means to verify the statements and views of the Yorùbá population reported in the journals and letters. The very nature of the CMS material, with its in-built discontinuities and gaps, therefore, means that we cannot necessarily take the information from the documents at face-value. The resulting picture is, therefore, by design androcentric, Christian-focussed, and far from comprehensive. The reader needs to remind herself that the story told in the archive documents was not the whole story of the encounter of CMS missionaries and the local Yorùbá population.

However, we saw in Section 6.3 that members of groups which are not generally considered 'experts', and, therefore, by and large excluded from the in-

stitutional discourse, sometimes managed to ‘break into’ the discourse. John Nottidge’s letters expressed his dismay and criticism of missionary activity in the area. We can read about a similar dissatisfaction with missionary influence as would be expressed by Edward Blyden and James Johnson towards the end of the 19th century. In his writing, Nottidge styled himself, on the one hand, as a man undeservingly ill-treated by the mission. On the other hand, his use of Latin phrases and biblical language positioned him as a well-educated African Christian, who was able to act and whose critical opinions should be taken seriously by the Parent Committee. Anna Hinderer’s memoir gave the reader a detailed insight into the life and work of missionary wives. Almost never mentioned in their husband’s journals or reports, these women contributed significantly to the missionary progress by accompanying their husband to the field, doing household chores, caring for the sick, engaging with the local population. These women also moved outside of their domestic sphere into social and political realm, as we saw in Hinderer’s case, who met with, and was recognised as an equal by, Ìbàdàn’s female ruler, thus displaying considerable female social power and agency.

Let me return to van Dijk’s (2001) discursive definition of social power. “We will define social power in terms of control,” he begins.

We have seen that among many other resources that define the power base of a group or institution, access to or control over public discourse and communication is an important ‘symbolic’ resource (pp.354-355).

Van Dijk reasons that those who control access to discourse channels are in a position of social power over those who are denied this access. While this can generally be said to hold true for the context of the institutional discourse generated by the CMS agents’ correspondence, as we saw in Section 6.2, in particular, there needs to be a level of qualification. We saw in the discussion of John Nottidge’s letters and Anna Hinderer’s memoirs that their actions displayed and constructed a high

level of agency for the groups not ordinarily represented or active in the institutional discourse concerning the Yorùbá mission. Nottidge's critical engagement with missionary practice, as well as Hinderer's display of female social power and agency, the highlight of which certainly was the woman-to-woman encounter with the *Ìyálóde*, expressed their possession of symbolic capital in the missionary world. In their writing, they partly claim power over the "symbolic resource" of control over missionary institutional discourse. The social control exerted by the men generally contributing to the Society's discourse can, therefore, not necessarily be seen to have been all-encompassing. I agree in this context with Allan (2008), who argues that the issue of agency is frequently neglected in critical approaches to language and thought. "In their pure sense," he reasons,

poststructuralist theories understand the subject as an effect of discourse and thus do not provide for a theory of agency in the sense that an individual has control over her actions and can resist systems of domination by strategically taking action against them" (p.18).

Access to the official institutional discourse which shaped mission policies and the reception of missionary work in Europe was for the non-Christian population, the 'non-experts', indeed, restricted by a lack of literacy and their social position outside of the mission. The dominant narrative constructed and reproduced in the institutional discourse was provided by and argued for by the group of 'experts' that consisted of the male missionaries in the field. Nevertheless, as we saw in this chapter, there were groups of actors, 'semi-experts', who defied this strict binary division, and to neglect their agency and efforts would mean a grave injustice and an even graver historical inaccuracy.

7 Concluding remarks and outlook

This conclusion is divided into two sections. In Section 7.1, I summarise the results of my research, providing a summary of the answers to the three research questions that have led me throughout the thesis. Section 7.2 explores the implications of these findings for the wider research community, focussing again on the interdisciplinary nature of this project and its audience. I also identify additional questions for future work which have emerged throughout my research.

7.1 Answering the research questions

This thesis set out to answer three primary research questions. I summarise here how I have answered these questions throughout my research by reiterating the main arguments presented in this work, retracing the expression and effects of linguistic power in the correspondence of 19th century CMS missionaries in the Yorùbá area.

7.1.1 Effects of missionary linguistic engineering and translation work on Yorùbá Christianity

Chapter 4 started by explaining how the CMS agents first committed Yorùbá to writing. This constituted an act of linguistic engineering (cf. Fengyuan, 2004), in that it involved the conscious intervention – mainly by non-native speakers – into the way the language was developed by its primary community of users. Giving the language a written form also meant choosing and developing a standard for a collection of hitherto diverse, if mutually intelligible, dialects. This standardisation and codification of Yorùbá as a language also resulted in an early step towards the development of the Yorùbá as a unified ethnic group. The process

was by and large controlled and steered by European missionaries with the assistance of Yorùbá agents like Samuel Ajayi Crowther. This external influence, and the very process of committing the language to writing in the first place, can be seen as acts of impoverishing local oral culture and imposing a European writing system, which brought in its wake European values and religion (cf. also Vansina, 1985 and Sindima, 1999).

