Translating Wor(l)ds
Christianity Across Cultural Boundaries
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1 Presentation

This volume unites articles, which are based on presentations given at two colloquia held at the University of Stirling: “Translating Christianities” and “Translating God”. Whilst the first one aimed at a general discussion of the transmission and interpretation of Christianity across different fields and disciplines, the second focused on the translation of the word *God* and related terms into different languages, in a number of, mostly colonial, settings.

The contributions to both colloquia dealt with the translation of culture in the context of religion, which one may imagine as a rather straightforward enterprise that implies a uni-directional process undertaken to transfer a message into a different (kind of) language, providing explanations and interpretations of diverse content and form. Our studies show that these processes can be bi-directional or even multiple because all works studied give evidence of how the authors resorted to different cultural traditions and languages and interrelated them.

Thus, all contributions to this book deal with a form of translation of Christian concepts, be they of linguistic and/or cultural nature. They have in common that they describe and analyse much more than the translation of a situation, experience or text; they also explain how content is conveyed and which factors play important roles in this process of interpretation and explanation, which has one main objective: that of communication across boundaries. All our studies focus on experiences, attitudes and objectives reflected and pursued in the translation of culture(s), and several are also

1 “Translating Christianities”, December 2015, was organised by the editor of this volume (see <http://www.translatingchristianities.stir.ac.uk/past-conferences/translating-christianities/> ) and “Translating God”, May 2017, by the editor, with Brian Murdoch and Stephen Penn (see <http://www.translatingchristianities.stir.ac.uk/files/2015/10/Translating-God-Colloquium-4-5-May-2017-Schedule-and-Abstracts-01-05-17.pdf> ). I would like to thank Brian Murdoch and Cândida Barros for having read some of the contributions and provided the authors with comments.
2 In this Introduction, all terms I mention and discuss are italicised.
directed towards an analysis of the word and its translation in linguistic terms. They draw on different disciplines, analysing texts in literary, ethnohistorical and/or linguistic terms and highlighting the processes of translation across cultures, from the Early Middle Ages, via the colonially dominated 16th to early 20th centuries, to today’s ‘modern’, post-colonial world. The papers show that similar methodological and ideological challenges have to be confronted when transposing Christian ideas to other cultural spheres, be it in a literary, missionary or in a contemporary university context. The studied works and con/texts reflect a not always orthodox way of understanding Christianity, trying to convey and communicate worldviews and religious concepts for recipients beyond the authors’ cultural boundaries. By using different methodological tools, the contributors to this volume show the manifold and innovative ways in which this field of the translation of culture can be approached.

The articles about colonial missionaries give evidence of how these implemented their faith and knowledge, often contextualising their interpretations of the Christian world by drawing on personal experiences, and at the same time, they appropriated it for their own purposes. When taking a superficial look at the protagonists, they seem to be in agreement and concordance with the orthodox Christian enterprise and objective, but a closer analysis shows that particular creative ways of interpreting their religious beliefs can be seen as ‘alternative’, some even as ‘subversive’, interlacing different religious worldviews. Our contributions analyse translation approaches in their sociopolitical contexts and in the transmission from one, hegemonic language and culture, to another, less powerful one. The languages and cultures’ perceived and real inequality is due to the political constellation of colonial or post-colonial, or even quasi-colonial situations.

Some contributors to this book use mainly linguistic evidence to show that translation is always also the outcome of the social production of knowledge; others emphasise the situational contexts to explain how the authors/translators they studied tried to connect different cultural experiences and universes, to bridge the gap between ‘their’ language and culture and those of the ‘others’, and the contributors highlight the role the author/translator had or wanted to assume in this effort.

The first part of the book addresses mission: languages, translation approaches and experiences. Here the contributions about the translation of

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3 For interesting case studies in similar contexts from across the world, see Mills and Grafton (eds.) 2003.
God explore how the concept of deity was conveyed to other cultures and languages, mostly in a colonial context. Two articles, about the colonial authors’ intentions to translate Western knowledge into different cultural situations and languages, specifically examine the missionaries’ cultural and intellectual background within their systems of knowledge. Another contribution analyses women’s roles in the missionary enterprise and how they became empowered through their agency. In the second part of this volume, on literature and scholarship, two articles present how religious experience was re-created in fiction and the authors crossed cultural boundaries in their lives and works, and by empowering themselves, they also empower their audiences. The final contribution discusses critically and from the scholarly angle how religious studies have been created and taught in different academic settings and traditions and what the future challenges are.

Below I will summarise, discuss and contextualise important aspects of the contributors’ analyses and results.

2 Mission: languages, translation approaches and experiences

2.1 Translating God

When Christianity is taught in a non-Christian culture, the translator faces obvious difficulties; especially the expression of abstract religious concepts presents a range of problems, which have always preoccupied philosophers and theologians. We may think, for example, of the spread of Christianity in medieval Europe, or of the Spanish Jesuits in Peru attempting to convert the indigenous peoples. How are concepts, enshrined in written form in an original language (Hebrew, Greek or Latin) or later in a mediating language (like Spanish in Latin America), to be transferred comprehensibly into the languages and hence the minds of the converted? The translation of God also reflects power-relations, which are revealed in the imposition of new ideologies beyond Europe, by medieval, renaissance and modern rulers, in the contexts of the Iberian, British or other empires. The contributors address these questions by examining how God or other spiritual concepts such as Holy Ghost or the Trinity are translated, how the idea of

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4 For example, the Council of Trent’s authors reflected on the translations of Amen, which different classic authors had offered (Council of Trent Catechism 1934 [1566], Part IV: The Lords’ Prayer, p. 588).
the Supreme Being is rendered in other languages and cultures, and which methods are used to reformulate Christian terms and their meanings in the languages of the other(s).

The contributions about the Goths of the Germanic region (1st millennium AD) (Murdoch), the Mayas of Guatemala (16th century) (Sachse), the Marathi people of Southern India (18th century) (Eliasson), the Zulus of South Africa (mid-19th century) (Colenso) and the Aranda-speaking peoples of Central Australia (turn of the 19th to the 20th century) (Moore) show how missionaries struggled for more than 1500 years with the translation of the term God and related words. Those who tried to convert other peoples to Christianity belonged, of course, to different European cultures and religious orientations: the young Church, which spread from its origins through Europe, the Spanish Dominican and Franciscan friars of Central America, the Portuguese Catholic Church in India, the Anglicans in South Africa and the German Lutheran Church in Central Australia, respectively.

Whilst we may not want to doubt the individual missionaries’ sincere intentions, we have to be aware that the power the missionaries had, or the lack of it, varied greatly and thereby shaped their work. The early missionary efforts in the Germanic and other European region were certainly less organised (von Padberg 2009: 16–17; cf. Fletcher 1997: ch. 2, esp. p. 37) than those of the Iberian empires. But whilst the latter became more powerful, and the Spaniards, for example, dominated and colonised the conquered peoples, this was mainly the case in the central areas of the conquered territories (e.g. Central Mexico and the Central Andes) rather than in marginal regions, which were more difficult to reach and administrate as the inhabitants resisted ‘pacification’ (e.g. Venezuela [Sarion], the Mapuche of Chile [Jones 1999]). In other regions, the missionaries found the local lords’ and empires’ power overwhelming; in China, for example, the missionary enterprise depended on the good will of its government (Ross 1994: ch. 6; Helm 2002: ch. 3.1).

Another difference was that of the civilisations with which the missionaries-colonisers found themselves confronted: purely orally transmitted traditions and beliefs (like in South Africa and Australia) posed other challenges than those which had been laid down in their own writing (like in the Germanic regions or India). In Latin America information about indigenous culture was written down in the Roman alphabet, by indigenous ‘intellectuals’, but these, of course, already lived in the era of colonisation

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5 The italicised names are those of the contributors to this volume.
and their texts can therefore not be considered as strictly pre-Hispanic traditions (e.g. the Maya *Popol Vuh*).

Considering these very different contexts and working conditions, we can therefore expect diverse approaches to the translation of *God* into the languages the converts spoke. Although all missionary authors coincided in the underlying idea that the native deities were not more than superstition or even the work of the Devil (see *Sarion*), they all ended up using native-language words, taken from exactly the indigenous cosmovision they so deeply disapproved of.

What certainly contributed to their lexical choices was the familiarity of the most dedicated missionaries with indigenous traditions, such as that of Domingo de Vico in Guatemala (*Sachse*), who resorted to indigenous epithets of Maya deities; or that of Strehlow in Central Australia, who also translated indigenous myths into German (*Moore*). Whilst they tried to understand the regional cosmovision, we must not forget that their interpretation and re-working in Christian instructive texts must have relied not only heavily on their own knowledge of the languages, but also been guided and filtered by their indigenous collaborators (e.g. in the Aztec mission [Dibble 1974: 229]) and interpreters (*Colenso*) – who may also have had their own agenda.

Moreover, the kind of materials which were translated or written varied greatly. The authors of the Catholic empires centred their efforts on the catechism and related instructive texts (such as sermons) because the Bible was not to be translated and made generally available. On the other hand, the efforts of the more recent Protestant missionaries focused on the translation of the Bible and thereby seem to follow in the very early footsteps of the Church, where we already find Wulfila’s Bible translation into Gothic.

Let us now look at the translation of the word *God* which is central to the above-mentioned contributions. The Franciscans and Dominicans in Mexico debated whether it was better to use loanwords or to re-semanticise native-language words, i.e. give them new meaning(s). Thus, the loanword *God* (of the respective indo-European languages of the missionaries) was not the first and only choice. As the contributors to this volume show, the

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Spaniards and Portuguese debated the aptness of using the loanword *Dios*, and they all accompanied it by other, indigenous, words. The Protestant missionaries in Australia also discussed possible terms, and Strehlow deliberately opted for the native language term *Altjira*; similarly the Anglicans in South Africa did not come to a unanimous decision. The choice of the most adequate translation method was always related to the evaluation of the indigenous people’s ‘capacity’ to understand Christianity, but often the arguments were also rooted in theological and political debates (*Sachse, Colenso*).

In this context it may be worthwhile to remind ourselves that the missionaries’ monotheistic cosmovision had its own origin in polytheistic worldviews (Wainwright 2018: section 1), and although this recognition may not always have been obvious to them, it was definitely present in much 16th/17th centuries writing. For example the Spanish lexicographer Cobarruvias ([1611] 1977: 727–728, s.v. “idolo”) recognised that the *gentiles* (*pagan ancestors*) had believed in more than one god. The priests were also familiar with polytheistic elements in their own contemporary religious belief. This becomes evident when the catechism explained the first commandment carefully (*Council of Trent Catechism 1934 [1566], Part III: The Decalogue: 367ff.*). And the Spanish scholar and priest Azpilcueta’s 16th century confession manual reflects the concern with respect to polytheism when he writes that the penitent should be asked about idolatry (Muguruza Roca 2018: 45–46). All this is evidence that the concept of polytheism was not completely removed from their minds.

Moreover, the notion of a triune god had already been debated in early Christianity, where Arianism saw the Trinity as a polytheistic concept (*McCull 2010: 73–84*). It is therefore important to keep in mind that being exposed to a cosmovision of more than one deity was not something inconceivable for these well-trained theologians, but rather an ever-present challenge. This also explains why the authors of the Council of Trent gave detailed explanations of the key terms and concepts of the Trinity (e.g. the Trinity in the Council of Trent Catechism 1934 [1566], Part I, Article I: The Creed, p. 20ff.). And the scholar José de Acosta, who was in charge of the composition and translation of the texts of the Third Lima Council, argued that, just like the Indians, the theologians do not and cannot have a

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7 The council of Trent elaborated a catechism for parish priests, which was meant as guideline for all and should be translated into native languages (which in the first instance meant the European languages, of course). This 1566 catechism provided the basis for the later works of the missionaries of the Catholic Church.
clear understanding of what the mystery of the Trinity really is because it is not a matter of understanding, but of belief (Acosta [1577] 1987, vol. 2, libro V, cap. VI: 230–231, paragraph 3).

Let us then see how, in this context of long-standing comprehension, transmission and translation traditions and challenges, and according to the authors of our contributions to this topic, the missionaries tried to convey this most complex concept of the one, triune God to other, polytheistic peoples. Obviously, the availability of data varies greatly and is especially scarce with respect to the Old Germanic languages. It is interesting that the intensive occupation with God as Trinity is above all found in the texts of the Iberian empires, whilst it seems that the much more recent Protestants are mainly concerned with the translation of the term God.

Frauke Sachse shows that, following the approach of the Dominicans in Mesoamerica to include indigenous language terms in order to transmit Christian concepts, Domingo de Vico did not go so far as to translate Dios using only the Maya word which existed for an indigenous deity, but he accompanied the loanword by Maya Great Lord, and moreover he explained that other epithets were to be used, such as Framer and Former, probably an established indigenous-language term. Again drawing on Maya discourse, Vico used Maya our mother our father to convey that there is only one God. This makes sense in particular when he translates God Father and God Son using the loanword plus the Maya word for father and son respectively, possibly implying the idea of family descendence. The translation of Holy Spirit is rather complicated because the word employed for spirit seems to have had a number of meanings, but could literally be understood as God Breather and is related to the other two elements of the Trinity through a linguistic kinship indicator. In later sources, the loanword Spiritu Santo is more frequently used. The term Trinity is expressed through the established Maya attribute threesome (similar to Old High German driunissa, literally three-ness [Murdoch]) but of which we do not know whether this was a lexical as well as semantic neologism. Thus, whilst both religious orders, Franciscans and Dominicans, opted for maintaining the Spanish words Dios, as well as persona, in their Maya texts, it is clear that the Dominicans preferred to co-textualise these words with those that had a particular religious meaning in the indigenous language. The same was done in the Andean Quechua catechism under the direction of the Jesuits (Dedenbach-

8 A neologism can be a new lexical entity, in terms of form and meaning, or it can be a new meaning, which is added to the established one (Meger 2010: 14, who cites Kinne).
Salazar Sáenz 2016: 415, 418–420; cf. Sarion where it becomes evident that the Franciscan approach was not as unified as one might think).

Pär Eliasson discusses the case of the nature of the persons, which conform the Trinity. Here the anonymous author of the Indian Marathi text did translate pessoa, using the Marathi word zann, which had the everyday meaning of person. Again and apparently following an established tradition, some elements of the Trinity – Trindade itself and Spirito Santo – were kept as loanwords. This can be explained because the Marathi words would refer to their threefold god and the human spirit respectively and therefore not be suitable in this context because in this particular case a threefold deity was seen as an obvious ‘pagan’ parallel to the Christian Trinity.9 A similar concept of manifold deities existed in Andean culture, where the missionaries made it explicit that there was no relationship between the Christian triune God and indigenous multiple deities (Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz 2016: 426–431).

Not only the Iberian missionaries gave native words new meanings (or at least intended to do so), creating a semantic (not a lexical) neologism. This method had already been used by the ancient Gothic authors-translators. As Brian Murdoch explains, they employed guþ for God, but the Gothic word referred to a native supernatural being. Probably in order to make it completely clear that these native deities were not identical with the Christian God, they also wrote professions of faith in which particular deities were explained as evil. On the other hand, God was also rendered as drohtin, a word for a Germanic warrior-lord who was expected to provide food for his people. With respect to the Holy Spirit, the translation of heilag gaist, meaning Holy Ghost in English, was a loan-translation, using the target language’s equivalents, but these were imbued with powerful native meaning, including gaist as the essence of the departed. As mentioned above, a loan-translation was used for Trinity: Old High German driunissa, literally three-ness. We can therefore assume that the converted people could integrate new religious phenomena into their own worldview, rather than replace it with a new religion.

In a similar way semantic neologisms were the most frequent solutions the Protestant missionaries opted for more than a millennium later. According to David Moore, despite the polysemous character of the word altji-rra, which in Central Australian Aranda included the concept of dreaming, dreamtime (related to the ancient times of creation), as well as eternal, un-

9 It has always been difficult to grasp the character of the Hindu deities (Wainwright 2018: section 7.3).
created, it was adopted, not uncontroversially, for translating God. For this to happen it had to undergo not only semantic change, but it was also affected in its grammatical construction of animacy and agency (ergative instead of accusative).

According to Gwilym Colenso the missionaries of the Zulus in South Africa did not agree unanimously on one term for God either, but despite inter- and intra-confessional quarrels about the most adequate word, the translation bishop Colenso suggested, uNkulunkulu, which according to his indigenous consultants already had the meaning of a divine being in African religion, became the established translation. It is still present in 21st century ritual.10

Like in the case of the debate between the colonial Franciscans and Dominicans as to what was best, loanwords or re-semanticised indigenous words, a discussion also took place between individual missionaries and between different missionary groups in South Africa. Possibly because the case is more recent and well documented, it can be seen that beyond theological arguments, the missionaries tried to position themselves with respect to their assumed civilisatory role in the colonial empire: Zulu religion was either seen as having monotheistic roots (also already supposed by Vico in 16th century Guatemala and by Garcilaso in 17th century Peru [see Serna Arnaiz 2006: 14]) or as the expression of ‘crude’ thinking.

Beyond the Guatemaltecan, African or Australian missionaries’ debate about the ‘correct’ translation it is interesting to observe how the translation decisions, which gained more influence in scholarship entered its discourse and arguments (see Colenso; for a systematic analysis Cox 2014: ch. 1). This reflects the power struggles of the missionaries as well as Western scholars rather than independent research conclusions, and it even contributed to the creation of contemporary discussions among Western scholars about how religion is constructed (see Roberts; cf. Murray 2003).

As we see in the articles, different suggestions and choices were made by the missionaries to translate God, and all solutions included the re-semanticisation of native-language words. However, we do not know much about the indigenous people’s contribution to them or influence on them, how they actually used the translated words themselves, or which ones, in their daily lives.

It would be an interesting follow-up study to find out what has become of the terms: are they still used and do they refer to Christian, native or hy-

10 See e.g. devotional texts of the Reformed Evangelical Anglican Church of South Africa 2019: <http://reachsa.org.za/?s=zulu&submit=Search>. 
brid elements of culture? We can see that in all regions the authors discuss with respect to the translation of God, still today indigenous peoples’ and European worldviews are blended, as the following examples show. In the far north, road projects have been stopped by the ‘elf’ lobby, which reflects many Icelanders’ belief that the earth is alive (Associated Press in Reykjavik 2013; Murdoch). On the theological level, African and European cosmologies are interlaced (cf. Elphik and Davenport eds. 1997, esp. Klaaren 1997: 380–382).11

In the 20th century in the Andes a villager from Southern Peru describes the World Mother as Trinity (using in Quechua also key Spanish words from the catechism – in italics; Gow and Condori eds. 1976: 9–11; transl. Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz):

Kay pacha paqarimantan kay Pachamamaqa niq kasqa: “Ñuqan kani Santa Tirra, Uywaq, ſũñuq, ſũqan kani. Pacha Tirra, Pacha ſũsta, Pacha Virgen ſũqa kani”, niq kasqa. ... Kay Santa Tirrapin tiyan panpa ukhupi kimsantin pirsuna – Pacha Tirra, Pachamama, Pacha ſũsta.

Since the birth of the world, Pachamama [World Mother] said: “I am the Holy Earth, the Nurturer, the Breastfeeder am I. I am World Earth, World Inca Princess, World Virgin”, she said. ... The Sacred Earth resides inside the plains [as] three persons together – World Earth, Pachamama [World Mother], Inca Princess.

2.2 Systems of knowledge

The contributions discussed above reflect how the missionaries had to mediate between Christian and indigenous knowledge systems by translating the term and concept of God. The two articles which follow give us some further insight into the in/compatibility of these systems and how two missionaries dealt with this challenge.

In her contribution, Sabine Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz analyses how the Spanish Jesuit scholar Diego González Holguín combined his knowledge of Christian and Andean religion in order to explain Christianity to the newly converted. He had studied oriental and classical languages in Alcalá

11 See also, for example, for Australia: Austin-Broos (1996), Charlesworth et al. eds. (2017); for Latin America: Gossen and León-Portilla eds. (1993: Pt. 3 and 4); for Marathi-speaking India: Zelliot and Berntsen eds. (1988).
de Henares, and when, in 1607/08, he published his grammar and dictionary of the Quechua language he had been living in Peru for approximately 25 years, of which he spent some as rector of the renowned Jesuit missionary and linguistic research centre in Juli on Lake Titicaca. As far as we know, González Holguín did not write or translate (or at least publish) any texts, but through his studies and work he was certainly familiar with them. Therefore his most common translation methods reflected the earlier ones and those used in texts: word-for-word equivalents (easiest in the case of objects which were known and used in both cultures), loanwords (for objects and concepts new to the indigenous world) and semantic neologisms or re-semanticisations (often for complex concepts) [supposedly] new to the indigenous world). Thus, due to his linguistic and theological background and training on the one hand and his familiarity with Andean culture on the other, González Holguín followed to a certain point the methods his predecessors had used in their works. However, not only did he add more words, derivations and compounds than his dictionary-writing predecessors, but he also used extensions of meanings and metaphorical paraphrases as well as equations, through which he re-contextualised Christian contents so that the indigenous converts – via the missionaries who taught them – would be able to understand them within their own cultural framework. Thus, for González Holguín the Holy Communion is the Inca’s powerful travel provision, the Eucharist is the Inca sacrifice of the baby llama, and Christ’s blood is Inca sacrificial painting. He makes it clear that these contextual equivalents are created on purpose and that for him they are the most adequate translations and explanations. We can see, then, that under the veil of Christianising Andean religion he also Andeanises Christian religion. Thus González Holguín seems to be – probably short of subversive – a true ‘cultural broker’ between worlds, using his knowledge of both cultures to create a new one.

Roxana Sarion shows in her study of the 17th century Franciscan missionary Matías Ruiz Blanco, who lived and worked in what is today Venezuela, how he re-conceptualised the Carib world on the basis of his own European system of knowledge. Similar to González Holguín, he held important positions in the religious order, such as chronicler and commissioneer to the missions. In over 30 years among the indigenous Píritus of Venezuela, he wrote linguistic and doctrinal manuals about and in the ‘general language’, Cumanagot, and was thus well familiarised with its linguistic system. He defended the indigenous peoples’ rights before the Spanish Crown, but he could not detach himself from his Western conception of the essentially ‘demonic’ character of the Píritus. This tension may have been partly due to the colonial circumstances and historical develop-
ment of the regions. For example, after first unsuccessful efforts to convert the indigenous nomadic peoples pacifically, the Franciscans established (much later than in Mexico and Peru) re-settlements, thus facilitating the imposition of economic and political structures of the Europeans. Another challenge was the linguistic diversity of the languages in the province. By the end of the 17th century, several doctrinal texts had been written in Cumanagot, and Ruiz Blanco’s texts of Christian instruction appeared in 1683 and 1690. In his account of Carib traditions for other missionaries, his discourse was characterised by explaining indigenous rituals and practices from within his own worldview: curers were representatives of the Devil, and the most respected supernatural being became associated with the Devil himself. He related Carib beliefs to those of Greek mythology, which, of course, were ‘false’ as well. However, following Aristotle (and in this way using the ancient Greeks in an inconsistent manner), he showed that the Carib concept of the soul was ‘wrong’. This form of understanding and comparing knowledge systems was the background for his translation methods. Besides adopting loanwords for the Trinity and certain ecclesiastical terms, he used re-semanticisations of Cumanagot words, such as sin, guilt and the Devil, the latter being translated by using the native-language word for their deity. Like González Holguín and the Mexican Dominican and Franciscan missionaries, he was conscious and deliberate in his approach: he discussed earlier translated versions of the Christian doctrine, and following St. Jerome, he opted for a translation ad sensum rather than ad literam, as well as disagreeing with the Third Lima Council’s recommendation about loanwords. He made it explicit that he chose explanations and paraphrases over literal equivalents, taking the audience into account, and he even worked with indigenous consultants – methods quite similar to those of González Holguín. But despite his explicit linguistic considerations he was torn between trying to ‘indigenise’ Christian concepts in Cumanagot words on the one hand, and demonising their faith on the other.

13 This was a widespread approach, also found, for example, in the 16th century Jesuit conversion texts for the Tamils (Županov 2003: 110). Cf. also Cobarruvias, mentioned above in section 2.1, p.12.
2.3 Empowerment

Whilst the articles about Latin America as well as those about the Protestant missionaries in Central Australia and South Africa look at how male colonial theologian-linguist missionaries tried to convey the Christian message in the native languages to the indigenous peoples, reflecting as well as creating new power relations, especially in the Anglican world of mission, there is another group of participants in the evangelisation projects, and these are missionaries’ wives or daughters who joined their partners or parents overseas. Alison Jasper brings to light not only the challenges and achievements of women missionaries in China, but also shows the complexity of the circumstances in which they lived and worked: rather than the ‘typical’ trajectory often found in the lives of male missionaries, the women’s family contexts, in addition to gender-restricting social attitudes, made female lives very different from male lives.\textsuperscript{14}

Although they hardly ever went as missionaries on their own, accompanying their husbands brought them fulfilment in a personally and socially recognised role denied to them in their own country or difficult to achieve in their patriarchally organised homeland. Through letters, their lives and works show that – beyond the discourse of power inequality – the colony was a field of experimentation and innovation; in the cases Jasper describes, these women, short of being ‘feminists’, did become agents of their own, often following charitable agendas and thus communicating with the indigenous people on a different basis. This is not to say that they opposed the predominant colonial ideology of the ‘barbarian’ native who had to be ‘saved’. We do not know much about their immersion into the native culture through language skills, but Jasper mentions that there are documented cases in which these women became fluent in the local languages and therefore had more personal ways of communicating with the indigenous people.

It is interesting to see that the story of the missionary’s wife who is a person in her own right is also found in the case of Frieda Keysser who was married to Carl Strehlow, the missionary in David Moore’s contribution about the understanding and interpretation of the concept of the divine in

\textsuperscript{14} Although living in convent-like communities in 17th century Lima and not dedicated to missionary tasks, the so-called \textit{beatas}, ‘blessed’ women, gained a certain independence from men and could, through education and work, create their own space (see Van Deusen 1999). It may therefore be worthwhile considering them in Jasper’s framework of “female genius” and empowerment.

The author’s overtly central corrective, perhaps, is to bring missionary women out of the shadows of their husbands. Frieda, who died in 1957, is a significant character in her own right. Her work to reduce infant mortality at Hermannsburg was both effective and heroic.

It was at the time the missionary women described by Alison Jasper worked in China that in 1926 in Edinburgh the first woman graduated from the School of Divinity. Elizabeth Hewitt wanted to work as a missionary in China, and for this, she wanted to be ordained. A first petition was made to the General Assembly in 1931, but women can only be ordained since 1968 (Orr 2018: 1:37), which shows the Church establishment’s reticence to enable them to acquire equal status. This small episode is interesting in our context in so far as the missionary women we read about can also be seen as forebears of the acceptance of women as priests, and it would be interesting to know more about the networks they established.

Another case is documented by Adasi (2017) who shows that women who played important roles in missionary work in the colonial era of the Basel mission in the then Gold Coast were often seen in the first instance as ministers’ wives; according to Adasi, this situation can even be found almost a hundred years later, in the Presbyterian Church. In this case, it seems that conservative European conceptions of the role of women in the Church coincide with a culture-specific image of the woman in Ghana – two not dissimilar structures meet.

This historical and contemporary context of women’s work in the Church(es) emphasises the importance a further analysis of women’s roles from the point of view of the “female genius”, which Jasper discusses, might have. With respect to the 21st century, such studies might even reveal an emic rather than only etic perspective of the “female genius”.

3 Literature and scholarship

3.1 Religious experience re-created in fiction: empowering the author and the reader

As opposed to the information and documents about Christianisation in the Germanic, Ibero-American and British past, the pieces Irving and Darroch present are fictional. Their authors are both – although in different
ways – closely related to the narrated events: Elias Haddad, a Palestinian who was educated and worked in a Christian orphanage; and Edwidge Danticat, author of Haitian origin brought up first in Haiti and then in the USA (Munro 2010) – both translate their knowledge of the world into the fictional medium, thereby showing how the personal interpretation of stories gives them a particular force and, appealing to an emotional understanding, explain complex circumstances of religious and socio-cultural hybridity to an interested lay audience. The cultural translation and interpretation of empire and colonial history in form of artistic discourse permits us a differentiated view of history and culture and has the potential to empower the audience and readers to recognise and stand by their colonial, syncretic heritage.

The translation of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing’s *Nathan der Weise* into Arabic, little before the foundation of the state Israel, made by the Christian Palestinian schoolteacher Elias Haddad, reflects the recurrent timeliness of the play. Not only had it been controversial even in its own time and country of origin and become more so later under the Nazi regime, but the complex sociopolitical situation in Palestine also made it an important part of its literary discourse. *Sarah Irving* explains how Haddad uses the play to promote understanding and tolerance among groups of different faiths, but above all, he employs it to advocate rationalism and condemn fanaticism, in order to accept all religions as equal. His work also evokes our 21st century world, where religious conflicts reflect fundamentalist attitudes rather than those related to religious belief. In this sense, Haddad’s approach is still a radical and topical one.

Situating Haddad’s work in the translation studies debate about “domestication”, Irving sees this (often negatively judged) translation approach as a form of empowerment. Originally written in Germany for a German audience and set in the ‘Orient’, Haddad ‘returns’ the play to its original setting and thus uses it as an argument in the debate of his time. The theme was common in the literary discourse of the period in the Middle East, which shows that the translation of this play was not an exceptional enterprise, but that the inter-faith relations and their interpretation was an important part of the consciousness of cultural diversity.

Translation then, as Irving shows, is not only the conveyance from one language to the other, using domesticating or foreignising techniques to bring a text closer to the audience (as originally seen by Schleiermacher [1813] 2004, and later made more popular by Venuti 1995: 19–20); the translator’s contextualisation of the work and his motivation reflect his participation and advocacy of the translated text as a political instrument. Thus Haddad is a “visible” translator (cf. Venuti 1995). Through an artful
and creative translation and the translators’ comments, the re-created text gives evidence of political challenges and tensions as well as highlighting Haddad’s objectives and his wish to empower Palestinians to create their own interpretation and discourse of cultural diversity. In this respect, he is an empathetic translator, quite different from those we meet when two religious systems clash and the author-translator does not only try to explain his own world to the other, but also wants to change that other world into something “better”, a something dominated by his and his government’s desire for power (see Robinson 2011 for an interesting discussion of the writing on translation and empire).

Fiona Darroch shows how literary fiction can reveal the complexity of cultural history and religious expression, in this case in the context of emigration and diaspora. Informed by historical and contemporary theoretical writing about the role of religiosity in Haiti and modern thought, this article shows how, in the framework of the colonial and postcolonial development of Haitian culture, Christian and native religious beliefs and practices have become intertwined in the contemporary world of emigrants. Darroch’s sensitive analysis of Danticat’s fiction makes it clear that the native symbolism and meaning of the goddess Erzulie underlies the characters’ efforts to infuse their difficult experiences of life in the diaspora with the strength to survive – personally and culturally. In the contemporary world, indigenous beliefs underlie the cosmovision of those who live in postcolonial times: a more integrated and complex vision and understanding of the super/natural characterises their cultural experiences. Not only does the deity as powerful helper support the protagonists, but she also empowers the women in her story so that they become feminine agents, their connection to Haitian history, culture and religion giving them their particular agency.

3.2 Conscientisation

In the context of learning and teaching Richard Roberts argues that in the current tendency of our universities to alienate students from critical and theoretical thinking, in our post-modern, globalised and technologised world it is essential to incorporate this thinking in our study and conveyance of religion (in the forms of religious studies and theology). Religion is becoming increasingly more important, as, for example, fundamentalist movements, but also esoteric views and practices show. Therefore, he reviews the historical development of different strands of religious studies in Great Britain, including a view to the Continent and North America.
He shows how in different eras scholars have tried, within theoretical frameworks, to grasp the meaning of religion and thus communicate it to students. Roberts argues that theoretical thinking has to critique the growing hegemony of managerialism, which shows the characteristics of ‘idolatry’ because it is used as an end in itself. In order to overcome this tendency, religious thinking has to incorporate into its arguments approaches which originate in other fields, such as ecology and the study of gender – these will enable us to ‘make sense’ of an ever more crisis-ridden world. Explaining religion in these terms will help us overcome managerial efforts to make students docile wheels in a world dominated by market necessities.

Setting Robert’s thoughts in the context of the pedagogy of liberation, an uncritical transference of aims which invades all fields of critical thinking and tries to render them invalid can only be avoided by the conscientisation of students, by learning and teaching in the framework of critical thinking, i.e. a socially conscious and conscientious ‘translation’ of contents and methods of how to arrive at them. It is worth noting that in 1970 Freire (2000) already postulated a critical pedagogy in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and it is remarkable that his studies, developed in the Brazilian context of unequal power structures, are becoming ever more timely, and the banking concept of education (ibid. ch. 2) is also visible in economically and technologically leading countries.

Fortunately, the studies assembled in this book show that this critical approach is present in established as well as younger scholars’ work who think about religion and power, and that it is expressed, described and interpreted from a number of different disciplinary perspectives.

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Part 1

Mission: Languages, Translation Approaches and Experiences
God and the Goths:  
Translation Techniques for the Germanic Tribes

Brian Murdoch

Abstract

This introduction offers a simplified model of the various linguistic strategies for translating basic Christian terms in the earliest written Germanic languages, specifically loanwords, loan-translations and loan-meanings. All of these can be problematic in terms of cross-cultural interference. Examples are considered primarily from Gothic and Old High German, with selected examples of basic Christian vocabulary, and with particular reference to words for the three members of the Trinity. The intent is to offer possible comparisons for the translation of Christian terms in chronologically or geographically more remote cultural contexts. [Loan-words, Loan-translation, Loan-meaning; Germanic tribes; Gothic; Old High German; Trinity]

1 Introduction

The study of the spread of Christianity in the early Germanic world boasts a very long tradition of philological research, and it will be seen that some of the material in this introductory survey was already published, or at least written down, as far back as the ninth century. The aim of this contribution is to sketch in basic form some of the techniques used and the problems encountered in translating Christianity at an early stage, for the early Germanic tribes, in the hope that this might help to highlight shared problems in geographically and chronologically different situations, and perhaps also to point up significant differences.

Translating Christian concepts from Greek or Latin into the various native Germanic languages involved, as a very broad generalisation, three techniques: first, loanwords, Lehnwörter, the simple taking over of Greek or Latin words; secondly, loan-translations, Lehnübersetzungen, the translation into local language-equivalents of entire words, or elements within a word; and finally loan-meaning, Lehnbedeutung, the grafting of a new meaning.
onto existing words, either non-religious ones, so that secular concepts are given a new context, or religious words, which implies syncretism (Green 1998: 281–286). Pre-Christian Germanic religious terms are, to be sure, not always easy to identify or to explain, and this often requires investigation of classical sources, of genuinely pre-Christian Germanic writings (which are very rare outside Scandinavia), or of common Indo-European roots.

Not only is this analysis at times rather speculative, but every one of those three different translation methods has serious disadvantages (Green 1998: 285). A loanword used unadorned in the new language, which might be a Latin one borrowed from Greek in the first place, is likely to be opaque. One may ask what the early convert made of a Germanic version of the Latinised Greek word *eleemosyna*, literally “charitable giving”? But it has nevertheless survived into modern German as *Almosen*, English as *alms*. Loanwords are only relatively unproblematic if they can be associated (as in the case of alms, perhaps) with a visible object, like an altar, Latin *altare*, or a bishop (*episcopus*, *episkopos*). A loan-translation, translating the whole or parts of a word, runs exactly the same risk of being initially incomprehensible. “Conscience” is a simple borrowing in English, but early Germanic translated literally the two parts of Latin *con-scientia* (itself not quite the same as Greek *syn-eidesis*, “self-knowledge”). Gothic *miþwissei*, “with-knowing”, and Old High German *ga-wizzani*, “generalised knowing”, will have demanded much supplementary explanation. Finally, grafting a Christian term onto a secular word risks retaining its old sense and thus missing the point, whilst using an existing *religious* word is even more hazardous if its pre-Christian meaning is still hovering about.

This greatly simplified scheme is presented as if it were purely linguistic, when of course the cultural dimension will always have affected the choice of words, especially in the category of loan-meaning, where a Christian concept need not have been represented by a single word in the target language; a concept may equally well be expressed by an extended paraphrase or through a (potentially confusing) cultural analogy, so that the distance between the original sense and the vehicle used for the loan-meaning is variable. Loan-translations, too, are quite likely to be neologisms in the language into which they are being introduced; to the examples given above we might add Old High German *driunissa*, “three-ness” for the Trinity, which is itself somewhere between a loanword and a loan-translation.

The conversion of speakers of the three branches of the Germanic language-family – East, West and North Germanic – took a considerable time. The earliest stage is the conversion of an East Germanic tribe, the Goths, in the fourth century. Next, from the fifth to ninth centuries came that of the continental and insular West Germanic tribes. Their languages were vari-
ous dialects of Old High German (which developed into modern German), and also the Old Low German ancestors of Dutch, Frisian and English. Last of all was the conversion of the North Germanic speakers of Old Norse, in Scandinavia and Iceland. Ideally, one should begin with the mission to the Visigoths in around 350 and end with the formal decision in Iceland at the Althing in 999 to adopt Christianity as a political act designed to avoid internal conflict. The conversion of Iceland is engagingly told by Magnus Magnusson (1987: 137–147), with patent regret that the events took place pretty certainly in 999 rather than the satisfying millennial date often given. As ever, whether this removed older beliefs completely is unlikely. Icelandic roads have occasionally been re-routed quite recently to avoid troll mounds, just as the sídhe, the fairy-people, have never really left Ireland. The earlier conversion of the Celtic world and the later one in that of the Slavs are, incidentally, both comparable. The latter mission, by Cyril and Methodius, is well documented, and there have been linguistic studies of pre-Christian Slav religious vocabulary, indeed of the development of the word for God, bog, from the idea of “riches” (Dittrich 1961: 501–502). Space dictates, however, that concentration here will be on the Goths (see in general Wolfram 1979; Heather 1991a, 1991b, 1996), and then on some of the West Germanic tribes.

2 The Goths and Wulfila’s Bible translation

The Gothic language is now dead, but it was the earliest Germanic tongue to be written down fully, and thus we have some solid material, although this is limited to a Visigothic translation of a good portion of the Greek New Testament made in the second half of the fourth century, and a very small amount of other writing indeed (texts in Streitberg 1919; for a survey see Stutz 1966). The Visigoths (West Goths) constitute one branch of the Gothic tribe, itself part of the broader East Germanic group, which also included Burgundians and Vandals. In the language of the Vandals we have, however, apart from names, just two words recorded by a Latin writer: that the words are frôja armês, probably “Lord have mercy” (kyrie eleison) is a nice coincidence, but it illustrates that sometimes we have very little to go on indeed (Eis 1974: 9–15). Another Germanic word fro, meaning “Lord”, is complex, and reference will be made to it later.

In around 340 Wulfila (the name which is also occasionally given as Ulfilas, means “little wolf”) was consecrated in Constantinople by the Arian Eusebius of Nicomedia as bishop with a mission to establish Christianity amongst the Visigoths. From historical sources, we learn that Wulfila had
a Gothic father and a Christian-Cappadocian mother or grandmother, probably a captive. He died in 381 or 382. The Greek historian Philostorgios also mentions – the comment is frequently cited – that Wulfila translated all the books of the Bible except the Books of Kings, because the Goths were already too warlike to need further encouragement. How accurate this is (there are plenty of other warlike books) is questionable; however, not only did he translate at least some of the Bible, but he also developed an alphabet in which to write it down. It is also worth stressing that with Gothic the mediation between the original text and the version in the new language is in the hands of a native speaker, which is not always the case, especially in later contexts. There are comments on the Goths not only by Philostorgios, but also, in Catholic sources, by Socrates Scholasticus, Sozomen, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, Jordanes, Isidore and writers as late as Walahfrid Strabo (ca. 809–849).¹

A translation of the Bible as such does not necessarily take precedence in the early stages of conversion over, say, creeds or formulas. A few centuries later, in the Old High German period, we have, for example, a translation of the Diatessaron, the useful Gospel harmony of Tatian (a synopsis of the life of Christ compiled in the second century in either Syriac or Greek from the four Gospels and later well-known in Latin), rather than of a full Bible, which did not really appear much before Luther. The Bible also had the built-in status problem which led in the early periods to an explicit or implicit reluctance to deviate from the letter of the sacred languages of Greek, Latin or Hebrew. This can make pre-Lutheran translations hard to assess. A literal translation of Greek or Latin may or may not have been acceptable as spoken Gothic or Old High German. With a long-dead language with limited documentation we cannot always establish what was standard usage (though it is sometimes possible when we can make comparisons), and biblical texts might also have helped something to become accepted, so that a certain circularity can creep in. Further, the debate between placing emphasis on the sense or upon the word – massively important as it is for studies of the translation of the Bible from Jerome onwards, but especially post-Luther (and outside European cultures) – is less relevant at this very early stage of Germanic Christianity than the notion of the sacred language.

¹ All sources are found in Streitberg 1919: xiii–xxv; Regan 1974: 165–177; Donini and Ford 1970; and see Stutz 1966: 9–19.
To translate the Bible from Greek into Gothic (Illustration 1), Wulfila devised an alphabet, an achievement which cannot be overestimated. Individual situations differ, of course, but often the alphabet most familiar to the missionaries is used, even if not phonologically suitable for the target language. In the case of Gothic, the Germanic runic alphabet was unsuitable.

Illustration 1: The Gothic Bible in the Codex Argenteus
for various reasons: it was designed for carved inscription rather than for script, but more importantly, it carried too many overtones of pre-Christian magic. The construction of a new alphabet had the advantage that it could be made to cope with those sounds in the language which did not conform to Greek or Latin, the other available systems. Wulfila’s alphabet was based largely upon Greek uncials (capitals), and although his spellings sometimes do match Greek usage, not every Greek letter kept its sound-value. Not all Greek letters were used, six were taken from Latin (not always with their values), and two signs from Runic (Elliot 1959: 48–49; Wright 1954: 4–12). Modern writings on Gothic customarily transliterate Wulfila’s alphabet, albeit with some variations.2

Later on, the West Germanic languages which were written down using an existing alphabet, in this case Latin, precisely did have problems with sounds like /Ø/, and had to use runic letters like thorn itself, or ad hoc Latin combinations like -th-, which English still uses. A parallel situation is that with the mission of Cyril and Methodius to the Slavs several centuries later, where a new alphabet was again created. As a result, the (Glagolitic) Cyrillic alphabet, also based largely upon Greek, has single signs for typically Slavic sound-groups, such as /shch/, familiar in modern Russian. Polish – which was in the hands of Catholic monks using the Latin alphabet – still requires complex ad hoc combinations of Latin letters to represent those same sounds (szcz).

A separate problem for modern investigators of the Gothic Bible – in spite of the fact that we have in this case supposedly a single central religious text – is that early and medieval Greek versions of both Testaments differ somewhat, and Wulfila probably drew upon an Old Latin (that is, a pre-Vulgate) New Testament as well (Hunter 1969: 338–362). Added to all this, the small number of manuscripts in which Gothic has survived are all later than Wulfila (fifth to seventh centuries), and were written in Italy, where the Visigoths had settled, so that it is not clear how accurately they represent Wulfila’s own text in any case. They are not homogeneous, and we cannot always tell with variations in the Gothic text whether something was original, or whether it is a later Latin-influenced adaptation.3

Which Christianity was being translated? Wulfila and his mission was Arian (Stutz 1966: 12–13). Arius had argued that Christ was not God by nature, but was made by the Father, as against the Catholic doctrine of the

2 Holthausen 1934; Feist 1939; de Tollenaere and Jones 1976; Lehmann 1986.
3 Schwarz 1985; there are examples in Friedrichsen 1926, 1939 and 1959; and see Fal- luomini 2013, 2015.
consubstantiality of the Father and the Son. The Arian doctrine was declared a heresy at Nicaea in 325, but even after the Catholic view was established as orthodoxy in the Roman Empire at the Council of Constantinople in 381, Visigothic adherence remained strong, and they converted other East and West Germanic tribes to Arian Christianity. Only in the late fifth century did the dominant West Germanic tribe, the Franks, convert to Catholicism, and consolidated matters by defeating the Visigoths in battle early in the sixth. The East Germanic Burgundians adopted Catholic Christianity in 516, and the Visigoths eventually renounced Arianism after the Council of Toledo in 589, when the Visigoth king of Spain—they had again moved westward—joined the Roman church. This victory of Latin Catholic Christianity probably ensured that there was no liturgical use of Gothic, and to what extent, if any, Gothic was ever used beside the three “sacred languages” even, say, with vernacular hymns or psalms sung before the Mass, is debatable. The language itself declined and died, giving way to the local Romance tongue, as did Burgundian, which has left only the territorial and some personal names. Translators can have a doctrinal agenda, but the Gothic Bible does not in fact seem to have an Arian spin, although there may be a reflection of it in one of the few other documents in Gothic, a scrap of a commentary on John, *Skeireins aiwaggeljons þairh Johannen*, “Clarification of the Gospel of John” (Murdoch 2004: 147–148). Whether or not warlike texts were deliberately omitted, all we have of a Gothic Old Testament anyway are some fragments of Nehemiah. For the New Testament, the Gospels and Paul’s letters (apart from Hebrews) were all translated, although all except II Corinthians are incomplete. Mark is the fullest Gospel. Acts, the minor epistles and the Apocalypse are not extant.

Wulfila had some words ready to use. These were either Christian loan-words from Greek, or loan-meanings grafted onto Germanic words, which sometimes had a pre-Christian religious meaning. “God”, for example, is rendered in Gothic with an existing word for a supernatural being, “a god”, *gub*, which is a masculine, although the word was neuter in its Primitive Germanic form. We know this from its survival as a neuter in Old Norse (*gups*), signifying a pagan god. It was assimilated to a masculine in Gothic, as was *got* in Old High German, although significantly *apgot*, “false god” (modern German *Abgott*) remained neuter in High German until the late Middle Ages (Karg-Gasterstädt 1944). The gender question is, of course, grammatical in the first instance, signifying an actual being. Tempting as it looks, the word is unrelated either to the concept “good” or the name “Goth”. The name of the Goths was *Guta*, *Gutanþiudi* (Wolfram 2004: 40–42) and Gothic words for “good” include: *gods*, *goþs*, *þiuþeigs*. The Indo-European root of the word for God may be linked with the idea of
invocation. In Gothic manuscripts, incidentally, when it is applied to the Christian God, the vowel is omitted, ΓΨ, like the unpointed Hebrew tetagrammaton. Greek loanwords already in Gothic (most of them were also taken into Latin) include aiwaggeljo, “Gospel”, aipiskaupus, “bishop”, apaustaulus, “apostle”, praufetja, “prophet”, diabaulus, “devil”. Wulfila doubtless created more; he probably gave us the loanwords synagoge for “synagogue”, sabbato for “Sabbath”, and loan-translations like πιουπτι-qiss, “blessing”, translating literally the Greek eu-logia, “good saying” (compare the parallel Latin loan-translation bene-dictio). The latter seems, incidentally, to have been an especially difficult concept. The modern German word Segen is linked with the word “sign”, signum, as in the ritual (and more importantly, visible) sign of the cross. English “blessing” is more complex etymologically, perhaps linked with a ritual marking with blood.

There was an early mission to Southern Germany by the Visigoths, notably to the Bavarians, and this leads us on to the translation of Christian terms in the West Germanic ancestors of more familiar languages: modern German and English. The Goths seem to have brought westwards a number of ecclesiastical terms, although since many Latin theological words are derived from Greek in any case, it can be hard to identify the precise source of an early loanword. In a long article in 1909 the etymologist Friedrich Kluge pointed out that this transmission had been discussed not only by the nineteenth century scholar Rudolf von Raumer in 1845, but rather earlier by the ninth-century Alemannic monk Walahfrid Strabo, who discussed words in different Germanic languages for ecclesiastical institutions, and knew and included some in Gothic, so that this material is, as indicated, not especially original. Kluge noted Pfaffe, Gothic papa, Greek papas, for a cleric, but more telling, and discussed already by Walahfrid Strabo with reference to Gothic, is the unusual word for “church” in the West and North Germanic languages, modern German Kirche, English church, kirk, Dutch kerk, Frisian tsjerk, Old Norse kirkja. This cannot be a borrowing from Latin but seems to be a direct representation of Greek kyr-iake (oikia) or the later kyriakon, “a (secular) lord’s house”, and can really only have entered the other Germanic languages through Gothic. Unlike Kirche and older equivalents, kyriakon is neuter, but there are other cases where Wulfila forms feminines from neuter nouns (Kluge 1909: 125). Things are complicated, however, by the fact that the word is not attested in written Gothic which uses aikklesjo, representing Greek ekklesia, for both the religious building and the community (Green 1998: 296–299).

The Greek-Latin loanword, *ecclesia*, has given the word for church to other Western European language families – Romance *église, iglesia, chiesa*, Celtic *eaglais, eglus*. Russian *tserkov*,”church” is, on the other hand, also related to *kyriakon*, and was presumably introduced by way of the Bavarian mission to the Slavs, and hence ultimately also from the Goths, rather than having come directly from the Greek mission (Zagiba 1961b: 275–276, and see in general Zagiba 1961a). Elsewhere in the Slav languages, Polish *kościół* does derive from *ecclesia* which was once again introduced by Catholic monks directly from Latin.

3 Old High German

The conversion of the continental West Germanic tribes, specifically Franks, Aleman and Bavarians (there is insufficient extant Lombardic to permit study in this context), who lived in what is now central and southern Germany, Austria and Switzerland, is better documented, but linguistically complex. The language of these tribes is known as Old High German, the first stage of modern German, written down from the eighth century onwards. However, the form and vocabulary used by the different tribes varied considerably; words from some dialects have survived into modern German, others have been lost. The Christian culture this time is a Latin one, and the written German language was established by Christian Latin monks, so that even the few apparently pre-Christian texts were written down and adapted by Christian clerics (Murdoch 1983: 25–44).

We may wish to note, incidentally, that the adjective “high” in the linguistic designation is in fact purely geographical, referring to the mountains in Southern Germany. It embraces those tribes whose language underwent changes to the West Germanic parent language which did not happen to the dialects spoken in Saxony, the Netherlands or England. Dutch, Frisian, Old Saxon, and Anglo-Saxon are accordingly classed as Low German, *Plattdeutsch*, “flat-lands German”. The conversion of High and of Low German speakers (or the re-establishing of Christianity in some of their tribal areas), came from a variety of directions and took place over many centuries, from the fourth century onwards, from Gaul or from the Roman provinces south of Bavaria, and then from the (Arian) Goths in the earliest stages (Green 1998: 275–281; King 1961: 4–11). Later on, Irish (Reiffenstein 1958) and Anglo-Saxon missions came to different areas, bringing not only a selection of saints – Columbanus, Gall, Wynfryth/Boniface – but also some distinctive linguistic variations. As an example of these variations, the term “Gospel” can be conceptual, meaning the mes-
sage itself, but it could perhaps be physically realised as a Gospel-book. In early (and indeed modern) High German the Latinised Greek word is adopted and survives as a loanword: evangeljo, modern Evangelium. Gothic also used the loanword. Alternatives, however, are found in Old High German texts (see the collection in Steinmeyer 1916 for example) as a loan-translation, of the Greek eu-aggelos, literally “good-message”, notably in Southern German monasteries, on the Reichenau as cuat chundida, and as kuot-arende in St Gallen. This may reflect the influence of Irish missionaries, given the parallel loan-translation so-scélæ in Old Irish. A further variant loan-translation, got-spel, is also found in Old High German, and this matches the early English form gôdspell as another literal version of the Greek. While the loanword Evangelium eventually prevailed in German, Gospel has possibly survived in English because the first element, “good”, merges in a kind of folk etymology with “God”, so that it comes to be taken as “God’s words”, which has perhaps accidentally sanctified a loan-translation. In modern English, on the other hand, the second element may now be felt to have extra-Christian supernatural overtones (“magic spell”), although Old English spell means “narrative”, “story”, “announcement” (Eggers 1963: 161, 166).

Latin writings condemning older religious practices often provide us with pre-Christian names and words, and once written German appears, we can identify Germanic gods in renunciation formulas. Two of the first texts we have are professions of faith, the abrenunciatio diaboli, in Old Low German and in Old High German, the former (which is a little fuller) calling for a renunciation of the Germanic gods thunaer ende uuoden ende saxnote ende allem them unholdum the hira genotas sint, “Thor and Woden and Saxnot (presumably a tribal god of the Saxons, and perhaps identified with Tiw or Tyr) and all those evil ones who are their companions”. The old gods are acknowledged by name, but vilified as unhold-, “evil ones”. Thor or Woden are also invoked in a few vernacular healing charms, albeit defused by the requirement to say a prayer or to add the word amen, “Lord let it be”, turning a pagan invocation into a Christian collect (Murdoch 1988a, 1988b, 1991). The named Germanic gods lose power, therefore, just as they have done most familiarly in our days of the week, where Wednesday or Thursday do not now evoke Woden or Thor. Coincidentally, the cognate of deus, theos survives, in fact, only as the individual god-name Tiw-, still embedded in the word “Tuesday”.

5 Boudriot 1928: 17; see Massmann 1839: 67 and Schlosser 1989: 207–249.
In written Old High German, we have much more material than in
Gothic. There are individual word-glosses which are sometimes academic
exercises within the monastery rather than words designed for general use;
much early glossing is clumsy and indeed sterile as a source of Christian
vocabulary (Nordmeyer 1958). Notable, too, is Tatian’s Gospel-synopsis in
German which often looks like a word-for-word glossing, but really is a
translation, albeit one trying to keep as close to the sacred original as possi-
ble; and there are also some apparently freer translations of non-biblical
texts, including what looks to us like a relatively free Old High German
translation of a theological work by Isidore of Seville (Murdoch 1983: 25–
44). The problems of “faithful translation”, the deliberately close adher-
ence to the sacred language, can be demonstrated by looking at an impor-
tant missionary text with a variety of potential pitfalls: the Lord’s Prayer.
Even the modern German designation is Vaterunser, piously retaining the
Latin order of noun and adjective. To take just one passage, problems
clearly arose in the rendering of panem nostrum cotidianum, “our daily
bread”. Again, the order of the words in Latin is “bread our daily”, as in-
deed it is in Greek: tou arton hemon to epiousion, “the bread our for the
coming day”, which Wulfila translated literally Hláif unsarana þana sin-
teinan, “bread (loaf) our then daily...” in Gothic.

Old High and Old Low German texts offer a range of translations, in-
cluding what sounds to a modern ear – caution is necessary here! – like a
“good” translation: unser tagelichez brot, “our daily bread”, but equally of-
ten the Latin word-order is imitated, prot tagalihhaz. Furthermore, some
versions deliberately avoid a direct rendering of “bread” in favour of some-
thing like “nourishment”, to pre-empt the idea of actual free loaves. There
are early versions of the prayer with a built-in commentary explaining that
daily bread means daily teaching (Massmann 1839: 155–168). Most inter-
estingly, a metrical version in the Old Saxon Gospel poem Heliand, “The
Saviour”, has Gef ûs dago gehuulikes râd, “give us support every day” (Can-
to xix, 1607, in: Behaghel 1996: 63; and see Murphy 1992: 55). It has been
noted that a direct reference to bread might very well have been taken lit-
erally, especially as the request was addressed to God as drohtin, a secular
word for “lord”; a Germanic warrior lord was expected to provide food for
his followers. The Anglo-Saxon prose version, which is also early, has a
recognisable Syle uns do dag urne daghwamlikan hlaf, “Give [selen, ‘grant’]
us today our daily bread”. The relatively late conversion of the Saxons was
an example, incidentally, of the imperial imposition of Christianity by
Charlemagne by force, rather than by the persuasion tried by Boniface
with the North-East Frisians, who martyred him in 754.
That Old Saxon secular word for “(warrior) lord”, truhtin, in Old High German and dryhten in Anglo-Saxon, is also regularly applied to Christ as dominus. It disappears entirely from the West Germanic languages, however, arguably because of conflict between its secular and religious contexts. The loyalty to a warrior lord in Germanic society is unequivocal but reciprocal, placing actual obligations on the lord to give support to his followers. This does not work with Christ, so that the word is replaced in German by the more neutral Herr, meaning “old” or “worthy”, and Lord in English, which curiously once had, but had by that time lost, associations with bread-provision. English “Lord”, is etymologically hláford, “bread-guardian”, but this sense had been lost by the time the word came to replace dryhten. In German the modern word Herr is linked with seniority and nobility (Green 1998: 116–120; and see Wells 2000; Green 1965 passim). A further secular Germanic word for Lord as applied to Christ, frô, probably linked to the concept of “first”, clearly died out in West Germanic at an early stage as a masculine, though it still survives in the compound Fronleichnam, “Corpus Christi”. The feminine version has survived as Frau, though the status has deteriorated from the original sense of nobility. In East Germanic, the word is one of the two preserved in the surviving fragment of Vandal referred to earlier, and it was standard in Gothic as frauja. Gothic had an equivalent for trohtin, albeit not used biblically as “lord”, visible through related recorded words like draúhtinassus, “service under a warlord”. An equivalent survives in Scandinavian descendants of North Germanic, as with Swedish drottning, “queen”.

If God changes gender, and Christ is a potentially disobliging warrior lord, the third person of the Trinity is even more problematic. The term “Holy Ghost” (in Latin spiritus sanctus) is still a difficult enough concept in any case. In the West Germanic languages, the term is translated in Germanic word-order, but there is a clear North-South division. Anglo-Saxon, continental Low German, and the High German dialects in central Germany all render the term – I cite the High German form – as heilag gaist, the equivalent of which is still there in modern German as in English, “Holy Ghost”. The adjective hailag is etymologically linked with healing, health, and is a relatively neutral word to be invested with a powerful religious meaning. Gaist, on the other hand, has pre-Christian supernatural significance, meaning the essence of the departed, and it still has this meaning as “ghost” or Geist. Discussing the etymology, Theodor Frings (1957: 62 f., 74) ventured the opinion that “ghost” in modern English exists happily beside the formulation “Holy Ghost”, but one might question how happy this really is, especially with children. The modern English alternative “spook” is colloquial, but in German, beside the synonym
Gespenst, the word Geist (which also has other meanings) still does function as “ghost”. “Holy” may have lost any connotations of healing and become established as a religious word, but “ghost” has not shaken off its overtones: a “health-giving spook”, perhaps?

Southern High German dialects took a more or less opposite approach, to give us uuiho atum. Gothic had rendered the term, with the noun first, as ahma weihs, the noun ahma deriving from a root indicating “understanding”, but the adjective used in both versions was already religious, a pre-Christian spiritual word perhaps related to the idea of sacrifice. It survives in modern German compounds like Weihrauch, “incense”, or Weihnachten, “Christmas”. In the Old High German formulation, however, the noun is a basic secular concept, atum, modern German Atem, so that this time we have “consecrated breath”. “Breath” does translate Latin spiritus, pneuma in Greek, although the idea is no longer transparent in the well-established loanword “spirit” in English. The variant English term “Holy Spirit” is therefore probably slightly safer, though the word has other meanings. Similarly, in modern German, the Northern version also displaced the Southern one completely as heiliger Geist, although Geist also has a very broad range of meanings, including “wit” and “essence”. As an aside, later iconography representing a dove might initially (and even later) have hindered, rather than aided comprehension: healing spook, sanctified breath or performing pigeon? Extensive (diachronic) word-field studies, difficult in early medieval languages anyway, are required to establish in each individual case how a concept was actually put across or understood (see in general e.g. Mittner 1955, Walch 1973, Kettler 1977).

4 Conclusion

The few examples I have been able to give, concentrating principally on the three members of the Trinity as concepts of central importance in the transmission of Christian ideas to a new culture, demonstrate for the most part what is probably the most hazardous of the various methods adopted to create a new Christian vocabulary, that of loan-meaning. The inherent problems are especially noticeable when a new spiritual sense is grafted onto an existing secular term, or when a pre-Christian spiritual concept is used. All designations for the members of the Trinity in early Germanic languages will inevitably have had problems of overlap with original elements of meaning. In the case of God, a presumed change in gender has established the word, but the secular word truhtin for “lord” does not even survive. These examples are offered as suggestions for model comparisons
with the translation situation in other languages and cultures when faced with Christianity for the first time, and the early Germanic solutions may provide parallels or indeed contrasts for the investigation of the Christianisation of later or more distant societies. Some of the premises, and indeed the range and nature of extant material will be quite different, but other aspects may well be similar.

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Maya Divinities in Christian Discourse:  
The Multivocalities of Colonial Mendicant Translations from Highland Guatemala

Frauke Sachse

Abstract

Highland Guatemala is a unique place for studying the translation of Christianity into the indigenous languages of the Americas. The linguistic conversion was not a homogeneous process, because friars of the Dominican and the Franciscan mendicant orders interacted in the field of the mission following different theological trajectories and creating a multivocality of Christian discourses.

By analysing the various renderings of the name of God and the Trinity in the Highland Mayan language K’iche’, I show that the mendicants often understood the nature of the indigenous conceptualisations of divinities, but chose to respond with different translation strategies. It was in particular the Dominican missionaries who appropriated names of pre-contact divinities from Highland Maya religious discourse. The Dominican strategy proved successful inasmuch as K’iche’ authors can be shown to have taken up the missionaries’ interpretation of primeval monotheism in their own narratives and texts. Moreover, I will show that missionary text sources can provide valuable clues about pre-contact indigenous ontologies. [Colonial Guatemala, Christianisation, K’iche’ Maya, Mendicants, Translation]

1 Introduction

This contribution is concerned with the multivocalities of Christian discourse creation in early colonial Highland Guatemala. The Maya highlands were one of the first regions in the Americas where native languages were used in the Christianisation of the indigenous population. Mendicant

1 I would like to thank Garry Sparks and Harald Grauer for their comments and helpful observations on this paper.
Friars of the Dominican and the Franciscan orders were the main agents in the linguistic conversion of the Highland Maya. Both orders developed different approaches to communicating the new faith and responding to indigenous religious conceptualisations which will be the subject of the present article.

Members of the clergy had begun the task of conversion and the study of the *linguas francas* of the region shortly after the Spanish invasion in 1524. The Church was formally founded in Guatemala with the appointment of the first bishop Francisco Marroquín in 1530. The mendicant orders established themselves at the new Spanish capital of Santiago de los Caballeros soon thereafter. The Dominicans under Bartolomé de Las Casas became instrumental in the pacification of those parts of the Highlands that were still resisting Spanish control. In the early 1540s, Las Casas sent a small group of friars to Tuzulutlán, the ‘land of war’, where they – with the help of indigenous converts – preached and sang the gospel to the local lords and population in their own language, winning them over for a new God and a new king (Biermann 1971). In his flowery description, the chronicler Antonio Remesal ([1619–20] 1964, vol. 1: 215) claims that it was in preparation for this so-called ‘peaceful conquest’ of the region today called the *Verapaz* (‘true peace’) when Dominican friars for the first time produced doctrinal songs and sermons in a Highland Mayan language.

The mendicants brought their greatest language talents from Spain to serve in the mission and translate Christianity into the indigenous vernaculars. Domingo de Vico, who was recruited by Las Casas in 1544, allegedly learned very quickly seven Mayan languages. Besides catechisms, sermons and other doctrinal texts, these missionary linguists wrote grammars and compiled dictionaries which were used in the language instruction of new friars who arrived in Central America to serve in the mission. Language ‘description’ and religious ‘prescription’ were a simultaneous process, in the course of which doctrinal and descriptive materials were constantly corrected, modified and refined.

The corpus of missionary materials in the closely-related languages K’iche’ and Kaqchikel is particularly rich. The Franciscans concentrated their linguistic efforts in the Kaqchikel-speaking areas and the vicinities of the Spanish centres, while the Dominicans continued to dominate the conversion in the more remote K’iche’ and Q’eqchi’-speaking central and eastern highlands. Both orders produced extensive doctrinal and descriptive materials in all three languages. The Franciscans focused in particular on the compilation of dictionaries and grammars, turning Kaqchikel into the *lingua franca* for language description. Many of these sources survive today in archival collections in the United States and Europe, where we also find...
doctrinal texts, including catechisms, hymns, sermons and theological treatises. This rich corpus of missionary materials of Dominican and Franciscan origin make Highland Guatemala a unique place for studying the divergences in the process of creating a Christian register.

2 The multivocalities of translation

Franciscans and Dominicans had opposing views of the correct translation of the Christian doctrine into the Highland Mayan languages which are manifested in the texts produced by members of both orders (Sachse 2016, in press).

Descriptive and doctrinal writings of Franciscan origin show a clear tendency to translate Christian concepts by creating neologisms. Such new terminology was either directly borrowed from Spanish or Latin, literally translated from Spanish, Latin or Hebrew into Mayan, e.g. Lat. *bene-dicere* ['speak-well'], ‘to bless’, was rendered in K’iche’ as *utz b’ij*2 ['good speak'] (*Anonymous Franciscan Dictionary* 1787: fol. 36v), or it was paraphrased. Descriptive paraphrases have been explained by William Hanks (2010: 157–164) as one of the principles of the “commensurate” approach to translating Christianity. By describing the Christian practice, the missionaries created a new term along with an explanation of its meaning. The concept of baptism, for instance, was rendered into K’iche’ as *uqajik ja’*, ‘the descending of the water’ (*Anonymous Franciscan Dictionary*, fol. 36r). This principle of “transparency”, as Hanks calls it, is applied in the missionary writings of both mendicant orders, but it is the Franciscan material which uses these transparent descriptive phrases more widely.

Unlike the Franciscans, the Dominican authors only introduced neologisms where they were inevitable and instead favoured a strategic appropriation of terms from Highland Maya religion. Jesús García Ruiz has argued that for the Dominicans the adoption of religious terminology from native religion was a necessary prerequisite to successful conversion that was based on their adherence to scholastic realism. Here concepts were understood to be autonomous and detached from their linguistic representation, which permitted the substitution of the Latin with the K’iche’ term, as both terms referred to the same essential concept (García Ruíz 1992: 92).

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2 Original spellings have been modernised in the present chapter and are set in italics. Translations into English are my own and in simple inverted commas. Double inverted commas are only used for literal quotations.
The Franciscans, on the other hand, stood in the nominalist tradition, according to which concepts were tied to their linguistic representation, or name, which implied that Christian concepts were not to be translated with terms from the indigenous religious context without leading to misunderstanding and heresy (García Ruiz 1992: 92–93). Accordingly, Franciscan authors preferred the introduction of neologisms.

While García Ruiz sees these differences in translation as the result of fundamentally different theological-philosophical orientations of both mendicant orders, Sparks has suggested that the different approaches are better explained by different academic traditions. He sees the Dominican approach as coming out of the Thomistic-humanistic school that was founded by Francisco de Vitoria at the University of Salamanca (Sparks in press). The ‘School of Salamanca’ combined the scholasticism of Aquinas with the cultural traits of Renaissance humanism which included the study of Classical languages, translation and applied logic (Valenzuela-Vermeiren 2013: 113–114, Sparks in press). Sparks argues that the Salamanca tradition of thought was brought to the Guatemalan field of the mission primarily by the aforementioned Domingo de Vico.

Vico is the author of the first Christian theology of the Americas. The Theologia Indorum, ‘Theology for the Indians’, was written entirely in K’iche’ between 1550–54 and is to current knowledge the longest colonial-era text ever composed in an indigenous American language (Sparks 2011, in press; Sparks et al. 2017: 25–46).3 The opus magnum originally comprised two volumes of 217 lengthy chapters, covering more than 400 folios, which survive today in form of various partial copies, including sixteenth-century translations into Kaqchikel, Tz’utujil and Q’eqchi’. While the first volume includes contents of the Old Testament and the second volume contents of the New Testament, the Theologia Indorum is not a translation or paraphrase of the Bible, but an original text that was written for a K’iche’-speaking audience or readership. Vico describes in detail the concepts of the Christian faith, strategically taking terms from K’iche’ religious discourse and matching them with a Christian concept to explain the new or ‘real’ meaning to the converts. Vico’s attempt to find “commensurable” analogies between the Christian and the K’iche’ worldview probably originates from his education in Salamanca (Sparks in press).4

3 The details regarding Vico and his Theologia Indorum are based on Sparks (2011), Sparks et al. (2017) and Sparks (in press).
4 The Theologia Indorum has never been edited or translated. A translation of the first volume into English and Spanish is currently being elaborated in a collaborative project titled The Theologia Indorum: A Critical Translation of Friar Domingo de Vico’s...
The explicit references to concepts from Highland Maya religion that are refuted and dismantled in the *Theologia Indorum* suggest that Vico co-operated closely with indigenous converts.\(^5\) It is certain that the text had a wide distribution in the indigenous communities of the central highlands. In 1555, Vico was killed in the mission to the Acalán region. The appreciation the Highland Maya must have had for the Dominican friar can be read in several sixteenth-century indigenous títulos\(^6\) which lament his death and make reference to his work (Sparks 2011: 124-126; Sparks et al. 2017: 260-268, 276). The authors of the *Título de Totonicapán* embed entire passages from the *Theologia Indorum* into their native narrative of origin,\(^7\) carefully modifying Vico’s text to make it consistent with Highland Maya cosmology (Sparks 2016: 218–224; Sachse in press).

Of particular importance are intertextualities that Sparks identified between the *Theologia Indorum* and the *Popol Vuh* – the most famous colonial-era text left to us by authors of the K’iche’ elite. The *Popol Vuh* contains the mythologies of creation and origin of the K’iche’ people that were textualised between 1554–1558 from oral traditions by members of the former K’iche’ ruling elite. While the text has traditionally been understood as resistance writing and an indigenous refutation of Christianity (Dürr 1989; Tedlock 1996: 30), Sparks has recently argued – based on the analysis of intertextualities on the first folios of both texts – that it is moreover a direct response to the *Theologia Indorum* and the concept of a central sacred text (Sparks 2011: 36, 189; Sparks 2014b: 108–116).

These links between missionary and indigenous sources make the K’iche’ linguistic heritage a unique corpus for analysing the complexities of the religious encounter. In reconstructing concepts of pre-colonial religious belief, we can attempt to understand why Dominican authors like Vico adopted terminology from Highland Maya religious discourse and why Franciscan authors did not. In comparing how Dominican and Franciscan missionaries translated essential concepts of Christian divinity into


\(^{6}\) Títulos are historiographical documents written by indigenous authors to state the rights of indigenous communities to land and resources (e.g. Carmack 1973; Matsumoto 2016).

K’iche’, we can discuss whether the different approaches to translation also resulted in distinct understandings of Christianity. This chapter will specifically analyse Dominican and Franciscan renderings of the name of God and the Trinity.

3 Naming God

The opposing mendicant positions on translation first became apparent in a dispute that ignited in Mexico after the publication of the *Doctrina christianae breve* in 1546 (García Ruiz 1992: 89–90). Cause of the dispute was the translation of the word for ‘God’ in the catechism written by the Franciscan Alonso de Molina. The Dominicans criticised the use of the Spanish term *Dios* and instead favoured the K’iche’an reference to divine beings: *k’ab’awil* (K’iche’) or *k’ab’owil* (Kaqchikel). This was unacceptable to the Franciscans, as this term referred to the effigies of stone and wood the Highland Maya were making offerings to and was thus utterly unsuitable as a reference to the transcendental Christian God (ibid. 93). The dispute was decided by bishop Francisco Marroquín who banned the use of the term *k’ab’awil* which was instead designated to mean ‘idol’. The following entry from the *Vocabulario copioso*, recently identified as a Franciscan source (Dürr and Sachse eds. 2017: 23–26; Sachse 2018), also includes the derived transitive verb *k’ab’owilaj* which is translated as ‘to worship idols’.

4abouil. estatua, o Ydolo. 4abovilah. … idolatrar. xqui4abouilah che abah. … ab4abouil. el idolatra que tiene idolos, y los reberencia.

*k’ab’owil* [deity/god] statue or idol. *k’ab’owilaj* [to worship deity/god] … worship idols. *xkik’ab’owilaj che’ ab’aj* [they worshipped wood and stone]. *ajk’ab’owil* [master of deity/god] the idolator, who has idols and venerates these.

(*Vocabulario copioso*, fol. 239v)

Dominican sources likewise give the terms *k’ab’awil* and *k’ab’awilaj* with references to idols and idolatry. In the first volume of the *Theologia Indo-rum*, Vico instructs the Highland Maya not to refer to the Christian God as *k’ab’awil* and uses the term instead in association with the Devil (*k’axtok*) (ch. 94), Hell (*xib’alb’a*) (ch. 28), various Highland Maya deities (ch. 25) as well as in reference to the biblical Baal and the idolatrous practices in

8 Basseta [1698: fol. 85r], 2005: 191; Ximénez 1704–1714: fol. 22r.
Babylon (chs. 92 and 95). In chapter 25, Vico explains the difference between God and the *k'ab'awil* (Sparks 2011: 173–174; Sparks et al. 2017: 103–120). The following paragraph clearly states that God must not be ‘equated’ (*junamaj*, Span. *emparejar*, Basseta [1698: fol. 60v], 2005: 145) with the *k'ab'awil* which is nothing but ‘stone and wood’.

“*Ma chutzin pa la chijunamaj Dios Nim Ajaw ruk’ k’ab’awil. Are’ ri’ kixcha’. ‘A k’o’i wi chiqataqeaj. Mare ri k’ab’awil, mare on Dios?’ kixcha’. Keje’ ri mawi usuk’ulikil tzij kaqab’ij chiwe kina’o. Xa loq’ chisilob’ ik’u’x runal xa ab’aj xa che’ k’ab’awil kixcha’ chire. Are’ ri’ ab’aj che’, jiyub’ taq’aj, k’ab’awil kixcha’ chire.

“It is not possible that God the Great Lord can be equated with *k’ab’awil*?" This is what you say. “Is there one who we shall obey? Is it the *k’ab’awil* or God?” you say. It is not like the word of truth that we tell you, what you feel? For nothing will it move your heart, since only stone, only wood is the *k’ab’awil* that you speak to. He is stone and wood, the Juyub’ Taq’aj [the Earth Deity’s name], the *k’ab’awil* that you speak to.


Vico uses the concept of *ab’aj che’,* ‘stone and wood’, to argue that the *k’ab’awil* cannot emotionally affect the human being. In identifying *Juyub’ Taq’aj* – the ‘earth deity’ (or *mundo*) the K’iche’ venerate to the present day9 – as *ab’aj che’,* Vico shows that he understands the meaning of the term *k’ab’awil* as referring not only to effigies but also to transcendent divine agents (cf. Sparks 2011:174).10 Michael Dürr has analysed the usage of *k’ab’awil* in the indigenous text sources and shows that the *Popol Vuh* uses the term to designate both, the patron deities of the K’iche’ lineages and their physical images as well as the mythological divinities of the Hero Twins. In the K’iche’ *titulos,* however, *k’ab’awil* refers exclusively to patron deities. No indigenous author adopts the Christian meaning of *k’ab’awil* as ‘idol’, nor does anyone associate the term with the underworld Xib’alb’a.


Vico clearly calls upon the K’iche’ not to continue worshipping the *k’ab’awil* and to follow only the Christian God. Sparks contends that Vico

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10 In a recent, yet unpublished paper, Sparks (2018) argues that Vico appropriated the emotional discourse that the K’iche’ used to refer to the *k’ab’awil* and applied it to the Christian God.
argues the worship of the *k’ab’awil* was only a recent development in the religious culture of the Highland Maya who originally adored only one god.¹¹ In his *Theologia Indorum* Vico ([1553] 1605, vol. I, cap. 25, fol. 35r) summarises his point of view in the following statement:

*Are’ chikanaj kanoq k’ab’awil are’ chiqataqej jun Dios Nim Ajaw. Ma pa mixtuub’ij mipuxita’o, majab’i k’ab’awil ojer. Xa k’a rotas k’a uwaqtas xtik-erisan k’ab’awil xicha’.*

It is that you should leave behind the *k’ab’awil*, it is that we follow one God, the Great Lord. Have I not just told you and have you not just heard that there was anciently no *k’ab’awil*? Only since the fifth generation, only since the sixth generation began the *k’ab’awil*, it is said.

The exact meaning of the expression ‘fifth/sixth generation’ is not entirely clear, though it may be connected to the argument Vico makes in chapter 105 that the indigenous population of the Americas were the lost tribes of Israel (cf. Sparks in press).

Thus, claiming that the Christian God and the one god the K’iche’ were venerating in their distant past were one and the same, Vico adopts terms from K’iche’ religious discourse to give God a name: *Dios Nim Ajaw*, ‘God the Great Lord’, and *Tz’aqol B’itol*, ‘Framer and Former’. In chapter 1 of the *Theologia Indorum*, Vico ([1553] 1605, vol. I, fol. 2r) explains that the missionaries from now on will be referring to God as ‘Framer Former’:

*Dios chuchaxik kumal oj padres Tz’aqol B’itol*

God will be called by us Fathers ‘Framer and Former’.

While this statement leaves room for speculation whether *Tz’aqol B’itol* may be a missionary invention, it is more likely that we are dealing with a Highland Maya concept. The term derives from the verbal parallelism *tz’aq b’it* ‘to frame, to form’ that is a metaphor for the concept of ‘creation’. Both the name *Tz’aqol B’itol* and the verbal parallelism are attested in the *Popol Vuh* and have been translated variously as ‘Maker Modeller’ (Tedlock 1996: passim), ‘Framer Shaper’ (Christenson 2003, 2004: passim) or ‘Formador Creador [former creator]' (Sam Colop 2008: passim).

In the *Popol Vuh*, *Tz’aqol B’itol* is used as an epithet of a pre-contact creator deity and mostly occurs in combination with the names of other deities, including *Tepew Q’ikumatz*, ‘Sovereign Quetzal-Serpent’,¹² *Alom*

¹² This translation follows Christenson (2004: passim).
K’ajolom, ‘Bearer Begetter’, the ancestral couple of Xpiyakok and Xmuqane, and the omnipotent deity Uk’u’x Kaj Uk’u’x Ulew, ‘Heart of Sky, Heart of Earth’ (Dürr 2015: 415–416). Dürr points out that this plurality of creators occurs exclusively in the Popol Vuh, while other títulos state that Tz’aqol B’itol was the name of the ‘one God’ that the K’iche’ had at their place of origin when they had only one language (ibid. 417–418). He identifies an almost identical statement in the Título de Pedro Velasco and the Popol Vuh that suggests ‘Framer Former’ and ‘Heart of Sky, Heart of Earth’ as epithets of the same “one God” rather than a reading for polytheism (Dürr 2015: 419).

Xawi jun kich’ab’al, ta xepetik chi releb’al q’ij, xawi Dios kak’isik’ij are’ na’tal chike ri utzij Tz’aqol B’itol Uk’u’x Kaj Uk’u’x Ulew

Only one language they had when they arrived from the place where the sun emerges, only God they called upon. This was their memory of the word of Framer and Former, of Heart of Sky, Heart of Earth.

(Título de Pedro Velasco, [1592]: fol. 1v, in Carmack and Mondloch 1989: 143)

Most interestingly, in the related passage from the Popol Vuh the authors seem to take up Vico’s argument for primeval monotheism and state that at their place of origin they did not yet pray to ‘wood and stone’.

Xa k’u jun kich’ab’al konojel. Maja chikisik’ijoq chee’ ab’aj. Are’ na’tal chikech ri utzij Tz’aqol B’itol, Uk’u’x Kaj, Uk’u’x Ulew.

Only one was the language of all of them. They would not yet call upon wood and stone. This was their memory of the word of Framer and Former, of Heart of Sky, Heart of Earth.

(Popol Vuh 1701–04, fol. 35r; translation from Christenson 2004: 165, modified)

Not only is this statement a further example of the previously mentioned intertextualities between the Popol Vuh and the Theologia Indorum which are discussed by Sparks; moreover, it shows how successful Vico’s strategy was in making the Highland Maya and the Christian narrative of origin compatible. The K’iche’ authors have not only accepted the ‘Framer For-

13 This translation follows Tedlock (1996: passim).
mer’, but furthermore associate the Christian God with the supreme deity of ‘Heart of Sky, Heart of Earth’. Although the ‘Heart of Sky, Heart of Earth’ is likely the closest analogy to the concept of an omnipotent god, Vico opted against adopting this name, as he must have thought it would probably result in an act of heresy.

Instead, Vico combined the name of the K’iche’ creator deity Tz’aqol B’itol with the other divine epithets Dios and Nim Ajaw, ‘Great Lord’. Dürr suggests that in doing so, Vico replicates the ‘polytheistic’ combination of several divine agents found in the Popol Vuh (Dürr 2015: 417–418). Sparks has argued before that in combining both names, Vico creates a univocal name for the Christian God that strategically mimics the couplets of Highland Maya ceremonial discourse (Sparks 2011: 167–168). While Sparks seems to imply that the ‘Great Lord’ may be a construct by Vico who tried to create a term that reflects his ‘commensurate’ approach to the mission, it is not entirely impossible that the term Nim Ajaw may likewise have been adopted from K’iche’ religious discourse. However, the sole, and therefore not very solid, indication for this is a reference in Las Casas’ Apologetica Historia Sumaria that before the Great Flood, the Highland Maya prayed to a divine couple named ‘great father and great mother’, which would translate into K’iche’ as nim qajaw nim chuch. Las Casas further assumes that the name of this ancient divine being was identical with the current name for God which could refer to either Tz’aqol B’itol or Nim Ajaw.

En el reino de Guatimala, donde tuvieron noticia del Diluvio, antes del, dicen algunos que tenían y adoraban por Dios al Gran Padre y a la Gran Madre que estaban en el cielo … del cual nombre agora no se acuerdan, pero que les parece que aquel nombre [es] lo que agora nosotros les decimos ser Dios.


Whether it was indeed Vico who introduced the names of Tz’aqol B’itol and Nim Ajaw into Christian discourse, or whether Dominican missionar-ies had used these terms prior the Vico’s arrival in Guatemala in 1545 is not entirely clear. Both terms occur in the K’iche’ version of the so-called Coplas, a 1567 copy of what may be the earliest doctrinal text from Guatemala:

Utz xril Dios Nim Ajaw
ronojel vk’asb’an
e jeb’elik e cha’om xeuxik
xepixabax k’ut rumal Dios

God the Great Lord was pleased
with all he had made
beautiful and pretty they turned out,
they were commanded by God.
“Give birth to yourself, multiply then, you shall populate earth and water”
were told all the animals
by Framer and Former

(K’iche’ Coplas 1567, cap. II, fol. 18v)

Manuscript 1015 from the Kislak collection of the Library of Congress is a mid-sixteenth-century missionary handbook containing a collection of different texts in various Highland Mayan languages. The core section has recently been identified as a K’iche’ version of the very hymns that were written by Luis de Cáncer for Las Casas’ mission of the Verapaz (Sparks and Sachse 2017). The Coplas have previously only been known in Q’eqchi’ in a seventeenth-century manuscript of the Newberry Library (Romero 2017). The original version was likely written in Q’eqchi’, the language of the Verapaz region. However, the surviving Q’eqchi’ and K’iche’ texts clearly deviate. The Q’eqchi’ version is less complete and less elaborate in its terminology. Equivalent Q’eqchi’ terms for ‘God, the Great Lord’ and ‘Framer Former’ are not used. Benno Biermann (1971: 466) claimed that Vico translated and expanded Cáncer’s original Coplas into other Highland Mayan languages. Ennio Bossú (1986: 196) even argues that Cáncer’s authorship was a misattribution and that the Coplas were in fact composed by Vico himself. Although there is no solid evidence for the latter, Vico’s association with this text might suggest that he was indeed the one who introduced both terms into doctrinal discourse.

The utilisation of the term Tz’aqol B’itol clearly marks doctrinal material as Dominican. Franciscan texts, such as the Vocabulario 4iche otlatecas in Berlin (Dürr and Sachse 2017), the Anonymous Franciscan Dictionary (Sachse 2009) do not include a single reference to the ‘Framer Former’. Although the name Dios Nim Ajaw also occurs in sources of Franciscan authorship, e.g. in Maldonado’s Libro de sermones varios en lengua quiche (1690), their writings generally show a more consistent use of the simple Spanish term Dios. Franciscan authors also tend to use the expressions Dios Qajawixel, ‘God Father’, and Qanimajawal Dios, ‘Our Great Lordship of God’, more frequently than Dominicans do. Though systematic and statistical analysis of the doctrinal sources is still pending, the missionary texts of both orders seem to reproduce the initial conflict about the translation of the name of God until well into the 18th century.
The different approaches to translation also manifest themselves in the renderings of the concept of the Trinity in Dominican and Franciscan doctrinal writings. The misunderstandings that resulted from the translation of this complex concept into languages spoken by people with a worldview that involved a “multiplicity of deities” have been previously discussed (Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz 2016). Confronted with the pluralistic reality of Highland Maya religion, the missionaries of both mendicant orders made a great effort in explaining that there is only one God. The following example from a Franciscan catechism named *Nabe Tihonic* (*nab’e tijonik*, ‘first lessons’) illustrates that one of the initial questions of the doctrinal dialogue regarded the number of God(s).

**Preg. Jarupa Dios kakojo?**  
**Resp. Xa junq Dios kanukojo.**

*A: Only one God I believe in.*

*(Nabe Tihonic 18th century: 5)*

In his *Theologia Indorum*, Vico ([1553] 1605, vol. I, cap. 25, fol. 33v) explains the nature of the ‘one God’ for whom he adopts the name from the K’iche’ language:

*K’olik xa jun Dios, Nim Ajaw, Tz’aqol B’itol ub’i chupam ich’ab’al.*

There is only one God, the Great Lord, Tzaqol B’itol is his name in your language.

In the following passage from chapter 47 of the *Theologia Indorum*, Vico states that there is “only one God … not two or three” and refers to God the Great Lord as “our mother, our father” (see Sparks 2011: 220).

*Xa jun qachuch qaqaqaw Dios Nim Ajaw mawi ka’ib’ mawi oxib’ ...*

Only one is our mother, our father, God, the Great Lord, not two, not three ...


Vico’s description of God as “our mother, our father” seems to be a clear violation of Christian belief. Not only because the Christian conceptualisation of God is exclusively male, but also because the parallelism *chuch qa-jaw*, ‘mother, father’, likely reminded the Highland Maya of the venerated ancestral creator couple Xmuqane and Xpiyakok, who according to the
Popol Vuh were the grandparents of the Hero Twins and the creators of mankind. The Highland Maya conceptualisation of these creator deities combines both gender aspects, with the female aspect usually mentioned in initial position. This multiplicity of divine agents was explained by Vico as being “only one”, which must have been as confusing to the K’iche’ converts as the concept of the Trinity.

With regard to renderings of the Trinity in K’iche’, the differences of Dominican and Franciscan translation principles are less clear cut, although the Dominican material seems to show again a greater tendency for embedding terminology from K’iche’ ritual discourse. In the Theologia Indorum, we find a translation of the Trinity as Dios Qajawixel, ‘God Father’, Dios K’ajolaxel, ‘God Son’, and Dios Uxlab’ixel, ‘God Spirit’:

\[ Xa \ jun \ Dios \ Nim \ Ajaw, \]
\[ chuk’oje’ik \ oxib’ \ pu \ uwinaqil. \]
\[ Qajawixel \ K’ajolaxel \ Uxlab’ixel \ chuchaxik. \]
\[ Xa \ jun \ Dios \ Nim \ Ajaw \]
\[ jujun \ chi \ winaq. \]
\[ xa \ jun \ Dios \ roxichal \]

only one is God the Great Lord, and he shall be three personages;\(^\text{14}\) Father, Son, Spirit is he called. Only one God, the Great Lord, is each person, only one God is the threesome.

\( \text{(Vico [1553] 1605, vol. I, cap. 33)} \)

Whilst the terms qajaw-ixel, ‘father’, and k’ajol-axel, ‘son’, are straightforward, some attention needs to be paid to the rendering of the Holy Spirit as uxlab’-ixel. In modern K’iche’, the noun uxlab’ means ‘breath’ and the abstractive form uxlab’al, ‘spirit, soul’ or ‘scent’ (Christenson s/a). Franciscan and Dominican dictionaries give the root uxlab’ as ‘breath’ (e.g. Basseta [1698: fol. 13r], 2005: 60) and ‘smell, stench’ (Vocabulario en lengua 4iche otlatecas: fol. 197r, Dürr and Sachse eds. 2017: 154). Combined with the noun ab’, ‘respiration’, uxlab’ is also associated with supernatural agency. In several Franciscan dictionaries, the expression ab’uxlab’ is translated as ‘angel’ (Anonymous Franciscan Dictionary 1787: fol. 21v) or ‘celestial spirit’ (Vocabulario en lengua 4iche otlatecas: fol. 1r, Dürr and Sachse eds. 2017: 73). In contrast, Basseta ([1698: fol. 113r], 2005: 240) translates ab’uxlab’ also as ‘honour’, which seems to be the meaning Vico applies in the following phrase: chinimaj chiwalaj k’o ta rab’ k’o ta ruxlab’ chik’u’x, ‘you shall

\[ 14 \text{ The abstractive noun uwinaqil is derived from the noun winaq ‘person, human’ and literally reads as “its person-ness” which is rendered here as “personage”.} \]
obey, you shall bear that there is honour in your heart’ ([1553] 1605, vol. I, cap. 2, fol. 4v).