The translation project was inherently and closely intertwined with the interdependent dynamics of interpretational authority and inculturation (cf. Peel, 2000, p.278). The missionaries' correspondence on the Yorùbá Christian vocabulary, namely the translations for 'prayer', 'God', and 'Holy Spirit', illuminates the considerations behind the Yorùbá words chosen for these three concepts. Charles Gollmer's commentary on Samuel Crowther's initial translation of the Gospel of St. Luke in particular offers an insight into the tension between the desire to keep a distance from Islam and the local beliefs and practices on the one hand, and the need and opportunity to make use of the semantic ground prepared by these religious traditions on the other. Albeit reluctantly on Gollmer's side, in all three cases the pre-existing conceptual space for the Christian terms was utilised; 'àdúrà', 'prayer', was taken from the vocabulary of Yorùbá Muslims, 'Ọlórún', 'God', originated in the traditional Yorùbá pantheon, and 'ẹ̀mí mímọ́', 'Holy Spirit', combined the two religious traditions with 'ẹ̀mí' referring to the breath of life in Yorùbá anthropology and the use of 'mímọ́', 'clean', by Yorùbá Muslims as a designation for Allah. These examples highlight the transfer of the message from the source language into the realm of influence of the target language, which is intrinsic in the very nature of translation. To a lesser extent this can also be seen with regard to the proper names in the scriptures. After a debate between Henry Townsend and Charles Gollmer about how proper names should be spelled in the

translations, the missionaries eventually settled on the Yorùbá syllable structure of ending syllables in a vowel as a guideline for the process. This can be seen as another step of inculturating Christianity in the Yorùbá area. The missionaries, therefore, to a certain extent surrendered interpretational control over the Christian message through the process of translating Christian texts into the local language.

This becomes most apparent in the fate of the *òrìṣà*, Yorùbá deities, in general and perhaps Èṣù most specifically. With the linguistic remapping of Èṣù onto the Christian devil in the missionaries' translations, the *òrìṣà* retained his status as a real force in the world in the minds of the Yorùbá converts. A collection of Yorùbá hymns from 1857 shows that the devil played a prominent role in the lives and consciousness of local Christians, despite the fact that the post-Enlightenment tradition of Protestantism guiding the European missionaries, in particular, aimed to instil a less personalised notion of the devil. While the religious encounter in the 19th century Yorùbá area was initiated by the CMS missionaries introducing not only their religion but also European values, the power balance was not entirely in their favour; the local population, empowered by a more immediate access to the Christian message in their own language, created and shaped Yorùbá Christianity, rather than merely passively receiving it. Power, therefore, does not necessarily correspond with or result in subordination. It can be transferred, sometimes reluctantly, as with the choice of Yorùbá terms from Christian concepts, or claimed, as the lasting influence of Èṣù indicated.

7.1.2 Linguistic strategies of Yorùbá missionaries to navigate and express their new identities

Chapter 5 was set to the backdrop of a considerable number of the Yorùbá missionaries' experiences of dislocation, enslavement, and life in the diaspora. When revisiting these experiences in their correspondence and re-evaluating them in the light of their conversion to Christianity and their position as missionaries for their new faith, traumatic experiences were presented as positive events setting the agents on their path to Christianity. Former group allegiances were rejected and feelings of alienation and estrangement were expressed both on the side of the missionaries themselves upon their return, as well as on the side of their families and friends.

There is an element of empowerment for the Yorùbá agents in negotiating new group boundaries and expressing alignment with the CMS and the European agents with whom they worked. The African agents in their correspondence redefined their identities as Yorùbá Christian missionaries by the use of social indices, such as 'we' and 'they', thus drawing a line in the metaphorical sand between themselves and the non-Christian population. These boundaries were not rigid, however, but flexible, depending on which aspect of their identities the agents wanted to highlight; for example, 'we' was used as in-group marker for Christians, former slaves, or African converts, respectively. This dynamic use of the personal pronoun corresponded with the variety of subject positions (cf. Fairclough, 2001, p.85) which the Yorùbá agents negotiated for themselves. The identity of the European missionaries as Europeans and Christians, despite their new work and life environment, was less in need of negotiation; accordingly, they used the social deixis 'we' considerably less frequently and, on the whole, to refer to the group of CMS missionaries. Examples of linguistic othering (cf., for example, Zuckermann,

2006) can be found in both the European and African missionaries' writing. Referring to the non-Christian local population and their beliefs and practices with deprecatory terminology, the agents labelled them as 'other', strengthened their own in-group ties, and, for the African missionaries in particular, reinforced their new alignment with the Christian tradition and the CMS.