The rendering of *uxlab’* as ‘Holy Spirit’ is rare, although it is used in the *Theologia Indorum* (see above) and in the *Vocabulario en lengua 4iche olaltecas* (fol. 197r, see Dürr and Sachse eds. 2017: 154). In all attested cases, *uxlab’* is marked with the absolutive suffix -iixel used for terms which indicate inalienably possessed kinship relations, and which also occurs with the other divine entities of the Trinity, the ‘father’ and the ‘son’. Basseta ([1698: fol. 69v], 2005: 159) lists the entry *Dios uxlab’inel ‘espiritu sancto* [Holy Spirit]’ which is an agentive form of the antipassive verb *uxlab’in*, ‘to breathe’, and literally means ‘God Breather’. The choice of the term *uxlab’ixel* in the Dominican sources is likely rooted in Aquinas’ Trinitarian theology that takes up Augustine of Hippo’s understanding of the Trinity as a unity of ‘three persons’ and defines their relations by ‘begottenness’ and ‘spiration’, with the Son being ‘begotten’ by the Father and the Holy Spirit being ‘spirated’ by the first and the second person (McCabe 2002: 51; Long 2016: 53–55).

It is possible that the missionaries used the term as a descriptive paraphrase. It is unclear whether any of the friars were aware of the Mesoamerican concept of a ‘breath soul’ widely described in the ethnographic literature on the Maya (e.g. Guiteras Holmes 1961: 296) and can be traced back well into the Classic period (Taube 2004:70–73; Fitzsimmons 2009: 25–39). Vico may have been aware of the problematic substitution of ‘Holy Spirit’ with *uxlab’*, as he also frequently uses the Spanish loan. However, it has to be noted that in later Franciscan catechisms the term *uxlab’ixel* was replaced with *Espiritu Santo*, as illustrated by the following example from the *Nabe Tihonic* (18th century: 5–6):

**Preg. Apachinaq Santisima Trinidad?**
**Resp. Dios Qajawixel, Dios K’ajolaxel, Dios Espiritu Santo**
**Preg. Dios pa la qajawixel?**
**Resp. Dios na k’ut.**
**Preg. Dios pa la k’ajolaxel?**
**Resp. Dios na k’ut.**
**Preg. Dios pa la Espiritu Santo?**
**Resp. Dios na k’ut**
**Preg. E oxib’ pa la ri Dios?**
**Resp. Xa junqu Dios koxichal personas.**

Q: Who is the Holy Trinity?
A: God Father, God Son, God Holy Spirit
Q: God is Father?
A: God surely, he is.
Q: God is Son?
A: God surely, he is.
Q: God is Holy Spirit?
A: God surely, he is.
Q: Are there three Gods?
A: Only one God are the threesome persons.

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In the statement about the Trinity from the doctrinal dialogue, the expression *koxichal* in the last line deserves particular attention. The root -*ichal* is a numeral classifier that counts togetherness of persons as in *kab’-ichal* [2-some] ‘twosome, both’, *ox-ichal* [3-some] ‘threesome, three together’, *kaj-ichal* [4-some] ‘foursome, four together’ etc. In the example from the *Nabe Tibonic*, the form is combined with the numeral *ox*, ‘three’, and the required third person plural possessive marker. *Koxichal personas* can be literally translated as ‘they are threesome persons’. The numeral classifier is also found in the Dominican sources, where it is, however, always marked with the third person singular *r-ox-ichal*, ‘its threesome’. In the *Theologia Indorum* (see reference from chapter 33 above) and the aforementioned K’iche’ *Coplas*, the Trinity is explained as *xa jun Dios roxichal* ‘only one God is the threesome’:

*Xa jun Dios Tz’aqol B’itol*                                      *Only one God is Framer and Former,*
*ki Dios Qajaxixel*                                                *they are God Father,*
*Dios K’ajoxixel*                                                  *God Son,*
*Dios k’ut Spiritu Santo*                                          *and God Holy Spirit,*
*xa jun Dios roxichal*                                             *only one God is the threesome.*

(*K’iche’ Coplas 1567, fol. 55v*)

From the perspective of a native K’iche’ speaker, the Dominican translation of *roxichal* seems to communicate the concept of the union of the Trinity more clearly. The use of the third person singular possessive prefix indicates that God Father, God Son and the Holy Spirit form a unity, while the Franciscan use of the third person plural suggests a plurality that could not have been intended by the mendicant authors. Furthermore, the above cited passage from the *Theologia Indorum* describes the Trinity as *ox-ib’ uwinaqil* ‘three personages’. Vico’s use of the abstractive form *uwinaqil* is significant. The noun *winaq* ‘person’ is used in K’iche’ to refer to both humans and deities. It appears that Vico introduces the abstractive to avoid any confusion between the Trinity and ordinary humans. Franciscan authors, in contrast, avoided any use of the term *winaq* in association with the Trinity. The Franciscan grammarian Bartholomé de Anleo expresses explicit concern for the translation of the Trinity as *oxib’ winaq* ‘three persons’:

… *oxib uinak*, tres personas, y esto no se debe ussar quando se hablare en el sacrosanto e inefable misterio de la santissima Trinidad, sino que se debe quitar esta palabra *uinak*, que es nombre copulativo, que tiene diversas significaciones y ambiguas.
… *oxib’ winaq*, three persons, and this must not be used when talking about the sacrosanct and ineffable mystery of the Holy Trinity, rather one needs to eliminate the word *winaq* which is a copula noun that has various and ambiguous meanings.

(Anleo [1744: fol. 12v, 2002: 44]

In accordance with Anleo’s explanation, the author of the *Nabe Tibonic* uses the Spanish term *personas*. In this case, probably neither the Dominican nor the Franciscan translation avoided confusion or helped in clarifying the nature of the Trinity.

## 5 Conclusions

Dominican and Franciscan authors handled the translation of Christian divinity into K’iche’ differently. In the Dominican material concepts of Highland Maya divinities were appropriated and embedded in Christian discourse which may be the result of Vico’s approach to translation. To fully comprehend the multivocalities of the mendicant translations, they need to be placed in the context of what is understood about pre-contact Highland Maya religion.

The Mesoamerican conceptualisation of divinity was inherently different from the Christian monotheistic worldview. Usually characterised as polytheistic, the Maya venerated a multiplicity of divine agents, including deities, ancestors and malevolent spirits (Cook 1986), but the precise nature and interactions of these supernatural agents are still not well understood. The *Popol Vuh* lists invocations of multiple agents that act together in the creation of the world and humankind:

*Awaxib’al, saqirib’al rumal. Tz’aqol B’itol, Alom K’ajolom, kib’I’. Junajpu Wuch’ Junajpu Utiw, Saqi Nim Aq Sis, Tepew Q’ukumatz, Uk’u’x Cho Uk’u’x Palow, Ajraxalaq Ajraxasel chuchaxik.*

It is the sowing and the dawning by them. Framer and Former, Bearer and Begetter, are their names. First Hunter of Possum and First Hunter of Coyote, White Great Peccary and Coati, Sovereign and Quetzal Serpent, Heart of Lake and Heart of Sea, Master of the Green Plate, Master of the Blue Bowl, as they are called.

(*Popol Vuh* 1701-04, fol. 1r; translation from Christenson 2004: 13–14, modified)
It remains a conundrum whether these are the names of individual supernatural beings or epithets of one and the same deity. Thus, there is no conclusive solution for the precise reading of this passage. Does each name refer to one individual divine agent (i.e. Alom ‘Bearer’ and K’ajolom ‘Begetter’)? Or do the parallelisms have one reference each (i.e. Alom K’ajolom ‘Bearer-Begetter’), as suggested in the translation above? Similar questions are posed by the Classic Maya record, where the precise meaning of “thesynthetic” representations of Maya divinities in image and text remains unclear (Martin 2015). Did the Highland Maya indeed believe in a pantheon of individual deities? Or was the ontological reality of pre-Christian religion much closer to the perspectivist nature of Amazonian cosmology (Viveiros de Castro 1998)? Understanding the pre-contact worldview seems to be the necessary prerequisite to fully appreciate the impact these conceptualisations may have had on mendicant translations.

For instance, Vico’s understanding of the K’iche’ term k’ab’awil as a reference to both effigies and transcendent beings seems to be confirmed by a thorough analysis of the comparable term k’uh in the Classic Maya hieroglyphic record (Prager 2013). Christian Prager shows that Late Classic monumental texts and the Codex Madrid clearly differentiate between supernatural agents that have a cognitive and biological capacity and their physical representations that were formed from clay, wood or stone, and could be possessed, dressed and fed. A reaction from the supernatural agent was evoked by manipulation of the image. In the Postclassic Codex Dresden the term k’uh is used exclusively as a reference to a physical object (Prager 2013: 657). This is interesting inasmuch as it seems to indicate that Postclassic religious culture in the Maya area paid more attention to the material reifications of divine agents than on their supernatural reality, which may also be reflected in the Highland Maya adoration of the k’ab’awilab’ of wood and stone.

This comparison with the hieroglyphic record illustrates the value of the missionary source materials for the reconstruction of pre-contact Maya religion. In seeking analogies between both belief systems, the Dominican approach to translation reproduced the concepts of Highland Maya religion within the framework of the Catholic faith. Whether translation indeed resulted in the continuation of ancient Maya divinities remains to be proven, but we may assume that the different mendicant responses to indigenous conceptualisations almost certainly resulted in different understandings of Christian concepts.

15 For a more detailed discussion of this issue see Dürr (2015).
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Christological Marathi in *Cristanchi Sastrazza Cathexismo* (1778)

Pär Eliasson

Abstract

In this article, I analyse the theological language of a bilingual Catholic catechism from 1778, written in Portuguese and a Marathi dialect from northern Konkan, India. The Portuguese title of the catechism is *Cathechismo da Doutrina Cristam* and the Marathi title *Cristanchi Sastrazza Cathexismo*. The author is unknown. More specifically, I concentrate on terms and phrases used for expressing ideas about Christology in the Marathi text, and try to find potential points of encounter with forms of religious language in influential Hindu traditions in the Marathi speaking region in western India, especially with *Jñāneśvarī* and the non-dualistic Vaiṣṇavite Vārkarī movement on the one hand, and *Gurucaritra* and the three-headed god Dattātreya on the other. The catechism apparently follows an already established practice of rendering Christian theology in the sister languages Marathi and Konkani. One criterion for choices between (1) Indic words, (2) Portuguese loan words and (3) Marathi paraphrase for various theological concepts seems to be desired efficiency to communicate the intended meaning without provoking misunderstandings due to association with ideas belonging to worldviews incompatible with the intended one. [*Indian Christian writings; Marathi; Hindu-Christian encounters; religious terminology; translation*]

1 Introduction

The aim of this article is to analyse how an eighteenth century Catholic catechism from western India presents Christological ideas in Marathi, a Southern Indo-Aryan language with almost 75 million speakers mainly in and around Maharashtra in western India (Simons and Fennig 2018). The catechism in question is the *Cathechismo da Doutrina Cristam* or *Cristanchi Sastrazza Cathexismo* (Anonymous 1778, abbreviated as CSC), written by an anonymous author in a dialect of Marathi spoken around Mumbai in

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the northern part of the section of the Indian west coast that is known as Konkan. The article will describe what the catechism says about Jesus’ divinity, identify crucial words and phrases, contrast them with their meaning and usage in certain Hindu discourses, and relate this to official Roman Catholic theology.

Hinduism is a large family of traditions with a considerable amount of religious literature and it is not possible to assess the usage of relevant words in all of these. Apart from occasional references to various sources, I have chosen two principal Hindu literary texts to embed this study in its Indian context. The first of these is the work known as Jñāneśvarī, written by Jñānadeva in the late thirteenth century (Jñānadeva [13th c.] 2012, cited as Jñāneśvarī). Jñāneśvarī is a poetical, roughly 10,000 verses-long commentary of the Bhagavadgītā in Marathi. As stated in the text itself, it can be used either as a commentary or enjoyed in itself, without the Sanskrit original (Jñāneśvarī XVIII.1720). It is probably no exaggeration to say that Jñāneśvarī is the most influential religious work so far written in Marathi. Its author, Jñānadeva, is regarded as the one who has laid the foundation for Marathi literature as such, as well as for the Vārkarī movement that gives Maharashtrian religiosity much of its characteristic flavour. The latter is a Vaiṣṇavaite bhakti movement centred on the deity Viṭṭhal of the south-west Maharashtrian town of Pandharpur, but with a rather radical non-dualism (advaita) at its philosophical core. Jñāneśvarī is suitable for this study on the one hand because of its general impact on the Hindu religious literature in Marathi. On the other hand, it was also known to Roman Catholic missionaries in western India from early on and it is therefore reasonable to assume that the author of the catechism was to some extent familiar with it (Falcao 2003: 13).

Apart from Jñāneśvarī and the Vārkarī movement, I will consider the potentially interesting point of encounter between the Christian concept of the Holy Trinity and the locally popular Hindu god Dattātreya. The three-headed Dattātreya is regarded as the trimūrti (literally ‘[having] three forms’) of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. He is worshipped by various religious groups in Maharashtra and neighbouring regions and is the central deity for the Datta Sampradāya (Rigopoulos 1998). The basic religious text for

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1 The dating of Jñāneśvarī is based partly on statements in the text itself (Jñāneśvarī XVIII.1792; Tulpule 1979: 330).

2 Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from Sanskrit, Marathi, Konkani and Portuguese are my own. Indian and Portuguese language texts are in italics, my translations into English in simple inverted commas; double inverted commas are only used for literal quotations.
the modern Dattātreya cult is the Gurucaritra, written in Marathi in the middle of the sixteenth century by Sarasvatī Gaṅgadhar (Rigopoulos 1998: 109; cf. Tulpule 1979: 353). Better known to the Catholic missionaries, however, was perhaps Yogarājaṭīlaka, written by Amṛtānanda around 1540 and known as ‘the book of god Dattātreya’ which was according to Tulpule (1979: 364) rendered into Portuguese in 1560 by Fr. Francisco Roiz.

2 Cristanchi Sastrazza Cathexismo in context

Although I do not know any earlier catechism written in the same dialect, Cristanchi Sastrazza Cathexismo apparently stands in a then already at least about 200-year old tradition of Christian writing in Marathi and its sister language Konkani. The centre of this tradition was Goa, colonised by Portugal from the sixteenth century onwards. The first great Christian author in both the languages was the English Jesuit Thomas Stephens.3

Goa was colonized by the Portuguese from the beginning of the sixteenth century, and the Portuguese rule went hand in hand with an intensive Roman Catholic mission. During the sixteenth century, four Provincial Councils were held in Goa, as requested by the Council of Trent, 1545–1563 (Wicki 1963: 243). In the proceedings of the first of these Provincial Councils (ação 2, decreto 5, in Manso 1872: 7), which was held in 1567, it was stated that preachers should know the language of the people. Similar statements were made in the following three councils in 1575, 1585 and 1592. In the proceedings of the fifth Provincial Council of 1606, it was stipulated that the superior vicar in every village church had to sit an exam to prove his proficiency in the local language, and those already

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3 Thomas Stephens S. J. (1549–1619), author of a biblical Marathi epic known as Kristapurāṇa ([1616] 2009), the Konkani catechism Doutrina Christam em lingoa Bramana Canarim (1622) and a Konkani grammar (1640), lived in India from 1579 until his death in 1619. Later he became an important person in the Jesuit mission in Goa, where he stayed for the entire period, except for one year at Basein College north of Mumbai (Falcao 2003: 7–10). Stephens’ work initiated a wave of Christian narrative literature in Marathi and Konkani (Tulpule 1979: 379–386). However, his influence probably reached far beyond the Marathi and Konkani speaking area, as all missionaries to the East Indies, except the Philippines, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had to travel to their final destination from Lisbon via Goa (Phan 1998: 40). For example, it has been proposed that his writing influenced Roberto Nobili’s writing in Tamil (Nardini 2017: 233).
holding such a position had to learn the local language within six months lest they would lose their office (acção 3, decreto 9, in Manso 1872: 123).

The local language meant on the one hand the literary language, i.e. literary Marathi, on the other hand the spoken dialects which varied geographically and according to caste. The dictionaries and grammars composed to help Europeans learn Indian languages mainly described the spoken language of the Brahmins.\(^4\) Apparently, the Provincial Councils’ language-learning requirements had effect, because from the end of the sixteenth century onwards a considerable amount of Christian literature was written in both Marathi and Konkani, mainly by Jesuits and Franciscans. These religious authors became pioneers of writing in Goan dialect, and although most of them were foreigners, their works are important sources for reconstructing the spoken language of the seventeenth century (Priolkar 1963: x, xiii–xiv).

At the third Provincial Council in 1585 (acção 2, decreto 25, in Manso 1872: 71), it was decreed that a catechism should be composed in Portuguese for translation into various local languages. It has been proposed that the *Doutrina Christam em lingoa Bramana Canarim*, the Konkani catechism written by the already mentioned Thomas Stephens and printed posthumously in the Jesuit College of Rachol in Goa in 1622 (Stephens [1622] 1945), is a translation of this catechism (Priyoḷakara 1964: ix).\(^5\)

The subject of this article is the less well-known bilingual catechism *Christanchi Sastrazza Cathexismo* (Anonymous 1778). It is written by an anonymous author in Portuguese and a Marathi dialect of northern Konkan,\(^6\) all in Roman script, and was printed at the press of Sagrada Con-

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\(^4\) E.g. in the *imprimatur* of Thomas Stephens’ *Arte da Lingoa Canarim* ([1640] 2012: 2), the language is described as *lingoa canarin bramana*.

\(^5\) However, I have not been able to verify this. Perhaps the writing of the catechism was belated or never realised, because in the fifth Provincial Council a similar decree was made anew (acção 2, decreto 25, in Manso 1872: 118). Stephens’ catechism, in fact, is obviously based on Marcos Jorge’s Portuguese *Doutrina Cristã* which was first published in Lisbon in 1566 and thereafter translated into several European and non-European languages (dos Santos 2016: 9, 14), among them Henrique Henriques’ Tamil translation from 1579 (Nardini 2017: 231). Perhaps the Portuguese catechism written in the wake of the third Provincial Council in Goa was an adaptation of Marcos Jorge’s already existing *Doutrina Cristã*.

\(^6\) In the *imprimatur* of *Christanchi Sastrazza Cathexismo*, Dom Eugenio Gomes, Sacerdote Portoghese di Goa, pratico in lingua Marastta, refers to the language simply as *lingua Marastta*, i.e. Marathi (CSC: 5).
gregação de Propaganda Fide in Rome in 1778. The book has 192 pages. Until page 173, the left side is in Portuguese and the right side in Marathi (Illustration 1), but the last pages are only in Portuguese.

Illustration 1: Anonymous: Cristanchi Sastrazza Cathexismo, Rome 1778
(Illustration digitised by Google)

Some features of the Marathi text seem to support the view that the author is a foreign missionary, probably Portuguese (M. Jośi 1962: 3–4; Moraje 1984: 27). Sometimes the Marathi text does not translate directly, but rather it sums up the meaning of the Portuguese text with reformulations, which according to Minâ Jośi can be taken as an indication that the author had learnt Marathi as a foreign language (M. Jośi 1962: 3–4). I do not know exactly which passages Jośi had in mind, but probably such as Português o misterio da Encarnação, translated as Deu Putra Manùx zallà (‘God the Son became a human being’) in the Marathi text (CSC 14–15). However, I think that these reformulations are not to blame on lacking lan-

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7 For this study, I have used a scanned version of the original edition of Christanchi Sastrazza Cathexismo, digitised in 2006 from a copy of New York Public Library. Another copy is held by the Vatican Library, catalogued as Mai.X.D.I.46, R.G.Liturg.V.887. Minâ Jośi edited the Marathi part of Christanchi Sastrazza Cathexismo in Devanagari transliteration, which was published in 1962 by Marathi Samshodhana Mandala in Mumbai.
language proficiency. Rather the author/translator judged that no single Marathi word would communicate the intended meaning of a certain term with satisfactory precision and therefore chose paraphrasing instead of literal translation. The focus of the following part of this article is precisely this, namely how Christological ideas are presented in the Marathi text, especially where associations with Hindu conceptions can be expected.

3 The Christology of Cristanchi Sastrazza Cathexismo

The following analysis of the theological language of Cristanchi Sastrazza Cathexismo will concentrate on propositions saying (1) that Jesus is both true God and true man, (2) that he is nevertheless only one person, (3) that he is present in the Eucharist, and finally, (4) passages explaining his role in the Holy Trinity. The Christological points and vocabulary are largely the same as in Thomas Stephens’ catechism, with small variations that can be attributed to dialectal differences. This indicates that a linguistic practice had become established, providing a terminological continuity since Stephens’ time.

3.1 ‘True God’ and ‘true man’

Cristanchi Sastrazza Cathexismo stresses that Jesus is God and man at the same time. It says that ‘Jesus Christ [is] true God and true human being’ (Jezus Christ sudà Parmeshòr, anim sudà manùx, CSC: 17). He is ‘God the Son’ (Putra Parmeshòr, CSC: 15). The word used for God here, translating Portuguese Deos, is Parmeshòr, a dialectal form of the Sanskrit word paramēśvara. The general meaning of paramēśvara in Marathi is ‘the Supreme Being’, although it is often used with particular reference to e.g. Viṣṇu or Śiva as supreme God. Saying that Jesus is paramēśvara is therefore a way of implying that he is the Supreme Being. The other word used for expressing that Jesus Christ is God (e.g. CSC: 15) is Deu (in standard Marathi deva) which, as a generic term for God/gods and in Hindu usage

8 The word sudà corresponds to Portuguese verdadeiro, i.e. ‘true’.

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can refer either to e.g. Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Being (Cf. e.g. Jñāneśvāri I.169, 193, 232, 242; III.1) or to any god.\(^9\)

However, whereas Christianity counts on a categorical difference between God and human being, this is not necessarily the case in Hinduism. In non-dualistic movements, like the Vārkarī movement, spiritual masters are often regarded as divine (cf. Tulpule 1984: 104ff.) and described as redeemers worthy of worship in a way similar to how Jesus is described in Christianity.\(^10\) The stronger the non-dualist tendency is, the thinner can we expect the line to be between human and divine. One can at the same time and with the same word deva refer to both the Supreme Being and the guru or Ganeśa (e.g. Jñāneśvāri XVIII.1–10). The seventeenth century Vārkarī poet Ekanātha (Ekanātha Gāthā no. 1818, in K. A. Jośi ed. 1967: 210) boldly writes about his guru Janārdana: ‘Guru [is the] Supreme Soul, Supreme God’ (guru paramātmā pareśu). In Sarasvatī Gaṅgadhar’s Gurucaritra, two thirds of the first chapter (I.46ff.) are devoted to praising the guru Nṛṣimha Sarasvatī. As a form of the god Dattātreya, he is honoured as ‘avatāra of the trimūrti’ (ibid. I.55), guruji traimūrti (I. 85; cf. I.86), ‘trimūrti [of three forms] Lord of the World’ (trayamūrti jagannātha, I.95), and with the acclamation: ‘You are the one God’ (tūci deva eka, I.108).\(^11\)

In a non-dualistic system, it is perhaps a matter of words if one describes a spiritual master as a human being who has realised divinity or as God taking human form. Both descriptions are valid, since the spiritual master is identical with God. In Catholic theology, however, a man cannot be strictly identical with God. The incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, where God not only appears as a human being but really becomes one, is unique.\(^12\) Cristanchi Sastrazza Cathexismo says:

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\(^9\) Cf. e.g. Jñāneśvāri I.136, where devas hear the war cries of at Kurukṣetra and think the end of the world has come (aisā adbhuta tūrāambahā/aikonī brahmā vyākuḷu/ deva mhanati prālayakāḷu/voḍhavālā ājī). Cf. also Jñāneśvāri I.157.

\(^10\) As an example, Jñānadeva says (Jñāneśvāri I.22) about his guru and elder brother Nivrūtnātha: ‘In my heart my sadguru, by whom I am saved from the flood of this world’ (maja hyrāyin sadguru/jenein tāriloṁ hā saṁsārapuru). Therefore (Jñāneśvāri I.25), ‘the wise should worship the guru’ (mhanoni jānateno guru bhajije).

\(^11\) Cf. the dialogue between Jesus and Peter in Matthew 16:15–16: “‘But what about you?’ he asked. ‘Who do you say I am?’ Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.’”.

\(^12\) Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994: 464): “The unique and altogether singular event of the Incarnation of the Son of God does not mean that Jesus Christ is part God and part man, nor does it imply that he is the result of a confused mixture of the divine and the human. He became truly man while remaining truly God. Jesus Christ is true God and true man.”.

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### Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portuguese</th>
<th>Translation PE</th>
<th>Marathi</th>
<th>Translation PE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P. Quae cousa he o misterio da Encarnação?</td>
<td>Teacher: What is the mystery of the Incarnation?</td>
<td>G. Deu Putra Manix zallà, mangè cay?</td>
<td>Teacher: God the Son became a human being, what does that mean?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. He o Filho de Deos, segunda pessoa da Santissima Trindade feito homem por nós.</td>
<td>Pupil: It is the second person in the most Holy Trinity made human for us.</td>
<td>X. Mange: Deu Bapazzà Putra, Dussrà zann màhà Pavitra Trindadàzzà zou viswa kartà vaimcut-ta natà, zou Deu àmàr, xàssvhat, manix bounn manixà passùn, ya mrute loukī allà.</td>
<td>Pupil: It means that the son of God the Father, the second person of the most Holy Trinity, the creator of the world and lord of vaikumîtha, immortal God, eternal, became a human being from a human being and came into this world of death.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is interesting to note that the Marathi text does not match totally with the Portuguese which in this case is much shorter. Presumably, the author did not find one-word terms in Marathi that corresponded to key concepts related to the incarnation and thought that the idea demanded more clarification for a Marathi speaking audience than for a Portuguese one.

The first thing to note is that there is no effort of giving a literal Marathi translation of o misterio da Encarnação (‘the mystery of Incarnation’). Instead, there is an explanation of the concept that God the Son became a human being (Deu Putra Manix zallà). Almost exactly the same formulation is used in Thomas Stephens’ Doutrina Christam ([1622] 1945: f. 23), although this particular passage has a variant of parameśvara instead of deva: “Paramesparacho putru […] mannussu zalo”.

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13 Cf. CSC: 167: Shat manitam ge Deu Putra ma Pavitra Trindadazza dussra Zann Manis Zailla […].
14 The differences in spelling are partly due to dialectal differences, partly to different systems for writing Indian languages in Roman script: Stephens’ ‘ss’ represents the same sound as ‘x’ in Cristanchi Sastrazza Cathexismo, and Stephens and his contemporaries used italics for short vowels.
The concept of the Incarnation is a highly specialized Christian theological concept, and apparently, the author found no Indian word that could communicate the concept with enough stringency. A word that he and his colleagues and predecessors may have considered but rejected for theological reasons would be *avatāra*. This is used for divine manifestations in Hinduism, especially the ten *avatāras* of Viṣṇu. Kṛṣṇa is regarded as an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, although he is also sometimes, e.g. in *Jñānēśvāri*, seen as the source of all *avatāras* (Sheth 2002: 99-100). There are no doubt similarities between the way God the Son incarnated as Jesus Christ is presented in Christian discourses and the way an *avatāra* like Kṛṣṇa is presented in some Hindu contexts. *Jñānēśvāri* (IV: 11–12) says that the Lord of the Universe (*jagādiśvāra*), ‘being without form, manifested himself’ (*amūrta hā ālāvyakti*) because of his love for Arjuna. Kṛṣṇa then talks about his own previous births as descending (*avatāreṁ*), saying: ‘Getting a form and descending, I destroy the darkness of ignorance’ (*mī sākārū hoūni avatāreṁ/ maga ajñānācem āndhāreṇi/ghālī, IV: 51). He ‘tears the record of fault’ (*dosāmcī lihilim phāḍīṁ*, IV.52) and ‘lights the lamp of discrimination’ (*pheḍūni vivekadīpa ujaḷīṁ*, IV.54). All these descriptions of Kṛṣṇa’s presence as *avatāra* could also apply to Jesus Christ.15

However, whereas Jesus Christ is said to be true God and true human being,16 it can be argued that Kṛṣṇa and other *avatāras* are understood as true God but only apparently human. Even if Kṛṣṇa’s manifestation in the world according to for example the *Bhagavadgītā* should be seen as real rather than illusory, as e.g. Sheth (2002: 98f.) argues, it is hard to see what that means in a context like that of *Jñānēśvāri*, with its strongly monistic or non-dualistic tendency (Tulpule 1979: 330). How can one distinguish between a real body and a merely illusory one within a non-dualistic paradigm? That being said, for Jñānadeva divinity and embodiment are not necessarily mutually exclusive. One who becomes as if bodiless already in this life, through attaining nonattachment to the fruit of actions (V.39),

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15 In John 8:12 (Bible 2011), Jesus says: “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” John 3:16 motivates God’s incarnation with love: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” The phrase *mājhe ajatve janmaneṁ* (‘my birth although unborn’) in *Jñānēśvāri* IV.58 bears similarity to *natum non factum* (‘begotten, not made’) in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (Tanner 1990: 23–24).

16 Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 464: “He became truly man while remaining truly God. Jesus Christ is true God and true man.”
becomes Brahman even though still in the body (Jñāneśvarī V.157). But, this being a real body or not, the authors of the Christian catechisms are careful to point out not that a man with a real body became God, but that God became a man with a real body. Presumably, they feared that the word avatāra would be unsuitable for communicating the ‘real-fleshiness’ of the incarnation, the idea that God thereafter was a human being in just the same way as we all are human beings, with a human body and a human soul. After all, the word ‘incarnation’ literally means ‘enfleshment’.

Christanchi Sastrazza Catheixismo stresses this by saying that the Son of God the Father (Deu Bapàzzà Putrà) took a body and soul like ours (Yek currha gheuna, anim yec atmã amachà sarcà, CSC 17). This real human body is then crucial for the way Jesus Christ saves humankind from sin and death, for unlike Kṛṣṇa and other Hindu saviours, the Christ of Christianity redeems not only through his power but also through his suffering, death and resurrection (Sheth 2002: 108). Reflecting Philippians 2:5–11, Christanchi Sastrazza Catheixismo stresses that Jesus is our Lord (suamy), precisely ‘because he saved us with his priceless blood’ (ou amazzà suamy, cam tiache amoulık ragtāxim amachy sorhawan khelly, CSC: 37).

In both the Old and the New Testament (Bible 2011), there are several accounts of theophanies or manifestations of God which are not regarded as incarnations, e.g. the burning bush (Exodus 3–4), the pillars of cloud and fire (Exodus 13:17–22), God on Mount Sinai (Exodus 34), the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove at the baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:16–17; Mark 1:10–11; Luke 3:21–22), and the light and voice at the conversion of St. Paul (Acts 9). Given the discussion above, these are maybe better analogues of the idea of avatāra than the incarnation itself is. However, the analogy is not total, as these theophanies are not attributed with the same kind of independence as avatāras usually are. For example, I have never heard of any Christian making the pillar of cloud or the Holy Spirit as the

18 Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 470: “Because ‘human nature was assumed, not absorbed’, in the mysterious union of the Incarnation, the Church was led over the course of centuries to confess the full reality of Christ’s human soul, with its operations of intellect and will, and of his human body. In parallel fashion, she had to recall … that Christ’s human nature belongs … to the divine person of the Son of God, who assumed it.”
20 The Portuguese (CSC 2:36) has: e que he nosso Senhor, pois que nos remio com o preço do seu sangue. Cf. Stephens [1622] 1945: f. 23.
dove his or her main object of worship, as Hindus do with Krṣṇa or Viṭṭhal.

A final thing worth noting in the passage above (CSC: 15) is that Jesus, like in Thomas Stephens’ Kristapurāṇa (e.g. II.7.80), is given the epithet vaimcutta natā (in standard Marathi vaikuṁṭha), i.e. the Lord of vaikuṁṭha, which in Hindu parlance is a name of Viṣṇu’s paradise. Vaikuṁṭhanātha and similar epithets usually refer to Viṣṇu in one form or another.21 By using this epithet for Jesus, the catechism enters a Vaiṣṇava discourse and, so to speak, tries to correct it by implicitly saying that although it is correct that vaikuṁṭha exists, its lord is not Viṣṇu but Jesus.

3.2 One person with two natures

Cristanchi Sastrazza Cathezismo points out that even though Jesus Christ is both parameśvara and human being, having both divinity and humanity, he is only one person.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CSC (16)</th>
<th>Translation PE</th>
<th>CSC (17)</th>
<th>Translation PE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P. Jesus Christo he verdadeiro Deos, e homem?</td>
<td>Teacher: Jesus Christ is true God and man?</td>
<td>G. Jezus Chris sudà Parmeshôr, anim sudà manûx?</td>
<td>Teacher: Jesus Christ [is] true parameśvara and true human being?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Sim, porque unio na sua pessoa a natureza Divina, e humana.</td>
<td>Pupil: Yes, because united in his person are the Divine nature and the human.</td>
<td>X. Ho: cam ye tiache zannant hayeta Deupana, anim Manuxpana.</td>
<td>Pupil: Yes, because in this his person are divinity and humanity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Achaô se taobem duas pessoas em Jesus Christo?</td>
<td>Teacher: So there are two persons in Jesus Christ?</td>
<td>G. Suamiã Jezus Christå madhim bamt doug zann?</td>
<td>Teacher: Are there two persons in Lord Jesus?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Naô; naô tem que huma</td>
<td>Pupil: No, there is not more than</td>
<td>X. Naim: Suamiã Jezus Christå madhim baxeta yec zann, zou Deu Bapàzzà niz Putra.</td>
<td>Pupil: No, in Lord Jesus Christ there is one person, namely the true Son of God the Father.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21 Cf. e.g. Jñāneśvarī I.140, where Krṣṇa is called ‘King of vaikuṁṭha’ (vaikuṁṭhicā rāṇā).
The cited passage, and especially the phrase *tiache zannant hayeta Deupana, anim Manuxpana*, reflects statements of the Councils of Chalcedon (451 C.E.)\(^\text{22}\) and Ephesos (431)\(^\text{23}\) that Christ has two natures, united in one person or *hypostasis*. In the constant philosophical reflection and at times intense debates about how to understand Jesus’ simultaneous divinity and humanity, the concept of ‘person’, pre-eminently signified by the Greek term *hypostasis* and the Latin *persona*,\(^\text{24}\) became a key concept in Christian thinking. In works like *Summa Theologiae* by the great 13th century philosopher and theologian Thomas Aquinas (1961: 1 q.29), the concept of *persona* was minutely defined and its exact relations to related and potentially similar concepts like *natura*, *hypostasis*, *subsistentia* and *essentia* were elucidated. The Marathi word that is here and often elsewhere used to translate ‘person’ is *zann* (in standard Marathi *jana* or *jana*).\(^\text{25}\) Although probably matching well with the common-sense meaning of ‘person’, it has not gone through the same theological and philosophical formation process as a theological term like Latin *persona*. It is therefore questionable if the Marathi phrase *tiache zannant hayeta Deupana, anim Manuxpana* could convey the subtlety of the Portuguese *unio na sua pessoa a natureza Divina, e humana*. On the other hand, it can be doubted how far these intricacies of two natures united in one person were understood even by Por-

\(^{22}\) Cite in *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 467: “We confess that one and the same Christ, Lord, and only-begotten Son, is to be acknowledged in two natures without confusion, change, division or separation. The distinction between the natures was never abolished by their union, but rather the character proper to each of the two natures was preserved as they came together in one person (*prosopon*) and one hypostasis.”.

\(^{23}\) Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 466: “St Cyril of Alexandria and the third ecumenical council, at Ephesus in 431, confessed ‘that the Word, uniting to himself in his person the flesh animated by a rational soul, became man’.”.

\(^{24}\) According to Thomas Aquinas (1961: 1 q.29 a2.2), ‘*persona* [Latin] is precisely the same as *hypostasis* [Greek]’ (*Ergo persona omnio idem est quod hypostasis*).

\(^{25}\) The pure Sanskrit form *jana* is translated by Molesworth ([1831] 1996: 177) as “[m]an individually or collectively; a man or mankind”, and the slightly differently spelled and pronounced Marathi form *jana* as “[a] person, a body, an individual”. Feldhaus and Tulpule (1999: 250) translate both as ‘a person’.
tuguese catechumens. Rather, the Portuguese formulation, by virtue of its close relation to the Latin theological language, carried a meaning that could be understood by theologically and philosophically schooled persons, but was probably quite obscure to many others. It is not self-evident what a person is and what a nature is and how the two are related to each other. Whether Marathi speakers unfamiliar with Portuguese or Latin could potentially understand the phrase in a way similar to how theologically schooled Europeans understood it is a question of how similar the concepts of zanna, deupana and manuxpana where to the concepts of persona, natura divina and natura humana. That is a question too big for this article, which I hope to be able to elaborate on elsewhere.

3.3 Jesus Christ in the Eucharist

Cristanchi Sastrazza Cathexismo says about the Sacrament of Eucharist (Eucarestizzà Sacrament):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CSC (96) Portuguese</th>
<th>Translation PE</th>
<th>CSC (97) Marathi</th>
<th>Translation PE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He hum Sacramento que contém realmente, e na verdade o Corpo, o Sangue, e Alma, e a Divindade de nosso Senhor Jesus Christo de baixo das especies, aparancias do paõ, e do vinho.</td>
<td>It is a sacrament which contains, really and in truth, the body, the blood, and soul, and the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ under the species, appearances, of the bread and the wine.</td>
<td>Mhangè yec Sacrament zayem shatbhavhartaxim hay sua mtà Jezus Christàchy Currha, Raghat, atmà, Deupan undbeàche, và Daruche vharna, vistar khalim.</td>
<td>That is a sacrament, in which verily is the body, blood, soul,\textsuperscript{26} divinity of Lord Jesus under the varna and vistāra of bread and wine.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{26} The word for soul (in Portuguese alma) is atmà (in standard Marathi ātmā) which can be translated as ‘soul’, but can also mean “[t]he soul of the universe [...] or the immaterial and immortal spirit of man considered as identical with it (Molesworth [1831] 1996: 37)”. This word will be discussed below in the chapter about Jesus Christ in the Holy Trinity.
Varṇa (‘colour’) and vistāra (‘extension’) are used to say that Jesus is present under the species (especies) and form or accidentia (aparancias) of bread and wine.\textsuperscript{27}

\textit{Cristanchi Sastrazza Cathekismo} (99) then says that one shall honour Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, since he is ‘true God’ (niz Deu) and ‘now present in this sacrament’ (hâllym agîr hay ya Sacramentâ madhim). It is Jesus’ real body and blood (boutè niz currha, anim niz ragbat Jezus Christâzzam) which is present in the form of wine and bread. It is the same body he had during his earthly life (tyzza currha houty tialà ya Duninta, CSC: 103). It is simultaneously present both in heaven and in the sacrament (hizza currha yecazza khinant hay suarghim, anim Eucarestiche Sacramentà madhim, CSC: 103). The whole of Jesus is present in every consecrated ostia (saglà suamy hay dhar yecuk consagrada Hosty madhim), and his whole body is in every piece of it (sagly currha hay dhar yecuk khutke madhim, CSC: 103). Therefore, the layman receives the whole of the Lord in one form (bread), whereas the priest receives him in two (bread and wine):

\begin{quotation}
\textsuperscript{27} Cf. \textit{Catechism of the Catholic Church}, 1413: “Under the consecrated species of bread and wine Christ himself, living and glorious, is present in a true, real and substantial manner: his Body and his Blood, with his soul and his divinity […].”
\end{quotation}
There is an obvious similarity between the Eucharist and the popular Hindu concept of *prasāda*, where devotees offer edibles to a deity and then receive them back and consume them as blessed food or *prasāda* (e.g. Pinkney 2013: 734–756). But instead of using that word, the catechism says that the mass is ‘a bloodless *homa* of the cross which we offer again’ (*Yec arhagta homo Crussazzà, ge punrapiy samarpitè*, CSC: 101). In Hindu contexts, *homa* primarily refers to a Vedic votive ceremony where offerings are made to the fire god Agni in expectation of a recompense (Payne and Witzel 2016: 1–2). In this choice of word, then, it seems that the author of the catechism has dismissed a word connected with popular Hindu religiosity in favour of a more particular Brahmanic word, although I cannot as yet fully assess the reasons for this choice.

28 Marathi *jinnasa* (here occurring with a posposition as *ginsant*) corresponds to Portuguese *especie*.
3.4 Jesus Christ in the Holy Trinity

*Cristanchi Sastrazzo Cathexismo* (13) explains the Holy Trinity (*Mà pavitra Trindade*) as ‘one God in three persons: Father, Son, *Spirt-Sant*’ (*yec Deu tigham zanant Bap, Putra, Spirt-Sant*):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CSC (12) Portuguese</th>
<th>Translation PE</th>
<th>CSC (13) Marathi</th>
<th>Translation PE</th>
</tr>
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</table>

Every person in the Trinity is *parameśvara*, but at the same time, there is only one *parameśvara* (*Bap Parmeshòr, Putra Parmeshòr, Spirt Sant Parmeshòr, thari tig Parmeshòr naim, pan yecuzza*, CSC: 15). This is so ‘because these three persons have the same *tattva* [i.e. essence or principle], the same divinity and the same infinite *guṇas* [i.e. qualities], therefore three persons only one god’ (*Cam ge yam tigham zannàchè yecazza thatua, yecazza Deupàna anim yecuzza apramita guñe, manun tighay zann yecuzza Deu*, CSC: 15). *Tathua* and *apramita guñe* are used to translate Portuguese *essencia* and *virtude* respectively (CSC: 14). Similar usage of the terms, suggesting that identity of *tattva* and *guṇa* means identity of being, can be found in various Hindu Marathi texts. To give two examples, *Jñāneśvarī* says that *iśvaratattva*, i.e. *iśvara*-nature or divinity, can be reached through both scripture (*śāstra*) and meditation (XVIII.847),

and *Gurucaritra* calls guru Nṛṣimha Sarasvatī, as shown above regarded as divine, ‘a treasure of the *guṇas* of the *trimūrti*’ (*trayamūrtice guṇa / tū eka nidhāna* (I.87).

As the reader might have noticed, the author uses (partly Marathified versions of) the Portuguese words *Trindade* and *Espírito Santo* for Trinity and Holy Spirit, whereas he uses Indic words for the two first divine per-

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29 *Jñāneśvarī* XVIII.847: *tari sattvaśuddhiyeyevé/śāstrei kāṁ dhyānabāleṇi/ iśvaratattvīnīcimife/miṣṭanikabuddhi/.*
sons (the Father and the Son) as well as for intricate philosophical concepts relevant for the theme. This is in accordance with what seems to have been the predominant practice among missionaries in the Marathi/Konkani-speaking area in the early modern period, although there are exceptions like the Jesuit Simão Gomes ([18th c.] 1994: 21), who used *tritva* (Sanskrit for ‘threeness’) instead of *Trindade*. An alternative to *Espírito Santo* would have been *pavitra ātmā* which is common in modern Marathi and Konkani.³⁰ Probably it is not the word *pavitra*, but *ātmā* which was considered problematic in this context. In early modern Christian literature in Marathi and Konkani, the word *ātmā* is generally used for the soul or human spirit and, as far as I have seen, not for the Holy Spirit.³¹ The reason might be the risk of blurring the distinction between God and man and even God and creation, since *ātmā* easily comes along with an idea of the individual soul as ultimately identical with God or *Brahman*. A good example of this is Ekanātha’s already cited line *guru paramātmā pareśu* (*Ekanātha Gāthā* [16th c.] no. 1818, in K. A. Joshi ed. 1967: 210), stating identity between the *guru*, the supreme *ātmā* and the Supreme God.

Even the authors most prone to use Marathi and Konkani words seem to have avoided *pavitra ātmā* in favour of *Espírito Santo* (spelled in various ways), and François Marie de Tours (*Fragmentum Fabronianum* ca. 1700: 6), writing in Hindi, used the Perso-Arabic *rouḥ el Kadous*, meaning Holy Spirit. The difference in practice makes sense if the idea behind it is to avoid words that may evoke unwanted understandings of the message. In this case *pavitra ātmā* would easily lead a Hindu listener to think that the Holy Spirit and hence God is ultimately identical with the human soul, whereas Perso-Arabic *rouḥ el Kadous*, coming from an Abrahamic thought-world, carries no such connotations. The Perso-Arabic vocabulary was less of an option in the southern Marathi- and Konkani-speaking regions and is consequently less present in the Christian religious vocabulary of these languages. This is a possible explanation for them resorting to Portuguese words in such cases.

Similar considerations are reported from early modern Jesuit mission in Japan, initiated by the same Francis Xavier who initiated the mission in India in the sixteenth century. There a baptised Japanese translated the Gospel according to Matthew into Japanese, using popular Buddhist words for Christian concepts. The translation was condemned by Xavier but later

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³⁰ See e.g. Matthew 28:19 in Bible (s/a) and Bible (2013).
criticised by Baltasar Gago for making Christianity appear as a new Buddhist sect from India. (Kaiser 1996: 9-10.) Gago wrote in a letter of 23 September 1555:

These [Buddhist] Japanese have a number of words which they use in their sects. For a long time we preached them the truth through the medium of these words. Once I had become aware of them, however, I changed them immediately because, if one wishes to treat the truth with words of error and lies, they impart the wrong meaning. For all words, therefore, which I realised to be damaging, I teach them our own words. Even just the things that are new require new words. Besides, theirs have in essence very different meanings from what we mean. (Translation by Kaiser 1996: 10.)

In relation to the idea of the Trinity, it is relevant to consider the already mentioned three-headed Hindu deity Dattātreya, who is said to be the trimūrti of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva and thus in himself seems to represent a rather close parallel to the Christian Trinity. Dattātreya was probably introduced to the Marathi-speaking region by the Śaiva Nātha movement, but the earliest literary documents in which he is mentioned belong to the Mahānubhava movement which flourished in Maharashtra around the thirteenth century (Rigopoulos 1998: 89) and contributed considerably to the shaping and development of Marathi prose (Tulpule 1979: 351).32 At least from the sixteenth century, various Hindu as well as Muslim holy men have been regarded as avatāras of Dattātreya (Rigopoulos 1998: 124). Among the Vārkarī related poets, Ekanātha (1533–1599) and Dāsopanta (1551–1615) are both regarded as devotees of Dattātreya (Rigopoulos 1998: 136).33 In view of Dattātreya’s triune characteristics and popularity in the Marathi speaking region and the fact that Catholic missionaries were aware of him already from the sixteenth century, either the author of Cristanchi Sāstrazza Catheismo or some of his predecessors must have considered how to relate to this particular god. Maybe unsurprisingly, as a cat-

32 The Mahānubhavas believe in only one God, parameśvara or simply iśvara, who has manifested himself or become avatāra as five Kṛṣṇas (pañcekṛṣṇa), namely Kṛṣṇa, Dattātreya, and three other human figures (Rigopoulos 2011: 33).
33 Ekanātha includes Dattātreya in his own lineage which he describes as dattatreyaṣīyaparaparā (Ekanāthī Bhāgavata [16th c.] 1925: 9.430). According to tradition, Ekanātha’s guru Janārdana was initiated directly by Dattātreya in the form of a Muslim mendicant. According to Tulpule (1979:353), Janārdana belonged to a Sufi tradition. Also the popular Tukārāma (1598–1649) and Rāmadāsa (1608–1681) mention Dattātreya (Rigopoulos 1998:146–151).
echism for basic instruction in the Christian faith and not much concerned with other faiths, it does not mention the name of Dattātreya, although it could have done so for the sake of illustration or for clarifying in which ways the Christian notion of the Holy Trinity differs from Hindu conceptions of Dattātreya. Notably though, it does not even appropriate the trinitarian attributes of Dattātreya as for saying that although this or that concept is good and useful, its correct application is to God and not to Dattātreya, as when it applies Viṣṇu’s epithet vaikuṇṭhanātha to Jesus Christ (CSC: 15; cf. Stephens [1616] 2009: II.7.80). Even the word trimūrti as such is absent. Instead, as already mentioned, the Portuguese word Trindade is used. Perhaps one felt that such words were too deeply associated with complicated metaphysical systems whose relation to a Catholic worldview would be too tricky to clarify without risk for misconceptions. The choice of words in Hindi by François Marie de Tours gives no clue here, since he gives no translation of trinitas, the Latin word for Trinity, neither in his Thesaurus Linguae Indianae (1703) nor in the already mentioned Fragmentum Fabronianum (ca. 1700) which in itself is a subject for further analysis.

4 Conclusions

It seems that the author of Cristanchi Sastrazza Cathexismo has tried to convey the official Roman Catholic faith. His work is as free from syncretistic tendencies as can be expected of a catechism printed at the Sagrada Congregação de Propaganda Fide in Rome. At the same time, however, he uses Indic words with strong philosophical and religious connotations and thereby takes a risk that the received message may be tinged by preconceptions formed by Hindu worldviews. Like other early modern missionaries writing in Marathi/Konkani, the author takes pains to explain the intricate dogmas about Jesus’ two natures and single person which is hard to understand even in languages long shaped by Aristotelian and scholastic philosophy. Using Indic words with a long Hindu history to explain this, his ability to control how the message was understood by readers with Hindu background must have been limited. However, for some crucial theological terms, he uses Portuguese words instead of Indic ones, and sometimes he uses reformulations employing several Marathi words for one single

34 In this section, I use standard forms of Marathi and Portuguese words, even when differently spelled in Cristanchi Sastrazza Cathexismo.
theological concept. In the field of Christology, he uses Indic words for ‘person’ (jana), ‘essence’ (tattva), ‘God’ (parameśvara, deva) and the first and second persons of the Holy Trinity (bāpa, pitā and putra). However, he uses Marathified forms of Portuguese words for the third person of the Trinity, i.e. the Holy Spirit (Espírito Santo), and for the Trinity itself (Trindade). For the central concept of the incarnation, he uses a paraphrase in Marathi, meaning that God the Son became a human being. I suggest that the usage of Portuguese words and Marathi paraphrase occurs when it was deemed either impossible to find a word with adequate meaning, or assessed that appropriation of Indic words associated with conflicting worldviews, notably monistic or non-dualistic ones, would risk giving the impression that the Christian faith could be understood within those metaphysical systems. For concepts like ‘incarnation’, denoting a process, the meaning could be conveyed with a Marathi paraphrase including a verb phrase. For concepts denoting entities or substances, like ‘the Holy Spirit’ and ‘Trinity’, this was not possible and the strategy of introducing loan words was employed. In view of the similar terminology in many Christian writings in Marathi and Konkani, from the works of the Jesuit Thomas Stephens and onwards, it seems that these considerations were made at an early stage, probably already in the sixteenth century, and that the author followed a practice that was well established in his day.

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Pär Eliasson

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Eliasson is author of the following articles:
uNkulunkulu:
Bishop John William Colenso and the Contested Zulu God-name in Nineteenth-century Natal

Gwilym Colenso

Abstract

Bishop Colenso’s advocacy of uNkulunkulu as the Zulu God-name can be viewed within his radical conception of Christian conversion. Some missionaries in Natal objected to the use of uNkulunkulu because the cultural inferiority of the African dictated that a Zulu word should not be used for the Christian God. More sophisticated objections were advanced by Colenso’s fellow missionary, Henry Calloway, on theological and ethnographic grounds. The debate continued into the twentieth century. I will argue that differences over the Zulu God-name reflected different views on the place of the African in the evolving colonial order in Natal. [Colenso; Callaway; uNkulunkulu; Zulu God-name; Natal]

1 Introduction

In 1853, John William Colenso (1814–1883) was consecrated as the first Anglican Bishop of the newly created diocese of Natal, a recently established British colony on the eastern seaboard of today’s South Africa (Map 1).

1 I would like to thank Dr. Jo Davis and Professor Christopher Saunders for their help and advice. My thanks also to Bridget McBean for her detailed advice on Zulu grammar, particularly on the complexities of the use of prefixes with different noun classes in isiZulu. And my thanks to Professor Mark Chapman for allowing me to quote from his unpublished paper.

The newly created diocese of Natal separated by Kaffraria from the diocese of Grahamstown (created at the same time as Natal) which includes British Kaffraria (see below). Zululand (‘amaZulu’) is shown to the north-east of Natal. The diocese of Cape Town, reduced in its extent by the creation of the two new dioceses, is shown (in part) to the west of Grahamstown.

A major part of Colenso’s responsibilities as Bishop of Natal was to carry out missionary work among the African population of the colony. When he arrived in Natal there were no Church of England missionaries in the colony. But over the previous decade Christian missionaries from other denominations and nations had established themselves there. A number of mission stations in the colony were run by the American Congregationalists and by the Wesleyan Methodists, as well as one station of the Berlin Missionary Society and one of the Norwegian Missionary Society (Etherington 1978: 24–46; Hermanson 2003: 6). There was also one Norwegian Missionary Society station in Zululand, an area to the northeast of Natal, not under colonial rule. And missionaries from a number of denominations, including Wesleyan Methodists and Scottish Presbyterians, were active in British Kaffraria and Kaffraria (see below) to the south-west of Natal.
Shortly after arriving in Natal, Colenso was to advocate the adoption of the Zulu word *uNkulunkulu* as the name for the Christian God. His adoption of the Zulu God-name can be viewed within his radical conception of Christian conversion. He believed that there was “common ground” between African and Christian religion. He later developed this idea in seeing the “seeds of religious truth, already planted by the Divine hand in the minds of these natives …” (Colenso 1865: cclxxiii). His focus was not on the differences between the pagan African and Christian European (Hinchliff 1963: 67). Rather, he was concerned to recognise a commonality of religious belief between them.

Many colonists and other missionaries in Natal objected to the use of *uNkulunkulu*, in some cases on the grounds that the cultural inferiority of the Africans dictated that a Zulu word should not be used for the Christian God and, in any case, the Zulu language was too ‘crude’ to support the concept. More sophisticated objections to the use of *uNkulunkulu* were advanced by Bishop Colenso’s fellow missionary, Henry Callaway, who contested its use on theological and ethnographic grounds.

The opposition to *uNkulunkulu* among the colonists and majority of missionaries was sometimes closely related, I suggest, to their wish to see Africans kept in a subordinate position in the colony – becoming, ultimately, a source of cheap labour and land for the white colonists. In contrast, Colenso emphasised “their rights as subjects of a Christian Queen, to share with us the full blessings of her government” ([1854] 1982a: 2–3, emphasis in the original). He believed that there was common ground between the colonised and coloniser, not just at the spiritual level, but also at the social, political and economic levels. For him, therefore, whether the Zulu had a God-name was not only a religious question. Colenso’s advocacy of *uNkulunkulu* as the Zulu God-name, I will argue, can be seen as also having political implications.

2 Maurician theology

Colenso’s interest in foreign missions had been inspired partly by the works of the theologian Frederick Maurice (1805–1872) who had exerted a strong influence on Colenso from 1843 when he enthusiastically read Maurice’s *Kingdom of Christ*. In that year Colenso was introduced to Maurice and the two men became friends. Colenso developed what he called

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his “Maurician theology” (Hinchliff 1964: 36). And when he published a collection of his sermons, he dedicated the book to Maurice saying: “You have taught us that … [God] has Love for us all, for the poor dark heathens of Africa, as well as for the far more highly privileged … Christians of England” (Colenso 1854: viii).

Recognised as the spiritual leader of the Christian Socialist movement, Maurice emphasised that there was a common humanity under the fatherhood of God (Hinchliff 1963: 65; 1964: 36). He argued that Christian missionaries “will recognise … a conscience and a light among the heathen” and that “there is in the savagest Indian [i.e. heathen] a witness for God …” (Davies 1964: 158–159). Colenso elaborated on the guiding themes of “light” and “witness” in a sermon delivered in England before embarking on his missionary work in Natal: “[t]heir [the heathens’] Father above hath not left Himself without witness in their hearts, as well as ours. They, too, ‘have the work of the Law written within them,’ by the finger of Him Who made them; and they have Light too, in some measure, given them …” (Colenso 1854: 138, emphasis in the original).

The use of “light” as a metaphor for the Divine message, an important trope for Colenso’s mission work, was reflected in the name he chose for his mission station: Ekukanyeni = “place of light” (Guy 1983: 50, 62, 64; Edgecombe 1982: xviii). In the same sermon, Colenso (1854: 141-142) made clear that his preferred approach to carrying out missionary work was by “meeting the heathen, half way, as it were, upon the common ground of our humanity … [rather] than by seeking to make all things new to them – to uproot altogether their old religion”.

It is clear that, well before his first visit to Natal, Colenso, already imbued with a strong form of universalism, was disposed to recognise, rather than to reject, the inherent value of African custom, belief and spirituality (Draper 2003: xv). Indeed, it has been suggested that Colenso’s “impulse to mission was less about conversion and more about the recognition of a shared identity” (Chapman 2014: 6).

3 Bishop Colenso’s adoption of uNkulunkulu as the Zulu God-name

Colenso made an initial exploratory visit to Natal in 1854 when he toured the colony, keeping a detailed record which was published on his return to

4 The reference to “witness in their hearts” was picked up on later by a critic of Colenso. See note 20 below.
Britain as Ten Weeks in Natal: a Journal of a First Tour of Visitation among the Colonists and Zulu Kafirs of Natal (Colenso 1855). As can be seen from the subtitle of this book, Colenso described the African population of Natal as “Zulu Kafirs of Natal”. However, elsewhere he also acknowledged that they were “commonly called by the general name of Zulus” ([1854] 1982a: 1).

Initially, Colenso grouped all the peoples and languages of south-eastern Africa together: “All the tribes of south-central, as well as south-eastern, Africa are now reckoned collectively as Kafirs, since they speak only different dialects of the same common tongue” which he referred to as the “Kafir language” (1865: ccl; cf. 1855: 59). But “strictly speaking” he distinguished the “Zulu Kafirs of Natal” from, on the one hand, the “Zulus” of the independent kingdom of Zululand to the north-east of Natal and, on the other hand, from those he refers to as “British Kafirs” or “Frontier Kafirs”, residing in the British territory then known as “British Kaffraria” (Colenso [1854] 1982a: 1–2) to the south-west.

“British Kaffraria” then formed the eastern “Frontier” of the Cape Colony. It was situated to the south-west of the colony of Natal, from which it was separated by an area known as “Kaffraria”. Though nominally independent (and sometimes referred to as “Independent Kaffraria”), Kaffraria was then regarded as being under British influence and Africans living there were to come in stages under colonial rule from the Cape. However, the term Kaffraria, broadly applied, came to include “British Kaffraria” as well as “Kaffraria proper”.

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5 On the very wide applicability of the term “Kafir” see Arndt (2018: 10–14). Now considered racially charged (and especially in post-apartheid South Africa), the word has varied in its connotations over the centuries of its use (Arndt 2018). In this paper, its use cannot be avoided when quoting contemporary sources from the eighteen-fifties and eighteen-sixties. I suggest that in this period it was used, at least by some missionaries, non-pejoratively: not only by white missionaries but also for example by the Xhosa Christian missionary Tiyo Soga who “always referred to Xhosa as ‘Kaffirs’ … [and] ‘of the Kaffir race’” (Williams 1978: 63). He used the term not only to refer to his own people but also to their land. See Odendaal (2012: 26–27).

6 It should be noted that, in this period, the Frontier was a disputed zone, subject to warfare and settlement of Africans and whites on either side of it (Saunders 1981: 149).

7 Writing in 1897, the Bishop of Kaffraria affirmed that “[d]uring the last twenty-five years, one by one, all the native districts [of Kaffraria] have been passed under British rule” (Pascoe 1901: 316a).

8 “British Kaffraria” and “Kaffraria proper” roughly corresponded to areas subsequently known as the Ciskei and Transkei respectively (as they are separated by the
Colenso was taken to task by Wesleyan missionaries who claimed that he failed to distinguish between the language spoken by the “Natal Kafirs” of Natal and that spoken by those they described as “Kaffirs, properly so speaking”, “British Kafirs” or “Kafirs of British Kaffraria”. These were also referred to by the Wesleyans as the “various tribes of the Amaxosa nation” (Wesleyan Missionaries 1855: 274–275), and therefore probably included the African population of Kaffraria as well as British Kaffraria. However, notwithstanding his reference to their “same common tongue” in “the Kafir language”, Colenso did distinguish between “the Zulu-Kafir tongue” and “the British-Kaffir tongue” (1855: 60, emphasis in the original). In his dictionary of 1861, Colenso refers specifically to the “Kafir-Zulu language” and then, in the 1871 edition, to “the Zulu language”. At the same time, Africans of Kaffraria (broadly speaking) began to be called “Xhosa”, their language now being seen as distinct from, but closely related to, Zulu.⁹

On his tour of Natal in 1854, Colenso was accompanied by Theophilus Shepstone, Natal’s Secretary for Native Affairs, who acted as his guide and interpreter. Together they visited a number of mission stations, beginning at Edendale which was run by the ex-Wesleyan Mr. Allison and where Colenso spoke to African residents. Here he found that

his [Allison’s] people were unanimous in their disapproval of the word for God, now commonly in use among the missionaries – uTixo,¹⁰— which, they said, “had no meaning whatever for the Kafirs. They used it because they found it in their Bibles; but it was not a word of their language at all” (Colenso 1855: 56–57).

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⁹ On the beginnings of the recognition of distinct languages in southeast Africa at this time, see Arndt (2018: 14–15). Historians consider the Zulu-speaking and Xhosa-speaking peoples to be two branches of the Nguni of south-eastern Africa, the Xhosa having branched off and, sometime after the eighth century, moved southwards into the area that came to be called Kaffraria (Hodgson 1982: 62; Bradford 2012: 161, note 1).

¹⁰ As will be seen, various spellings were used by different writers: uTixo, uThixo, utikxo, u Thixo, Thixo, Tixo. See Smith [1950] 1961: 98, n. 2; Hodgson 1982: 93. Except where quoting directly from original documents, I have used the form uTixo, as used by both Colenso and his contemporary, the Xhosa missionary, Tiyo Soga.
He continued to explain that:

Dr Vanderkemp, who first laboured among the Hottentots some sixty years ago, adopted this word in his teaching as the name of God; and the Wesleyan and other Missionaries have carried it from west to east, first among the British Kafirs, and now among the tribes of Natal (ibid. 58). But instead of uTixo, the converts at Edendale used the word iTongo. On further questioning, Colenso found that iTongo referred not to God but to the spirit of a dead chief. He reported that Allison “objects to the name uTixo, and adopts uYehova, the Hebrew name for God” (Colenso 1855: 60). But he also pointed out that, having imported the God-name, uTixo, the missionaries “have scarcely noticed at all two names, which the Kafirs have of their own for the Deity” (ibid. 58). He wondered why there was no mention at Edendale of “the other two names, umKulunkulu and umVelinqange … which, in every other instance, were given to me at once by the natives” (ibid. 60, emphasis in the original). Rejecting uTixo as a “mean and meaningless name” (ibid. 160), Colenso set out his view of the true Zulu God-name: “[t]he true words for the Deity in the Kafir language – at least in all this part of Africa – are umKulunkulu, literally, The Great-

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11 Johannes van der Kemp (1747–1811) was the first head of the London Missionary Society in southern Africa (Elbourne 2002: 92–102).
12 ‘Hottentot’ was a term then used to describe Africans of the Western Cape, predominantly pastoralists, later referred to as Khoikhoi or, collectively, together with San (hunter-gathers of the Cape whom whites had called Bushmen), as Khoisan. Their languages were recognised, even then, to be different from that of the Xhosa or Zulu who were mixed farmers (pastoral and arable). (Saunders 1981: 150.).
13 The origin of the term was a matter of debate among missionaries (Worger 2001: 429–431; Hodgson 1982: 91–95; Smith [1950] 1961: 98–102). Hodgson (1982: 62– 63) has suggested that it was a Khoisan term “borrowed” by the Xhosa as a result of intensive interaction between the two peoples during the late eighteenth century, its use being re-enforced by the influence of missionaries in the early nineteenth century. Regarding the adoption of uTixo by the Zulu, Smith ([1950] 1961: 103) considers that either by Africans themselves or by missionaries and their interpreters, the Xhosa uThixo was introduced among the Zulus and was adopted by some missionaries in their preaching and in their transactions. Hermanson (2003: 6–7) suggests that “missionaries who went to the Zulu … sometimes used Xhosa interpreters … and were given grammars and translations in Xhosa”. Hodgson (1982: 62) contends that “in pre-Christian times the … Zulu speaking people did not identify with the God-name … Thixo (Tixo) [which was] … clearly adopted by the Xhosa after they branched off [from the Nguni Zulu-speaking people]”. 

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Das Erstellen und Weitergeben von Kopien dieses PDFs ist nicht zulässig.
Great One = The Almighty, and umVelinqange – literally, The First Comer-Out = The First Essence, or, rather, Existence” (ibid. 59) (see Illustration 1).

The two words, uNkulunkulu and umVelinqange, Colenso (ibid. 115) noted, were “connected in the mind of the Kafir with such grand associations, as Almightyness and Original Existence .... They are the very ideas contained in the Hebrew words Elohim and Jehovah”.

umVelinqange is derived from vela (‘to appear’) and ngqangi (‘the origin’) (Carton 2009: 160, 166, n. 50). But it was umKulunkulu that Colenso understood was in practice used. Its meaning is derived from its stem, khulu, meaning ‘great’. The reduplication of khulu intensifies its meaning (Smith ([1950] 1961: 104). Adding the personal prefix makes this term refer to a person or being, which led Bishop Colenso (1855: 59) to translate it as “the Great Great One”, “the Almighty” or, as he later came to more commonly characterise it, the “Supreme Being”. Colenso initially used the prefix um, but later corrected this to arrive at uNkulunkulu with the N
capitalized as the first letter of the stem of a proper name. The h in khulu is dropped to reflect a phonetic change owing to the nasal n in the prefix (personal communication from Bridget McBean; cf. Doke and Vilakazi 1990: xx–xxi).\textsuperscript{14} He continued:

It will be seen, as my narrative proceeds, that in every instance, whether in the heathen kraal, amidst the wildest of savages, or in a Missionary station … these words have been familiar to them from their childhood, as names for Him ‘who created them and all things’ … which … their ancestors possessed long before the arrival of Missionaries (Colenso 1855: 59; see Illustration 1).

In order to find out more about the name of God, Colenso also wanted to learn from Zulu who resided away from the mission stations. It was partly for this reason that he set off with Shepstone “for a visit to the north of the colony, and the principal heathen tribes in those parts” (ibid. 75; cf. 57). Their itinerary was to include visiting the kraals of the Natal Zulu chiefs Pakade, Langalibalele, and Putine. Colenso referred to the chiefs and their followers as “complete heathens” (ibid. 114), by which he meant that he considered them to be living in their traditional African setting, remote from the centres of colonial society. Colenso and Shepstone were accompanied by Ngoza, a Zulu man whose wagon they had hired, and by a minor chief, umQundani, known by his Dutch name, Jantjee. “The attendance of Ngoza and Jantjee, as well as that of all the followers who continued to swell our train as we advanced, was voluntary and unpaid”, Colenso noted (ibid. 78; cf. 75, 86, 91). Shepstone, who had grown up on Wesleyan mission stations, had previously acted as government interpreter on the Eastern Cape Frontier. He was fluent in the Zulu language and therefore able to interpret for Colenso (Guy 1983: 40, 2013: 57–70; Colenso 1855: 98, 133–134).

The party spent six days travelling between the chiefs’ kraals, staying in huts in the kraals or in their wagon or their tent. Colenso endeavoured, in most cases successfully, to engage each of the chiefs and their followers in lengthy discussions on the matter of the Deity. He drew on his notes of these discussions for his account in Ten Weeks.\textsuperscript{15} The discussions centred

\textsuperscript{14} umVelinqange has the modern spelling uMvelingqangi. However, I have retained Colenso’s spelling. I have italicised uNkulunkulu, umVelinqange and uTixo throughout, except when quoting from texts where I have retained the original form and spelling.

\textsuperscript{15} For a critical view of these discussions see Worger (2001: 436-438).
largely on the Zulu names *uNkulunkulu* and *umVelinqange* and were, as Colenso (1855: 98) remarked, made possible due to Shepstone’s translation. Regarding *uNkulunkulu*, Ngoza said that “they all knew everything came from Him”, and “umKulunkulu made all things” (ibid. 98–99). Another person said: “umKulunkulu made us, takes care of us, has given us laws and we must all stand before Him, that we should expect to be punished if we have done wrong” (ibid. 100–101). At Pakeda’s *kraal*, Colenso was told that “they did know of *umKulunkulu* by their own traditions – that He was the same as *umVelinqange*, the First Out-comer – and that they had heard lately of uTixo, and supposed that he must somehow be the same” (ibid. 114–115).

At Langalibalele’s *kraal* Colenso (ibid. 129) was told that they knew of *umVelinqange* and *uNkulunkulu* (“He was the same”); and “[t]hey only knew of uTixo, since white men had come into the country; but they knew the other names [*uNkulunkulu* and *umVelinqange*] from time immemorial.” Allison had visited them and told them of “Jehovah”. But initially they did not “connect the Names [they had for God] with Jehovah” (ibid. 130). And in a later discussion a distinction was made between “the spirits of dead people” and “umKulunkulu [who] made men and all things” (ibid. 131).

At Pute’s *kraal*, when in discussion with Pute, surrounded by some forty of his people, they were told that “long before the white men came, they heard of umKulunkulu’ - that ‘he made the land, and men, and all things’.” When Colenso asked Shepstone to tell them that “He is our Father, and we are all His children, and, therefore, brethren ...”, they replied: “That was very good ... to find that they were all brethren.” Colenso said: “[t]ell them, that ‘Their own Names are excellent Names for God; and we shall call them by those Names and shall come and tell them more about Him’.” (ibid. 133–134).

Colenso considered that these discussions with the chiefs and their followers in their *kraals* substantiated the description of the God-names which he had noted earlier in his journal and which he had promised the reader would be confirmed “as my narrative proceeds” (ibid. 59).

Colenso later met Mr Oftebro, a Norwegian missionary from his mission station in Zululand. Colenso (1855: 215) noted:

Mr. Oftebro entirely and most effectively confirms all the results of my past experience about the words uTixo and umKulunkulu .... “They [the natives] all know umKulunkulu, but know nothing of uTixo; and he and his brethren [i.e. his fellow missionaries] never use the latter word – only the former – even in the Creed.”
Subsequently Colenso visited the American missionary, Daniel Lindley, at his mission station at Inanda (1855: 238–240). Colenso (ibid. 238) “told him of the traces of natural religion, which I have found among the savage tribes, and how they appeared to me to attach very just notions to the names umKulunkulu and umVelinqange”, and Lindley arranged for Colenso to question two converts:

They told us that they had heard the name uTixo [from missionaries] … more than twenty years ago. “Had they ever heard any other name besides uTixo?” “Yes – umKulunkulu. He had made all things.” … “Was umKulunkulu the same as uTixo?” “Yes: but they did not understand uTixo at first. They do now, because they have been taught its meaning? [sic]” “They think umKulunkulu would be the best word to use for the unconverted heathen.” (ibid. 239).

Lindley told Colenso that their replies convinced him (more than before) of the truth of “their rude conceptions of the Divine Being” and he regretted “that the Americans had not – as the Norwegian Missionaries now had done – laid aside altogether the word uTixo, and adopted at first uNkulunkulu.” They had not done so because they had “deferred to the example and judgment of the Wesleyans and others, whom they found in the field before them” (ibid. 240).

So it appears that Colenso had received further evidence in support of his views noted earlier in his journal. But, strangely, in view of his strong advocacy of the two Zulu God-names, he was initially hesitant to use them. And, also strangely in view of his opposition to the use of non-Zulu terms, he considered using a Zuluised form of the Latin God-name:

*umKulunkulu* and *umVelinqange* are both too long for common use …. I am not sure that it would not be best to employ *uDio*. It is a new word, it is true, like uTixo, but it is easy of utterance, is directly connected with the Greek and Latin Names for God, and is not very far removed in sound from the word that it displaces (ibid. 160).

However, in 1856, Colenso intended to use *uNkulunkulu* in translating the *Book of Common Prayer* (Benham 1896: 55; Carton 2009: 156), but in 1859 he referred to “the name uDio, which we use in common with their uNkulunkulu.”

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16 Daniel Lindley (1801–1880), American missionary who “lived and laboured” among the Zulu at Inanda from 1847 until his retirement in 1873 (Brookes and Webb 1965: 28).

17 It should be noted, however, that the accuracy of this account has been questioned by Lindley’s daughter (Hermanson 2003: 9).
lunkulu, as the name of God” (Colenso [1860] 1982b: 120). Finally, by 1861, he had concluded that uNkulunkulu was “undoubtedly the name to be used” (Edgecombe 1982: 160, n. 131). In his dictionary of 1861, Colenso (1861: 341) has “uNkulunkulu (U), n. Great-Great-One, Supreme Being, traditional Creator of all things, called also umVelingane”. In his translation of the New Testament, probably published in 1876, Colenso has uNkulunkulu for God (Hermanson 2003: 11).

Colenso’s view of the equivalence between the Zulu and Hebrew God-names was given substance in his belief that the Zulu were descended from the lost tribes of Israel. To postulate such a historic link was in line with the thinking of a number of other contemporary theorists who sought to identify connections between various present day “primitive peoples” and the roots of European civilisation (Chidester 1996: 137–138, 170; Draper 2000: 427). Colenso also considered that certain Zulu customs he observed had their parallels in the Christian tradition, or could be made to conform to them. When he asked of the Zulu Feast of First-fruits whether it was not a feast of Thanksgiving, he was told that it was (Colenso 1855: 130). Seeing the feast as an example of the “common ground” between Christian and heathen customs, Colenso (ibid. 93) reflected that “[t]his, as now observed, is a purely heathen ceremony, but has undoubtedly a right meaning at the bottom; and, instead of setting our face against all their practices, our wisdom will surely be … to adopt such as are really grounded on truth, and … raise them … still higher by making them Christian celebrations”.

Colenso’s tour of Natal recorded in Ten Weeks could be regarded as an ethnographic investigation conducted in order to answer an empirical question. His findings provided an answer to this question which accorded well with his radical universalist theology, which predisposed him to expect to find the “light” of the Divine message among the “heathen”. Furthermore, I suggest that his identifying the Zulu God-name also accorded with his mission policy of seeking to meet the heathen on “the common ground of our humanity”.

Finding that a name for God already existed in the Zulu language perfectly suited both Colenso’s universalist theology and the mission policy he was committed to. The result of his exploratory visit to Natal was therefore, in his own view, a happy concordance between fact, theology, and mission policy. But it was one that was to set him on a collision course with other missionaries and with the settlers in Natal.
Published after Colenso returned to England later in 1854, *Ten Weeks in Natal* was intended to inform and persuade a British audience of the prospects for missionary work in Natal and, in doing so, to persuade them to subscribe to a fund to support this work (Guy 1983: 46). In this respect, the book was a success.

But *Ten Weeks* did not go down so well among the settlers and other missionaries in Natal. A thumbnail sketch of the reaction to it when it appeared in Natal is provided in a history of the Anglican Church in Natal, by Rev. B. B. Burnett. Published as “one of the commemorative projects of the Diocesan Centenary of 1853–1953” ([1955]: vii)\(^{18}\) with a foreword by the Bishop of Natal at the time of its publication, Burnett’s book can be reasonably taken to present the official Anglican view from the mid-twentieth century. Introducing the subject of *uNkulunkulu*, Burnett ([1955]: 62) begins by stating that Colenso’s book “provoked an immediate outcry from the press. *The Witness*\(^{19}\) columnist on Native lore wrote pointedly on the real meaning of words such as *uNkulunkulu* and *uNveau-qange*. ‘Theophilus Thinker’ [a pseudonym, presumably lampooning Theophilus Shepstone, Bishop Colenso’s travelling companion] sniped at the Bishop for his immature judgements in matters with which the missionaries on the spot had been engaged for years.” But, more importantly for our purposes, Burnett (ibid. 62) sympathetically reports the missionaries’ charge against Colenso, that “[he] had summarily discarded the local missionaries’ views concerning the name for God … Believing, as he did, that God had not left Himself without witnesses\(^{20}\) to the African people, he proposed to use their own word which appeared to be closest to the Christian concept of God. He therefore discarded the word *uThixo* already introduced by the missionaries.”

The evident irritation at Colenso’s intervention was also conveyed by Wesleyan missionaries writing just after the publication of *Ten Weeks*: “[a] ten weeks’ run through a country is hardly sufficient to render a person

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18 No date of publication is given, but the book is listed in the British Library catalogue as [1955].

19 *The Natal Witness*, one of the more prominent newspapers in Natal, was first published in 1847 (Ballard 1989: 129).

20 The mention of “witnesses” may be intended as a reference to Colenso’s sermon quoted above. But “witnesses” in the plural implies that God had left *people* as witnesses, rather than leaving His “witness in their hearts”, as Colenso, following Maurice, had postulated. See note 4 above.
competent to pronounce so dogmatically on matters of which he has previously ignorant ... It appears to us, that the Bishop evidently set out on this tour, with his mind already prejudiced against the name for ‘God’ usually employed by the Missionary Churches” (Wesleyan Missionaries 1855: 278, 273).

The use of *uTixo* was also strongly defended against Colenso by the Wesleyan Rev. William Shaw (1860: 451–452) who argued that, “[a]fter long and careful consideration, the Missionaries have generally concurred in the adoption of the word *Utixo* as the name for God; ... [but] the Bishop of Natal ... rather needlessly endeavoured, long after *Utixo* had been adopted as the word for ‘God’, to introduce some new word”. 21

And the Wesleyan commentators argued that, contrary to Colenso’s claim that *uTixo* was an alien word imported by missionaries, it had been a “Kafir word” before the missionaries arrived. They further asserted that, though the “Kafir [n]ever had any proper idea of what we mean by ‘God’, independently of the teaching of the Missionaries, yet, ... the nearest approach to that idea is to be found in the word *UTIXO*”. They then asked: “Is it desirable, after a doctrine has long been taught through the instrumentality of a new word, to change that word for another ... ?” (Wesleyan Missionaries 1855: 275, 276.)

Thus, the justification for retaining *uTixo* was that, though it was a “new word”, its use was well established in the colony. Colenso’s more experienced missionary predecessors in Natal clearly resented the fact that he did not accept their ‘established use’ argument for *uTixo* (a word that they claimed was not entirely alien, anyway); and that neither did he accept their view that the Zulu had no ‘proper idea’ of, let alone a word for, God.

But the complaint against Colenso from some quarters was not only that he sought to overturn established precedent, or that the Zulu God-name did not correctly translate the Christian concept of God. For the missionaries Burnett ([1955]: 62–63) refers to, the nub of the argument is clear: in order to avoid “linking up the Christian concept of God with Zulu crudities”, the name of God should not have “any associations in Zulu”.

Associating supposed lack of cultural development with linguistic shortcomings, like most of Colenso’s missionary peers, the missionary Jacob Döhne (1857: vii) thought that “the language [of the Zulu] ... is coarse, clumsy, and unrefined as the barbarians themselves” (cf. Worger 2001: 417-418). Colenso (1855: 160) appeared initially to subscribe to this view

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21 William Shaw was the General Superintendent of Wesleyan Missions in British South-Eastern Africa (Boyce 1874: 245).
to some extent, although this did not prevent him from using a Zulu word for God.

However, by the early twentieth century the Zulu language had come to be viewed in a new light. In his 1905 dictionary, the missionary Alfred Bryant (1905: 8) affirmed that “the [Zulu] language … absolutely outclasses many of our European languages”. But, continuing to subscribe to the view of Zulu as a coarse and unrefined language, Burnett – even in the nineteen-fifties – appears to have ignored developments in the study of the language over the previous hundred years. He rounded off his account of the controversy with a facetious quote from one ("waggish") correspondent: “some of them (i.e. Natives) are surprised to find (since Colenso’s advent) that they have been under divine instruction so long, and are most gratified with the rank they have attained” (Burnett [1955]: 63).

Ridiculing the aspiration to equality of ‘rank’ with the white colonists, and characterising Zulu as an inferior language by reference to its ‘crudities’ seems to link the denial that there could be a Zulu name for God with a firm belief in a hierarchical divide between the races, a point which we shall return to.

5 Objections to uNkulunkulu by Rev. Henry Callaway

In March 1855, Colenso returned to Natal with his family to take up permanent residence in the colony and to establish himself at his mission station, Ekukanyeni, located near to Pietermaritzburg, the capital of the colony. Already in Natal was Reverend Henry Callaway (1817–1890). Formerly a Quaker, Callaway had recently converted to Anglicanism and been ordained by Colenso in order to work with him as a missionary in Natal. Callaway initially worked with Colenso at Ekukanyeni and in Pietermaritzburg. But discovering “that they had many points of disagreement” (Benham 1996: 115), in 1858 Callaway broke away from Colenso to start a separate mission station called Spring Vale, located in the south-west of the colony in an area relatively remote from the capital (Hinchliff 1963: 63; 1964: 65). Callaway was to become a leading contemporary critic of Colenso’s advocacy of uNkulunkulu as the Zulu God-name and came to be considered an authority on Zulu culture and religion. His findings were cited by a number of well-known writers in Europe, including Max Müller, John Lubbock, Herbert Spencer, Edward B. Tylor, Andrew Lang and James Frazer. In particular, Max Müller, the renowned philologist, drew on Callaway’s findings for his lectures in 1870 which are considered to have launched the discipline of comparative religion. Callaway was among
those regarded as “local experts” by imperial theorists based in the metropole who began to develop comprehensive theories of human history within an evolutionary framework (Chidester 1996: 152; 2014: 7, 19). These theorists depended heavily on information supplied by those, such as Callaway, who worked with the indigenous people of the colonies. However, as we shall see, the reliance on “local experts” was not without its pitfalls. They could be a mixed blessing.

Callaway’s theological objections to *uNkulunkulu*, referred to in a diary entry in 1856, are fourfold:

1. *uNkulunkulu* is a proper name, and not a word expressing the idea of Divinity as Deus – Gott. It would be no more proper to adopt such names as Jupiter, Mercury, Woden as names of God, than to adopt Unkulunkulu.
2. The people themselves attach many very wrong and absurd notions to the Unkulunkulu …
3. The Jews were very expressly commanded not to adopt the names of heathen gods.
4. S. Paul … adopted the word *Theos* for God; yet he did not employ any of the names of the Grecian gods … Indeed, how could he, when he taught the Corinthians (1 Cor. X. 30) the gods whom the Gentiles worshipped were devils?

(Benham 1896: 55–56)

Hence, the Christian mission to the Zulu in the nineteenth century could not do what St. Paul forbade the Christian mission to the Greeks in the first century.

But Callaway’s most forceful argument against *uNkulunkulu* was based on his questioning of numerous Zulu residents at his mission station, Spring Vale, and of those in the local area, about their beliefs. Questions and answers were relayed through his leading informant, Mpengula Mbande (d. 1874), who “placed his distinctive mark on the formulation of a traditional Zulu religious system” (Chidester 1996: 159). On the basis of these discussions, Callaway arrived at firm conclusions concerning aspects of Zulu belief which he published in his *Religious Systems of the Amazulu* (Callaway 1868, 1970; Benham 1896: 238–239). In contradiction to Colenso’s findings, Callaway’s chief conclusion was that *uNkulunkulu* was not the name of a Deity or a sky-god, but rather of an ancestor (or ancestors). Indeed, he claimed that the Zulu did not even have a notion of a Supreme Being: “[t]hey are ancestor-worshippers, and believe that their first ancestor – the first man – was the creator. Unkulunkulu means the old-old-one, the most ancient man” (Callaway 1868: 1, n. 2).
He also claimed that there could be many *uNkulukulu* – each for the ancestor of a particular descent line (1868: 48–49). The difference between Callaway’s and Colenso’s understanding of *uNkulunkulu* can be accounted for by looking at *kulu* (*khulu*), the constituent part of the longer word. Colenso understood this as meaning ‘great’, which would be appropriate for a sky god. In contrast, Callaway claimed that *kulu* was to do with seniority, in terms of age, which would be appropriate when referring to an ancestor.

Part I of *Religious Systems* is primarily concerned with *uNkulunkulu*, but in it, Callaway takes issue with other purported African God-names. Concerning what, for the Wesleyans (*Wesleyan Missionaries* 1855: 273), was “the name for ‘God’ usually employed by the Missionary Churches”, he concluded that “[to] my mind nothing here found conveys the idea that the notion of divinity was ever in the uneducated native mind connected with Utikxo” (Callaway 1868: 111). Turning to *uNkulunkulu*, Callaway (1868: 104) found:

> Unkulunkulu is, both on critical and religious grounds, an utterly unfit word with which to translate GOD. The … natives ascribe in some sort the divine act of creation to the first man. But I think … their notions of creation are so widely opposed to ours, that most of the words they use to express it are unfit to be used for the purpose by the missionary, implying as they do a theory of creation utterly inadmissible in Christian theology, which is founded on the Word of God.\(^{22}\)

Therefore, the Zulu have neither a sky-god nor do they even have a notion of creation that corresponds to the Christian idea. Furthermore, speaking generally of the “different peoples” of “South Africa”, Callaway (1868: 113) affirmed that a new name introduced into their language would be “not really newer to them than the idea of the supreme Being itself.”

The new God-name used by Callaway was *uDio* (*Chidester* 2014: 228; *Benham* 1896:100), showing that, at least at one point, he and Colenso had not been so far apart on this issue.

It can be seen that, as was the case for Colenso, Callaway found that his ethnographic data vindicated his theological arguments.

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\(^{22}\) Significantly, in this connection, Hermanson (2003: 6–7) cites one factor contributing to the reluctance by early missionaries to the Xhosa to use words in the local language referring to the Supreme Being. This was that the possible “unbiblical connotations which those words, used in local accounts of creation, for example, might convey about the God revealed in the Bible.”.
However, not all were persuaded by the way in which Callaway had gathered his evidence. Some observers had found the evidence from Callaway’s informants to be honest, but ambiguous and “confused” (Chidester 2014: 132, 140; Smith [1950] 1961: 104). Historians have shown that Africans who were attached to Christian mission stations at this time occupied a marginal position in African society, as even Callaway admitted (Etherington 1978: 87; 1989: 283). They were dislocated from traditional African society, sometimes coming from areas distant from the Mission station.  

23 Mbande himself came from Griqualand East, to the south of Natal. He had left his chiefdom “under some sort of cloud” (Etherington 1978: 108). Being in the melting pot of the collision between two cultures could inspire some to innovate, indeed to ‘philosophise’, as Mbande may have done, perhaps justifying his characterisation as a ‘Zulu philosopher’ providing, it has been argued, not an ethnographic account but a theological critique of traditional Zulu religion.

In contrast, although the African chiefs visited by Colenso and Shepstone in 1854 were living under colonial rule, albeit indirect rule, it could be reasonably supposed that Africans in their kraals, when relied on as informants, were more likely to be in touch with the ideas and beliefs of their elders and less influenced by European ideas, compared to Africans at mission stations.

Indeed, Mbande’s evidence was called into question later in 1897 when Müller, “received from Zululand itself an account of Unkulunkulu from the hand, as it would seem, of a native, very different from that given by Bishop Callaway”. This account identified uNkulunkulu as a sky god. “If we can no longer quote Callaway on Zulus …” Müller asked, “whom shall we quote?” (Chidester 2014: 80–81, 227–228).

The debate on uNkulunkulu continues into the twentieth century

In a further twist, it later turned out that Mbande’s evidence had been contradicted not by a Zulu but a white missionary, Alfred Bryant, writing in the newspaper *Inkanyiso yase Natal* in 1895 (Chidester 2014: 81, 229). However, despite having authored the articles claiming uNkulunkulu to be a sky...
god, in Bryant’s 1905 Zulu-English dictionary (p. 750), the entry for *uNkulunkulu* was: “The Great-great-ancestor, or ancestral-spirit (of mankind), the first man who is supposed to have made most of the things around about; hence adopted by missionaries to express God, Creator”, thus suggesting that *uNkulunkulu* was in fact an ancestor – and it was missionaries who had imposed on the word the meaning of God! And, after reviewing the evidence of Callaway and others, Worger (2001: 442) comments that, half a century after Callaway had studied the meaning of *uNkulunkulu*, Zulu and other Africans remained ambivalent about its metaphorical implications.

In the meantime, novelists had joined the debate. Rider Haggard had spent some time in Natal in the 1870s and used his experience as the basis for novels such as *King Solomon’s Mines*. In a lecture delivered in Edinburgh in 1887 on the Zulu he said that “[t]hey believe in a God, the Unkulunkulu – the almighty, the Greatest Great. He is the creator, the Source of all Life”. In *Nada the Lily*, published in 1892 (and dedicated to Theophilus Shepstone who Haggard had worked with in Natal), his Zulu character, Mopo, “dared to pray to Umkulunkulu [sic] the great soul of the world, who moves through the heavens and the earth unseen and unheard”. But, in contrast, in John Buchan’s *Prester John*, published in 1910, the Zulu worshipped “Umkulunkulu, ... a great Power who had been their ancestor” (Chidester 2014: 134–135, 140–141).