An important aspect of brokering and expressing their identity for the Yorùbá agents was the implicit identification with the term ' *òyìnbó* ', 'white man', the use of which in relation to themselves they frequently reported and thereby perpetuated in their journals and letters. This expressed the allegiance and desire to be associated, not only with Christianity, but with European values of 'civilisation' more generally. This reference to a common label, albeit one not actively used by the Yorùbá missionaries themselves, was a new way of positioning themselves, and not least being positioned by others, which is also reflected in the choice of a new name upon baptism. The act of renaming themselves and, moreover, choosing names associated with Christian or British tradition, such as Daniel and David or William and James, or explicitly with the CMS, like in the cases of Samuel Crowther and James White, was a powerful way of confirming and expressing their new religious affiliation. Naming and renaming change the status of reality, in what can be seen as acts of "performative magic" (Jackson Jr., 2005, p.218), thus giving the missionaries the very real opportunity to identify as someone other than who they were before encountering Christianity. The change in self-identification marked the life-changing journey of conversion for the Yorùbá agents.

The missionaries' writing contains frequent quotations from or allusions to Christian texts. The act of quoting established a visible link between the CMS agents' correspondence and the Christian tradition represented by passages from the scriptures and hymns. These intertextual bonds (cf. Fairclough, 2001, p.41)

served for example to contextualise the missionaries' experiences of distress and frustration by pointing to biblical precedent of struggle. For the African agents, in particular, these links also meant opportunities to prove themselves as knowledgeable theologians on a par with their European colleagues, and to establish links with their European audience through the use of indirect quotations, which pre-supposed a certain biblical knowledge in the readers. The frequency of quotations from and references to the Pauline epistles and Acts foregrounded the Yorùbá missionaries' identification with the apostle, who, like them, had converted to Christianity, adopted a new name, and set out to evangelise his own people. The linguistic strategies found in the missionaries' correspondence, therefore, contributed to the creation, the writing, of a new space for the Yorùbá agents in the Christian narrative. They showcase not only the possibilities of linguistic re- and self-definition but also the tremendous empowering potential of these linguistic actions. From their self-constructed liminal space in their socio-cultural in-between position, the African missionaries were able to exert considerable influence over the Yorùbá mission throughout the 19th century, thus not only reclaiming power over their identities and lives after traumatic experiences of displacement and enslavement, but also contributing to changes, in their view, for the better for the people in the Yorùbá area.

7.1.3 Influence of institutional missionary discourse on the picture the documents painted of missionary work and life

Chapter 6 looked at the missionary correspondence as a whole as a constitutive part of the institutional discourse of missionary life and work in the CMS. Following Agar's notion of institutional discourse as involving "a socially legitimated expertise together with those persons authorized to implement it" (1985,

p.164), a binary division in the missionary world can initially be drawn: on the one hand, the ‘experts’, those able to access, critique, and contribute to the discourse, namely the male CMS missionary agents and their superiors and audience, and on the other hand, the ‘non-experts’, those unable to do so, namely in our case the groups of Christian converts not involved in the mission, the non-Christian local population, as well as the missionaries’ wives. This restriction of access makes the missionary correspondence an instrument of discursive control.

The missionaries’ journals, in particular, were used in articles in the Society’s publications, such as *The Missionary Gleaner* and *The Intelligencer*. The agents were naturally aware of this utilisation of their writing and overtly referred to it in their correspondence. The use to which the writing was put necessarily impacted on its content and the selection of which passages were included into the documents sent to the CMS headquarters. In the vein of Bakhtin’s notion of “addressivity” (1986, p.96), their intended audiences and the fact that they were answerable to their superiors in more than one way, influenced the way in which the writers presented their work and efforts, leading them to focus on a narrative of success in evangelisation and overcoming setbacks and hurdles. The stories from the missionaries’ journals included in the Society’s publications were recontextualised in the articles, thus serving the purpose of highlighting the CMS agenda of evangelisation and the efforts made to achieve it. This two-layered selection process means that the contemporary audience, as well as the present-day reader and not least researcher, could not and cannot necessarily take the reports and narrations in the correspondence at face value (cf. also Peel, 2000, p.12). The prepackaging of information in the journals according to their purpose calls into question the reliability and the comprehensiveness of the picture presented in the documents. Equally, while the voice of the local population was represented in

the missionaries' reports and narrations, it was only through this discourse channel that the readers in Europe got to hear about the views and opinions of this group of people. The CMS agents harnessed the local population's voice, their ability to express themselves and be heard by others, in their telling of a narrative of successful evangelisation and missionary perseverance. In what seemed like quotations, which the readers then and now had and have no means of verifying, the agents presented the local peoples' views as either positive and supportive towards the mission, or as adversarial, in which case the re-narration of the respective encounters generally ended with the missionaries having the last word and the upper hand. The voice of the local population, which seemingly spoke through the missionaries' pen, gave an air of objectivity and outside positive appraisal to the stories of encounters and interactions in the missionary field.