Then, in the nineteen-twenties, in a series of articles in *Anthropos*, the Catholic missionary, Rev. William Wanger (1923–1924, 1925, 1926) argued that *uNkulunkulu* was not a single word but two words distinguished by differing pronunciations. Callaway and Colenso were not therefore in disagreement about two possible meanings of the same word. Rather, each of these meanings related to a different word. The difference between them hinged on the fact that *Kulu* meant ‘great’ in two senses: superior as in high up; or old, in terms of age or seniority.26 Wanger (1923–1924: 658) went on to claim that “there is no longer any missionary in S. Africa who doubts *uNkulunkulu* to be a traditional Zulu God-name. But to cease opposing it, would be tantamount to publicly avowing the mistake made by their forefathers.” This appears to corroborate the American missionary, Lindley, when he told Colenso that the Americans had used *uTixo* because they had “deferred to the example and judgement of the Wesleyans” as their predecessors (Colenso 1855: 240).

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26 It is suggested by Worger (2001: 444-445) that the contrast is more accurately represented as one between (patriarchal) power and age.
And, indeed, as we have seen, the Wesleyans justified *uTixo* on the grounds that it had “long been taught” in the colony (Wesleyan Missionaries 1855: 276).

And, reversing the charge of prejudice brought by Callaway against other missionaries,27 Wanger (1923–1924: 658, emphasis in the original) asserted that Callaway was “biased by a foregone conclusion that UNKULUNKULU could not, or perhaps even must not, be that which COLENSO had proclaimed and defended it to be, namely a traditional genuine Zulu God-name”. He also pointed to the dangers of informants “philosophising”, citing as a “glaring instance” of this Callaway’s informant, Mpengula Mbande. And, addressing one of Callaway’s objections to using the names of pagan gods, he suggested that missionaries were inclined to suppose that pagan religions were polytheistic, as were those they were familiar with, that is, chiefly the Greek, Roman, Teutonic and Celtic ones, whereas the Zulu-speaking peoples were monotheistic (ibid. 662, 656–657). In this connection it might be conjectured that it was an association with (in Western perception) the permissive pantheons and colourful narratives of the classical religions Burnett ([1955]: 40) had in mind when he implicitly downgraded the truth status of *uNkulunkulu* by saying that Colenso had taken the name from “Zulu mythology”.

Then, in another twist, in 1935, Bryant published a book in which he compared the Zulu and the Kavirondos of Uganda, finding that “[j]ust as the Zulus have their *uNkulunkulu* (or the Great-great-One, the creator of mankind), the Kavirondos likewise have their *Nyasi* (or Supreme One)” (Chidester 2014: 230–231). Thus, notwithstanding the definition in his 1905 dictionary, Bryant now affirmed uNkulunkulu as the Supreme Being!

Reflecting the continuing debate, in their 1947 dictionary Clement Doke and Vilakazi (1964: 580) gave three meanings of *uNkulunkulu*:

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27 To explain the failure of some to recognise the divergence between Zulu and Christian belief systems, Callaway (1868: 105–106) argued that observers had sometimes projected onto “heathen savages” the beliefs they wished to find, “[i]mpart[ing] to them great truths and ideas which they never heard before, and presently have these come back again as articles of their own original faith when in reality they are but the echoes of one’s own thoughts.” He might have thought, as did the Wesleyan missionaries quoted earlier, that this is precisely what Colenso had done.

A similar point is made by Paul Landau (1999: 22) who suggests that “African analogies to Western religion were elicited [by missionaries] ... in order to produce Africans’ Christianity.”.
Nkulunkulu (uNkulunkulu): i) The great progenitor of the human race, the great ancestor or ancestral spirit of mankind, who is believed to have created things about him; ii) God; the supreme Deity; iii) (pl.) used to indicate pagan divinities, thus allowing for both Callaway’s and Colenso’s interpretations of uNkulunkulu.

In 1950 the historian of missions, Edwin Smith, reviewed the interpretations of uNkulunkulu, including those by Colenso, Callaway, Wanger and Doke. Though rejecting the distinction made by Wanger between the two pronunciations of uNkulunkulu and, though considering that generally across south Africa “the Supreme Being is overshadowed by ancestral gods”, Smith ([1950] 1961: 108, 133–134) nevertheless concluded that “genuine Zulu tradition knows a great deal more of the true God than the Zulus were credited with.” This implicitly supports Colenso’s belief that Africans had knowledge of God which was “in their hearts, as well as ours” (Colenso 1854: 138).

It appears that, nearly a hundred years after Bishop Colenso first visited the colony, opinion continued to be divided on whether uNkulunkulu was an ancestor or a sky God.

However, among missionary bodies and Churches of different denominations, and in the translation of the Scriptures, it appears that in the twentieth century there was a convergence towards the use of uNkulunkulu as the Zulu God-name. The American missionaries continued to use uTixo in their first New Testament in 1865, and in their first complete Bible published in 1883 as well as in its new edition in 1893. But in their revised New Testament in 1917 and in the complete Bible in 1924 they changed to uNkulunkulu. The Bible published by the Hermansburg Mission in 1924 used uNkulunkulu. The Catholic New Testament of 1966 uses uNkulunku-lu. The Bible published by the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1959 also uses uNkulunkulu as does the Bible of the Bible Society of South Africa, published in 1997,28 which is the Bible in general use in the majority of Zulu Churches today. (Hermanson 2003: 11; Smith [1950] 1961: 104, n. 2.)

28 The first line reads: “Ekuqaleni uNkulunkulu wadala izulu nomhlaba”, translation: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (The Bible in Zulu [isiZulu] 1997, Genesis 1:1). In comparison, present-day Bibles in Xhosa retain uTixo as the name for God (The Holy Bible [isiXhosa] 2013; also see Worger (2001: 445, n. 111).
In 1947, Smith ([1950] 1961: 102) noted seeing ‘Unkulunkulu nthando’ (‘God is love’) inscribed on the entrance to the private chapel of the Paramount Chief of the Zulu. And in 1955 even Burnett ([1955]: 63), after apparently accepting contemporary accounts ridiculing uNkulunkulu as an example of one of the “crudities” of the Zulu language, was forced to concede that “time has completely vindicated him [Bishop Colenso] in this respect. Throughout Natal and Zululand it is uNkulunkulu that is used by the Church of the Province of South Africa.”

In academic journals, the debate has continued into the present century. Reviewing the missionary literature (including Callaway’s and Colenso’s) Worger (2001: 438) concluded that there was considerable evidence that Colenso’s identification of umKulunkulu with the lost Christian god was incorrect. And drawing on evidence from Callaway’s informants and on histories of the formation of the Zulu state, Jennifer Weir has argued forcefully that uNkulunkulu was “a generic name for particular significant ancestors”. When extending the power of the Zulu state, the ancestors were of particular importance in establishing the legitimacy of the new regime to those newly incorporated in it. Echoing Paul Landau’s warning against assuming religious “transcultural universals”, Weir considers that the idea of Unkulunkulu as a God is a “colonial construct”, “an example of white systems of understanding being grafted on to African systems that are not necessarily compatible …” (Weir 2005: 203–216; cf. Landau 1995: xx).29

7 Conclusion

I suggested earlier that the debate on uNkulunkulu in mid nineteenth-century Natal had a political dimension to it. This level of the debate was not explicitly articulated by the participants. But its outline can be discerned from some of the expressions used by protagonists on both sides.

We have seen that the view of Natal settlers and of many missionaries, as characterised by Burnett, was that, due to the “crudities” of their language, the Zulu could not have a God-name. This implied a hierarchical ranking between the races with the Zulu assigned a lower ‘rank’, or subor-

29 There is not space here to develop a discussion of Weir’s argument. However, it may be relevant to note that the social and political context of the expansion of the Zulu state earlier in the century would have differed from that in Natal in the eighteen-fifties.
dinate status, compared to the white colonists. Colenso’s very different vision of the colonial relationship was one informed by his view that the existence of a Zulu God-name was evidence of the “common ground” between Zulu and Christian.

As suggested by both the Wesleyan missionaries and by Callaway, it is possible that Colenso prejudged his investigations in Natal, setting out determined to find a Zulu God-name. But I suggest that he saw the possession by the Zulu of a name for God in their own language as an indication of both their spiritual worth and potential, and of their entitlement to a position in the newly developing colonial order equal to that of the white settlers. As we have seen, this was something that settlers and many other missionaries in Natal viewed with contempt and derision (but also possibly with fear?).

It is therefore not surprising that, when he arrived in the colony proposing a Zulu name for God in contradiction to the name well established in the practice of the local missionaries, Colenso was considered to have upset the applecart.

A historian of missions was to note a hundred years later that “[t]he majority of missionaries in those days disagreed with Colenso” on the Zulu God-name (Smith [1950] 1961: 103). Nevertheless, it may have been his early challenge to the ‘established use’ justification for the continued use of uTixo in Natal, together with his advocacy of a Zulu word as the alternative that, despite not gaining acceptance at the time, laid the groundwork for a process of change. The eventual outcome was that it was uNkulunkulu that was to prevail among the Zulu-speaking people, in contrast to their Xhosa-speaking neighbours.

The adoption over the next century, by the Churches and missionary societies, of uNkulunkulu as the Zulu God-name, rather than uTixo, may be regarded as a political accommodation between the Christian institutions and the increasing strength of the Zulu voice within their congregations. But it was a process in which Bishop Colenso’s impassioned intervention in Natal in the eighteen-fifties played no small part.

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30 The opposition to uNkulunkulu from missionaries in Natal in the mid-nineteenth century was also fuelled by a number of controversies concerning theology, missionary practice and Church organisation that Bishop Colenso was involved in in Natal.
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His publications include:


The Wanderings of Altjira, Christianity and the Translation of Sacred Words in Central Australia

David Moore

Abstract

German missionaries working in Central Australia were cultural translators who had a strong grounding in philology, a discipline which developed in Germany to a high standard throughout the nineteenth century. The missionaries aimed to translate the Bible and hymnbook containing Luther’s Small Catechism, hymns and prayers, into the Aranda language. Their adoption of Altjira for ‘God’ was radical considering the literalness of their translations and their wariness of syncretism. Soesilo (2007: 176) maintains that “the acceptable translation of divine names is an area of debate in Bible translation in many areas of the world” as “there are missionaries and Christian workers who think that adopting local divine names can lead to confusion and syncretism.” Given concerns about syncretism and considering that Kempe usually borrowed Latin terms for key theological terms, it is surprising that he chose Altjira as the term for ‘God’. Over time Altjira has changed meaning and is now different from the one prior to European settlement of Australia. Changes in meaning are also found in other languages, where meanings have diverged in different ways. [Altjira; Arandic languages; literal translation; interlanguage; loanword]

1 Introduction

Europeans sparsely settled the Central Australian frontier from the 1870s onwards. The Aboriginal people of this region were hunter-gatherers who

1 I thank Donald Kemarr Thompson, Frank Kemarr Holmes and other men at the arnkenty men’s camp at Ampilatwatja who have informed my understanding of Altjerry. I also thank John Henderson and Marie-Eve Ritz, my academic supervisors, and Maïa Ponsonnet for valuable feedback on this paper at the University of Western Australia. I would also like to thank James Cox, Adam Possamai, Ken Hansen and Garry Stoll for many enlightening discussions on indigenous religion.
lived in small bands, and the first contacts with European settlers were with explorers, cattlemen and missionaries. To the west of the Aranda and Luritja, the last of these Aboriginal groups to encounter western influences were the Pintupi (Myers 1986: 11), almost a century after the establishment of the Hermannsburg Mission Station.

In this context, around the turn of the nineteenth century into the twentieth, the first efforts to translate Christian texts into Central Australian Aboriginal languages were made by German Lutheran missionaries who tried to convey the Christian doctrine through Aranda (written ‘Arrarnta’ or ‘Western Arrarnta’ from the 1970s) and a neighbouring language, the Western Desert language Pintupi-Luritja (see Map 1).

and language, and the organisers of the Stirling Colloquium who invited me to give this paper in December 2015.
In “Altjira, Dream and God” I explored the way in which Dreaming wandered from its limited geographical origins in Central Australia (Moore 2016). Altjira was translated as Dreaming by the settler society (Wolfe 1997: 82) which was intended to reinforce the theory that Aboriginal societies had magic rather than religion (Gillen 1901). Dreaming was a key term of social evolutionist anthropology which outlived the ethnographic matrix of its creation and became a key term in local and Australian English varieties of secular mainstream and pan-Aboriginal Australia. For different languages, words which originally had similar meanings have diverged in different ways to take on a range of meanings in different dialects and languages. These terms involve the extension of meanings as a result of se-

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mantic change which reflects rapid cultural change following the colonisation of Australia.

The translation of *Altjira* as ‘God’ shows the problematic nature of translation of the terms when languages come into contact. Although controversy about the meaning of *Altjira* has raged between non-Indigenous researchers for a century, we have not heard the Indigenous arguments about its meaning. A century after the initial translation of *Altjira* in Aranda hymns there were discussions about the key term for ‘God’ in Pintupi-Luritja. The word *Tjukurrpa* (equivalent to Aranda *Altjira*) was seen by Pintupi-Luritja speakers as inappropriate for the translation of ‘God’. This paper highlights the uniqueness and the problematic nature of that translation choice.

Whilst the spread of *Dreaming* was based upon an interlanguage which developed at the frontier, the development of religious key terms has been intentional, although not all of them have been accepted. I explore Central Australian missionary translations as collaborative works and explain how *Altjira* became established as a key term of Christianity in the Aranda language, examining reasons why it was accepted as the key term for ‘God’ for some languages and not for others.

2 Beginnings: the Hermannsburg Mission

German Lutheran missionaries working in Central Australia were cultural translators with a strong grounding in philology, a discipline which emerged in Germany in the Reformation and developed throughout the nineteenth century (Moore and Ríos 2018). They aimed to translate the Bible and hymnbook containing Luther’s Small Catechism, hymns and prayers into the Aranda language. The Hermannsburg Mission Institute in Lower Saxony in Germany sent the first missionaries to Central Australia (Harms 2003: 121). Hermann Kempe and Wilhelm Schwarz arrived in 1877 and were joined by Louis Schulze in 1878. They established the Hermannsburg Mission station in Central Australia, and Kempe published a worship book in 1891. After many crises and disappointments, the missionaries left Hermannsburg in 1891 and were succeeded by temporary caretakers until the arrival of Carl Strehlow (1871–1922), a missionary who was trained by the Neuendettelsau Mission Institute near Nürnberg in Franconia (Harms 2003: 153). He had arrived in Australia in 1892, initially learning the Dieri language at Lake Killalpaninna and translating the New Testament from biblical Greek and German into Dieri with J.G. Reuther, before moving to Hermannsburg in 1894, where he continued to work on
the Dieri translation. The first translation of the New Testament into an Australian Aboriginal language (Schild 2004: 55) was the Dieri New Testament which was published in 1897.

After the Hermannsburg mission was established, the first task of the missionaries at Hermannsburg was to find theological key terms. Many of their key terms were makeshift and appear to have had a place-holding function until more suitable terms were found. Strehlow gained over a decade of experience in translation before he made the Aranda hymnbook revision and was well aware of the untranslatability of many terms between Aboriginal languages and German.

Carl Strehlow’s arrival heralded the beginning of a new era at Hermannsburg. He had a dual role. While translating the Lutheran hymnbook into Aranda, he was also translating Aranda and Loritja myths, legends and tales into German. His collaboration with Freiherr Moritz von Leonhardi (1856–1910) resulted in the publication of Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien [The Aranda and Loritja Tribes in Central Australia], a comprehensive collection of texts, songs and culture descriptions published in seven parts (Strehlow 1907–1920). As a missionary translator, he had retained the use of Altjira for ‘God’. A word with a similar meaning to Altjira in the Dieri language, muramura (Kneebone 2005: 115), was not adopted for ‘God’. Strehlow must have been aware of this decision, as he continued to work on the translation of the Dieri New Testament at Hermannsburg. Carl Strehlow’s translation philosophy was to make as few changes as possible from the work of his predecessors. In the translation of the Gospels, Strehlow replaced Kiria (Kempe 1891) from Κύριε/Kyrie [Lord] in New Testament Greek with Inkata, an Aranda word used to indicate a ceremonial leader (Kenny 2013: 252). Strehlow was constrained in the changes he was able to make when he revised Kempe (1891) and published his revised hymnal in 1904 because his informants insisted that he translate into their own dialects of Aranda, that is, the Aranda aratja ‘right’ dialect rather than the Aranda ulbma dialect (J. Strehlow 2011: 739), reflecting prescriptive language ideologies which were held by Aranda speakers. Missionary Wettengel’s opposition to Strehlow’s changes to the hymnal led to Wettengel’s departure from Hermannsburg and return to Germany (J. Strehlow 2011: 871). His criticisms of Strehlow were conveyed to the Berlin-based linguist Wilhelm Planert (1908: 703) who claimed that Strehlow’s 1904 hymnbook contained “very little classical Aranda” and that the Aranda people themselves were not able to understand it. There seems to be little basis for this criticism as it is apparent that Strehlow had actually replaced Kempe’s loanwords with Aranda words (see Section 4) and also corrected grammar.
3 Controversies and challenges of translation

Meaning in language is often indeterminate in that even speakers of the same language can experience difficulties with ambiguity, generality and vagueness. Translation from one language to another increases the indeterminacy and potential for miscommunication. Words for ideas and values are often untranslatable between languages (Williams 1985: 16), and are often not translated (Apter 2014: vii). Despite indeterminacy and the failure of translations to convey source language meanings accurately, there is often the mistaken belief that a word in one language can be translated by a single word in another language.

The challenges of translation become especially evident in contact situations where interlanguages can arise. These are “language systems created by someone learning a second language which contains the properties of both the first and second languages according to the learner’s system of rules” (Crystal 1992: 308), and they develop along linguistic frontiers (Cooke 1998: 42). The missionaries were learning Aranda but would have spoken a kind of interlanguage, a learner’s Aranda while Aranda speakers adopted words of English. It was therefore natural for words to develop new meanings in the interlingual frontiers of Central Australia.

3.1 Pepa

An example of a word from the linguistic frontier is the Aranda word *pepa*, a loanword from English ‘paper’ which means ‘paper, book, letter, document or church service’ (Oberscheidt 1991: 161; Breen 2000: 46). The association of Christian worship with hymnbooks led to the adoption of *pepa* to mean ‘worship’ (Hansen 1983: 22) and describes “a Christian service and the books used” (Hansen and Hansen 1992: 106). *Pepa* can have a secular sense of ‘document, form, letter, report’ and numerous other translations related to English ‘paper’; for example, Roennfeldt et al. (2006: 70) use it for ‘book’. The missionaries translated religious literature such as Luther’s *Der kleine Katechismus* [The Small Catechism] (Luther [1529] 2012), hymns, prayers and Bible passages into the Aranda language of Central Australia. The strong connection with the key documents of the Protestant Reformation, the Bible, hymnbook, and literacy and education that were integral to Lutheran religious practice was therefore key to the acceptance of *pepa* as a useful metonymy.

In contrast *tjurunga* is untranslatable by any single word in English and has only religious connotations, describing sacred objects (Breen 2000: 60)
and associated ceremonies. Rather than assuming “a related meaning to tjurunga” (Kenny 2013: 127), the similarity between *pepa* and *tjurunga* is that they are both purported to be metonymic. Evidence is lacking for Kenny’s claim for *pepa* that “in the course of the twentieth century its meaning seems to have solidified, relating to Christian tjurunga” (2013: 128). The adoption of *pepa* does not mean that ‘the Arrernte became Christian by rendering Christianity in an Arrernte way’ as Austin-Broos claims (2003: 312), rather that *pepa* developed as a term in a religious interlanguage to describe something new based upon sense relations between physical and metaphysical referents, the metonymic extension of meaning (Cruse 2004: 209). This change in meaning of *pepa* would have been quite unintentional on the part of the missionaries and shows the extent to which loanwords are assimilated into a language as speakers of different languages assume a mutual understanding of shared terms.

### 3.2 ‘Sacred’

The word *mek-mek* was used for the title of a Northern Territory Government report *Ampe Akely-rnemane Mek-mekarle, The Little Children are Sacred*, based upon its mistranslation as ‘sacred’ (Moore 2016: 95). In the translation, it was supposed to mean ‘inviolate’. But *mek-mek* is untranslatable by a single English word. It refers to a sacred site or ceremonial ground to “which certain people, especially women and children are not allowed to go near” (Henderson and Dobson 1994: 114). The Western Arrarnta dictionary defines the word as “secret/dangerous place or site” (Oberscheidt 1991: 115). Collocations are conventional combinations of words and include compounds and idioms. *The Little Children are Sacred* is a ‘collocational clash’, a translation error (Beekman and Callow 1974: 166) involving a semantically unacceptable placement of words in a way that makes no sense to speakers. The equivalent term to *mek-mek* in Pitjantjatjara *miil-miil* is defined as ‘dangerous and prohibited, sacred’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tjanampa</th>
<th>miil-miil</th>
<th>mula</th>
<th>nyaratja</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3PL</td>
<td>sacred</td>
<td>real</td>
<td>there</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Theyir sacred objects are stored over there” (Goddard 1992: 66).

The use of *makamaka* for ‘glory’ (Albrecht 2002: 194) in the Western Arrarnta Bible (Bible Society 1997: 304) is a deliberate attempt to introduce a key term with sacred associations in the translation of Isaiah 6:3:
“His glory fills the whole earth”.

Translator Paul Albrecht (1997) aimed to convey the notion that ‘the whole earth is God’s taboo place, a place of significance because of God’s presence’. In other parts of the translation makamaka specifically refers to ‘sacred sites’ or ‘holy places’, for example, in the translation of Exodus 3:1:

“Horeb, that was God’s sacred mountain”.

Albrecht seemed confident that the word would be accepted as the Arrarnta term for ‘glory’, replacing a previous word alkaralkara, “glorious, bright (as the sky)” (Oberscheidt 1991: 2) and “clear, transparent, like a clear sky” (Henderson and Dobson 1994: 93) which the missionaries adopted as the term for ‘glory’.

By the time of the 1997 Arrarnta Bible translation there was a recognition of the unreality of some of the terms. While the translation was being tested, there were problems with “slipping into theological jargon” and “English-isms” (Albrecht 2002: 195). These were a result of the translation process itself. Indigenous Arrarnta speakers appear to have had a marginal role in the process of checking and verifying the translation.

The accretion of key terms over generations has led to their naturalisation within the limited domain of the Church but also appears to have had a limited overall impact upon the language. In general terms, the effect of translation was to create a separate language, one that would be accepted within the domain of the Church but not understood or used outside it. By 1997, when the Western Arrarnta Bible was published, there was an apparent acceptance of these unusual ways of speaking in indigenous societies. In a similar way, many indigenous languages have special registers for avoidance and respect. For example, the language of songlines contains archaic words that cannot be understood unless they are explained. In a similar way, the language of the Church became a sacred language, understood only by the initiated, showing that capturing the meanings of the individual words has been less important than participation in the ceremony. The Reformation principle of perspicuity and the language ideology...
that sacred language needs to be understood by all was subordinated to a language ideology of songlines and word meanings which have no currency outside of the ceremony.

4 Language change

I argue that translation is a cause of language change and the origin of interlanguage, as becomes evident when a term is given a novel meaning which corresponds to a term in the source language. Terms have been borrowed; for example, *Churinga* (Spencer’s spelling of *tjurunga*, ‘sacred object’) has been used to name apartment blocks and shopping centres. This appears to have been done without any understanding of what the word means in its traditional context.

This process of language change occurred deliberately through the translation at the Hermannsburg Mission. The hybrid situation (Cohen 2016: 113) led to terms which were widely accepted and gained currency. An interlanguage developed in the Lutheran mission in which Aranda terms were adopted, taking on specific meanings in specific contexts. However, many terms were not widely accepted or only in the ecclesiastical domain, among the Hermannsburg missionaries and evangelists. Some terms became obsolete. These included *Efangkelia* ‘Gospel’, ‘good news’, from Greek via German, a term that was clearly alien and which was replaced with *yia marra*, ‘good story’.

4.1 Abstract nouns and nominalisations

Terms were created to cover abstract nouns which had no equivalents in Aboriginal languages. Aboriginal languages have very few abstract nouns (T. G. H. Strehlow 1944: 69; Dixon 1980: 272). The missionaries created terms by nominalising verbs, as shown by the following examples from Oberscheidt 1991:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aranda source verb</th>
<th>Abstract noun</th>
<th>translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>nama</em> ‘to sit, to be’</td>
<td><em>nintja</em></td>
<td>‘being, existence’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>nentilama</em> ‘to explain’</td>
<td><em>nentilintja</em></td>
<td>‘explanation’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>naamalhelama</em> ‘to cause to move, shift’</td>
<td><em>naamalhelintja</em></td>
<td>‘removal, deportation’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These abstract nouns developed in the Church context and are not used in others, thus having no independent existence.

4.2 The conversion of sacred terms

Another method of developing key terms was the process of zero derivation (Moore 2015: 3) or conversion (Cruse 1986: 132; 135 footnote 15), that is, changing the function of the word, from a describing or attributive meaning to one in which it represented a quality. The term for ‘peace’ was derived from ngwanga, defined as “non-belligerent, quiet, merciful” (Oberscheidt 1991: 133). Australian languages do not distinguish adjectives from nouns on structural grounds, as they occur with the same grammatical markers and share the same grammatical properties. Often a word with an attributive function can stand alone as a noun, for example, in Eastern Arrernte akweke ‘small’ can stand alone as ‘the small one’. However, the shift from nominal to abstract noun is more radical, creating a term for a referent and a usage that is not found in the traditional language.

4.3 Sacred places

Missionaries developed key terms by taking sacred terms from an Aboriginal language to use it in the Christian context. Strehlow was cautious about the adoption of new terms which were taken from Aboriginal religion, although he replaced many of Kempe’s classical language borrowings with Aranda-derived terms (Moore 2015: 44). For example, arknanaua was too culturally specific to use for ‘church’, as it referred to a storehouse of sacred objects that uninitiated people were forbidden to visit (Moore and Ríos 2018: 337–338). The analogy with a church building was not accepted by his informants (C. Strehlow 1907–20: 73) because mentioning a restricted and off-limits location would be regarded as sacrilege, resulting in serious consequences for uninitiated people. Thus, Strehlow dropped the use of the term “because the blacks associate too many heathen perceptions with the word arknanaua” (ibid.). He chose instead the more general term ilita for ‘Haus’ or ‘Hütte’ ['house’, ‘hut’]. In fact, relatively few terms appear to have been borrowed from Aboriginal religion to serve as key terms of Christian religion. The use of tjurunga was probably never considered and appears not to have been used in the Western Arrarnta translation, probably because it is culturally specific. Rather than referring to Aboriginal reli-

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gion in a general way, it has specific reference, which as Strehlow recognised, is not readily transferrable to other contexts.

5 The translation of God: Altjira

One of the earliest terms that the missionaries sought was one for ‘God’. Much of their questioning of Aboriginal informants would have been about Aranda beliefs concerning the existence of God, and whether or not they had a word for God. The word *alxira* (an earlier spelling of *Altjira*) was used from around 1880 in hymn translations. The Hermannsburg missionary A.H. Kempe had described it in his report to the mission board:

> They call this alxira and attribute to him the creation of the sky and the earth; they say too that he lives in the sky and is well disposed to humanity, or at least doesn’t cause them any ill (Kempe 1881: 55).

Schwarz (1881: 74) reports that the Hermannsburg Christian congregation sang the hymn *Alxir alkiela* at Christmas, and the term appears throughout the 1891 hymnbook. Of the 53 hymns translated by the missionaries which appear in the hymnbook (Kempe 1891), 36 hymns contain *Altjira* as the translation for ‘God’. Clearly, the Hermannsburg missionaries were using the term soon after their arrival in Central Australia. Whatever they may have said later about its translation, there can be no doubt about their early commitment to the use of the term.

However, disagreements about the translation of *Altjira* occurred among translators and Aboriginal Churches. Their adoption of *Altjira* for ‘God’ was radical considering the literalness of their translations and their wariness of syncretism. Considering that Kempe usually borrowed Latin terms for key theological terms, it is surprising that he chose *Altjira* as the term for ‘God’.

Some idea of the complexity of *Altjira* was given by T. G. H. Strehlow (1971: 614–615):

> Altjira as a word is difficult to translate into English and there were disputes about how to translate it in the early twentieth century. ‘altjira’ is a rare word whose root meaning appears to be ‘eternal, uncreated, sprung out itself’ and it occurs only in certain traditional phrases and collocations.

*Altjira* is a highly controversial word, translated differently by researchers who were polarized in their metascientific orientations. Given the indeterminacy of language and difficulty of translation, it is not surprising that
there would be strong disagreements about the translation of Altjira. The views of the English biologist and ethnographer Walter Baldwin Spencer (1860–1929) were based upon his training in the natural sciences. He embraced a positivist philosophy of science which encouraged literalism. He sought a literal translation for Altjira which would yield a ‘core meaning’ based upon an etymological connection with ‘dream’ (Moore 2016: 88). The untranslatability of Altjira was not apparent to him. He contrived sentences which showed the invariant translation ‘dream’ (Spencer and Gillen 1927: 306). An interlanguage developed in which neither side fully understood each other and misunderstandings occurred regularly. Just as ‘false friends’ arise between related languages, so Dreaming arose based upon the translation of a term which had different functions in different linguistic and cultural systems, leading to miscommunication between Aranda first-language speakers and monolingual English-speakers. The term spread through mistaken European notions of pan-Aboriginality and the use of Dreaming by Aboriginal English speakers. Spencer and Gillen assumed that the self-evident and naturalness of Dreaming as a translation was confirmed because it was used by Aboriginal people. Many words result through miscommunication that is contrary to the original intention of the speaker and even unknown to them as they are adopted by speakers of the receptor languages who have not fully understood its meaning in the source language but have adapted the word for their own purposes. Dreaming is a clear example of this misunderstanding. The term creates dissonance. Dreaming is disliked by many Aboriginal people who think that Aboriginal culture is portrayed as vague and unreal, especially when reinforced by the negative meanings which have become attached to words such as ‘myth’ and ‘myth-ic’ with their usual connotations of ‘untrue’ for English speakers.

5.1 Collocations

In collocations Altjira occurs with other words which delimit its meaning. With the following collocation altyerr-altyerr and the verb angkerl-anem may occur sequentially or may be separated by other words but angkerl-anem is necessary to understand the meaning of altyerr-altyerr:

Altyerr-altyerr angkerl-anem
‘(he) talks continuously in his sleep’

In certain constructions such as altjira rama, ‘to dream’ (Moore 2016: 88), it forms a minimal semantic constituent with the verb rama, ‘see’. If the
verb *rama* is deleted from *altjira rama*, then *altjira* no longer means ‘to dream’ as the minimal semantic constituent is non-compositional.

### 5.2 Definitions and their limitations

Definitions of *Altjira* in recent Arandic language dictionaries have created the impression that *Altjira* is polysemous. Polysemy is comparatively rare (McGregor 2009: 137). It is simplistic to analyse *Altjira* as polysemous, but this understanding is inevitable when different contexts of use are not considered. Rather *Altjira* represents an untranslatable referent for which a number of approximate translations or ‘guesses’ have been made in the form of single English words, of which none is a fully adequate translation on its own. These could be regarded as a ‘refractive’ approach to translation, which means that various translations are given in the target language in the hope of capturing some of the range of meanings of the word (Gipper 1986: 119). The *Introductory Dictionary of Western Arrernte* (Breen 2000) appears to take the ‘refractive’ approach, defining (s.v.) *altyerre* as ‘Dreaming; dream; God’, suggesting that all three senses of the word could be used by speakers. These senses are limited to particular contexts but the dictionary contains no example sentences for the entry to give the contexts in which these senses are used.

The treatment of *Altyerr* (*Altjira*) as polysemous is seen in the *Anmatyerr to English Dictionary* (Green 2010: 58) in which ‘television’ is listed under *altyerr* instead of being listed under *altyerr arem* ‘to dream’ (verb) as though *altyerr* meant the physical ‘television’ set and not the natural extension of verbal *altyerr arem* to the ‘seeing of television’ which could be seen as analogous to the act of ‘dreaming’.

The identification of *Altjira* with *Dreaming* was opposed by Strehlow and led to a controversy which continues at the present time. Carl Strehlow claimed that Aranda people would not say ‘to have a dream’. Rather the complex form *altjira rama* is translated better by ‘to dream’ as a verb. We cannot say that *altjira* can be translated as ‘dream’ as in every case, it has the more complex and untranslatable sense of ‘time before people who are living now’.

In Spencer’s view *Altjira* as ‘God’ could only have existed because it was taught to Aboriginal people at the mission and not because its translation as a religious key term was salient or plausible. The traditional meaning of the word remained within the broader Aranda speaking community, but among the Christian Aranda community *Altjira* took on a new meaning in the Church interlanguage and was accepted as the term for ‘God’.
Over time *Altjira* has changed meaning and now, in some language communities, it has a different meaning to that prior to the European settlement of Australia. For different languages, words which had similar meanings, now have meanings which have diverged. The Hermannsburg missionaries were the only translators in Central Australia to adopt *Altjira* for ‘God’. This reflected a Lutheran preference for using an indigenous term rather than a loanword ‘Gott’, ‘God’ or ‘Deo’ which was adopted elsewhere in Oceania (Capell 1969: 156).

### 5.3 Syntactic and semantic shift

Let us now look at one of the difficulties of using *Altjira* as a key term for ‘God’.

The translation of *Altjira* as ‘God’ involved a significant semantic and syntactic shift (Moore 2015: 45). Traditionally *Altjira* referred to ancient times of creation, and the essence of tradition and Aboriginal religion. It is often invoked as an explanation, as to why a state of affairs has come about and this is like Stanner’s ‘charter’, not so much as a way of guiding behaviour but as an explanation or ontology of how things came to be the way they are:

> Altjiranga is commonly given as the answer to questions about the origin of the world. Thus, according to the Aranda, the earth and the sky have existed altjiranga, or as we might say, they have existed “in the beginning”, meaning thereby that nothing preceded them (T. G. H. Strehlow 1971: 614).

Similar meanings have been found for related words in the Arandic languages and the adjacent languages of Central Australia.

*Altjira* still has its original meaning in the Alyawarr language. In *Artnwer* ‘Desert Dingo’ (CAAMA 2016) the narrator explains that Sacred trees *arnenty* are *Altyerr-penh*, from the Creation time. The trees are unlike ordinary trees, because they involve characters from the Creation time turning into objects in the landscape. The physical landscape is where these beings now live, for example the Kwerrenarr or Rainbow Snake:

---

3 A documentary produced by the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA).
“It came from the Creation and really lives there now”.

Altjira was not traditionally spoken of as animate. In Aranda grammar, an agent is marked with a suffix which indicates the ergative case or agent of a transitive sentence:

```
Artwala       ura ngkwaltja       kutjima
Man-ERG       kindling           collect-PRES
```

“The man is collecting kindling wood”.  
(Roennfeldt 2006: 62).

Altjira has now become the word for ‘God’ in the Western Arrarnta language and some adjacent languages, replacing its earlier meaning (Green 2012: 171). Most noticeably, this involved a change in animacy and agency, indicated with the ergative case marker -la which also has locative and instrumental functions. The following example from Kempe’s grammar shows that Altjira was being used with an agent marker to indicate that Altjira had agency:

```
Altjirala   jingana       etata      ntema
God-ERG     (to) me-ACC    life       give-PRES
```

“God gives me life” (Kempe 1891: 9).

(ERG marks the Agent of a transitive clause. ACC is the Accusative Case, indicating the direct object of a transitive clause).

To use the -la suffix with Altjira involved making a syntactic change. Unless -la was interpreted as a locative marker (which it is homophonous with), this would mean a change in the way that the word was used traditionally. This probably would have jarred with speakers of the language and must have been difficult for them to understand as an innovation which was radically unlike what they had said previously.

Altjira is a grammatical Agent, occurring in transitive sentences which have a direct object, marked by the Accusative case. This syntax is not found with Altjira in its traditional use which does not occur with the Ergative case marker (marking the Agent of a transitive clause) and is clear-
ly distinguishable from Altjira (‘God’) on syntactic grounds, which is evidence that, rather than being analysed as polysemous, these two Altjira should be analysed as different words (see 5.1.2).

5.4 Theological correctness

I make the case that missionary translations were also constrained by concerns about syncretism (Moore and Ríos 2018). Missionary research was often limited by the attitudes of the religious authorities which largely viewed indigenous religions as ‘heathen’ and feared syncretism. At the beginning of the twentieth century missionary Siebert, for example, was criticised by the Lutheran Mission Committee chairman Gustav Rechner for allowing his research to interfere with his missionary duties and “trying to impress the truth of salvation on the blacks using the medium of their heathen perceptions” (Nobbs 2005: 32). Siebert’s letter in response to the Mission authorities in Adelaide (dated March 28, 1900), however, justified his research, not as disinterested scholarly work, but in terms of its practical usefulness to missionary translations and totally commensurate with good missiological practice. This shows that missionary translations were also constrained by concerns about syncretism (Moore and Ríos 2018: 339).

5.5 Missionary views

Soesilo (2007: 176) maintains that “the acceptable translation of divine names is an area of debate in Bible translation in many areas of the world” as “there are missionaries and Christian workers who think that adopting local divine names can lead to confusion and syncretism”. This characterises the opinion of Presbyterian translators Ron Trudinger and J. R. B. Love who decided that they would not use Tjukurrpa for God in their Pitjantjatjara translation: “In the rendering of the sacred name I long ago came to the conclusion that it is not safe to use a native word for ‘God’ ” (Rainey 1947: 37).

The objections were theological: “But many of their (Pitjantjatjara) myths ascribe the creation of various features to animals and birds. And God cannot share the creation with his creatures.” (ibid.). The translators also thought that “the actions of their mythical heroes are not consistent with the character of God.” They eventually decided to adopt a loanword: The translators decided that although “we should never pour ridicule or
contempt on the tribal beliefs, we must recognise that, with the Gospel, we are bringing them something new, for which a number of new names are indispensable" (ibid.). In this era translators were making decisions for Aboriginal Christians and this is evident with the translation of the Aranda hymnbook, for example:

Before the final revision of the Hymnal was commenced, the native elders at Hermannsburg were consulted. They expressed agreement with the plan, and advised that the final decisions as to form and idiom be left to Mr. Strehlow (Loehe [1965] 1988: x).

Strehlow’s traditional approach to translation was encouraged by the British and Foreign Bible Society which discouraged additions or deletions to the text and was reluctant to accept idiomatic translations (Zogbo 2009: 24).

5.6 Aranda as a basis for other translations

By the 1950s the Lutheran Mission had done more linguistic and translation work than any other mission in Central Australia and influenced other missions. In the 1950s, there were close links between the Hermannsburg Lutheran Mission and the Santa Teresa Catholic Mission. As Green (2012: 171) reports, “once the term altyerre was clearly established as a translation for ‘God’ by Lutherans in the Western Arrernte region, other mission personnel were keen to use it amongst Eastern Arrernte speakers at the Catholic Mission at Santa Teresa”. Green cites Veronica Dobson Perrurle, Arrernte speaker and co-compiler of the Eastern and Central Arrernte to English Dictionary who claimed that “Father Tom Dixon asserted with conviction that the word altyerre meant ‘God’ and not ‘dream’.” Dixon learned the Eastern Arrernte language and was familiar with T. G. H. Strehlow’s grammar and Aranda New Testament translation.

Austin-Broos (2003: 314) documents the transfer of secular authority at Hermannsburg from the missionaries to government in the 1970s and 1980s. Her judgement of the apparent decline of the usage of pepa, ‘worship’, fails to recognise the acceptance and spread of Christianity among Aboriginal people in Central Australia and the translation of Bibles and hymnbooks for a Church which now consists of a large number of Aboriginal pastors and congregations in Central Australia (Albrecht 2002: 203). It was at the time of the spread of Lutheran Christianity that new developments occurred in translation. A new orthography was developed in the 1970s and the new Western Arrarnta Bible was translated. Moreover, the
Western Arrarnta liturgy was translated into four other languages of Central Australia (Albrecht 2002: 160). In 1988 the Aranda hymnbook was retranslated and then Luther’s Small Catechism and liturgies of the Church were translated into the languages because the Western Arrarnta text should then be used as basis for the other translations (Albrecht 2002: 159). The languages to the north of Alice Springs which belong to the Arandic group\textsuperscript{4} are noticeably different from Western Arrarnta. Following mission policy, Paul Albrecht translated the Catechism and liturgies into Alyawarr, Eastern Arrarnta, Anmatjirra and Wailbiri, completing his work in 1985. (Albrecht 2002: 160.) It seems, though, that the translation into the northern Arandic language varieties was made mechanically and that the focus was on finding equivalent terms in the languages and translating directly from Arrarnta. The translations were later revised to adapt them to the changes which had been made to the Western Arrarnta texts, aligning them deliberately with Western Arrarnta in order to reduce confusion across language boundaries when Aboriginal Christians were to meet to worship and study together (Albrecht 2002: 160, 191). For Anmatyerr and some Alyawarr people this seemed to be a fairly natural transition. Those groups spoke Arandic dialect, but not Western Arrarnta (Albrecht 2002: 159) which was the language of Lutheran worship, and their languages were related to Arrarnta, even if the ecclesiastical language was largely unintelligible to them. They had close links to the mission and a long history of evangelisation by Arrarnta-speaking evangelists. The result of this policy was to transfer some of the Western Arrarnta literalisms into the Anmatyerr, Eastern Arrernte and Alyawarr liturgies, and Altjira was adopted as the word for ‘God’ in those Arandic languages in the Church context while also retaining its traditional meaning in Aboriginal religion.

6 The Western Desert experience

The Western desert is a vast area in which mission stations had made few inroads even in the 1920s when the Hermannsburg mission was celebrating its fiftieth anniversary. It was only in the 1930s that a Presbyterian mission was established at Ernabella among speakers of Pitjantjatjara, a West-

\textsuperscript{4} The Arandic language group includes Western Arrarnta, Eastern Arrernte, Pertame, Lower Arrernte, Anmatyerr, Alyawarr and Kaytetye (Henderson and Dobson 1994: 8).
ern Desert language variety that is related to Luritja\textsuperscript{5} (see Map1). The ceremonial life of Western Desert people continued during an era in which missionaries were more inclined to be tolerant of traditional practices. Apart from traditional reasons, there were also Christian ones for opposing the use of the term.

6.1 The Luritja translation

Aranda was the language of the traditional landowners at Hermannsburg, and Luritja was the Western Desert language variety of those who had migrated from the west (Holcombe 2004: 264).\textsuperscript{6} There would have been large numbers of Luritja speakers at the Hermannsburg mission at different times. Aranda was the privileged language and the language of Bible translation at Hermannsburg, but Luritja would have been understood by some of the Hermannsburg population, as multilingualism is common in Central Australian indigenous societies. The Aranda evangelist Moses Tjalkabota spoke Luritja and was one of Carl Strehlow’s chief informants (J. Strehlow 2011: 1144). Strehlow recorded Luritja words in his linguistic and translation work and included 6400 words of Luritja in his wordlist (C. Strehlow 1909). He made some attempts at translating Bible verses into Luritja in his Aranda and Luritja Grammar, for example:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Lakina} & \quad \text{Alatji} \\
\text{Altjirala} & \quad \text{Tukuralu} \\
\text{alarinjaka} & \quad \text{mantanguraraku} \\
\text{kankitjita} & \quad \text{bokularematsu} \\
\text{era} & \quad \text{paluru} \\
\text{lerrakua} & \quad \text{katara}
\end{align*}
\]

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Lakina</th>
<th>Alatji</th>
<th>Altjirala</th>
<th>alarinjaka</th>
<th>kankitjita</th>
<th>era</th>
<th>lerrakua</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Like that</td>
<td>God-ERG</td>
<td>Earth-dweller-DAT</td>
<td>Like-HAB</td>
<td>3S son</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nintakuia</td>
<td>ekurana</td>
<td>palumbanu</td>
<td>nditjitalangu</td>
<td>jankuntitanku</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kutungari</td>
<td>single</td>
<td>3-POSS</td>
<td></td>
<td>give-HAB-REL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Like that God so loved the world that he gave his only Son” (John 3:16) (C. Strehlow ca. 1910: 46).

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\textsuperscript{5} Pintupi (Hansen 1983) is a Western Desert language to the west of Luritja. The languages are often referred to as ‘Pintupi-Luritja’ as distinct from other Western Desert varieties which are called ‘Luritja’.

\textsuperscript{6} The first Hermannsburg missionaries were aware of the Luritja language; Kempe (1891: 1), for example, mentions it as another language of the region.
The text is as close to a literal translation of the Aranda as the structure of
the Luritja language will allow. Oskar Liebler started translating some texts
into the Luritja language (Latz 2014: 95) as he was managing the Herm-
mannsburg Mission Station during Strehlow’s absence on sabbatical from
1910 to 1912.