Naturally, there were exceptions to the rule that only the male CMS agents could contribute to and critique the institutional discourse surrounding the Yorùbá mission. In his letters to CMS Secretary Henry Venn, the African Christian John Nottidge expressed his disapproval of the missionary efforts and methods, and criticised the co-operation with the colonial forces in West Africa, thus to a certain extent anticipating late 19th century pan-Africanists and mission critics like Edward Blyden. Nottidge displayed his considerable education by his frequent use of Latin expressions and references to the scriptures, thus positioning himself as someone whose contributions to the discourse about the mission were to be taken as seriously as those of the official agents of the Society. As an educated, literate Christian, Nottidge could not be seen as a 'non-expert' in Agar's sense but should rather be seen as a 'semi-expert' because of his level of knowledge and the ability to make his views known in writing. The biography of Anna Hinderer, posthumously compiled of her letters and personal journals, some of which had

been used in the CMS publications similarly to those of male missionaries, gave an insight into the life and missionary efforts of the wife of German CMS missionary David Hinderer. Expressing the desire to become a missionary herself in early life, Anna Hinderer had followed her husband into the missionary field and supported his work by looking after the local children and engaging with the political realm and female figures of power in Ìbàdàn. Her writings bear witness to the high level of agency which Hinderer displayed in her daily life and work in the field, despite not officially being a missionary herself. This agency, also represented in the fact that she corresponded with CMS officials and contributed to the Society's publications, gave her, similarly to Nottidge, the status of a 'semi-expert' in relation to the CMS institutional discourse.

The limited number of people who generally had access to the channel of institutional discourse which the missionary correspondence constituted meant that the documents were instruments of social power, controlling the narrative of missionary work and life which was transmitted to and received by the European audience of CMS officials and supporters of the Society. With regard to the correspondence of Nottidge and Hinderer, who to a certain extent broke this cycle of exclusion and non-representation, a qualification of this notion of social control as all-encompassing seems necessary, in order to be able to see and account for the voices and the agency of those otherwise considered excluded and under-represented. While one aspect of linguistic power can certainly be considered as "the ability not only to tell the story of another person but to make it the definitive story of that person" (Orji, 2015, p.43), the dynamics of denying and claiming the power to tell one's own story prove to be subtle and dialectical, rather than being absolute.

In this thesis I showcased the interdependent dynamics of language and power in a scenario of religious encounter and changing societal structures. In more than one sense, the religious encounter between the Christian missionaries and the local Yorùbá population was also a linguistic encounter. Access to the religious message in their own language, learning English as the language associated with the group overtly in power, and acquiring literacy skills with which to gain symbolic capital and make their voice heard, were means of empowerment not only for the Yorùbá missionaries, but also for the converts among the local population. Power relations constructed and expressed by linguistic means, therefore, did not necessarily mean domination on the one side and subordination on the other. Similarly, linguistically negotiating reality and the concept of self in order to claim a space, and construct and tell a narrative of missionary life was a crucial part of this religious encounter. Rather than fixed or absolute, the linguistically shaped power dynamics in the encounter of the Yorùbá and the Christian faith were thus highly differentiated and responsive to individual and group agency. In the following section, I discuss what the implications of this work can be for wider academic scholarship.

7.2 Implications for the research community and future work

In this thesis I have connected linguistic questions with the field of religious studies. This was a step towards closing the existing gap between the disciplines of linguistics and religious studies. In this section, I briefly elaborate on the implications my research has for the wider research community in both fields and discuss research questions for further work.

My research systematically applied questions from the fields of translation studies, sociolinguistics, and discourse theory to the academic fields of missionary history, and religious studies more generally. I have explored the vital role linguistically constructed power relations play in settings of religious encounter and evangelisation. The implications of this methodological approach, as I have shown, are manifold. Sociolinguists can benefit from paying closer attention to the religious dimension of human identity and the power dynamics involved in discussing religion and religious communication. Theorists of translation will be better able to understand the intricacies of the translations of religious texts by analysing the considerations behind translation work and how it affects the language community of the target language. Scholars of religious studies can gain a more thorough understanding of how, by whom, and by which means religious encounters are communicated and shaped, by taking into account the linguistic dimension of religion. My approach to the discourse of missionary activity in the Yorùbá area can be employed in other settings of religious encounter and evangelisation, both historical and modern. The field of mission history can benefit from a linguistic analysis into the power dynamics of missionary work in colonial settings, in particular. Scholars of present-day missionary activities can apply linguistic theory to the vast body of online religious communication and outreach, for example in the context of modern Pentecostal churches. I have discussed the negotiation and expression of religious identity in Chapter 5. The information available on church websites and online forums provides ample source material for exploring the issue of religious identity, of recent converts, in particular, to be more meaningfully described and understood. The application of a critical language analysis to the issue of representation and voice, as discussed in Section 6.2,

can shed light on the emergence and rationale of grassroots religious movements and liberation theologies.

I would now like to discuss in more detail two potential starting points for future research which have emerged throughout the course of this project.

7.2.1 Further analysis of Yorùbá Christian vocabulary

In Section 4.2, I discussed three Christian terms and the process of their translation into Yorùbá. There are a number of other key Judaeo-Christian concepts the translation of which warrant closer analysis, such as ‘sin’, ‘covenant’, ‘angel’, or ‘prophet’. It can contribute to an even better understanding of missionary thought, as well as the development of Yorùbá Christianity in the 19th century to understand which considerations went into the translation of these terms. Similar to my analysis in Section 4.2, the analysis should include the origin and previous use of the Yorùbá terms chosen to express Christian concepts, other contenders of Yorùbá words, and the reasons behind not choosing them. Furthermore, the discussion of whose arguments prevailed in the decision and what that tells us about the power dynamics within the group of missionaries, as well as, where possible, the impact of the chosen translations on the shape of Yorùbá Christianity, should be included. Answers to these questions will yield a more comprehensive view of the missionary translation project and highlight contemporary ideas which went into the translation work. The latter aspect, in particular, I find intriguing. Theologian Cyril Orji (2015, p.34), following Bujo (1992), has called into question the legitimacy of “any theology [for the African context] that does not emerge from the African context [...] because it does not ‘speak’ the African language”. With the issue of inculturation at the forefront of his thinking, Orji argues that with the shift of Christianity to the global South, the European notion of a single, ‘high’

culture has to shift to a pluralistic concept of cultures and Christianities⁶⁰. From this, a discussion leading to new translations of Christian texts can be derived, making the conscious decision to overcome some of the 19th century ideas that went into the translations in the missionary field. A closer analysis of the thought processes involved in these original translations may help to answer this question.

7.2.2 ‘Sermons in stones’: Linguistic transgression in evangelisation

A second idea for further research emerged when I analysed some of the linguistic strategies used by the missionaries in their attempts to evangelise the Yorùbá population. I here give two examples from missionary correspondence:

- “One Ijebu man asked me to take him with me **to my own country**. I showed him **the road to a much better country** to which I invited him to travel with me [...] he at once surprised me with the question if I would engage to **bring him back as well**.” (CA2 O49 111, David Hinderer, journal excerpt, 12th April 1855, highlighting added)
- “Some children being near I offered them **some ginger-lozenges** which at first **they were afraid to receive** but having been prevailed upon to taste ones [sic], and declared it to be really sweet many other [sic] rushed forward to receive some. Even so I told them it was with the Message of the gospel. **They fear it until they have really received its sweetness** – that is is [sic] the entrance of the truth into the heart which alone can give light and life.” (CA2 O37 129, Valentine Faulkner, journal of itinerancy, 23rd January 1877, highlighting added)

⁶⁰A *caveat* seems in order concerning the ‘single culture’ approach of ‘Africanness’ present in this discussion, as Orji’s hint at “the African language” indicates.

The highlighted passages in the two excerpts above are examples of ‘transgression’. The term in this context describes the act of reaching up from the realm of the mundane into the realm of the transcendent, by using everyday objects and occurrences as leads to something beyond human experience (cf. Meyer, 1999, p.38f.). The Bible itself offers multiple examples, for example, the parable of the lost coin (Luke 15:8-10), the parable of the mustard seed (for example, Matthew 13:31–32), and the parable of the tares (Matthew 13:24-30). Christian missionaries picked up on the idea and, based on everyday objects in their immediate vicinity, devised their own allegorical ways of relating their faith to the local population.

Peel suggests that in the case of the Yorùbá mission “[t]ransgression may have found ‘sermons in stones’, but river pebbles were a material embodiment of Osun’s power” (2003, p.163). In his view, the link between the spiritual truth and the mundane object which evoked the association was seen as merely symbolic by the missionaries, whereas in local understanding the link was felt to be material. The missionaries accordingly aimed at severing these material links. Employing a “rhetoric of disenchantment” (Peel, 2003, p.169), African agents, in particular, owing to their superior command of language and insight into the culture, were able to work towards this goal. The underlying semiotic models are crucial for analysing inculturation of Christianity in Africa. If one side sees an object merely as a way to initiate a conversation about religious faith, whereas the other side sees it as an ancestor or a deity, they are bound to arrive at different conclusions about what is being said. A more in-depth analysis into the language of evangelisation will yield a crucial insight into the semiotics of missionary thought and not least the re-interpretations of the Yorùbá world view emerging from the religious encounter with Christianity.

Finally, I would like to point out that Meyer argues that Pietist missionar-

ies among the Ewe in Ghana used transgression “based on the notion that words were able to act” (1999, p.38) as a means of literally taking a step towards the divine. Interestingly, Württemberg Pietism, the Protestant tradition from which the majority of the German CMS agents had been recruited, did also not place an emphasis on de-personalising the devil, unlike the Anglican CMS. An issue which also warrants attention, therefore, is the origin and the effects of these differences between European protestant traditions in their approach to the semiotics of evangelisation.

I began this thesis with a few thoughts on the interconnectedness of social encounters and power relations. The 19th century CMS Yorùbá mission was a social, a religious encounter, and as such also a linguistic encounter. There undeniably existed a power imbalance between English as the language of the centre and Yorùbá as the language of the periphery in the missionary world, but also the transfer of interpretational authority to the Yorùbá-speaking population in the process of translation and the shaping of Yorùbá Christianity. Language was an instrument of discursive control and exclusion through non-representation, but at the same time functioned as an empowering tool of forming and re-forming personal identity and negotiating group boundaries. I analysed and presented in this thesis these different forms and expressions of linguistic power in the setting of the 19th century Yorùbá mission, constructed and reflected in the missionaries’ correspondence. The linguistically shaped power dynamics in this religious and linguistic encounter must be seen as exactly that – dynamic, frequently unpredictable, and highly adaptable to the motives and needs of those constructing and deconstructing the mechanisms of control, emancipation, and empowerment.