Illustration 1: Heinrich and Tjalkabota’s Hymnbook 1924
(Courtesy of the Lutheran Archives in Adelaide)

From the Luritja supplement of the Aranda hymnal (Heinrich and Tjalka-
bota 1924: 297) showing the use of the Luritja word Tjokur (Tjukurr) for
‘God’ in the First Article of the Apostle’s Creed.

The teacher H. A. Heinrich helped Moses and others to translate parts
of Strehlow’s Aranda Service Book into Luritja (Latz 2014:116). In the in-
troduction, Loehe (page viii) says that “this edition, which carried a Sup-
plement containing the Lutheran Catechism and ten hymns translated by
Moses Tjalkabota and Mr. Heinrich into the Loritja language, comprised a
total of 312 pages”. The last section of the hymnbook (Heinrich and Tjalk-
abota 1924, see Illustration1) called Talua, ‘end’, or ‘Supplement’, but it
was omitted in the 1964 Hymnbook revision. The translation of the entire
New Testament into the Luritja language began in the 1960s with the ar-
rival of Ken and Lesley Hansen. They were trained by the Summer Insti-
tute of Linguistics (SIL) in American structuralist and anthropological lin-
guistics, whose studies were largely based on the experience of fieldwork-
ers from the USA who worked in American Indian languages. Moreover
linguistic relativity and new techniques of describing languages were intro-
duced to Australia in the 1950s (Moore 2008: 285), and contemporary
translation theory was taught by missionary linguists such as Nida (1969)
and Beekman and Callow (1974). The Summer Institute of Linguistics translated according to the principles of idiomatic translation or dynamic equivalence. Like their predecessors, the Hansens sought to find key terms for the translation of the Bible. At the same time as the revised Aranda hymnbook was being published (Lyilhintjamia Pepa Luther-arinya 1964) the Hansens were learning Luritja with the intention of translating the Bible into Luritja. Hansen (1983) identified contemporary idiomatic meaning-based approaches to translation with Martin Luther’s theory of translation, citing key passages from Luther, thus demonstrating the relevance of idiomatic Bible translation to Lutheranism.

Hansen did not follow the translation style of the 1924 hymnbook. Significantly, he did not attempt to create new key terms through the derivational processes of nominalisation and zero derivation. Rather, he used multi-word expressions for some terms. For example, ‘Pharisee’ was translated as tjuwuku luwuku mikunytju, “a lover of the Jew’s law” (Hansen 1983: 15). The Luritja translation of the New Testament and Old Testament stories were published, and this was the first time that they became available to Pintupi/Luritja speakers in their own language (Katutjalu Wajantja Yirritjitanu 1981; cf. Albrecht 2002: 158). The equivalent to the Aranda word Altjira was Tjukurrpa which Hansen attempted to use as the key term for God, but nearly a century after the establishment of the mission in Central Australia the Luritja people decided not to adopt Tjukurrrpa. While the Luritja at Hermannsburg had adapted to the mission language and spoke Aranda, the Pintupi whom Hansen worked with lived further to the west and were less influenced by Aranda and the Lutheran mission (Hansen 1983: 21). Perhaps it was easier to consult Luritja speakers at the height of the era of the Self-Determination policy in the 1970s in which Aboriginal decision-making was encouraged and had moved to the foreground of government policy. At the same time mission policy had shifted to a tolerance of traditional Aboriginal religion which was seen as having a legitimate role in maintaining order in Aboriginal societies (Albrecht 2002: 74).

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7 Introduced as a “non-Lutheran” in his article (Hansen 1983: 13), the editor of the Lutheran Theological Journal recognised that he was not a traditional Lutheran from South Australia. It is doubtful if any of the traditional South Australian Lutherans ever made this connection so strongly.
6.2 The wanderings of tjukurrpa

In some Aboriginal languages of Central Australia there is an important distinction between sacred and non-sacred texts. As Hansen (1983: 15) formulates it:

I was told by one of my Christian friends recently, “Katutja (‘God’) is not tjukurrpa (‘dreaming’), he is yilta (‘true/real’). He is before all the tjukurrpa’s ‘dreamings’.” If we had used Tjukurrpa for God, this important distinction of the Christian God would have been very hard to make. To illustrate the use of tjukurrpa and yilta, I will use the following example which was given to me on a couple of occasions. After a story has been told of some happening at a certain water place, the person has then said, “This story is yilta (‘true/real’), not tjukurrpa ‘dream-time happening’.” Even though dreamtime myths are considered true to most Aborigines, they draw a distinction between historical happenings and dreamtime happenings.

Alyawarr speakers make a distinction between stories which are received by tradition altyerr ilem, ‘to tell altyerr’, and those which happen in historical time and which have been witnessed by the storyteller. In Luritja there are separate notions of real and fictive, yurti and Tjukurrpa respectively (Myers 2002: 33). We can see that the differences are often expressed as a distinction between ‘historical happenings’ and mythical ‘dreamtime happenings’. Those happenings which are identified as ‘the Dreaming ones’ are usually associated with particular named places and explicitly owned by individuals or groups (Green 2014: 44).

Although early twentieth-century translations into Luritja closely followed the Aranda translations of the hymnbooks and catechism, the above-mentioned distinction seems to be the reason why Tjukurr was not adopted as a term for God. Instead, two Luritja words were used, katutja, “one who pertains above” (Hansen 1983: 15) and mama, “father” (Hansen and Hansen 1992: 53). The rejection of Tjukurr for ‘God’ appears to have occurred because of Aboriginal concerns that there was a mixing of traditions, and that traditional culture and Christianity should be kept separate. The Luritja who were involved with the translation were those who spoke Luritja as a first language and had less exposure to Aranda and to the missionary language which was developing at Hermannsburg. Government

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8 As to the variation of Tjukurr and Tjukurrpa, “pa is a special syllable that is added to the words to prevent them ending in a consonant” (Eckert and Hudson 2010: 16).
policies of Self-Determination led to the relocation of the Luritja people and their residence in small ‘outstations’ rather than government settlements. Therefore, the Western Luritja and Pintupi were less influenced by the mission culture and more concerned about keeping traditional religion and Christianity in separate domains. There were many other Western Desert groups such as Pitjantjatjara and Ngaanyatjarra which did not adopt Tjukurr as the term for ‘God’.

In other areas however, Altjira was adopted because the hymnbooks were translated word-for-word into their languages, and Altjira was also present in their languages and therefore easy to incorporate into the translation.

Then again, Altjira-related words have diverged along different paths because for Alyawarr and many Eastern Arrernte speakers Altyerr (Altjira) retains its traditional meaning. In addition, Anmatyerr, Western Arrarnta and some Alyawarr speakers use Altjira for ‘God’. Some translations have used Altjira/Tjukurr for other biblical terms; and Jukurr, a cognate term in Warlpiri has been used to translate timelessness (Swartz 1985: 417), as with logos or ‘Word’ in John’s Gospel. It appears that Tjukurrpa translates a kind of text such as a discourse or catechism. In the recent Pitjantjatjara hymnal, produced by the Lutheran Finke River Mission (2010: iv), Tjukur9 has been used to translate Godaku Tjukurpa the ‘Word of God’. Another section of the hymnbook is Luther’s Catechism Lutherku Tjukurpa. Where Western Arrarnta has used yia marra, ‘good story’, for the Gospel, the Pitjantjatjara uses tjukurpa palya, ‘good story’.

In Western Desert languages Tjukurrpa appears to have a wider variety of senses including ‘Dreaming, Law’ and ‘story’, extending across mundane and secular domains in the Pitjantjatjara Dictionary (Goddard 1992: 155). It is used to mean ‘government script’ which may concern topics such as housing and health.

The terms which have been employed are not equivalent, even between language groups which are affiliated with the Lutheran church. There was syntactic and semantic dissonance, which meant that the word was not readily understood with new associations, even among Aranda speakers.

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9 Standard Pitjantjatjara spelling for what is spelled ‘Tjukurrpa’ in other Western Desert languages.
7 Conclusion

On the two hundredth anniversary of the Bible Society in Australia, in 2017 (Mattingley and Sherman eds. 2017), Lutheran translators and local Churches have carried out a disproportionate amount of Bible translation compared with other missions, completing the first two translations of the New Testament into Aboriginal languages in 1897 (Dieri) and 1919 (Aranda). The Church took a century to move from its base at Hermannsburg, from Arrarnta, to the languages of the outlying regions. Completed Pintupi-Luritja translations of the New Testament and selections from the Old Testament only appeared after 1977, the centenary of the arrival of Hermannsburg missionaries at the mission. The use of *Altjira* was a bold move and involved semantic and syntactic change so that the word had meanings which it did not have in Aboriginal tradition. The languages of Central Australia which adopted *Altjira* as ‘God’ in Church contexts were those which were adjacent to the Western Arrarnta region, culturally and linguistically similar to the Western Arrarnta, influenced by the Lutheran mission and receptive to its influence. However, others who were close and socially interrelated with the Aranda, such as the Luritja, did not adopt their equivalent term *Tjukurrpa* as ‘God’. Of all Central Australian translations, the Eastern Arrernte translation has moved furthest from the Western Arrarnta. The recently completed Eastern Arrernte Bible (Wycliffe Bible Translators Australia 2017) uses *Ingkarte* for ‘God’ and *angkentye*, ‘language’, for ‘logos’ in John’s Gospel. This lack of equivalence is due not only to variation in the semantics in words of different languages, but also to underlying language ideologies, mission histories and identification of the speakers – all aspects which await further study.

With a view towards the twentieth century, the increasing autonomy of Aboriginal people is reflected in their gaining voting rights (1967) and land rights (1970s), and in the establishment of Aboriginal community-controlled councils. At the same time the expansion of the Mission and the establishment of Aboriginal Churches meant that Aboriginal people have become more actively engaged in Christian religious activities, becoming pastors and having gained a voice in decision-making, which has also led to greater Aboriginal involvement in the translation process.
**Glossary of linguistic abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>Accusative Case</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONT</td>
<td>Continuous Aspect</td>
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<tr>
<td>DAT</td>
<td>Dative Case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMPH</td>
<td>Emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERG</td>
<td>Marks the Agent of a transitive clause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAB</td>
<td>Past Habitual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOC</td>
<td>Locative marker on nouns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEN</td>
<td>Temporal succession, then it happens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAST</td>
<td>Simple past tense</td>
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<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>Plural</td>
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<td>Singular pronoun</td>
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<td>3S</td>
<td>Third person singular pronoun: he, she, it</td>
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</table>

**References**

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His publications include:
Recontextualising the Sacraments: 
Diego González Holguín’s Construction of Christian Vocabulary in Colonial Peru

Sabine Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz

Abstract

In 1608 the Jesuit missionary-linguist Diego González Holguín published a comprehensive Spanish-Quechua dictionary, which covered all aspects of life and also included a wide range of words which refer to Christian and Andean beliefs. Although he situated himself in a by then established Christian Andean tradition of the translation of religious concepts, he also used innovative translation methods, reinterpreting Andean and Christian words in an unorthodox way.

Through the analysis of his translation methods light can be shed on the process in which religions are constructed. For this I will examine the translations of the term ‘sacrament’. Whilst the word itself is transmitted into Quechua as a loanword, in more detailed explanations the author uses extensions of meanings and metaphorical expressions. Thus, for example, a certain aspect of the sacraments is translated in the context of healing/poisoning; another instance is the relation of the Holy Communion to the powerful royal Inca travel provision. González Holguín’s translation approach shows how Christian religion could be integrated into the Andean worldview. [Colonial Peru, Christianisation, Dictionary Source, Quechua language, Sacraments]

1 Introduction

When the empire of the Incas was invaded in 1532 and submitted to Spanish rule little later, the newly formed colony received the Crown’s right to take care of the conversion of the indigenous population to Christianity.

1 I would like to thank Lindsey Crickmay and Cândida Barros for their careful reading of this paper and for their suggestions.
Following earlier efforts in Mesoamerica to translate Christian texts into the native languages and teach the new faith through them, missionary linguists started creating grammars and dictionaries for the most widely spoken languages in order to have a linguistic framework for the translation of the Christian doctrine and related texts. In Peru the first dictionary and grammar, accompanied by a short Christian text, was published by the Dominican Domingo de Santo Tomás in 1560 (Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz 2008: 236–237). When the Third Provincial Council met in Lima at the beginning of the 1580s, it was decided, under the direction of the eminent Jesuit scholar José de Acosta, to produce an authoritative catechism in Quechua and Aymara, including a large collection of sermons to be used as models for the preachers who were supposed to have good knowledge of the native language of the area they worked in. These doctrinal works were complemented by a brief grammar and dictionary, from an author who has remained anonymous (Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz 2008: 237–238). The missionaries worked with these books (and probably other materials of their own) as the basis for their Christian teachings, and only in 1607 and 1608 a further grammar and dictionary were published by the Jesuit missionary and linguist Diego González Holguín. As opposed to the earlier linguistic works, these were much more comprehensive and detailed, and the Quechua-Spanish and Spanish-Quechua dictionary can be said to be the most comprehensive until the present.

It covers all aspects of life and also includes a wide range of words which refer to Christian and Andean beliefs (of which the earlier ones only had few). Although González Holguín situated himself in a by then established (although not made explicit) Christian Andean tradition of the translation of religious concepts, I will show that he also used innovative translation methods, reinterpreting Andean and Christian words in an unorthodox way. Through the analysis of his translation methods, light can be shed on the process of how Andean and Spanish religion became linked. For this I will examine how he translated the term ‘sacrament’ as well as how he transmitted the concepts of the Holy Communion and the Extreme Unction. Whilst the words themselves are transmitted into Quechua as loanwords, in phrases and sentences the author uses extensions of meanings and metaphorical expressions, which re-contextualise the

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2 These grammatical and lexicographic studies were among the first works in descriptive linguistics.
3 Except for the one by Jorge Lira, also a priest, who published his 1200-page dictionary in 1944. For further information on the topics of this Introduction see Durston 2007; Mills 2008; Hamerly 2011; Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz 2016.
Christian contents in order to provide explanations the indigenous population would be able to relate to their own cosmovision and experience.

2 Diego González Holguín and his lexicographical work

Diego González Holguín, born in Cáceres in 1552, was a member of one of the most distinguished families of Spain. He studied oriental and classical languages as well as the Bible at the Universidad de Alcalá de Henares. Although we have no knowledge of the syllabi of these subjects, we can suppose that, in addition to the languages themselves and the Scripture, students became familiarised with the topics and challenges of translation as this field was well known and widely discussed in Spain at the time (Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz 2016: 8–10).

In 1581 González Holguín came to Cuzco as part of a Jesuit mission and was ordained as priest. It was also in the ancient Inca capital that he learned Quechua, the most widespread language due to the Incas’ expansion, and consequently he used this dialect in his linguistic works.4

In 1600 he became rector of the Jesuit order in La Plata (Sucre, Bolivia), and in 1607 he was superior of the Jesuits in Juli, an important linguistic and missionary centre on Lake Titicaca. He then worked as an advocate for the indigenous population (defensor de indios) in Paraguay and Chile and became rector of the colegio in La Asunción. He died in 1618, while serving as superior of the residencia of Mendoza.

Like the other missionary linguists, González Holguín viewed his work as an aid for the missionaries to learn the indigenous language for the purpose of conversion. It has therefore to be kept in mind that his target group were the missionaries, not the indigenous people who would have been secondary recipients, through the words and teachings of the parish priests.

González Holguín wrote that the Quechua language lacked all kinds of words referring to vices and virtues, to the other life, and to the spiritual sphere, and that his dictionary helped to fill these lacunae ([1608] 1989: Al lector). Here he was obviously thinking of these concepts as part of the Christian faith because his work shows that most of these concepts were, indeed, present in the Quechua language, but not their exact Christian equivalents. The dictionary is a veritable treasure-trove of Quechua words

4 This and the following paragraphs summarise mainly Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz 2008: 238–239; cf. Mannheim 2008.
and phrases, which is not surprising in the light of the author’s statement that the principal authors were all the Indians whom he had consulted and with whom he had worked for many years (ibid.: Al christiano lector). Whilst all dictionaries of the time were to a certain extent modelled on Nebrija’s first Spanish dictionary, González Holguín also used the Quechua vocabulary written in the context of the Third Lima Council as the basis for his work, supplementing it with a great deal of additional material and much more elaborated and detailed entries. The contents of his dictionary include words from virtually every sphere of human life and Andean culture, as well as the mentioned Christian terms. The first part, Quechua-Spanish, is comprised of 372 pages; the second part, Spanish-Quechua, contains 330 pages (in the original 1608 edition). There are approximately 25,000 entries altogether.

When studying individual words, it becomes clear that González Holguín constructed a network of words and meanings which could be cross-referenced and used as a manual to learn Quechua and deepen the missionaries’ knowledge in text and context.\(^5\)

Even apparently straightforward semantic fields, such as the one around maki, ‘hand’, show that his dictionary hardly ever has one-word entries and equivalents, but in this case for instance ca. 122 equivalents, explanations and examples, concrete as well as figurative expressions. The translations and phrases document the richness of Cuzco Quechua as well as the challenge of incorporating new aspects into the indigenous languages as a result of the colonial situation.

3 The sacraments

The Tercero Cathecismo,\(^6\) a collection of sermons published by the Third Lima Council in 1585, says that the sacraments are the signs and ceremonies of...
ordered by Jesus Christ, with which we honour God and take part in his
grace, and that those who take them are free from sin.\textsuperscript{7} González Holguín
himself has an example of a Quechua translation for this:

Remedios para los pecados son los sacramentos. Huchacuna pam-
pachaypac sacramentocunam yachacuquen casca\textsuperscript{8} (1608, Sp-Qu: 294; 1989: 657).

The sacraments are remedies for the sins [Spanish]. The sacraments
were means/remedies to forgive the sins (Christian usage) / lit. For the
faults to become even the sacraments were remedies [Quechua]
(Transl. SDS\textsuperscript{9}).

In the Roman Catholic Church the seven sacraments are Baptism, Confirm-
ation, Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction,\textsuperscript{10} Holy Orders and Matri-
mony.\textsuperscript{11}

By the beginning of the 17th century, in Christian Quechua the accepted
word for ‘sacrament’ was the loanword itself.\textsuperscript{12} It is therefore not surpris-
ing that González Holguín does not include an entry in his dictionary, but

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\textsuperscript{7} “Sacramentos llamamos vnas señales y cerimonias ordenadas por Iesu Christo:
con las cuales honramos a Dios y participamos de su gracia. ... los Sacramentos ...
hanz que los que los toman queden libres de peccado” (Tercero Cathecismo,

\textsuperscript{8} “Yachacuquen” is given by González Holguín as ‘the means, or remediation, or
what is important and valuable for something’ (“Los medios, o remedios, o lo
que importa y vale para algo”, 1608, Qu-Sp: 362; 1989: 361); the religious mean-
ing of pampachapa- is a colonial creation (1608, Qu-Sp: 274, González Holguín 1989:
276; Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz 2013: 294). The nominalised form kasqa as a past
tense was probably constructed by González Holguín and/or other colonial lin-
guists, without reflecting actual Quechua usage (Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz 1999a).

\textsuperscript{9} All English translations of ethnohistorical sources and Quechua linguistic materi-
als are mine. My translations from Quechua are based on colonial and modern
Quechua dictionaries (González Holguín [1608] 1989; Lira 1944; Perroud and
Chouvenc 1969?).

\textsuperscript{10} Now called Anointing of the Sick (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2003, pt. 2,

\textsuperscript{11} Doctrina Christiana, Catecismo Mayor, de los Sacramentos [1584, fol. 46r], 1985:

\textsuperscript{12} The Third Lima Council had already included a translation of the sacraments into
Quechua in the Christian doctrine (Doctrina Christiana, Catecismo mayor [1584:
that he does, indeed, see the necessity to complement it with words and phrases in the Andean language so that the concepts can be conveyed in an understandable manner to the indigenous people.

Here, he follows the Christian imagery for the sacraments: their administration is compared to the preparation and eating of food; the soul can be healed with the sacraments; and the Holy Communion is conceived of as ingesting Christ’s body (in the Catholic faith, the direct belief in the Eucharist as the consumption of Christ’s body and blood) which is the Lamb of God. Thus, these comparisons and metaphors are what González Holguín had to transmit to the Andean people in their own language. For this, he included in his dictionary example phrases with Christian key words; these already had an Andean meaning, which he now embedded in a Christian context in order to convey the new meanings.

fol. 45v–56v], 1985: 110–132; the Communion [fol. 48r–49v], pp. 115–118), and in the Tercero Cathecismo it also had several sermons, which were dedicated to a more detailed explanation (sermon X–XVII [1585] 1985). These translations always use the Spanish loanword.
### A Preparation for the sacraments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>González Holguín (1608, Sp-Qu: 13–14; 1989: 388) Spanish Quechua</th>
<th>Translation by SDS From Spanish (S) From Quechua (Q)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To prepare the weapons (S). With weapons, I provide myself, make myself ready, prepare myself (Q).</td>
<td>Added by González Holguín in the Quechua translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To prepare oneself to enter war (S). I equip myself, make myself ready for the war (Q).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To prepare one’s own things, or to put in place, to make ready (S). I prepare myself, I dispose myself (Q).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To prepare oneself like this (S). I prepare myself, I make myself ready, I dispose myself for the sacraments (Q).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to translate and explain the preparation for the sacraments González Holguín’s method is that of a word-for-word translation of Quechua equivalents for Spanish words (1–3). The general usage of the

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13 González Holguín seems to use the more modern form -na interchangeably with the older form -nqa to express the instrumental (cf. González Holguín [1607] 1975, l. II, cap. 14: fol. 44r – as gerund), both forms for instruments or people dedicated to battle or war (Lira 1944: 72).

14 -ni is the suffix for the first person singular, and the colonial dictionaries used it where in Spanish they employed the infinitive.
synonymous verbs for ‘to prepare’\(^\text{15}\) (3) is preceded by examples used for weapons and war (1–2), an important part of the expansionist Inca empire (D’Altroy 2015: ch. 10). These equivalents are then also applied to the Christian concept of the Sacrament which he only gives in the Quechua translation (4) – it seems that as priest he took it apparently for granted that these verbs could also be applied to a religious concept.

The constructions with the objects in question – direct object -ta for the weapons which are prepared (1), indirect object/directional -man for the war one prepares for (2), and -paq benefactive for the object of the purpose, the sacraments (4) – reflect his knowledgeable and consistent usage of Quechua morphology. I doubt whether the sacrament would here necessarily be seen in a context of warfare because this only seems to be an example, although the catechism of Trent talks about confirmation as equipping the Christian “for battle”.\(^\text{16}\) In any case, it is possible for the missionary Quechua learner to relate both, the war and the Christian concept, in order to remember different grammatical constructions.

Thus, in this case, González Holguín gives word-for-word equivalents, and except for using a Spanish loanword in the last phrase without explaining it,\(^\text{17}\) by employing everyday Quechua words González Holguín integrates a Christian activity into Andean life as one more aspect of it.\(^\text{18}\)

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\(^\text{16}\) Quoting Pope Melchiades, to be understood as the battle against sin or the devil (Catechism of Trent [1566] 1823, On the Sacrament of Confirmation: 139).

\(^\text{17}\) As the word “sacramentocunapac” is added at the end, it seems to be an afterthought – syntactically one would expect it to be at the beginning of the sentence (but this is, of course, a dictionary, not a sermon).

\(^\text{18}\) Obviously, there are many studies on translation methods, which vary considerably in terminology and scope of each discussed phenomenon. Here I have used terms which I find most apt for my purpose. I have found the following works particularly useful: Baker 1992: 13–42; Fawcett 1997: ch. 4; Hatch & Brown 1995: 170–185.
B The preacher as the one who feeds the soul God’s word

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quechua</th>
<th>Spanish in Quechua text in italics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karani.</td>
<td>Dar de comer a personas, pensar las bestias y aues. ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karacuk.</td>
<td>Los que siruen a la mesa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karani animacta Diospa siminhuan o Sacramentocunahuan, animacta karak padre.</td>
<td>I feed the soul with / I serve the soul God’s word, or the Father who feeds the soul with the sacraments (Q).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El predicador.</td>
<td>The preacher (S).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the case of qara-, ‘to serve food’ (1–2), González Holguín adopts the same method, but in his example of Christian usage he creates a complex and explanatory description of the priest as administrator of the sacraments (3). As above, González Holguín does not coin words or new lexical meanings (neologisms), but embeds accepted Andean words with their original meaning in sentences with Spanish loanwords in order to convey the figurative sense. He combines an everyday cultural concept, ‘to serve food, to feed’, with a more specified action where metaphorically the soul is fed with God’s word, and the priest feeds the sacraments to the soul.19 This construction indicates that the indirect target person was meant to know the Spanish words ‘soul’, ‘Father’, ‘God’ and ‘sacrament’; and that González Holguín considered the administration of the sacraments to be a vital part of a priest’s tasks. In the same way as the Quechua word in this entry becomes related to a Christian concept, this concept is embedded in an Andean understanding. Thus in his Quechua explanation he creates a

19 González Holguín seems to have taken this image from the Catechism of the Council of Trent where the Eucharist is described as follows: “The sacrament is to be used by us as the food and nourishment of our souls.” (Catechism of Trent [1566] 1823, On the Sacrament of the Eucharist: 160).
metaphor – a figurative expression, an image which goes beyond the word's daily usage (Braak 1969: 30–32) – around the loanword, using understandable semantic resources of the target language to embed it.

Finally it should be noted that surprisingly in the translation the function of the priest is not, as described in the Quechua sentence, an administrator of the sacraments. Rather, González Holguín renders the whole sentence simply as ‘the preacher’.

Sabine Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz

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C Healing, poisoning and the administration of the sacraments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>González Holguín (1608, Qu-Sp: 138–139; 1989: 145)</th>
<th>Translation by SDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qechua Spanish in Quechua text in italics</td>
<td>From Quechua (Q)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>From Spanish (S)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Hamppi, o hamppicuna. Medicine, or medicines (Q). Any medicine (S).

2 Hampicamayoc. El médico o cirujano. The one who is in charge of / knows about medicine; healer (Q). The doctor or surgeon (S).

3 Hampipayani. Curar de limosna, o de gracia. ... I assist the healing process / I heal repeatedly (Q). To heal with the help of alms, or out of kindness. (S).

4 Hampik. Es el que dá rexalgar, o bocado para matar. ... The healer (Q). The one who gives poison, or a serving in order to kill (S).

5 Hampini, o, hampipayani animacta huchanmanta sacramentocunahan. Curar al alma de sus pecados con los sacramentos. I heal, or repeatedly heal the soul with the sacraments from its fault(s) (Q). To heal the soul from its sin(s) with the sacraments (S).

6 Hampipayak. El sacerdote médico. The one who assists the healing process / heals repeatedly (Q). The doctor priest (S).

7 Hampini. Curar a otro con medicinas. ... I heal (Q). To heal someone else with medicine(s) (S).

The verb *hampi*- is the most general term for ‘to heal’ in Quechua. Entries 1 and 7 are straightforward word-for-word equivalents of ‘medicine’ and ‘to heal’ (*hampi* commonly refers to herbal medicine, and the healer is the *hampiq*; see Marzal 1971: 264–265).
Like most Quechua concepts, *hampi(-)* can express the positive action of healing as well as the reverse: causing damage through poisoning.\(^\text{20}\) It is therefore understandable that González Holguín has derivations from the term for both (1–3 vs. 4).

Whilst these are all Andean concepts translated by González Holguín, his other entries integrate Christian concepts and thereby extend the Quechua meaning, that of a ‘healer’, to that of ‘priest’ (6, also 5).

In Christian faith, Christ is seen as healer of body and soul,\(^\text{21}\) and through the Holy Spirit the sacraments have healing force. It is therefore comprehensible that the Quechua terms for ‘medicine/to heal/healer’, *hampi/-* *hampiq* are used by González Holguín in this context and further extended to the priest (5, 6). This reflects the Christian idea of the confessor as a medical doctor (Muguruza 2018: 36–37) who heals the soul with the sacraments (5).\(^\text{22}\) Besides the priest as healer from the sins (5, 6), González Holguín also refers to that of a gesture of benevolence, typical of the Christian behavioural code to give alms (3).\(^\text{23}\)

\(^{20}\) In Quechua cosmovision everything has two sides: a positive or benign one as well as a dangerous or negative one. This can be seen in the behaviour of the spirits and deities towards human beings, depending on how they are treated (Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz 2017: 445), and it is also found in Quechua words, such as *ayni-* which refers to mutual help, but also to vengeance, i.e. mutual compensation, positive as well as negative (see González Holguín 1608, Qu-Sp: 32–33, 1989: 40).

\(^{21}\) “... the Sacraments bring, to use the words of St. Ambrose, the healing remedies and medicines, as it were, of the Samaritan mentioned in the Gospel.” (Catechism of Trent [1566] 1823, pt. II, On the Sacraments: 104, cf. 112).

\(^{22}\) In a dictionary of the *lingua geral* (Brazil) from 1622, probably written by a Jesuit, ‘Father’ is translated as *pajé*, a shaman in Tupí culture (Ayrosa ed. 1938: 324; cf. Monserrat and Barros 2018, section 3 for *pajé*; I would like to thank Cândida Barros for calling my attention to this parallel). We do not know if there was any communication within the Jesuit order as to the kind of translation of key concepts, or whether the indigenous understanding seemed to make the missionary-linguists create the parallel independently. Supporting the latter hypothesis, Bertonio ([1612] 1984: Sp-Ay: 442–443), another Jesuit, has in his Peruvian Aymara dictionary a different translation of ‘Father’/‘priest’, as ‘father’ and ‘someone who helps another person as if he was a father’. This, then, reflects a rather broad, probably individual, variety of translation methods.

\(^{23}\) For example, “The pastor will teach that every species of satisfaction is included under these three heads, prayer, fasting, and alms-deeds, which correspond with these three sorts of goods, those of the soul, of the body, and what are called external goods, all of which are the gifts of God.” (Catechism of Trent [1566] 1823, On the Sacrament of Penance: 204).
In the Andes healing is carried out by persons with particular knowledge and/or supernatural gifts (Marzal 1971: 257–266) – in this sense the concept of the priest as healer is not far removed from the Andean idea, and although in the late Incaic and early colonial era their denominations and functions varied according to regions, an important task of an Andean priest was healing, mostly through the communication with deities and spirits, and often preceded by divination.\(^\text{24}\)

The Quechua suffix \(-paya\) which refers to an intensive or repeated action or assistance\(^\text{25}\) (3, 5 6) is apparently used to extend the original meaning to include new aspects. It is therefore possible that González Holguín used morphological devices to create semantic extensions (although words with \(-paya\) already had a meaning in Quechua).

It is not completely clear what González Holguín means with the translation: “Hampicamayoc. El médico o cirujano” (2).\(^\text{26}\) An Andean healer is not considered a surgeon who would operate on a person or cut open wounds and tumours.\(^\text{27}\) Whilst a \(hampiq\) in charge of a surgeon’s task in addition to his traditional ones might have been conceivable as an innovation, the application of the word for an indigenous healer to a ‘priest’ would certainly have enabled Andean people to integrate the concept of the priest into their own system – certainly a dangerous suggestion from the Christian point of view. Also, at least the Quechua-learning priest (if not the Quechua speaker as well when confronted with these terms in their extended meaning) may have been confused as to the complexity of \(hampi-\), which could have been understood in a number of ways: the \(hampiq\) is a priest and a doctor; the sacraments help to heal an illness; the healer can be Andean; he can be a surgeon; and \(hampi-\) could even refer not to curing, but to poisoning. It is possible that González Holguín’s consultants were responsible for these translations and examples, but there is still the fact that he did not disambiguate them and therefore made them

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\(^{24}\) Gareis 1987: 223–275. In more recent times, the so-called paqu or altomisayuq heals by communicating with the spirit and deities (Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz 2017: 448). Whether the \(hampiq\) ever communicated with the deities may be doubted; rather he seemed to treat the sick using herbal medicines (Guaman Poma [ca. 1615] 2001: 192 [194]).


\(^{26}\) -kamayuq was used to refer to a professional of the task described in the word itself (e.g. González Holguín 1608: 40, 1989: 48). Almost 50 years earlier Santo Tomás ([1560: 136v], 1951: 290) had \(hampikamayuq\) as “medico, o cirujano generalmente”, ‘doctor or surgeon in general’.

\(^{27}\) As described in the Diccionario de Autoridades [1729/II] 1990/1: 360, s.v. cirugia.
available to the missionaries as *double entendres*, although he wanted to help them to find their way into Andean usage.

All this shows González Holguín’s competence in Quechua semantics and grammar, but these examples also reflect how his translation of words and phrases may have caused (con)fusion.

The only two sacraments he explains in his dictionary are those of the Communion and the Extreme Unction, and we will see González Holguín’s innovativeness in his entries for these.

### 4 Holy Communion

In the Christian faith, the Lamb of God is the representation of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. By dying on the cross, he took on humanity’s sins in order for all of them to be absolved: “The next day, he saw Jesus coming towards him and said, ‘Look, there is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.’”.\(^{28}\) In Christian belief this is the only sacrifice.\(^{29}\) How does González Holguín express this ritual of the Communion in the Eucharist?

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\(^{28}\) *New Jerusalem Bible* 2015, John 1: 29, <http://www.catholic.org/bible/book.php?id=50&bible_chapter=1>; “Alterna die vidit Ioannes Iesum venientem ad se & ait: Ecce agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccatum mundi” (Biblia Sacra Vulgatae 1592: 940). This gesture itself represented and replaced the sacrifice of a lamb which, according to the Old Testament, was offered in order to save the people from their sins (e.g. Ezekiel 46, where different animals were to be offered, the most important feature being that they were unblemished ([ibid. <http://www.catholic.org/bible/book.php?id=33&bible_chapter=46>; cf. *Biblia Sacra Vulgatae* 1592: 756]; cf. also for example Leviticus 23: 12 [*New Jerusalem Bible* 2015, <http://www.catholic.org/bible/book.php?id=3&bible_chapter=23>; cf. *Biblia Sacra Vulgatae* 1592: 97]).

\(^{29}\) *Catechism of Trent* [1566] 1823, On the Sacrament of the Eucharist: 147, 173–176). Cf. the modern Catechism: “The only perfect sacrifice is the one that Christ offered on the cross as a total offering to the Father’s love and for our salvation.” (2003, pt. 3, sect. 2, ch. 1, art. 1, The first commandment, 2100, <http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s2c1a1.htm#2099>).
### D The Holy Communion is delicious food

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quechua</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Machhicani, &lt;br&gt;o machthicahuanmi, &lt;br&gt;o machyicuni, &lt;br&gt;o machhiycuhuanmi, &lt;br&gt;o mizquiquianmi, &lt;br&gt;o mizquiquihamni [sic], &lt;br&gt;o mizquichicuni.</td>
<td>Gustar de vna comida saber bien tomar gusto en ella como.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like (the) food, &lt;br&gt;or the food tastes well for me, &lt;br&gt;or I enjoy the food, &lt;br&gt;or it tastes well especially for me, &lt;br&gt;or it tastes delicious for me, &lt;br&gt;or it tastes delicious for me, &lt;br&gt;or I make it taste delicious (Q).</td>
<td>To like a dish, a dish to taste well, to find it enjoyable, like (S):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctissimo Sacramentoctam mizquichicuni machhicacuni, &lt;br&gt;o Dtopa vcuñam machhicuhuan, &lt;br&gt;o machyicuhuan, &lt;br&gt;o mizquicyuhuan.</td>
<td>I find the Holy Sacrament delicious, I like very much how it tastes, &lt;br&gt;or God’s interior/body already makes me enjoy it, &lt;br&gt;or I enjoy it intensively, &lt;br&gt;or I find it delicious (Q).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As mentioned above, the sacraments are seen as food for the soul; it is therefore not surprising that the concept of taste is related to the Eucharist, the Holy Sacrament, as well. The verb González Holguín uses in this instance is “mach(h)i-” which means ‘to taste well’, and *miski* is ‘sweet’, ‘delicious’ (1), which he incorporates into a sentence that can be considered metaphorical – a figurative sweetness of the Eucharist – and at the

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30 It may derive from Aymara (Bertonio [1612] 1984, Ay-Sp: 211), or both Quechua and Aymara from some older form; the Anonymous dictionary (1586) has ‘to become soft, tasty’ for (s.v.) “machitmani”.

31 *-wan is the transitional form to mark third person subject to first person object: ‘he/she/it (to) me’ (González Holguín [1607] 1975, l. II, cap. XL: fol. 76r).
same time physical with respect to the taste of the bread and wine. Thus the sentence can be seen as a word-for-word translation and a metaphorical expression. The loanword Sanctissimo Sacramento, embedded in Quechua morphology, is explained in the following clause: “God’s interior/body [subject] already makes me enjoy it” which seems to be grammatically incorrect as what is enjoyed is God’s body (it would have to be: “Sacramento Dios pa vunña tam machhicuhuan”, ‘The sacrament makes me enjoy God’s interior/body [object’]), because it is not God’s body which makes one enjoy the sacrament (2). This was a confusing way to explain the concept.

But on the whole we can see how the Holy Communion, central element of which is the ingestion of the Host,\textsuperscript{32} is compared to delicious food, and the mention of God at the same time guarantees that it is related to spiritual enjoyment.\textsuperscript{33} If this was taught comprehensibly to the new flock, it would have been difficult for the indigenous people to compare this kind of ritual to their own kind of offerings where the communication with the deity was the main objective (as it is still today, e.g. Pachamama, in Gow and Condori eds. 1976: 5–12), whereas here it is the ingestion of this deity. Thus, it seems that in these sentences little or no explicit relation is established between Andean and Christian rituals.

So far we have seen word-for-word translations, loanwords, extensions of meaning and metaphorical expressions as the means González Holguín uses to translate Christianity and to a certain degree enable it to be amalgamated. However, a fusion\textsuperscript{34} becomes more evident and explicit in González Holguín’s explanation of the Communion when he relates it with the Inca concept of travel provisions (Illustration 1).

\textsuperscript{32} “In St. John he also says: ‘The bread that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world:’ [footnote: John vi.52] the bread which he promises to give, he here declares to be ‘his flesh’. A little after he adds: ‘Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you:’ [footnote: john vi.54] and again, ‘My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed’ [footnote: John vi.56].” (\textit{Catechism of Trent} [1566] 1823, On the Sacrament of the Eucharist: 161).

\textsuperscript{33} When chewing coca people will say that it is sweet (Lindsey Crickmay, personal communication, 17 January 2017), and contemporary offerings include different kinds of sweets, e.g. “tulsi mesa”, ‘sweet table’ (from Spanish) (Fernández Juárez 1997: 89–90).

\textsuperscript{34} ‘Amalgamate’ implies “the forming of a close union without complete loss of individual identities”; ‘fuse’ “oneness and indissolubility of the resulting product” (Merriam Webster Thesaurus 2018: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/thesaurus/fuse> [accessed 02.03.2018]).
### Table: Translation of Quechua Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quechua Term</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Tupacochor</strong></td>
<td>Plate made of gold and inlaid stones on which the <em>mazca paycha</em> was set which was the tassel, which, together with the <em>tupa cochor</em> composed the Inca’s royal crown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Plancha de oro y piedras engastadas en que se ponía la <em>mazca paycha que era la borla, que con <em>tupa cochor</em> hazían la corona Real del Inca.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Tupa yauri</strong></td>
<td>The royal scepter, the staff, the royal insignia of the Inca.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>El cetro real vara insignia real del Inca.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Tupa.</strong></td>
<td>Means something royal which is of the Inca.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Dize cosa Real que toca al Rey.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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35 *Quchuy*, ‘amusement’, or *qhuchu*, ‘meeting’ (Lira 1944: 415 “kochoy” and p. 539 “kkhocho” resp.) – but none of these seems to be related to González Holguín’s expression, and I have not been able to locate the word in a chronicle. Lafone Quevedo (1892: 334) mentions the word with a question mark and seems to refer to Mossi’s dictionary.

36 This and related expressions, including “*mazca paycha*”, with information about different colonial sources, are presented by Araníbar (1995: 396–397, 318) in his index to Pachacuti’s chronicle.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>González Holguín (1608, Qu-Sp: 348; 1989: 347)</th>
<th>Translation by SDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong> Tupa cocau. El viatico real, la comida que daua el Rey a los que embiaua, que era vna talega de mayz pequeña que por ser del Rey era de gran sustento porque vn grano quitaua la hambre, y comian vn grano al dia y hauian de boluer sin acabarse el viatico.</td>
<td><strong>Royal travel provisions / victuals (Q).</strong> The royal travel provisions / Eucharist, the food the King gave to those he sent, which was a small sack of maiz, which – as it was from the King – was of great sustenance because one grain took the hunger away, and they used to eat one grain a day and had to come back without having finished the provisions / Eucharist (S).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong> Tupa cocau. Se dira el sanctissimo Sacramento al qual le conuienen mejor estas propriedades, de <em>tupa cocau</em> y con verdad. ...</td>
<td><strong>Royal travel provision (Q).</strong> This is what the Holy Sacrament will be called; these characteristics of <em>tupa cocau</em> are most suitable for it, and this is rightly so (S).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong> Tupa. Es nombre de honor para honrrarse, o llamarse honrrosamente, como nosotros dezimos Señor, <em>A tupay</em> o Señor, <em>A tupay Dios</em>, o Señor Dios, <em>tupay San Pedro</em> o Señor san Pedro.</td>
<td><strong>Royal / noble (Q).</strong> It is a name of honour for someone to be honoured, or be named honourably, as we say Lord: <em>A tupay</em> or Lord; <em>A tupay God</em>, or Lord God; <em>tupay Saint Peter</em>, Oh Lord Saint Peter (S).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7</strong> Tupa cuca. Coca de hoja menuda la mas sabrosa coca Real.</td>
<td><strong>Royal coca (leaf) (Q).</strong> Coca of tiny leaves, the most delicious, royal coca (S).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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37 Guaman Poma ([ca. 1615] 2001: 267 [269]) says that the Chinchaysuyus sacrificed, among other things, “tupa coca”.

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https://doi.org/10.5771/9783896657954
Das Erstellen und Weitergeben von Kopien dieses PDFs ist nicht zulässig.
The central word González Holguín uses is *tupa*, which can be translated as ‘noble’, ‘honourable’, ‘precious’, and was above all used in prehispanic times for persons and objects relating to the Incas themselves. González Holguín recurs to the European concept of ‘royal’ in his explanations of the term itself (3) and several objects related to the Inca (the Inca’s headdress in 1, the Inca’s scepter in 2, and the special coca leaf38 in 7). But by using the adjective ‘royal’ the concept of Inca nobility is related to Spanish

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38 The coca leaf (*Erythroxylon coca* [Allaby ed. 2013: s.v. *Erythroxylon*) has a long tradition in the Andes – it is chewed as a stimulant, for stress relief, to reduce the feeling of hunger; and it is used in healing and divination ceremonies, in offerings and for social purposes (cf. Allen [1988] 2002).
nobility and also to Christian divinity, as a honorific title (6). It is evident here that for González Holguín there is no division between the political and the religious sphere. And thus he constructs a full circle: Spanish royal = Inca royal = divine, and implicitly the Incas can be seen as Christians.39

However, the most interesting and explicit relation to the Eucharist is that of the travel provisions given by the Incas to their messengers (4). In trying to explain and find a word for the embodiment of the deity (Christ) in the ingested object (the Host), González Holguín equals it to the extraordinary character and strength the Inca provisions had. And he does so clearly and emphatically, justifying his translation: “se dira ... y con verdad”, ‘[the Holy Sacrament] will be called [tupa quqaw, noble travel provision] ... and this is rightly so’.

But not only did his translation enable the missionaries to understand which Andean word could be used to convey the Christian concept; moreover they could have understood that the Inca object in question was, indeed, related to Christianity because ‘viático’ means both ‘travel provision’ and ‘Eucharist’40 – here the Christian and the Inca meaning almost seem to coincide.

What would the equivalence of the word for an object and concept of Inca culture with a Christian one have done to the Andean mind? Although we do not know in how far the Inca domination was still present in people’s memory, we can suppose that they related tupa with concepts which were exclusively reserved for any kind of highly respected noble class. It is therefore understandable that González Holguín chooses this Quechua word, tupa quqaw, for the Holy Communion. Considering, however, the Inca’s religious function as son of the Sun, the equivalence of the most important sacrament with the Inca’s special food must have invited the integration of the Christian concept into the Andean one. In the worst (or best?!) case, indigenous people would not have known anymore what tupa quqaw was in Inca society and would have (only) been able to understand the Holy Communion as a very special food one would take with oneself on a trip (quqaw).

39 As Serna (2006: [14]) points out, the chronicler Inca Garcilaso de la Vega and the Jesuits tried to explain that the indigenous people were inherently Christians (Garcilaso de la Vega 1609, I. II, cap. II: 27).
40 Documented with both meanings in the Diccionario de Autoridades (1739/VI], 1990/3: 474).