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9 Appendices

9.1 Appendix A: List of archive material used in thesis

CMS Sierra Leone mission, archived in Birmingham			
CA1 O79 4a	letter	Samuel Crowther	1842
CA1 O79 10	letter	Samuel Crowther	1843
CA1 O79 1	letter	Samuel Crowther	11 th February 1837
CA1 O79 11a	journal	Samuel Crowther	16 th February 1844
CA1 O103	journal	Charles Gollmer	25 th September 1844
CA1 O79 32	journal	Samuel Crowther	3 rd July 1841
CA1 O195 72	journal	Jacob Friedrich Schoen	29 th September 1841
CA1 O130 1	Journal Niger expedition	Thomas King	1841
CMS Yorùbá mission, archived in Birmingham			
CA2 O49 5	letter	David Hinderer	16 th July 1851
CA2 O68 111	journal	John Andrew Maser	7 th April 1853
CA2 O31 89	journal	Samuel Crowther	18 th December 1844
CA2 O79 4	journal	J.B. Read	23 rd October 1877
CA2 O61 42	journal	Thomas King	26 th December 1851
CA2 O72 6	journal	John Christian Mueller	12 th April 1848
CA2 O97 14	annual letter	Thomas Wright	25 th November 1872
CA2 O69	journal	George Meakin	11 th April 1857
CA2 O61 38	journal	Thomas King	24 th November 1850
CA2 O61 1	letter from	Thomas King	27 th October 1857
CA2 O85 229	journal	Henry Townsend	25 th July 1845
CA2 O87 34	journal	James White	9 th June 1852
CA2 O49 69	letter	David Hinderer	24 th April 1868
CA2 O85 227	journal	Henry Townsend	25 th March 1845
CA2 O85 228	journal	Henry Townsend	18 th May 1845
CA2 O43 94	Yorùbá orthography	Charles Gollmer	1847
CA2 O43 129	journal	Charles Gollmer	10 th October 1858
CA2 O87 88 A/B	collection of hymns		1857
CA2 O67 5	journal	William Marsh	7 th December 1845
CA2 O61 36	journal	Thomas King	25 th June 1850

9.1 Appendix A: List of archive material used in thesis

CA2 O87 33	journal	James White	10 th June 1852
CA2 O31 128	journal	Samuel Crowther	12 th January 1853
CA2 O18 16	journal	William Allen	8 th May 1859
CA2 O31 89	journal	Samuel Crowther	25 th March 1845
CA2 O61 37	journal	Thomas King	25 th September 1850
CA2 O87 96	annual letter	James White	Autumn 1867
CA2 O82 12	journal	Thomas King	25 th September 1848
CA2 O72 6	journal	John Christian Mueller	15 th April 1848
CA2 O43 129	journal	Charles Gollmer	12 th August 1848
CA2 O37 16	letter	Valentine Faulkner	2 nd June 1868
CA2 O96 46	letter	Jonathan Wood	27 th January 1868
CA2 O98 10	journal	N. Young	25 th April 1875
CA2 O82 10	journal	Isaac Smith	25 th March 1848
CA2 O69 9	journal	George Meakin	6 th March 1858
CA2 O87 97	annual letter	James White	1868
CA2 O61 38	journal	Thomas King	25 th December 1850
CA2 M6	letter	Samuel Pearse	10 th January 1871
CA2 O82 12	journal	Isaac Smith	25 th September 1848
CA2 O87 98	annual letter	James White	30 th November 1869
CA2 O81 15	letter	Edward Roper	3 rd February 1869
CA2 O41 2	letter	William George	1 st March 1868
CA2 O16 40	letter	John Nottidge	29 th September 1867
CA2 O16 38	letter	John Nottidge	17 th August 1867
CA2 O16 39	letter	John Nottidge	5 th September 1867
CA2 O49 95	journal	David Hinderer	19 th June 1849
CA2 O37 129	journal	Valentine Faulkner	23 rd January 1877
CA2 O49 111	journal	David Hinderer	12 th April 1855
BFBS correspondence, archived in Cambridge			
BSA/E3/1/2/2	letter	Henry Venn	2 nd June 1848

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BSA/E3/1/4/4	letter	Henry Townsend	3 rd July 1866
BSA/E3/1/4/4	letter	Charles Gollmer	14 th November 1866
BSA/GI/3/8/1857-1863	letter	Charles Gollmer	1 st December 1858
BSS 467.E57	translation Genesis	Samuel Crowther	1853

9.2 Appendix B: Risk assessment for research in Nigerian National Archive, Ìbàdàn



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Fieldwork Assessment Form (High Risk Activities)

Fieldwork Project Details	
Faculty School/Service	Philosophy, Religion and History of Science
Location of Fieldwork	Nigeria
Brief description of Fieldwork activity and purpose <i>(include address, area, grid reference and map where applicable).</i>	<p>National Archive, Ibadan (3 weeks): Department of National Archives of Nigeria, University of Ibadan, UI, PMB 4 Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria → researching early 20th century Church Missionary Society correspondence on the Yoruba mission</p> <p>Travel in Nigeria to visit main sites of 19th century missionary activity (Abeokuta, Lagos) and Yoruba sites (Ile-Ife) (1 week): hotels not booked yet</p>
Fieldwork itinerary <i>e.g. flight details, hotel address, down time and personal time.</i>	<p>28th March – 26th April 2014, return flights Leeds – Amsterdam – Lagos with KLM 29th March: Lagos to Ibadan by car [REDACTED] Other travels cannot be planned in advance, depends on driver's availability</p>
University Travel Insurance Policy Number	UKBBB014431
Organiser Details	
Contact details <i>Name, Email, Telephone</i>	
Fieldwork Activity Organiser / Course Leader	[REDACTED]
Departmental Co-ordinator	PhD supervisors Dr. Kevin Ward (retired after 14th Feb. 2014), Dr. Alison Johnson
Nature of visit <i>Size of Group, lone working, staff, postgraduate, undergraduate.</i>	I am a postgraduate student, travelling to Nigeria on my own, mainly to do archival research.
Participant Details	
Contact details <i>Name, Address, email, telephone, gender and next of kin contact details</i>	
[REDACTED]	
[REDACTED]	

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	female
	emergency contact: [REDACTED]

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HAZARD IDENTIFICATION	
<i>Identify all hazards specific to fieldwork trip and activities, describe existing control measures and identify any further measures required.</i>	
HAZARD(S) IDENTIFIED	CONTROL MEASURES <i>(e.g. alternative work methods, training, supervision, protective equipment)</i>
Nature of the site <i>School, college, university, remote area, laboratory, office, workshop, construction site, farm, etc.</i> archive and accommodation on University of Ibadan campus	The location of both my accommodation with Prof. Herbert Igboanus and the archive where I'm going to spend most of my time are on University of Ibadan campus.
Environmental conditions <i>Extremes of temperature, altitude, exposure to sunlight, potential weather conditions, tidal condition etc.</i> rainy season (increasing risk of mosquito bites), high temperatures (~35°C)	The rainy season in Nigeria's South starts in the middle of April. Mosquitos thus only are a problem in the second half of my stay and then mainly during the night time. I will have a mosquito net for the bed, anti-insect lotion and anti-malarials to minimise the risk of malaria infection. The temperatures can get between 30°C and 35°C at that time of the year but I will spend most of my days inside or use sun screen and light-coloured clothing to avoid sun burns and sun strokes.
Site specific conditions <i>e.g. cliffs, scree, bogs, featureless landscapes, local endemic infectious diseases, zoonoses etc.</i> typhoid fever, meningitis, malaria, yellow fever; HIV AIDS	I have all the necessary vaccinations (or have booked appointments) to protect me as much as possible from infectious diseases (see above). I do not intend to engage in behaviour likely to cause an infection with HIV. I am aware of the risks un-purified water and will therefore only use bottled water (drinking, brushing teeth, cleaning wounds, etc.) where necessary.
Process <i>Operating machinery, electrical equipment, driving vehicles, handling or working with animals etc.</i> n/a	n/a
Transport <i>Mode of transport while on site, to and from site, carriage of dangerous goods etc.</i> travel from Lagos to Ibadan and to other destinations	The easiest and most risk-free option is taking a taxi or hiring a car. The drivers are experienced with regards to the roads and potential roadblocks. The risk of roadblocks exists but is manageable by paying a small amount of money.
Equipment <i>Manual handling risks, operation of machinery, tools, use of specialist equipment etc.</i> n/a	n/a
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<p>Violence <i>Potential for violence in location, political and social unrest; against participants (previous incidents etc.).</i></p> <p>mugging or kidnapping, roadblocks on Lagos—Ibadan highway: risk medium terrorist activity: risk small</p>	<p>As the FCO travel advice for Nigeria (HYPERLINK "https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/nigeria" https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/nigeria) states, militant groups like MEND (Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta) and Boko Haram have been active in Nigeria in the recent years and the risk of kidnapping exists as well. The area I will be visiting, the Southwest of Nigeria (states Ogun, Osun, Oyo), however, has not been as affected as the Northern states, e.g. Plateau State, Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Gombe, Jigawa, Zamfara, Kebbi and Sokoto.</p> <p>I will avoid going out on my own, particularly at night, and make sure not to travel after nightfall when travelling. My accommodation on campus (and in hotels when travelling) will also help to avoid these risks.</p>
<p>Cultural Considerations <i>Specific to the activity or participants.</i></p> <p>Muslim areas</p>	<p>Out of respect it is necessary to cover at least my head, shoulders and legs when entering Muslim areas in Nigeria. This will not present a problem as long clothes are sensible precautions against the sun in any case.</p>
<p>Individual(s) <i>Medical condition(s), young, inexperienced, disabilities etc.</i></p> <p>first time in West Africa</p>	<p>I do not have first-hand experience with travelling to and in West Africa. In preparation for this trip I have, therefore, talked to fellow researchers working for the university who have been to Nigeria and other West African countries before. I was able to establish contacts in Nigeria and get valuable information and support for organising the trip. I was able to get detailed information about the necessary health and travel precautions from the Nigerian Embassy, the FCO, the NHS, and Prof. Igboanusi, my host in Ibadan.</p>
<p>Work Pattern <i>Time and location e.g. shift work, work at night.</i></p>	<p>The archive is located on University of Ibadan premises, about 1.1 km away from my host's house, which, too, is on campus. Opening hours are Monday to Friday: 8.30am to 3.00pm, which means I can avoid working at night and having to walk home in the dark and also allows for enough time to rest. The archive is located in a public building frequented by fellow researchers and members of staff available during the opening hours, which means there will be no lone work.</p>
<p>Permissions Required <i>Contact details, visas, and letters of permission, restrictions and other details of permissions.</i></p> <p>visa, acceptance of immigration responsibility, membership of National Archive, Ibadan</p>	<p>Visa application submitted, awaiting response. Prof. Igboanusi, my host in Ibadan, has agreed in writing to accept immigration responsibility for me. He was also kind enough to make enquiries about the archive membership for me. It can be obtained upon arrival in Ibadan and requires a small fee and a letter of introduction by the University of Leeds.</p>
<p>Other Specific Risk Assessments <i>e.g. COSHH, Manual Handling, Lone Working if so what is identified in these assessments? Are there training requirements? (cross reference where appropriate).</i></p>	<p>no lone work, see work pattern;</p>