See also in the Catechism of Trent ([1566] 1823, On the Sacrament of the Eucharist: 147): “Sacred writers also frequently call it ‘The Viaticum’ as well because it is the spiritual food by which we are supported during our mortal pilgrimage”.

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González Holguín chooses a linguistic equivalent, which he considers to be close in meaning to the concept he wants to translate, and this cultural substitution can have the impact on the indirect target group, the Andean people, that they relate their own concept with the new one. At the same time it can do the same to the immediate target group, the missionary who learns Quechua, i.e. he could relate the Andean concept to his own, Christian one.

As we will see, going even further than equating the miraculous Inca travel provision to the Eucharist, González Holguín directly identifies the baby llama the Incas sacrificed with the Lamb of God.

**The Eucharist is the Inca sacrifice of the baby llama**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>González Holguín</strong> (1608, Qu-Sp: 160; 1989: 166)</th>
<th><strong>Translation by SDS</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quechua</td>
<td>From Quechua (Q)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>From Spanish (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Huaccar.</td>
<td>Great white egret (Q).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garça blanca cuelli larga pocas carnes ...</td>
<td>White heron with long neck and little flesh (S).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Huaccarpaña vña.</td>
<td>White baby llama for sacrifice (Q).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cordero blanco sin mancha para sacrificios.</td>
<td>White lamb without spot for sacrifice (S).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Huaccapaña [sic] vñanchic checamanta Iesuchristom casca. Nuestro verdadero Cordero y sacrificio es Jesucristo.</td>
<td>Our white baby llama for sacrifice is/was really Jesus Christ (Q). Our real Lamb and sacrifice is Jesus Christ (S).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Great White or American Egret (*Ardea alba egretta*), called ‘garza’, ‘heron’ (1), is a large white bird that lives in wetlands and is native to the Americas. When one compares it to a white baby llama (2) (see Illustrations 2 and 3), the similarities in their whiteness and long necks are startling enough; moreover in the Andes this water bird is also linked to the mythical origin of the llama, which came out of a fountain (Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz 1990: 183–184; Mariscotti 1978: 216, 221, 229). Al-

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though the etymology of “huaccarpaña” is unknown, it is quite obvious that this part of the word is related to the white bird; uña is a young animal, such as a lamb or baby llama.\textsuperscript{42} Whilst González Holguín’s translation of the bird is an accurate description of what he must have seen (1), the term “huaccarpaña uña” apparently only referred to the white baby llama as sacrificial animal (2) and was probably elicited from his consultants. We do not know whether this kind of sacrifice was still being made at the beginning of the 17\textsuperscript{th} century, but the chronicler Cieza de León still witnessed it in the 1550s.\textsuperscript{43} Despite the uncertain etymology the ‘sacred’ character of this animal moved González Holguín to suggest it as equivalent translation for Agnus Dei.

\textsuperscript{42} González Holguín 1608, Qu-Sp: 354, 1989: 355; see also González Holguín 1608, Sp-Qu: 78, 1989: 449: ‘White ram without spot which the Indians sacrificed …’ (“Carnero blanco sin mancha que sacrificauan los indios, huacarpaña”). In Aymara, Bertonio ([1612] 1984, Ay-Sp: 141) has “Huacarpaña; Carnero blanco muy lanudo”, ‘very woolly white ram’, without mentioning its sacrificial aspect (the verb “huacca-” means ‘to comb the wool by hand’, ibid.). It is possible that this is connected to the custom to use (still at present) the fine wool from the llama’s neck to weave ceremonial garments (Lindsey Crickmay, personal communication, 17 January 2017). In Quechua paña means ‘right hand, right-hand side’ (González Holguín 1608, Qu-Sp: 274, 1989: 277), but it is not an Aymara word (Bertonio [1612] 1984, Sp-Ay: 207). In Quechua the additive meaning of the elements as a word-for-word translation (“white heron – right-hand side) does not make much sense, and it is possible that the word as a whole (and its meaning in religious ritual) is a loan from another language (such as Puquina), possibly adapted through a folk-etymology.

\textsuperscript{43} He wrote: ‘they brought a [llama] lamb up to one year of age without any spot, of one single colour … stretched out on the ground alive, they removed its entire entrails from one side; and these were given to their diviners whom they called Guacacamayos [specialists in charge of the sacred], like priests among us. And I saw that certain of their Indians took hurriedly in their hands as much of the lamb’s blood as they could and spread it among the potatoes they had in the sacks’, “traxeron vn cordero de hasta vn año sin ninguna mancha todo de vna color … tendido en el suelo biuo le sacaron por vn lado todo el assadura: y esta fue dada a sus agoreros, que ellos llamauan Guacacamayos, como sacerdotes entre nosotros. Y vi que ciertos indios de ellos lleuauan a priessa quanto más podían de la sangre del cordero en las manos, y la echauan entre las papas que tenían en los costales.” (Cieza de León [1553] 1984, cap. CXVII: 306). Cf. Molina, Mayo [ca. 1575] 2010: 47; Polo de Ondegardo cap. VI [1585b: fol. 9v], 1985b: 270.
In the Western biblical tradition, the white lamb, Agnus Dei, is a common element in the liturgy of the mass, a metaphor for the Eucharist, and as such it has also been widely used in iconography (see Illustrations 4 and 5).

Thus, as the verbally and visually well known concept had to be expressed in Quechua, González Holguín decided to explain the Eucharist through the Andean concept of the sacrificial lamb. In this case, rather than a metaphor, he used the verb ‘to be’ (śka-) and the Quechua witness evidential (-m/-mi): “Huaccapaña [sic] vñanchic checamanta Iesuchristom casca”, ‘Our white baby llama for sacrifice is/was really Jesus Christ – I have seen it’ (3). In this way he equates the Andean and the Christian concept, and although his Spanish translation seems, as equivalent, to render faithfully the Andean meaning he gives (3), the meaning of the Quechua term evokes a completely different cultural and ritual context from that of the Spanish word, each embedded in and associated with a different faith. The linguistic method he uses in equating “huaccarpaña uña” with “lamb and sacrifice” (see bolding in F 3) fuses the Christian and the Andean explicitly.

To highlight the differences between the ‘pagan’ and Christian sacrifice, the authors of the sermon written by the Third Lima Council in the Tercero Cathecismo had noted that ‘we do not offer a llama, a young animal’, in Quechua: “manam llamactachu, manam vñactachu cocunchic” (sermon

44 For example, the Catechism refers to 1 Peter 1: 18–19: “... with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled.” (Catechism of Trent [1566] 1823, On the fourth article of the Creed: 50).

45 Statements which in Quechua cannot carry this suffix because they could not possibly be witnessed received this suffix as a kind of emphatic validator in Christian Quechua (Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz 1999b: 231–232).
but by negating the Andean ritual, they still evoked the comparison. González Holguín’s contextualisation of the Holy Communion in the Andean sacrifice is also more explicit compared to the Doctrina Christiana where the word *quku*, ‘to offer’ (cf. Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz 2013: 232) is used to describe that Jesus Christ is the ultimate sacrifice (*Doctrina Christiana* [1584: fol. 49r]; 1985: 117). However, the Doctrina answer to what there is after the consecration of the sacrament states that it consists of the ‘real body and blood of Jesus Christ’, “el verdadero cuerpo y sangre de Iesu Christo”, quite literally translated into Quechua as “Iesu Christo apunchicpa checan vcun, checan yahuarinmi” (ibid. [fol. 48v]; p. 116,), ‘the real body, the real blood of our lord Jesus Christ’, which is, of course, not far from a possible Andean understanding of sacrifice.

Thus, almost a quarter of a century later González Holguín, a Jesuit like Acosta who was responsible for the Doctrina Christiana (Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz 2013: 50–51), explicitly refers to Inca sacrifices in order to explain the Agnus Dei. And although the Incaic sacrifice was supposed to be exterminated with the colonisation, people must have remembered it, and the fact that it was still carried out at least in the 1970s shows its vitality and continuity (Nachtigall 1975).

46 In the letter to the Corinthians (1, 10: 14-21) it is made clear that the Communion has to be differentiated from the pagan sacrifice (*New Jerusalem Bible* 2015, http://www.catholic.org/bible/book.php?id=53&bible_chapter=10; *Biblia Sacra Vulgatae* 1592: 1010; cf. 1 Peter 1: 18-19, at http://www.catholic.org/bible/book.php?id=67; *Biblia Sacra Vulgatae* 1592: 1064). However, Christ’s quoted exhortation to ‘eat, this is my body’, “micuychic caymiñocap vcuy” (*Tercero Cathecismo* [1585: fol. 74v], 1985: 496), may have had resonances of the entrails of an animal which was used for divination and which was then eaten.
Illustration 4: Agnus Dei – The Lamb of God on the Book with Seven Seals. Iglesia de la Anunciación, Sevilla, España, 1616

Illustration 5: The Lamb of God, by Juan Gerson. Sotocoro, Temple of the Franciscan Ex-Convent of La Asunción de Nuestra Señora, Tecamachalco, Puebla, Mexico [1562]

47 Agnus Dei ([1616b] 2016); for a description see Agnus Dei ([1616a] 2012).
### G Christ’s blood is Inca sacrificial painting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quechua</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>González Holguín (1608, Qu-Sp: 285; 1989: 166)</td>
<td>Translation by SDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Quechua (Q)</td>
<td>From Spanish (S)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Pirani.**

   Era vna cerimonia que del carnero, o cordero que auian de sacrificar con la sangre nueva y fresca se embijauan con rayas en la cara, o cuerpo para tener parte en aquel sacrificio.

   It was a ceremony in which they painted in their faces or on their body lines with the new and fresh blood of the ram or lamb they had to sacrifice so that they could participate in that part of the sacrifice.

2. **Pirascca.**

   Los embijados, o sulcados con sangre, y se puede aplicar a nuestro cordero Christo.

   Those painted, or those with lines made of blood, and it can be applied to our Lamb of God.

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Here González Holguín creates yet another cultural equivalent: the blood of a sacrificed animal used to paint one’s body in Inca times (1) is, according to him, like the Lamb of God (2). There are numerous passages in the Bible which refer to the blood of Jesus. An interesting one, which links the Old and the New Testament and thereby gives us an idea of some of the similarities Andean and Old Testament religion showed, is the following:

But now Christ has come, as the high priest of all the blessings which were to come. He has passed through the greater, the more perfect tent, not made by human hands, that is, not of this created order; and he has entered the sanctuary once and for all, taking with him not the blood of goats and bull calves, but his own blood, having won an eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkled on those who have incurred defilement, may restore their bodily purity. How much more will the blood of Christ, who offered himself, blameless as he was, to God through the eternal Spirit, purify...
our conscience from dead actions so that we can worship the living
God. These verses indicate the salvation of humankind through the offering of
Christ’s blood in the Eucharist ceremony, and González Holguín makes
the transference of the word for painting oneself with sacrificial animal
blood to the Lamb of God completely explicit: “it can be applied” (2) –
like the Inca travel provision as Holy Communion (E 4). Again, he sug-
gests more than the translation and application of an everyday word to a
Christian concept: he makes an equation of Inca and Christian rites possi-
ble and thinks that it is acceptable.

5 Extreme Unction

In the 17th century the sacrament of the Extreme Unction was given to
those who were about to die. The anointment of the sick or dying persons
served to prepare them for the meeting with God. It is therefore an impor-
tant Christian ritual, and this is reflected in the fact that the 1585 Tercero
Cathecismo dedicated a whole sermon (17) to it (after a very brief treatment
in the Catecismo Mayor of the Doctrina Christiana [1584: fol. 52v–53r];
1985: 124–125). According to the authors, it has three objectives: the par-
don of all sins, to cure the body of its illness, and the strength to gain the
coming battle with the Devil (ibid. [fol. 95r–96r], pp. 537–539).

49 Durston (2007: 278–279) mentions two colonial hymns in which Christ is de-
scribed as being inside the Host – yet another explanation which may have led to
misunderstandings.
## Extreme Unction and ritual ointment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quechua</th>
<th>Translation by SDS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Llussini o hauini. Vntar, o vngir.</td>
<td>I anoint or I spread a greasy substance (Q). To apply an oily substance (S).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Llussina hanpi. V[n]guentos o vnciones.</td>
<td>Herbal medicine to be applied as ointment (Q). Oily substances to be applied (S).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Llucsina [sic] sacramento. El sacramento de la extrema vncion.</td>
<td>The Sacrament to be applied as ointment (Q). The sacrament of the Extreme Unction (S).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremauncionhuan llussiy tucuni. Ser vngido.</td>
<td>I am rubbed in with the Extreme Unction (Q). To be anointed (S).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacramentohuan llussini. Vngir o dar la extrema vnncion.</td>
<td>I rub on the Sacrament (Q). To anoint or give the Extreme Unction (S).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacramentohuan llussisca. El vngido.</td>
<td>The one who is rubbed in with the Sacrament (Q). The anointed (S).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vya llussina. Los afeytes,</td>
<td>The substance to rub on the face (Q). Embellishments (S).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oyacta llussicuni. González Holguín (1608, Qu-Sp: 215, cf. 149; 1989: 166)</td>
<td>I rub embellishment on the face (Q). Translation by SDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afeytarse.</td>
<td>To embellish/adorn oneself (S).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this context, González Holguín uses the Quechua terms for ‘to rub a substance on the body’ (Spanish ‘untar’), i.e. *hawi-* or *llusi-*.

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51 From here onwards, all the entries I have separated form one entry in González Holguín.
52 *Hawi-* and *llusi-* clearly refer to painting things or the face (González Holguín 1608, Qu-Sp [149], 1989 155–156; and 1608, Sp-Qu: 314, 1989: 686–687 resp., cf. Lira 1944: 236, 602). Of course, we do not know whether there was any kind of facial painting for embellishment only, without further ritual meaning, and González Holguín does not clarify this. Santo Tomás has a number of words, of which *hawi-* means ‘to paint oneself with any kind of colour in general’ ([1560: fol. 6r] 1951: 18; fol. 137v, p. 292), and the same word also means that the woman paints herself with black oil (ibid. fol. 6r,
In a Quechua speaker, the usage of the Quechua words would at least have evoked the action itself. Therefore it seems to be an adequate choice to use *llusi-* in combination with the Spanish word, either ‘sacrament’ or ‘Extreme Unction’ (again, as loanwords), but it would only have evoked the physical aspect of rubbing a substance on the skin, not necessarily that of the ritual aspect for which González Holguín only uses loanwords.

Similarly he used *pira-*, which refers to the painting of the face or body with fresh llama blood in a particular sacrifice ritual, to express the Lamb of God (G 2). Several Spanish colonial sources describe the ritual anointment of adored people, objects or animals. Augustinian monks saw a ritual in Central Peru where, apparently in order to guarantee the fertility of maize, guinea pig blood was sprinkled on maize leaves. The rocks of a *huaca* (deity, sacred object) were rubbed with the blood of sacrificed guinea pigs; another *huaca* in the form of a stone was painted with the red colour of a certain tree.53 Polo de Ondegardo mentions how sorcerers healed the sick by rubbing on their body the ointment of a guinea pig or frog’s fat or meat, or plants such as maize, hoping for them to be healed. Other occasions where ointments were used were festivals, and Ondegardo also reminds us that the dead Incas’ bodies were embalmed and their faces painted with the blood of children who were sacrificed on these occasions.54 We can see that the ritual process of applying certain substances to the body was well known in Andean culture. This would have made it relatively easy to transfer the indigenous understanding to a Christian ritual, facilitating once again a fusion of both, and it is obvious from the examples that González Holguín used these interpretations intentionally.

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53 “... y allí las [flores del maíz] mochan y sacrifican un coy y a las hojas mismas echándoles la sangre encima” (Agustinos [1560/61: fol. 15v], 1992: 41); cf. “y ofrescíale coyes y untavan las peñas con la sangre” (ibid. fol. 7v, p. 22); “estava esta piedra e ydolo / muy enbixado, ques un colorado que allá tienen muy preçiado a manera de bermellón” (ibid. fol. 8r, p. 23).

54 “Los enfermos se suelen embadurnar el cuerpo con mayz, o con otras cosas, o embadurnar a otros para sanar de sus enfermedades” (Polo de Ondegardo, cap. V, no. 11 [1585a, fol. 4v], 1985a: 260); “... vtandoles con sebo, o con carne, o grossura del Cuy, o Sapo, o de otras immundicias, o con yeruas” (Polo de Ondegardo, cap. III [1585a, fol. 5r], 1985a: 257); cf. Polo de Ondegardo, cap. II, no. 12 [1585b: fol. 8r], 1985b: 267; cap. XIV [1585b: fol.15v], 1985b: 282.

From a varied semantic field in the dictionaries and these Spanish sources one can conclude that the application of body colours and other ointments was important in Andean culture and that applying them was also a means of healing.
By combining in his translations word-for-word equivalents, extensions of meaning and loanwords with Andean everyday and ritual terms, González Holguín created what one might call neologisms. But these are not lexical neologisms; rather, they are cultural parallels created through metaphors and the explicit equation of Christian and Andean beliefs. Andean words are used in these sentences, completely embedded in and surrounded by their own context so as to draw Christian terms and concepts into the Andean world. The purpose was obviously to integrate Andean elements into Christian faith more easily, but it also would have established parallels between both religions, which enabled Andean people to see their own rites as equal to Christian ones—a cultural substitution that worked both ways. Probably through its lack of orthodoxy this kind of cultural transference and convergence did not survive the colonial period, although it did reflect common practice of the time. Thus Polo de Ondegardo (cap. XIV [1585b, fol.15r–v]; 1985b: 282) had mentioned that the two systems were in use: indigenous ‘sorcerers’ employed Christian phrases and gestures and at the same time continued applying their own rituals; that is, only fifty years after the conquest the Andean people seemed to have learned to combine both types of rituals, which superficially did probably not seem to be very different from each other to them.

On the linguistic level, what initially was a translation/transference of Christian metaphors into Quechua became a re-interpretation of Christian forms within the Andean cultural framework. Whereas the other colonial missionaries chose loanwords or literal translations, González Holguín is the only author (ancient and modern) who re-contextualised Christian and Andean terms and concepts by translating the key terms into Quechua and creating metaphors based on the Andean culture, thus, in a way, making it possible to bring two different visions of the world together through textual images.

Thus we can see in three cases, “tupac cocau”, “huaccarpaña vña” and “pirascca”, how González Holguín used the Andean words, fraught with cultural and religious meanings of the Inca era, to integrate the most central meaning of Christianity, that of the Eucharist, into the Andean world—and not the other way round! Linguistically he made his choice clear by assigning the Christian meanings explicitly to the Andean words by using

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55 It would be interesting to study if and how the sermons written by 17th century priests make use of metaphors.

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ʻis’, ʻwill be called’ and ʻcan be applied’, and by integrating them into Quechua sentences. It is therefore clear that González Holguín took a conscious decision rather than making an intuitive translation.\textsuperscript{56}

This finds its support in González Holguín’s recontextualisation of Quechua words and concepts through his supposedly Christian interpretation and it makes the fusion process practically an orthodox one. It means that, at least in these examples, González Holguín explicitly creates Christian Quechua concepts, which aim at combining or amalgamating Andean and Christian beliefs. However, whilst rituals themselves which combined elements from both beliefs, have persisted through the centuries (e.g. Marzal 1992; Albó 1999), González Holguín’s unorthodox translations did not become part of Quechua Christian discourse.\textsuperscript{57}

There is no documentation as to why this was the case, for example critical Church comments as to an unorthodox usage of language. On the contrary, the dictionary was approved by the Real Audiencia and by the Church because – so wrote the Jesuit Juan Vázquez in his Aprobacion in 1607 – it has

examined and inquired particularly well the words and their use and easy accommodation to ours, and of their phrases and ours, everything so appropriately that I hope that it will be of much help for the priests and those who would like to use [it] in the preaching of the Holy Gospel in order to promote faith and good customs. This is because this work has a very large amount of terms and words, which have

\textsuperscript{56} In their religious texts, other missionaries used the Spanish loanwords for Host (\textit{Doctrina Christiana}, Catecismo Mayor, de los sacramentos [1584: fol. 46r], 1985: 111) as do contemporary hymns (Durston 2010: 151).

\textsuperscript{57} 20th century massbooks use the loanwords introduced by the Third Lima Council in the 1580s, e.g. the Eucharist is the ‘unique sacrifice’, “Sacrificio singular”, translated into Quechua as ‘principal sacrifice’, “sacrificio collanam” (\textit{Doctrina cristiana en quechua} [between 1958 and 1963]: 52); similarly ‘Holy Communion’, “Santa Comunion” in Quechua, and ‘Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar’, “Santísimo Sacramento Altarpi” (ibid. 54). Equally in (Protestant) Bible translations \textit{Agnus Dei} is translated using a loanword (John 1: 29), e.g. ‘God’s lamb’, “Diospa Corderon” (\textit{Señorninchis Jesucristoq Mosaq Rimanakuynin} 1966: 297), or ‘God’ combined with the Quechua word for ‘young animal’: “Diospa Chitanta” (\textit{Senorninchik Jesucristop Musuq Testamenton}, John 1: 29, 1958: 261).

We do not know if González Holguín’s terminology was not accepted because it was not considered orthodox or simply because the discourse used in early doctrinal materials was easier to continue to employ than the words presented in a dictionary (re-edited for the first time only in 1842 [Hamerly 2011: 46]), which would have needed some analytic effort.
now been adapted to the spiritual in order to declare the mysteries of
our holy faith, vices and virtues which the language lacked.\textsuperscript{58}

Rather than having difficulties because of his unorthodox translations
which contributed to amalgamating the religions, probably few parish
priests used the dictionary because they may generally have relied on the
Quechua Christian Doctrine of the Third Lima Council and lacked the
time and interest to verify the translation of certain key terms in a compre-
hensive book, which – moreover – does not seem to have been easily avail-
able.

The difference in the translation of key Christian concepts in the Third
Lima Council texts, directed by the Jesuit José de Acosta, and that of
González Holguín, Jesuit as well, also shows that there does not seem to
have been a clear strategy adopted by a certain religious order.

With respect to the impact González Holguín’s work might have had,
there is no evidence documented in writing that it influenced the develop-
ment of what is now called ‘Andean religion’, but it does seem probable
that the fusion we see here may have been supported orally by his indige-
nous consultants who represented the contact the two religions had from
early on. Thus, in a way González Holguín’s translations reflect the prac-
tice of the indigenous people of amalgamating European and Andean cul-
ture, which began almost as soon as the Christianisation.

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\textsuperscript{58} Translation SDS: “particular examen y aueiguacion de la propiedad de los vocab-
los, y el vso y acomodacion facil de ellos a los nuestros, y de sus frases y nuestras,
todo con tanta propiedad que espero ha de ser de mucha ayuda a los Curas y a
los que se quisieren emplear en la predicacion del santo Evangelio para el aumento
de la fee y buenas costumbres por tener esta obra grandissima copia de terminos y vocablos nueuamente acommodados a lo espiritual para la declaracion de
los mysterios de nuestra sancta fee, vicios, y virtudes de que tenia falta la lengua”.

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Agustinos

Albó, Xavier

Allaby, Michael (ed.)

Allen, Catherine J.

American Egret

Anonymous

Araníbar, Carlos

Ardea Alba

Ayrosa, Plínio (ed.)
Baby llama

Baker, Mona

Bertonio, Ludovico

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see Biblia Sacra Vulgatae 1592
  King James Bible Online 2017
  New Jerusalem Bible 2015

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see Catechism of the Catholic Church 2003
  Catechism of Trent [1566] 1823
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59 González Holguín would have used a Latin edition of the Catechism of Trent (different Latin editions were not exactly identical), and according to the translation of the English version I have used this one seems to be based on the first Latin version from 1566 (Donovan in Catechism of Trent 1823: 10). It should be added that there was no translation into Spanish until 1777 (except for the one into Nahuatl and Spanish in Mexico in 1723) (Rodríguez 1998: 14–15).
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Señorchinchis Jesucristoq Mosoq Rimanakuynin

Serna Arnaiz, Mercedes

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Recontextualising the Sacraments

Tercero Cathecismo [1585]
[This is a collection of sermons.]

The Lamb of God

WorldCat

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Her recent publications on the language of Christianisation include:


- El *Tratado de los errores* de Francisco de Ávila en comparación con el manuscrito quechua de Huarochirí. Estudio analítico y transcripción comparativa. St. Andrews: St. Andrews University, Centre for Amerindian, Latin American and Caribbean Studies 2016. (CAS Occasional Publications 34)


Matías Ruiz Blanco’s Reconceptualisation of Carib Practices and Traditions in his *Conversion de Piritu de indios cumanagotos, palenques, y otros* (1690)

*Roxana Sarion*

**Abstract**

This article examines the Franciscan Fray Matías Ruiz Blanco’s reconceptualisation of particular Carib practices and customs and the conveyance of the Christian faith, as theorised by him in his work *Conversion de Piritu de indios cumanagotos, palenques, y otros* (1690). The main aim is to analyse whether the so-called ‘pacific evangelisation’ project undertaken by the Franciscan missions in Píritu served, in fact, the assimilation and acculturation of the indigenous peoples under the Spanish empire, despite its seemingly conciliatory initial purpose. Consequently, this article enquires how Ruiz Blanco interpreted and conveyed Carib knowledge systems according to Christian structures. For this, I will first examine the process of evangelisation on the eastern coast of Venezuela in relation to the spiritual conquest dynamics of the Americas during the 16/17th centuries. I will then provide examples of the way in which Ruiz Blanco ‘demonised’ manifestations of Carib practices which he made comprehensible to his fellow missionaries by establishing associations with his Christian mentality and clerical training. Finally I will study Ruiz Blanco’s translation of the *doctrina cristiana* according to principles which were not always aligned with the orthodox guidelines imposed by the Third Council of Lima (1582–83). [Conversion, Cumanagot, Doctrina, Mission, Province of Píritu (Venezuela), Mattías Ruiz Blanco, Translation]
On the 1st of March 1672, twenty years after the Spanish missionaries finally established their first successful missions in Venezuela, Fray Matías Ruiz Blanco (1643–1705/1708?) signed up for the third Franciscan expedition to Píritu. Together with 13 missionaries, Fray Ruiz Blanco embarked in Cadiz, and once he arrived in Venezuela contributed significantly to the spiritual conquest of the indigenous peoples by founding stable proselytising settlements. As he had been appointed Reader of Theology before his departure to Venezuela, his first task in the missions of Píritu was the training of young missionaries who had not completed their studies before enrolling for the mission. Around 1675, together with Fray Jacinto Pérez, he was in charge of the administration of the sacraments in the Province of Píritu (Tucupio, San Lorenzo de Aguaricuar, etc.). After a short stay in Spain, Ruiz Blanco went back to Venezuela in 1683, and on the 5th of April, he was appointed chronicler of the Franciscan missions of Píritu by the Franciscan general commissioner of the Indies (Cristóbal del Viso). Between 1688 and 1693, Fray Ruiz Blanco returned to Madrid to support the organisation and the strategic growth of the missionary expeditions in Venezuela. On three occasions (1686–89, 1696–99 and 1705–08) Ruiz Blanco was assigned the tasks of Apostolic commissioner for the missions in north-eastern Venezuela and examiner of the diocese of Puerto Rico.

He spent over thirty years on the conversion of the Cumanagots, Palenques and other indigenous peoples to Catholicism. For this, he wrote linguistic and doctrinal manuals in the general language (Cumanagot) of the region which were crucial for the efficient doctrination and orthodox celebration of Catholic rituals: the *Principios y reglas de la lengua cumanagota* (1683)\(^2\) and the *Manual para catekizar, y administrar los santos sacramentos* (1683).

Author of a significant corpus of missionary texts which reflects the evangelisation context in north-eastern Venezuela, in his most elaborated text, the *Conversion de Piritu de indios cumanagotos, palenques, y otros*\(^3\) (1690),

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1 I am very grateful to Sabine Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz and Carlos Fernando Cabanillas Cárdenas for their constructive suggestions.

2 Ruiz Blanco printed for the first time in 1683 a revised and improved exemplar of the Manuel de Yangues’ Cumanagot grammar, *Principios y reglas de la lengua cumanagota*, which circulated as manuscript among the missionaries in the Province of Píritu, together with a *Diccionario de la lengua cumanagota* composed by him.

3 Currently I am conducting a Ph.D. dissertation project that aims at a comprehensive analysis of this text within the research framework of the *Encounters and Cul-
Fray Ruiz Blanco reflects on the transculturation process as well as its linguistic challenges. This comprehensive – hitherto understudied – work on the Carib world is a hybrid text which comprises four books: (1) a historical introduction, (2) the practice of teaching the Indians and a translation of the Catholic Church’s essential sermons and sacraments into the Cumanagot language, (3) a grammar of the Cumanagot language, and (4) a Spanish-Cumanagot vocabulary.

Although Ruiz Blanco defended the indigenous rights before the Spanish Crown, he could not escape the ideological and religious colonial framework of the catechetical Christian materials for Amerindian cultures he belonged to. In order to understand the indigenous narratives, he established links between pre-existing models and Christian structures according to his seventeenth century Western conceptualisation of knowledge. Thus, Ruiz Blanco reconceptualised the Carib world based on European strategies of appropriation of the indigenous traditions and ‘demonisation’ of the indigenous discourse manifest both in cultural and linguistic aspects.

On the one hand, Ruiz Blanco focused on the study of the pre-Hispanic rituals and traditions in order to identify and extirpate what the Catholic Spaniards judged to be idolatrous practices and superstitions (see Mills 1997). On the other hand, the linguistic choices he made in the translation of the Doctrina into the Cumanagot language point to a symbolic assimilation of the Carib world. Thus he transmitted the Christian concepts of

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4 Coined by Ortiz (1940), the transculturation concept is used to explain the different stages and results of cultural contact among people brought together by the European colonial expansion into the Caribbean. The concept of “transculturation” is part of a lively debate in postcolonial and Latin American studies, intersecting with other concepts of cross-cultural exchange. This contribution adopts Mignolo and Schiwy’s understanding of the concept of transculturation which relied on and was inseparable from translation in the process of conversion to Christianity in the Indies (2003: 6).

5 The extirpation of idolatries became an institutionalised practice in the Americas. It was not unlike the inquisition in Europe, but applied to the indigenous population. Inspection visits were carried out and court cases made against native ‘sorcerers’ and ‘witches’ (Gareis 1999; Mills 1997).

6 In religious terms a ‘doctrina’ (Lat. ‘doctrina’; Gr. ‘didaskalía’) gives the intellectual structures used for guidance in the processes of instruction, propaganda and conversion and includes prayers which contain didactic explanations of the basic principles of Christian belief. In Latin America the missionaries had to teach the indigenous peoples these principles. A doctrina was also the name given to a mis-
God, Virgin and Jesus Christ using Spanish loanwords, whilst for ‘sin’, ‘devil’ and ‘punishment’ he used extensions of the meanings of the Cumanagot words *machir*, *yboroquiamo* and *yguaze*, respectively. It is no coincidence that Ruiz Blanco reinterpreted the indigenous terms as vilifying concepts in order to ensure the effectiveness of his proselytising efforts.\(^7\)

In this framework of recontextualisation of the Christian faith, my aim is to show that Ruiz Blanco used the indigenous languages as tools for suppressing the prehispanic ‘idolatries’ and ‘superstitions’ which according to Western standards were deemed to be the work of the Devil. Therefore, this contribution concentrates on his translation of Carib practices and traditions in his *De las naciones de indios de aquel país, de su economia politica y ritos supersticiosos*\(^8\) and the *Practica que ay en la enseñança de los indios y vn directivo para que los Religiosos puedan commodamente instruirlos en las cosas essenciales de la religion Christiana*\(^9\), i.e. in Catholic sermons and the sacraments.

I will first provide a contextualisation of Ruiz Blanco’s translation endeavour in the process of evangelisation in colonial Venezuela; subsequently I will present Ruiz Blanco’s ‘demonising’ interpretation of Carib knowledge systems, and finally I will show that the translation principles Ruiz Blanco used to convey the *Doctrina* in the Cumanagot language, were in open disagreement with the Third Lima Council’s linguistic policies.

2 *The violent spiritual conquest*

The religious justifications of the Catholic Monarchs’ overseas expansion to the Americas which took place simultaneously with the process of the missionary settlement or parish in which the indigenous peoples lived according to Christian rules and values (see *Diccionario de Autoridades* 1732, vol. III, doctrina, item 6).

\(^7\) These strategies of recontextualisation of the Catholic faith in indigenous discourse structures with the purpose of evangelisation are still found in the contemporary missionary context of Venezuela, as identified by Villalón (1999) in the indigenous communities located on the Orinoco watershed, proving thus the persistence of this type of ideology of certain missionary groups (in this case evangelicals).

\(^8\) Book I, chapter VI: *Of the Indian nations of that country, of their political economy and superstitious rites*. [All translations of Spanish book and chapter titles as well as text passages (in simple inverted commas) are by RS].

\(^9\) Book II: *Practice in teaching the Indians, and an authoritative guideline for the friars to comfortably instruct them in the essentials of the Christian religion*, henceforth *Practica* (1690).
Reconquista (1492) in the kingdom of Granada, was officially legitimised by Pope Alexander VI’s Bula Intercætera (1493)\(^{10}\) conceded to Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon. By the time Columbus had set foot on the mainland of the Carib during his third voyage in 1498, the Spaniards had already experienced a long tradition of medieval Crusades motivated by their messianic conviction of having been chosen by God to convert humankind to Christianity (Prien and Buckwalter 2012: 1).

In order to Christianise the Amerindian peoples in the Americas, the Spanish missionaries had to adapt their tools and methods of conversion to the culture and nature of the indigenous peoples with whom they were committed to work during the spiritual and political conquest. The missionaries’ conversion methods consisted mainly of extirpating the prehispanic polytheistic religious systems, and on a tabula rasa introduce the Christian faith in one only and supreme God (Gareis 1999: 231).

Throughout the 16\(^{th}\) century, an intensive Christianisation process took place from Mesoamerica to the Andes, but the modus operandi in which the missionaries fulfilled their conversion tasks differed considerably from one region to the other. In the earliest phase of evangelisation, the indigenous people were converted to Christianity directly in Latin and Spanish (College of Santa Cruz of Tlatelolco, Mexico, 1530) (Valdeón 2014: 124), whilst later the missionaries translated their catechetic texts into the indigenous languages (e.g. Aymara and Quechua) in order to make the Christian message more comprehensible (Tercer Concilio Provincial de Lima (ed) 1584). In any case, the “Doctrina was indeed a key instrument for the use of translation in the evangelization of the region” (Valdeón 2014: 133). However, its translation did not only imply the adaptation of the religious texts to the indigenous languages, but also the comprehension of the ‘others’ and their inclusion in Western cultural parameters, as part of the complex process of transculturation (cf. Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz 2013: 71–159).

Moreover, the implementation of a homogeneous methodology in the translation of the Doctrina in the New World was meant to encourage the Spanish missionaries to avoid the use of specific religious indigenous concepts and terms, and to favour a universal approach. The impact of the

\(^{10}\) The Papal Bulls were official decrees with juridical impact which entitled the Catholic Monarchs to take possession of the newly – and to be discovered – territories of the Americas with the strict condition to convert all its indigenous peoples to Christianity (Prien and Buckwalter 2012: 5–7). As a result of Pope Alexander VI’s bulls in 1493, the Requerimiento (‘Requirement’) was issued and formally used to notify the indigenous peoples that they must ‘obey the domination’ of the Spanish empire and emperor (see Requerimiento [1510] [s.a.]).
religious councils upon the language of conversion and its translation policies (The Council of Trent from 1545 to 1563, The Second Council of Mexico in 1545) reached a point of maximum regularisation in the Third Council of Lima (1582–1583).

The Third Council of Lima began its meetings in the early 1580s and decided to translate the *Doctrina christiana* into Aymara and Quechua, the two main ‘general languages’ of the Andean area, decreeing the publication of the *Doctrina christiana, y catecismo para instrucción de los indios, y de las de mas personas, que han de ser enseñadas en nuestra Sancta Fé* (1584), written by a group of theologists under the Jesuit José de Acosta’s (1540–1600) close supervision. This book aimed at the standardisation of the ecclesiastical policies and summarised the main Christian principles in short (*Tercer Concilio Provincial de Lima* (ed) 1584, fol. 13r–18r) in the *Catecismo breve*, ‘for the rude and busy ones’ and, in a longer version (fol. 25r–82v), the *Catecismo mayor*, for ‘the more capable ones’ (Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz 2013: 51). These texts were the only ones authorised by the Provincial Synod with the purpose of replacing different versions of the *Doctrina* that circulated at that time with a single one. These authentic and unique translations of the *Doctrina* ought to be used without contradiction, so that the Indians did not learn a diverse and erroneous version of the Christian doctrine. However, critics of this text made themselves heard soon, among them Ruiz Blanco who disobeyed these standardisation principles openly, as will be shown in the section about “Ruiz Blanco’s translation of the *Doctrina*” of this contribution.

This was probably also due to the fact that by the beginning of the 17th century the Spanish missionaries of the Andean region realised that ‘words’ had not made much difference in the Christianisation process, as the indigenous people maintained their traditions and narratives despite the intents of imposing Spanish forms of life and customs on their ancient practices. As a result, the prehispanic cults and practices were perceived as manifestations of the Devil and ‘idolatries’, to be strictly pursued and extirpated by zealous priests, such as Joseph de Arriaga (1564–1622), who enforced their proselytising strategies with oppressive and often violent methods of conversion.

Designed as a manual for rooting out paganism, Arriaga’s *Extirpación de la idolatria del Pirv* (1621) revealed that, although the Indians of Peru had been Christians for years, traces of idolatry – objects of worship, priests and ‘sorcerers’, festivals and sacrifices, and other ‘superstitions’ – still persisted in the Archdiocese of Lima, and they should be methodically prevented and extirpated. Arriaga’s text is one of the most explicit treatises in regard to the persecution of what were considered indigenous ‘idolatries’
and ‘superstitions’ and became a model of religious repression in Latin America throughout the seventeenth century (cf. Mills 1997: 23–24).

2.1 First attempts to evangelise the eastern coast of Venezuela

During his third expedition, in 1498, Christopher Columbus stepped on the shores of the northern-eastern coast of Venezuela – recognised during the 16th and 17th centuries as the Province of New Andalusia – which comprised three regions: Cumaná, Píritu and New Barcelona (see Illustration 1). Despite the early arrival, it was only in 1656–57 that the Franciscan and Capuchin missionaries came to establish their settlements in the region. There was more than a century of delay between the dynamics of conversion undertaken in Mesoamerica and the Andes, and even more between these and the Carib territory of Píritu, which inevitably resulted in a different process of evangelisation with specific indoctrination methods.
The first attempts to start the evangelisation activities in the Province of New Andalusia\textsuperscript{11} were made around 1513 by the Dominican order. After being banned by the political authorities on Hispaniola Island, the friars Antonio de Montesinos (1475–1545) and Bartolomé de Las Casas (1474/1484–1566) directed their missionary activities to the south of Venezuela where they set out to test a new evangelisation model in an indigenous community which had not been previously exposed to daily contacts with the Spanish. In order to avoid the interference of the en-
comenderos\textsuperscript{12} in the management of the indigenous communities, the Province of Cumaná was appointed as the most suitable one for this new religious experiment (Ojer 1966: 35–38), which according to their ideas, would subsequently have opened the path for a pacific model of conquest in the New World. Although reinforced by the other Franciscan missions in the area, these Dominican utopian ideas failed in practice due to the continuous uprisings of the indigenous peoples, the assassinations of many Spanish leaders in the region, and the burning down of Christian churches. During the 16\textsuperscript{th} century, many unsuccessful attempts to evangelise the Province of New Andalusia were made and it became a theatre of war between the Spaniards and the indigenous communities (Ojer 1966: 86).

These challenges and struggles faced by the missionaries in the 16\textsuperscript{th} century delayed the spiritual conquest in the region and marked the structural features of further missions which were established later in the Province of Píritu. The process of converting indigenous people to Christianity on the Carib east coast during the 17\textsuperscript{th} century had its own peculiarities and distinguished itself considerably from the evangelisation carried out in Mesoamerica and the Andes where the missionaries encountered consolidated native political and social systems to fight against in order to impose the Christian faith and the policies of the Spanish Crown.

2.2 The Franciscan ‘reductions’ in the Province of Píritu

In contrast to the native peoples who lived in established settlements in other regions of Latin America, the indigenous communities of the coastal areas of Venezuela were mainly nomadic. Moreover, their conflictive inter-ethnic relations made the conversion tasks difficult for the Spanish missionaries. The only successful strategy of conversion was the creation of reducciones\textsuperscript{13}, settlements of indigenous communities where life was regulated according to Christian standards under the supervision of the Franciscan 'reductions' or 'Republics of Indians' – used in all regions in Latin America – were settlements organised according to Christian principles where the indige-

\textsuperscript{12} The Royal Patronage of the Spanish Crown created the encomienda system in order to control the colonisation of the Americas. An encomendero (conquistadors and other leaders) was granted a piece of land and a number of Indians whom he had the responsibility to protect and Christianise. In return, the Indians were forced to ‘tribute’ in the form of gold or labour. Most often, the encomendero used this system to effectively enslave the Indians and take their lands rather than protecting them. (Arcila Fariñas 1966: 142.)

\textsuperscript{13} The ‘reductions’ or ‘Republics of Indians’ – used in all regions in Latin America – were settlements organised according to Christian principles where the indige-
can friars. On the one hand, this approach helped the missionaries to pacify border conflicts, and on the other hand, it opened the doors to the colonisers and facilitated the Spanish Crown to rule the area. From this perspective, missionaries in the Province of Píritu became the promoters of the Spanish Crown’s aspirations since they were not only spiritual leaders, but also social catalysts of the political takeover by assuming temporarily the role of governors of the area; i.e. the Franciscan missionaries in the Province of Píritu were in charge not only of religious conversion, but also of the administration of the communities and local civil government. They were responsible to the elected Prefects, the Spanish Crown and the Council of the Indies, and not to bishops or government officials in Venezuela. During the 17th century, the Province of Píritu, together with the Province of Cumaná and New Barcelona, fell under the political jurisdiction of the Great Captaincy of New Andalusia. However, the Franciscan missionaries who controlled this region, unlike most of the missions in Venezuela at the time, did not rely on the Franciscan headquarters in the Province of Santa Cruz of Hispaniola and Caracas, but were responsible directly to Spain, a hierarchical structure uncommon at the time (Gómez Canedo 1967: 26–31).

These unusual historical and political circumstances were the cause of the creation of an atypical evangelisation pattern in an area in which prior attempts to civilise the region peacefully had failed at their early stage. Although the establishment of the Franciscan missions in Píritu tried to imitate pacific evangelisation model initiated by the Dominican order in the 16th century, it did not prevent interethnic conflicts and colonisers’ aggressions, although it diminished their impact through continuous denunciation of these abuses before the Spanish Crown.

2.3 Translation methods

In addition to the complex political and religious hierarchical structures, previous evangelisation projects in the area were unsuccessful to a certain degree because of the mutual incomprehension between the Spaniards and
the indigenous people. The diversity of languages and dialects\(^ {14}\) spoken by the indigenous people in the Province of Píritu (Cumanagot, Chaima, Pariagot, Palenque and others) made the conversion to Christianity more difficult. The first step towards creating communication between the missionaries and the Carib peoples was to overcome the challenges and limitations the different languages posed.

In order to convey the Christian concepts and practices, the Spanish missionaries tried to avoid confusions and misunderstandings by translating the religious concepts into the indigenous languages. Some of the missionaries decided to introduce loanwords from Castilian (\textit{hispanismos}), others employed literal translations (\textit{ad litteram}), whilst others opted for the use of neologisms or semantic substitutions and additions (\textit{ad sensum}) and linguistic adaptations (Zwartjes 2014: 7–8). In order to implement these translation methods, the missionaries wrote grammars and dictionaries (\textit{Artes} and \textit{Vocabularios}) which they published together with catechisms and sermons.\(^ {15}\)

Once the Spanish missionaries in the area had learned the indigenous languages and translated the \textit{Doctrina} into the Carib languages, more catechisms and confessionaries were written, together with guidelines to improve the existing translations, such as the \textit{Manual para catekizar, y administrar los santos sacramentos à los Indios que habitan la Provincia de la Nueva Andaluzia, y Nueva Barcelona, y San Christoval de los Cumanagotos}\(^ {16}\) (1683), a volume of 101 pages written by Matías Ruiz Blanco. This catechism provides the basis for Ruiz Blanco’s successive translations of the \textit{Doctrina}, such as Book II, \textit{Practica} in \textit{Conversion de Piritv} (1690), as well as for other works written in the eighteenth century, such as the \textit{Confessionario en lengua cumanagota} (1723) by Fray Diego de Tapia (1673?–1732?), the \textit{Resso}...