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n/a	
Health Questionnaire Completed <i>Is it required and has it been completed, who by and where is it recorded.</i>	n/a
Health Surveillance Required <i>Is it required and has it been completed, who by and recorded.</i>	n/a
Vaccinations Required <i>Obtained and certificate where applicable.</i>	Inoculations received (Hepatitis A and B, polio/diphtheria/tetanus, meningitis) or appointments arranged (typhoid fever, yellow fever); prescription for anti-malarials (Malarone)
Hepatitis A and B, typhoid fever, polio/diphtheria/tetanus, yellow fever, meningitis, malaria prophylaxis	
First Aid Provision <i>Requirement for first aid or specialist first aid equipment, access to medical equipment and hospital.</i>	I have identified the closest medical centre and hospital to Ibadan University campus (Cureland Medical Centre, University College Hospital), where I will be spending most of time, as well as phone numbers for emergency services. I will also be carrying a personal first aid kit (including disinfectants, bandages, analgesics, etc.) for minor injuries or illnesses.
first-aid provision and medication	

Additional Supporting Information	
Pre-departure Briefing <i>Carried out and attended.</i>	n/a
Training <i>Identify level and extent of information; instruction and training required consider experience of workers, details of relevant training.</i> need for experience in archive work in order to work efficiently in a new environment	I have been able to gather experience in archive work in the Church Missionary Society's Archive in Birmingham and the British and Foreign Bible Society's archive in Cambridge over the last 18 months since the start of my postgraduate research. This will help me identify the documents and information relevant for my research quickly despite the new environment and differences in filing system, shelfmarks, etc.
FCO advice <i>Include current FCO advice for travel to the area where applicable.</i>	https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/nigeria
Supervision <i>Identify level of supervision required e.g. full time, Periodic telephone/radio contact.</i>	I intend to update my supervisors by email at least on a weekly basis, depending on availability of internet access, in order to report on my progress and potential issues regarding my research, health etc.
periodic email contact with supervisors in the UK	
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Emergency Plan <i>Consider and identify the plans you may need to have in place in the event of emergency e.g. medical emergency.</i>	<p>Various colleagues experienced in travel to Nigeria have offered to put me in touch with their contacts in Lagos and Ibadan in case of emergencies. I have researched medical centres and hospitals in Ibadan, where I will be spending the majority of my stay, and identified the ones closest to Ibadan University campus (Cureland Medical Centre, University College Hospital).</p>
Other Controls <i>e.g. background checks for site visits, embassy registration, FCO Locate service.</i>	<p>I am going to register with the German consular tracking service for German citizens abroad. Similar to the FCO Locate service, this allows me to get and stay in touch with the German embassy in Abuja and offers additional emergency services.</p>
Identify Persons at Risk <i>This may include more individuals than the fieldwork participants e.g. other employees of partner organisations.</i> <i>Copy of other Organisation's risk assessment attached?</i>	<p>n/a</p>
Additional Information <i>Relevant to the one working activity including existing control measures; information instruction and training received, supervision, security, increased lighting, emergency procedures, access to potable water etc.</i>	<p>n/a</p>

Residual Risk	Yes	x
<i>Is the residual risk acceptable with the identified controls?</i>	No	

Assessment carried out by	Name:	Sandra Nickel
	Signature:	
	Date:	11th February 2014
Names of person(s) involved in Fieldwork <i>N.B: This can take the form of a signed class register when large group work</i>	Name:	Sandra Nickel
	Signature:	
	Date:	

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Fieldwork Activity Organiser / Course Leader <i>e.g. PI, etc</i>	Name:	Dr. Alison Johnson
	Signature:	
	Date:	

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