\(^ {14}\) Depending on different studies in which linguistic varieties are considered dialects or independent languages, the Cariban family fluctuates between 20 and 50 languages (including extinct and endangered ones). Several scholars have analysed the genetic affiliations of the Cariban languages and classified them under different glottonyms – Caraib or Karib, Cariña, Carif, Caribe – which need to be disambiguated since these dissimilarities might lead to taxonomic confusions. This contribution follows Loukotka’s classification (\textit{apud} Adelaar and Muysken 2004: 31–33, Table 1.5).

\(^ {15}\) For example, the \textit{Doctrina cristiana y catecismo de los Misterios de nuestra Santa Fè} (1680), written by the Capuchin friar Francisco de Tauste (1626–1685, OFM) is a 20-page catechism, included at the end of his \textit{Arte y bocabulario} (1680).

cotidiano en lengua Cariva (1760) written by Fray Fernando Ximénez (dates unknown)\(^{17}\) and the *Doctrina christiana traducida del Castellano al Cumanagoto, para uso de las Missiones y Doctrinas de la Concepcion de Piritu que estan al cargo de los Missioneros de la Regular Observancia de N.S.P.S. Francisco* (1761–66) by Antonio Caulín (1719–1802). Within this tradition, Ruiz Blanco wrote the *Manual para catektzar* (1683) to help prospective missionaries in their evangelisation activities, keeping in mind his target audience when translating the *Doctrina* into the Cumanagot language, as I will discuss in the section on Ruiz Blanco’s translation of the *Doctrina*.

3 Ruiz Blanco’s ‘demonisation’ of Carib narratives

Ruiz Blanco sought to demonstrate that to practice what the Spanish Catholic Church considered to be a deviation from its official doctrine, namely Carib ‘superstitious rites’ (1690: 26), constituted a grave sin. He insisted that by not knowing the truth spread by the Christian faith, the Caribs would continue submerged in ‘blindness and ignorance’ (1690: 2). Therefore he believed that writing about Carib traditions would help both to make the indigenous population aware of their ‘idolatries’ (1690: 2) and to inform his fellow missionaries of the sins that the Caribs were supposedly committing, reinforcing thereby the Church’s sense of urgency towards Christian intervention.

When reading the first book of the *Conversion de Piritu* (1690), a brief examination of Ruiz Blanco’s interpretation of Carib practices and traditions made in chapter IV (Of the Indian nations of that country, of its political economy and superstitious rites) shows how, bearing in mind his audience, the author tries to fit the indigenous traditions into his own framework of knowledge. Ruiz Blanco’s depiction of Carib beliefs represents one of the few sources left nowadays that reconstruct ancient indigenous cosmovision. However, what Ruiz Blanco rendered was his own interpretation of the indigenous traditions according to Christian standards, and not the genuine Carib beliefs and practices.

Thus Ruiz Blanco depicted Carib traditions as manifestations of the Devil and deployed a series of strategies of appropriation of the indigenous

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\(^{17}\) According to Fernández Heres (2000: 288), Gómez Parente recovered a copy of this manuscript considered lost and published it in *Promoción Indígena, Labor Franciscana en Venezuela* in Montalbán 8 (1987): 963–968 (Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, Caracas).

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culture by demonising the indigenous discourse affirming that the Carib worship of ‘pagan idols’ had been instigated by the Devil. He presented the Carib priests, piazamo, as the greatest enemies of the Spanish missionaries since they taught the Indians ‘how to invoke the devil and other superstitious ceremonies’ (1690: 33). A similar approach was recorded a century and a half earlier when the Franciscan missionary Pedro Simón (1574–1628) had described the piazamo as doctors who cured diseases, as well as representatives of the Devil.18

Moreover, Ruiz Blanco referred to them not only as ‘ministers of the devil’ and ‘masters of life and death’ (Ruiz Blanco 1690: 34), but also as ‘dogmatising teachers who preach against the Christian Doctrine’ (1690: 34). He then described how these indigenous experts, whom he also called ‘witches’, hechiceros in Spanish, ‘were invited to cure illnesses and other spiritual diseases with balms and rituals and how they invoked the devil to leave the sick person’s body’ (1690: 34). If the sick person eventually died, the hechicero was to be killed too because he had not practiced the appropriate ritual or he had not dispensed the proper cure. According to Ruiz Blanco, these rituals meant to expel ‘evil gods, demons and devils’ performed by the piazamo were nothing but idolatrous manifestations.

Ruiz Blanco’s vilifying approach to the piazamo reveals his proclivity to demonise Carib traditions and to highlight the innumerable rites and ‘diabolical delusions’ (1690: 39) the indigenous people lived with. Moreover, he added to his denunciations against the Carib practices the widespread practices of astrology, alchemy and other forms of sorcery:

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18 “Usaban de médicos para sus enfermedades a quienes llaman piaches, que es lo mismo que en otras partes mohanes, y en estas del Reino (de Nueva Granada), jeques. El médico había de dar sano al enfermo que tomaba entre manos, a quien le pagaban muy bien su trabajo; pero si el enfermo moría, pagaba el médico con la vida. ... Estos piaches no tenían más de médicos que de hechiceros y nigrománticos a quien hablaba el demonio tan de ordinario como ellos unos con otros” (Simón [1627] 1987, vol. II, 107). ‘They used doctors for their illnesses whom they called piaches which is the same as in other regions the mohanes, and here in the Kingdom (of New Granada) jeques. The doctor had to cure the sick man he had taken into his hands, and was paid very well for his work; but if the patient died, the doctor paid with his life. ... These piaches were sorcerers and necromancers rather than doctors to whom the devil used to speak like they did with each other’. We have to take into consideration that there is no information about pre-Christian beliefs and practitioners except that given by the Catholic clerics.
It is clear that they are all idolaters and typical of them that they all hate the devil and show great fear of him; they call him *Iboroquiamo*; they attribute to him all their illnesses and misfortunes.\(^{19}\)

Here it seems that what we know to have been the most respected Carib supernatural being was associated with the Devil. *Iboroquiamo* was indeed a Carib deity to whom the indigenous people attributed ‘all the good and the evil in the world’ (Lejarza 1965: XVI) and had apparently no relation with the devil and demons in a Christian sense, contrary to Ruiz Blanco’s affirmation.\(^{20}\) Once more, Ruiz Blanco created biased associations between his Christian imagery and the indigenous cosmovision.

Subsequently, he described Carib ‘dances and drunkenness’ which used to occur in specific moments of the annual cycle, such as harvesting or when returning from fishing, as manifestations of the adoration of the Devil and forms of idolatry:

They have two dances which are formally to be considered idolatry: one which is performed with an instrument called *Purma* composed of two pumpkins, and the other one with a drum, in which, improvising, they sing the most important songs, and they call it *empoican*, and next to the instrument they have idols made of wood ...\(^{21}\)

Ruiz Blanco’s interpretation of indigenous belief goes back to Greek mythology. *Estigia* (*Styx*) was primarily a feature of the afterlife, but has been described as a feature present also in the hell of Christianity. In *The Divine Comedy*, Dante ([ca. 1307–20] 1849: 78) attributed to Flegias the guard of the Styx and made him the fifth circle of Hell where the angry and sullen receive the punishment of being perpetually drowned in the

\(^{19}\) Ruiz Blanco 1690: 39: “Es cosa asentada que todos son idolatras y es cosa particular que todos aborrcnen al demonio y le tienen gran miedo; le llaman *Iboroquiamo*; atribuyenle todas sus enfermedades, trabajos y infortunios ...”.

\(^{20}\) In Andean culture, all (supernatural) beings have two sides; a benevolent and a negative one, and the aspect that comes to the fore depends on how human beings treat them (pers. comm. S. Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz, May 2017). This also seems to have been the case in Carib culture and obviously made it difficult for the missionaries to capture the complex character of a deity.

\(^{21}\) “Dos bailes tienen que son formalmente idolatria: el uno es con un instrumento que llaman *Purma*, formado de dos calabazas y de uno como tambor en que cantan los mas principales coplas de repente, y a este canto le llaman *empoican*, y a los lados del instrumento tienen los idolos formados de madera ...” (1690: 40).
muddy waters. In Ruiz Blanco (1690: 39), we find the correlation between the laguna Estigia (Styx) and the lake Machira where the Caribs’ souls were to spend eternity swallowed by snakes in their passage to a more joyful and elated place: “It must be that Stygian lagoon the poets imagined; moreover, they are wrong in that they think that the irrational [beings’) souls are also immortal”. Here we can see that Ruiz Blanco made a systematic correspondence between the Carib and Christian representations of the Devil. Moreover, he states that the Amerindians were wrong with respect to the ‘right’ understanding of the character of the soul which differed from the classical interpretation offered by Aristotle in La gran moral, Book I, chapter 5, División del alma en dos partes, y virtudes propias de cada una (Azcárate ed. 2005, vol. 2, 18–19). The ‘irrational [beings’] souls’ he refers to might have been the animals’ souls which Cumanagot people believed to be immortal, when according to Ruiz Blanco’s ‘classical’ worldview they were not (see more understandings of the ‘soul’ in the 17th century in Spain in Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz and Ruhnau 2016: 188–190).

The religious, ethnographic, historical and cultural assembly of his text reflects his encyclopaedic knowledge of the Carib indigenous universe, but, as we can see in the passages discussed above, Ruiz Blanco is critical of indigenous culture, although he makes visible efforts to bridge the cultural gap between his Catholic monastic background and the indigenous worldview.

4 Ruiz Blanco’s translation of the Doctrina

Having shed light on Ruiz Blanco’s strategies of appropriating Carib practices and traditions in Christian terms, the following pages seek to demonstrate the array of textual elements deployed by him in the transla-

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22 “Una palude fa, che ha nome Stige./ Questo tristo ruscel, quando è disceso/ Al piè delle maligne piagge grige” (Alighieri, Divine Comedy, Inferno VII, stanza 105: 78).

23 “Debe ser aquella laguna Astigia que fingieron los poetas; yerran más en esto, que entienden que las almas de los irracionales con [sic: son] inmortales también” (1690: 39).

24 Aristotle divides the soul in two parts: a rational and an irrational side. The first one is endowed with prudence, wisdom and memory, and the latter with temperance, justice, and value. The irrational part of the soul should be praised only when it serves and obeys the rational part.
tion of the *Doctrina* and will show how the author used both Spanish loan-
words and semantic extensions of Cumanagot terms in order to teach the
Christian faith.

Ruiz Blanco began his research on the Carib languages in Píritu after
many years of experience in the conversion of indigenous people in the
missions of Characuaires, San Lorenzo, San Juan de Tucurpio, Apostol San
Pablo (regions which form part of present-day Venezuela), and others. He
collected his data empirically and also relied on earlier grammatical studies
on the Carib languages, such as the *Principios y reglas de la lengua cu-
managota* (1683) by Manuel de Yangues (1630–1675). As he explained, his pro-
cedure in the data collection consisted of spending eighteen years in ‘finding
the exact words’ (1690: 113) in order to translate the *Doctrina*, after he had
realised that previous translations had inadequate terms and some were
even contrary to the truth:

… due to the interpreters’ little knowledge in our Castilian language, I
devoted myself to translate again the Christian Doctrine, eliminating
some of the Castilian words for being unintelligible to the natives, and
others of their language for being superfluous, and thus I wrote the
Doctrine and Catechism that I gave to print in the year [16]83.25

In fact, Ruiz Blanco refers to the version of the *Doctrina* he had previously
written in his *Manual para catekizar* (1683) which contained a compilation
of sacramental texts and prayers, both in Cumanagot and Spanish, with oc-
casional instructions for priests only in Spanish. This bilingual catechism
was comprised of the Christian Doctrine with the precepts of the Holy
Church, a brief explanation of the Symbols of Faith, precepts of the Deca-
logue and the sacraments of the Holy Church.

In the *Manual para catekizar* (1683) Ruiz Blanco presents the doctrine
first in Spanish, followed by a translation to Cumanagot, indicating thus
that the principal recipient was the missionary who would use the text as a
guide for the oral evangelisation of the indigenous people. This catechism
is innovative in that it intercalates the Spanish and Cumanagot accounts
(see Illustration 2), creating an intertext between the two versions of the
Doctrine.

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25 “… por ocasion de los Interpretes poco versados en nuestro idioma Castellano,
me dedique à traducir de nuevo la Doctrina Christiana, expurgandola de algunas
voces castellanas por no inteligibles para los naturales, y de otras de su idioma,
por superfluous y asi compuse la Doctrina y Catecismo que di a la estampa el año
de ochenta y tres” (1690: 113–114).
Ruiz Blanco mainly used two methods of translation in the *Manual para catekizar* (1683): the insertion of Spanish loanwords and the extension of meanings of some Cumanagot terms. In the transmission of the Christian concepts related to the divine Trinity, namely God, Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit, Ruiz Blanco decided to introduce Spanish loanwords (see Table 1), whilst for the notions of ‘sin’, ‘guilt’, ‘penitence’ and ‘Devil’ he used semantic extensions of Cumanagot terms (for ‘sin’ and ‘Devil’ see Table 2), reinterpreting and embedding them in a Christian mindset. This selection of terms manifests Ruiz Blanco’s proclivity to use language as means to vilifying and demonising the Carib practices and beliefs.

*Illustration 2: Fragment of the Manual para catekizar (1683) de Matías Ruiz Blanco (Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University)*
Table 1: Spanish loanwords used by Ruiz Blanco in the translation of the Doctrina

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Christian concepts</th>
<th>Ruiz Blanco: Spanish</th>
<th>Translation from Spanish by RS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deity</td>
<td>Dios</td>
<td>‘God’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liturgical calendar</td>
<td>Domingo, Misa</td>
<td>‘Sunday’, ‘Mass’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecclesiastical terms</td>
<td>Santa Iglesia Católica, Padre (confessor)</td>
<td>‘Holy Catholic Church’, ‘Father’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biblical characters</td>
<td>Santa María, Virgen</td>
<td>‘Holy Mary’, ‘Virgin’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacred objects</td>
<td>Cruz</td>
<td>‘Cross’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily life hispanisms</td>
<td>Pueblo</td>
<td>‘People’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These Spanish loanwords are Christian terms employed in the Doctrina as the simplest strategy used by the missionaries in early phases of the spiritual conquest.
Ruiz Blanco justified his approach to the indigenous languages and described his strategies of translation as a result of the peculiarities of the language and the evangelisation context in which he was working. Yet, these words reveal how Ruiz Blanco appropriated and recontextualised the indigenous discourse in his Christianisation efforts and used it as a proselytising tool to achieve cultural and linguistic domination.

Furthermore, in the *Conversion de Piritv* (1690) Ruiz Blanco dedicated a full chapter (Book II, *Practica*) to the description of the evangelisation practices and the translation principles to be followed in the missions of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ruiz Blanco: Cumanagot</th>
<th>Ruiz Blanco: Spanish</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yboroquiamo Dios nanonur ynezmener pueke mana parà</td>
<td>El Diablo aborrece siempre el mandamiento de Dios (p. 6)</td>
<td>The Devil always hates God’s commandment</td>
<td>Cumanagot supernatural being as Devil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piazmo maimur com tunuazamo chercuyurcom yaKer ater mu-moromanca?</td>
<td>Las palabras de los piaches y simplezas de los viejos las crees acaso? (p. 65)</td>
<td>Do you believe, perhaps, in the piaches’ words and old peoples’ simple-mindedness?</td>
<td>Cumanagot priests – kept as loanword in Spanish translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ure machir com huezmenache com apotay</td>
<td>aborrezco mis pecados por ti (p. 101)</td>
<td>I abhor my sins for you</td>
<td>Cumanagot word to translate ‘sin’, meaning not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ure machir com huekeremachim</td>
<td>mis pecados confesaré (p. 101)</td>
<td>I will confess my sins</td>
<td>Cumanagot word to translate ‘sin’, meaning not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dios ipocapraechy acurepnarcom</td>
<td>Dios no perdonará vuestros pecados (p. 129)</td>
<td>God will not forgive your sins</td>
<td>Cumanagot word to translate ‘to forgive’, meaning not known</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Píritu. This study (pp. 112–160) comprises five sections, four in Spanish and one in Cumanagot. In fact, here Ruiz Blanco revisited his previous work, the Manual para catekizar (1683), and reduced it drastically to a monolingual version of the Doctrina in Cumanagot which contains the main prayers (pp. 114–120), a brief explanation of the Catholic precepts of faith and the Holy Sacraments (pp. 134–157). In addition to this version of the Christian doctrine, the Practica (1690) comprises four sections which focus on the linguistic challenges (with explanations and corrections of the first translation of the Doctrina) faced in the conveyance of the Christian faith among the Caribs.

This reveals how Ruiz Blanco reviewed his working methods throughout time: in contrast to previous linguistic approaches to the translation of the Doctrina, his main strategy at this stage of the Caribs’ conversion to Christianity was to evangelise the indigenous people solely in the Cumanagot language. Given the difficulty of the indigenous languages and their structural and semantic incompatibility with Spanish, Ruiz Blanco adverted in his Prologue that he tried to translate the words of the Spanish language in the Carib languages, following the meaning of the whole sentence (‘phrasis’) and not that of isolated words because ‘…rather than following the nature of the words one has to concentrate on their formal meaning and sense’ (1690: 21). For this, he decided to translate the Christian doctrine ad sensum, according to San Jerome’s (347–420) principles26 and not word-by-word (ad litteram), in order to avoid two great dangers:

The first one is altering the sentence by replacing one term with another. The second, adding or removing terms in the text; because the first one would be to teach false doctrines and the second one to [teach] faulty ones harming faith severely.27

As previously mentioned, Ruiz Blanco’s works were written under the influence of the most prestigious canonical texts of the Christian tradition of his time, such as St. Augustine’s Doctrina Cristiana and St. Jerome’s Vulgata. Following these principles, in the third section of Book II, Practica, entitled De algunas dudas sobre la primera traduccion (‘On some doubts about the first translation’), Ruiz Blanco discussed the first translation of “Pater noster” (‘Our Father’) and inquired as to what would be the best transla-

27 “El primero es corromper la sentencia sustituyendo un termino por otro. El segundo, añadir ó quitar terminos al texto; porque lo primero sera enseñar doctrinas falsas y lo segundo defectuosas, con grave perjuicio de la Fè” (1690: 113).
tion into Cumanagot of the phrase: “No nos dexes caer en la tentación” (‘Do not let us fall into temptation’). He deplored the limitations of previous translations and presented the linguistic and semantic adaptation strategies based on which he justified his choice of terms. Thus Ruiz Blanco made a comparative linguistic study in which he proved that previous literal translations (word-for-word) of this phrase were not the most suitable ones to convey the Christian faith in Cumanagot (see Table 3).

Ruiz Blanco explains the limitations of the previous translations of the aforementioned request: ‘Do not let us fall into temptation’, amna quemamozpoy machircomyau, arguing that the meaning of the word quemamozpoy is not adequate in this context because it says in fact that God is to be condemned for the committed sins. Therefore, he removes this word and replaces it with capoiac that, according to him, without any controversy means ‘keep me away’. Thus Ruiz Blanco offers a completely new translation for the specified request which means ‘protect or defend us so that we do not sin, amna quenotapteK, imachtapra quivechetcom, which is the same as saying: ‘do not let us fall into temptation’.

28 The text reads as follows: “En la primera traducción de la Oración del Pater noster estaba traducida la peticion que dice: No nos dexes caer en la tentación en esta forma: amna quemamozpoy machircomyau; las cuales palabras según su legítima significacion dizen, no nos hagas caer en pecados, porque quemamozpoy significa no me hagas caer, lo cual así dicho es absurdo y esta condenado, como lo esta esta proposición Deus est Mali, y por ello en mi traducción quite la dicha palabra, quemamoz poy y en su lugar puse Capoiac que sin controversia significa apartame, y en la dicha peticion puse ahora, amna quenotapteK, imachtapra quivechetcom, que quiere decir amparanos o defiendenos, para que no pequemos, que es lo mismo que decir: no nos dejes caer en la tentacion. En la ultima petición se puso esta palabra amna quetupcak, que quiere decir venganos, en que erro el interprete, pues no es lo mismo decir libranos, ni en todo el texto de la oracion se halla palabra que denote venganza, y por ello quite la dicha palabra quetupcak, y traduxe asi capoicakcom yaquer temere cureprapoy lo cual sin controversia dice y apartanos de todo lo malo lo cual es muy conforme a la ultima peticion y ageno de todo escrupulo” (1690: 124–125).
Table 3: Ruiz Blanco’s translation process of “No nos dexes caer en la tentación” (1690: 124–125)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amna que-mamozpoy machircomyau</td>
<td>No nos hagas caer en los pecados</td>
<td>‘Do not make us fall into sins’</td>
<td>The meaning of the Cumanagot word que-mamozpoy is inadequate in this context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quemamozpoy</td>
<td>No me hagas caer</td>
<td>‘Do not make me fall’</td>
<td>‘Ridiculous’, according to Ruiz Blanco, Cumanagot loanword = Lat. Deus est Mali is inadequate as (in a literal sense) God is to be blamed for the committed sins (“no nos hagas caer en pecados”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capoicac</td>
<td>Apártame</td>
<td>‘Keep me away’</td>
<td>Better choice because the Cumanagot loanword disambiguates the context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amna quentapteK imachtapra quivechet-com</td>
<td>Ampáranos o defendéndonos para que no pequemos</td>
<td>‘Protect us or defend us so that we do not sin’</td>
<td>New translation to Cumanagot by Ruiz Blanco (meaning not known)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amna quetupcak</td>
<td>Vénganos</td>
<td>‘Avenge us’</td>
<td>Mistake of previous translators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capiocak coru yaquer temere curepra poya</td>
<td>Apártanos de todo lo malo</td>
<td>‘Keep us away from all evil’</td>
<td>Better Cumanagot translation (meaning not known)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ruiz Blanco’s practical experience and linguistic awareness entitled him to criticise the deviations of meaning produced in previous translations due to the lack of precision in the most appropriate terminology, which had finally led to a deviation from its message of the Christian doctrine itself.
Previous translators had used a great number of Spanish words that caused confusions among the indigenous people and altered the interpretation of the *Doctrina*, and therefore, according to Ruiz Blanco, this methodology should be avoided, ‘since it is illogical to teach them Castilian terms and words they do not know or understand’\(^{29}\) (1690: 121).

Rather, the translations of religious texts should be adapted to the needs of the audience for which they were designed, either friars or indigenous people. For this Ruiz Blanco gathered a group of friars and the ‘most capable Indians’ (1690: 132) whom he appointed as interpreters and questioned on the translation of the Christian verb “creer” (‘to believe/to have faith’), as explained in the fourth section of Book II, *Resvelvense algunas dificultades de la primera traduccion* del Simbolo de la Fè (‘On how to resolve some difficulties of the first translation of the Symbols of Faith’). Thus Ruiz Blanco gave examples of word-for-word translations showing how everyday Cumanagot words (for ‘to know’, ‘to like’) had been integrated into the missionary language although they were not the most suitable ones to transmit the meaning of the Symbols of Faith in the Carib context. Apart from some cases where loanwords are used, there are further translation techniques (Table 4).

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ùre yehua man Dios</td>
<td>yo se (qualquier conocimiento o noticia cierta o improbable)</td>
<td>‘I know (any knowledge or news, true or doubtful)’</td>
<td>According to Ruiz Blanco ‘to know’ here as ‘I believe’ (“creo en Dios”)</td>
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\(^{29}\) “... porque segun noto San Geronimo de *optim.gen.interpaet*. en las versiones, no tanto se ha de atender a lo material de las voces, quanto a su formal significado y sentido: y supuesto que en el nativo lenguaje hay voces con las cuales se les puede dar a entender los divinos misterios e instruirlos en lo que deben creer, es cosa irracional entender con terminos y voces del idioma Castellano, que no saben ni entienden” (1690: 121).
<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yehuamana tehui quene Dios mana queneren</td>
<td>Se (conozco) que hay uno solo de verdad - Yehuamana no significa ascenso del conocimiento que implica el acto de fe</td>
<td>‘I know truly that there is only one (God)’ - Yehuamana does not mean the ascent of knowledge implied by the act of faith</td>
<td>According to Ruiz Blanco ‘I know truly’ is not sufficient in the pragmatic context (“conozco”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ycatemaze Dios pueque</td>
<td>Tengo gusto o complacencia en Dios - Ycatemaze es gustar con el paladar</td>
<td>‘I like or enjoy God’ - Ycatemaze is to taste with the palate</td>
<td>According to Ruiz Blanco ‘I taste’ is not adequate for the pragmatic context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ymoromaze</td>
<td>Creer</td>
<td>‘To believe’</td>
<td>According to Ruiz Blanco this is the most adequate Cumanagot word</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, Ruiz Blanco openly showed his disagreement with some of the translation strategies made by the editor of the Christian Doctrine published by the Third Lima Council\(^\text{30}\) and suggested a different method of translating the doctrine contrary to these authoritative guidelines. One of these guidelines for the translation of the Christian doctrine recommended that when some terms were missing in the indigenous languages, they should be replaced with others of the Spanish language: ‘then nothing pre-

\(^\text{30}\) These were published in the “Epistola sobre la traduccion” in the preface of the *Doctrina christiana, y catecismo para instruccion de los indios, y de las de mas personas, que han de ser enseñadas en nuestra Sancta Fé* (Tercer Concilio Provincial de Lima [ed.] 1584).
vents one from using Castilian words together with those of any other lan-
guage of the Indians'.

Subsequently, Ruiz Blanco replies to these precepts of the Third Coun-
cil of Lima (1582–83) stating that the methodology of combining Span-
ish words with indigenous terms is not appropriate, given that none of the
indigenous languages is formally equivalent to Spanish. In his view, this
will not help the indigenous people to really understand and deepen the
Christian faith:

I also suppose that the Spanish words mixed with those of the indige-
 nous languages are not only useless, but rather they confuse each oth-
er’s meaning, in the same way as if I would say a prayer in Spain inter-
posing Spanish words with Mexican, Arabic or Greek ones ...

Ruiz Blanco argued that the simplicity and brevity of the language in
which the indigenous people should be converted was of great impor-
tance. He pleaded for the standardisation of the criteria used in the spread
of faith in Cumanagot:

... if the meaning of the word God is never presented in terms of their
language, neither will they know its meaning, and consequently they
cannot have faith in the first commandment which professes that there
is a Lord who is the Creator of all things. The same I say about the

31 “… en uno de los concilios limenses hay precepto para que en la traduccion de la
Doctrina Christiana, cuando falten terminos de los lenguajes de los indios, se su-
plan con otros de la lengua Castellana; luego no obsta la interposicion de voces
castellanas con las de cualquiera otro idioma de los indios …” (1690: 122).

32 “Por tanto, ningún indio sea de oy más compelido a aprender en latín las ora-
ciones o cartilla, pues les basta (y aun les es muy mejor) saberlo y dezirlo en su
lengua. Y si algunos de ellos quisieren, podrán también aprenderlo en romance,
pues muchos ló entienden entre ellos. Fuera de esto no hay para qué pedir otra
lengua ninguna a los indios.” ‘Therefore, no Indian is obliged anymore to learn
the prayers or the catechism in Latin because it is enough (and it is even much
better) that they know it and say it in their own language. And if some of them
wanted to, they could also learn it in Spanish, because many of them understand
it already. Apart from this, there is no reason to demand any other language from
the Indians’ (Tercer Concilio Limense 1582–1583, ‘La segunda acción’, Cap. VI, Que
los indios aprendan en su lengua las oraciones y doctrina 1982: 63).

33 “Supongo tambien, que los terminos castellanos entremetidos con los del lenguaje
de los indios no solo son inutiles, mas bien juntos confunden los unos la signi-
ficacion de los otros a la manera que si yo en Castilla dixese una oración inter-
polando voces castellanas con mexicanas, arabicas o griegas …” (1690: 122).
word Jesus Christ, whose meaning it is to be the Son of this Creator and of a Virgin Woman ...\textsuperscript{34}

However, Ruiz Blanco admitted the need to maintain three loanwords from Spanish ‘to avoid causing astonishment among the Caribs’ (1690: 123): Dios (‘God’), Jesucristo (‘Jesus Christ’) and Virgen María (‘Virgin Mary’). These names were crucial for the conversion and should be maintained as such in order to continue with the evangelisation tradition initiated before.

5 Conclusion

This contribution aimed at exploring the mechanisms of transferring one culture into another, taking into account Ruiz Blanco’s use of the ‘demonising’ strategies in the translation of Carib cultural elements according to his Western background. For the sake of evangelisation and Christian indoctrination, Ruiz Blanco attempted to fit his interpretations of Carib deities and practices as well as his knowledge of the Carib languages, into a Christian intellectual model. First, he embedded the cultural and linguistic data into Western frameworks of knowledge and composed a manual in the Cumanagot language for his fellow missionaries; secondly, he merged all his material into an encyclopaedic structure in which future missionaries could find a useful and systematic instrument to guide them in the tedious process of the extirpation of idolatries. Thus, the recontextualisation of the Christian concepts undertaken by Ruiz Blanco obeyed ultimately the massive process of acculturation and assimilation promoted by the Spanish Crown in the New World.

Ruiz Blanco’s strategies of transculturation are confusing. He demonises the native people (their God is the Devil) and at the same time indigenises the Christian faith (using their own words), and he also tries to interpret indigenous belief in a Christian framework (the classical literature). The three approaches he takes seem to be contradictory up to a certain point; but they show the efforts and work in progress he undertook as a missionary in a region where he was one of the first Christian priests. Ruiz Blanco

\textsuperscript{34} ‘... si lo que significa esta palabra Dios, nunca se les propone en terminos de su lengua, tampoco podrán tener conocimiento de su significado, y consiguientemente no podrán tener Fé del primer articulo, que confiesa hay un Señor que es Criador de todas las cosas. Lo mismo digo de la palabra Jesucristo, cuyo significa
do es ser Hijo de este Criador, y juntamente de una Mujer Virgen ...’ (1690: 124).
attempted to follow a prescriptive model, but its practical application challenged him: new empirical struggles prevented him from adopting a heterogeneous transculturation framework in a consistent manner.

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Requerimiento
Ruiz Blanco, Matías

1690 Conversion de Piritv de indios cvmanagotos, palenqves, y otros. Sus principios, y incrementos que oy tiene, con todas las cosas mas singulares del Pais, politica, y ritos de sus naturales, practica que se observa en su Reduccion, y otras cosas dignas de memoria Sacalas nuevamente a luz el P. Fr. Matias Ruiz Blanco, de la Observanci de N.P.S. Francisco, Lector de Theologia, Examinador del Obispado de Puerto-Rico, y Comissario Provincial que ha sido dos vezes en dicha Conversion. Dedicalas al excelentissimo señor Marques de los Velez, dignissimo Presidente del Supremo, y Real Consejo de las Indias. Madrid: Juan Garcia Infançon. <https://archive.org/details/conversiondepiri00ruiz> (accessed 04.02.2019).

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Her publications include:


Narratives of Female Genius in the Mission Field:
Five Case Studies in China

Alison Jasper

Abstract

This article considers five case-studies relating to women missionaries in China at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries: Lucy Soothill, Eleanor Harrison, Mildred Cable, Annie Torrance and Jessie Emslie. In this article, the term ‘female genius’ (Kristeva 2001a; Jasper 2012) is used to identify the creative, imaginative and embodied agency exercised by women in the kind of conditions of male normativity that were so powerfully described by de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* ([1949] 2011: 5) as “oblique” to the “absolute vertical” of androcentric and patriarchal society. In their roles as missionaries and missionary wives, these five women were recognised in colonial society and took on responsibilities that would have been more difficult to assume in their homelands. Nevertheless they remained, in de Beauvoir’s sense, “oblique”. The aim of this paper then is precisely not to suggest that these women should just be accounted as missionaries or missionary theologians in the conventional male dominated sense which invokes a particular form of academic or institutional qualification. Equally their lives do not have to be seen as exemplary in every sense; they were inevitably marked by the same contexts in which they were entangled howsoever much they sometimes crossed their limits. What is proposed instead, is that rather than simply considering how far they conform or deviate from a male, colonial norm, we also try to frame and present what they achieved on their own terms, as creative, imaginative and embodied female geniuses. [British Women Missionaries in China; Female Genius; Mildred Cable; Jessie Emslie; Eleanor Harrison; Lucy Soothill; Annie Torrance]
1 Introduction

I am interested in understanding the female subjectivity of missionary women, that is their self-conscious awareness of their strengths and desires as distinctively gendered people in male-normative contexts. The issue of female subjectivity, in this sense, is not a new question but it has not yet been fully explored, least of all in the historical context of Christian theology. It can be associated with the aims of this collection because it relates to the question of translating or transferring – carrying across – a Christian theology that is significantly patriarchal, into terms that allow genders to be negotiated in non-patriarchal, non-masculinist ways. The approach taken here is both critical and also committed. That is to say, it takes seriously, as motivating forces, Christian and biblical narratives about God, the world, human nature and Jesus Christ, attempting to avoid strictly reductionist approaches adopted for example within a classically Freudian or Marxist view. Nevertheless, this approach acknowledges that texts, teachings and practices of Christianity and its various strands and fields of theology have been very largely developed and expressed within conditions of patriarchy and heterocisnormativity, often with a colonial emphasis. At the same time, it is also committed to a feminist point of view. In more recent times, the dissonances this entanglement of Christian theology and feminism produces have sometimes been resolved by recourse to forms of liberation theology; that is theology that identifies and also identifies with the actions, motivations and desires of the marginalised (Gutierrez 1971; Boff and Boff 1987). In the history of Christianity, this approach has often been aligned with what is called a “prophetic” motif (Brueggemann [1978] 2001). The prophetic motif derives its legitimacy from a biblical tradition which associates God with a sense of probity transcending and trumping merely human, institutional power. Although this motif is generally still rooted in patriarchal assumptions about the nature of God, it has served as a powerful tool for feminist theologians (Isherwood and Radford Ruether 1999; Althaus Reid 2000; Althaus Reid and Sung 2007). At the same time, it cannot smooth away all dimensions of Christian theology, doctrine and tradition that have continued to project or promote patriarchal privilege or support a colonial sense of entitlement. So, the feminist theologian/translator cannot afford to underestimate the discriminatory obstacles and limitations (differently) imposed on (different) women through pre-existing the-

1 Thanks are due to Michael Marten and Rajalakshmi Nadadur Kannan whose inspiring conversations on the subject of missionaries, was my starting point.

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ological patterns of symbolic gender. In sum, the engagement of Christianity and feminism still results in some awkward entanglements when the locatedness of being feminist and being Christian are taken into account.

Looking for a way to address the entanglements of the Christian feminist theologian/translator, I suggest that, like Kristeva who first uses the expression (2001a: ix–xxi), drawing on notions of natality taken from the work of Hannah Arendt, the concept of “female genius” has a capacity to describe the possibility of faith in and hope for the world, that can be fixed in relation to the miracle of life in which women just as much as men are invested, that is to say, ontologically rooted in the life process (Kristeva 2001a: 8). Female genius thus identifies the creative, imaginative and embodied agency still enacted and enjoyed by women in the conditions of male normativity, described by de Beauvoir ([1949] 2011: 5). It is not simply the capacity of women to bring new beings to birth but their singular involvement in all kinds of new births in terms of new relations, ideas and pathways taking them beyond mere survival in what feminist theory of all kinds has identified as a man’s world. It thus challenges the view that women can be entirely constrained by male normative structures and institutions. It cannot do this by denying the limitations and obstructions that continue to be posed for women by male normative frameworks. Rather, it underlines or highlights the ways in which privileged values and gendered assumptions misrecognise both women’s desires and the myriad ways in which they have sustained faith and hope in life, something Arendt identified as “the miracle that saved the world” ([1958] 1998: 247). To claim for women the capacity for female genius is thus to claim for them the possibilities of creating new and singular patterns of thought, value and relationship within male-normative contexts. Combined with a Christian theological potential that focuses on the idea of new birth and radical change even with a patriarchal Christian context, female genius invokes for me a natal potential for faith and hope. It is thus used to describe how Christian women have made ill-fitting living spaces accommodate them in ways that bear witness to some different ways of living and desiring and in this way defying or remolding rather than simply being destroyed by structures of dominance. Female genius (Kristeva 2001a, 2001b, 2004; Jasper 2012) becomes a kind of heuristic for ensuring that when we look – here at missionary wives and women – we do not simply translate what they do according to the fixed assumptions and entitlements that sustain dominant patriarchal cultures within the Christian Churches. Rather, we begin to challenge these monopolies of meaning.

First then, to set the scene for this paper and outline its scope: evidence suggests that from the middle of the 19th century increasing numbers of
mostly middle-class, white women, including a large number of unmarried women, were joining the missionary societies of the colonial West and travelling to a wide range of host-lands (Devine 2011: xiii, 144). It seems that they combined a strong sense of “high endeavour” (Okkenhaug 2002) with an equally obvious but less explicitly articulated sense of adventure. Extraordinary and sometimes dangerous pathways dedicated to missionary work gave women opportunities they would not have had at home and provided the justification for travel that would have been difficult to establish otherwise. Of course, as Rhonda Semple (2003: 24) cautions, we should not adopt too romantic a view of women’s “fulfilled professional freedom” in the mission field. On the whole, this large body of women – Tom Devine (2011: 205) writes for example, that by 1900, 66% of Church of Scotland missionaries were women – was occupied in the routine work of running and teaching in schools or nursing and dispensing in hospitals and clinics, rather than in the work of missionary direction at a senior level. However, it is important to recognise that power relations in such situations will not be one-dimensional, although for the main part, women did not have the status of ordained or commissioned clergy and ministers. They were generally not involved in the public work of preaching, especially where congregations or meetings were composed largely of men. Although the issue was being discussed (Johnson 1983: 266–324), public preaching was generally still proscribed for women throughout this period as coming under biblical prohibitions on women exercising any kind of overt authority over men. Interactions with the colonial subjects of their missionary activities was similarly circumscribed. In other words, women in the missionary context of this period were still constrained by their female gender and privileged by other intersectional considerations, and by travelling from homelands to host-lands (Devine 2011: xiii, 144) they did not simply escape these formative and limiting influences.

Nevertheless, my aim here is not to suggest that missionary women expressed female genius by removing themselves from patriarchal or colonial contexts. On the contrary, when we shift the focus in order to interpret or translate the stories of missionary women with greater awareness of the singularity of their lives and of the desires they fostered as women and in relation to their sense of Christian calling, we can see differently. We can

2 See work on the Protestant Deaconess motherhouse model, emerging in the first half of the 19th century in Germany, as an alternative, non normative pattern of hierarchy (Köser 2006).
identify female genius even amongst those who are entangled in privileged and constrained circumstances at home and in the mission field.

Moving on from this discussion of terms and context, my aim is to look at five case studies. Each one centres on a British woman who spent at least some years at either the end of the 19th century or the beginning of the 20th century as a missionary or missionary wife in China. The five women I have chosen come from uniformly white, middle-class backgrounds. In this way, I will not address questions about female genius that might arise, for example, in the context of indigenous “bible women” who also undertook missionary work (Tucker 1985; Sebastian 2003). These five women can only be said to be typical of one significant constituency of female missionaries of the period, characterised, moreover, by certain hagiographic, stylised and gendered features typical of their backgrounds and of the genre of missionary accounts to which they contributed (Marten 2013: 66–71).

2 Lucy (Farrar) Soothill (1857–1931)

Lucy Soothill, née Farrar, was born in West Yorkshire in 1857. Her memoir, published under the title of Passport to China: Being the Tale of Her Long and Friendly Sojourning amongst a Strangely Interesting People, was published in 1931, and the following comments are based very largely on that account. The memoir begins with Farrar’s sea journey to Shanghai, en route to marry William Soothill, a young missionary from Halifax (Young s.a.) who had been sponsored by the United Methodist Free Churches. In the early years of their marriage, the couple lived in Wenzhou in Zhejiang Province – which she refers to as “the City-of-the-South”. As her husband’s work changed in emphasis from Church-building to translating, and he was invited to work at a new University set up in Shanxi Province, she followed him. Eventually the Soothills returned to England when William was appointed to a Chair in Sinology at the University in Oxford in 1920 (Young 2012).

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3 The choice of China was planned as the first step in a larger project about Scottish women missionaries that would also contemplate the experiences of women from colonised communities, and I am indebted to the work of my former colleagues Michael Marten and Rajalaksmi Nadadur Kannan for their encouragement and guidance in pursuing this question.

4 Mary Slessor and Gladys Alyward – two of the best known British missionaries of the period – both came from working class families, of course.
Soothill was exposed to experiences in China that, from an English, colonial perspective, she might easily have discounted or condemned. Yet she showed a marked degree of sympathy for the Chinese in some respects. For example on Chinese suspicion and hostility towards foreigners like herself and her husband, she reflected on one occasion (Soothill 1931: 93):

Suppose, from a far-off country of which we had never so much as heard, there arrived in England a few people of the weirdest possible appearance. Suppose these people, after contriving to rent a dwelling by paying double what any of us would do, calmly settled down to live amongst us. We, being perfectly satisfied with ourselves, could only look upon these strangers as interlopers, and the queerest of the queer. For, instead of clothes made to clothe and hide their shapes, their apologies for garments were skin-tight … revealing rather than concealing their limbs and figures in disgraceful fashion. Those of their women were particularly offensive in this respect …

As a woman, Lucy Soothill played no part in directing Christian mission in China at the time. Her life could be regarded as the classic illustration of Simone de Beauvoir’s view that women lack the means to consider themselves as autonomous beings without reference to the male ([1949] 2011: 5–6), especially in a context determined by the hierarchical symbolism of Christian theology and by patterns of colonial privilege and subordination. Even this expression of thinking outside colonial norms could be accounted for as a reflection of the more liberal approach taken by her husband. However, thinking in terms of female genius allows a translation that begins to liberate her from the margins of her husband’s life and enables us to see her singular desire for a fullness of life expressed through the things she brings to birth, including two children and this widely read account of the life of a Christian missionary wife. This is a woman who committed herself to serve and actively sought out ways in which to sustain and enhance the lives of those around her without neglecting her own desires, not the least through the exercise of her own undoubted talent for writing. This is not to deny that she relied on the labour of Chinese servants and nursemaids or to suggest that the challenges she posed to the gender or the racial conventions of her class and background were, in any sense, revolutionary. Rather it is to propose that when we shift the focus in order to recognise the singularity of her life in relation to her sense of Christian calling, we can in fact identify a range of ways in which it makes sense to speak of her subjectivity as a woman, entangled though she was within the privileged and constrained circumstances of her colonial and patriarchal world.
3 Eleanor Harrison (1872–1930)

Details about Eleanor Harrison’s life come from documents kept in Birmingham University’s extensive collection of materials relating to missionaries and their work, including an unpublished account of her life by an author identifying him/herself as H. J. Griffin. The collection contains some of Harrison’s manuscript journals and also newspaper cuttings relating to her death.

Harrison applied to the Church Missionary Society (CMS) while she was working as a library assistant in Kidderminster and was accepted to serve in the Fujien Mission in Fujien Province in south east China, arriving in 1896 to work as a nurse. She returned to England briefly during the Boxer Rebellion (1900), when anti-missionary sentiment led to the recall of many missionaries from China, taking the opportunity to gain further medical training at the local hospital. When she went back to China she stayed until the early 1920s when her father died and she had to take on responsibility for her mother’s care, a common expectation affecting women, missionaries included (Green 2015: 43; Cable with French [1942] 1984: xiv). When her mother died in 1929, Harrison returned to China immediately. She was caught up in the widespread unrest that followed the establishment of Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalist Government in 1928 and kidnapped with fellow missionary, Edith Nettleton, in the summer of 1930. The British press called the kidnappers “bandits”, but they were undoubtedly Communists opposed to Chiang’s Nationalist government. She and her companion were executed by their captors in 1930 after the failure of attempts at ransom negotiations.

The title of Griffin’s manuscript – *A Tragedy in China* – refers, of course, to this death. A memorial for the women published in 1930 by an author who identifies him or herself as “H. R.”, is entitled *Faithful Unto Death*. Aside from these two documents, the newspaper accounts of the kidnapping and eventual recovery of Harrison and Nettleton’s dismembered bodies, seem to have been the only other published accounts of Harrison’s life. Thus, the public dimension of Harrison’s missionary life is foreshortened into its last few months. The memorial notes that Eleanor Harrison’s versified form of the martyrdom of St Stephen was found in a notebook written shortly before her final return to China. It makes the suggestion that she had contemplated her possible fate and committed herself nonetheless to continuing the work of Christian witness. The trope of martyrdom had already been prefigured for Griffin, in relation to Harrison’s rejection – that he or she reads as a sacrifice – of a marriage offer in her twenties. Harrison with her “raven brown hair” refuses a young man who wishes to
marry her in order to “suffering humanity’s need” (Griffin 1896–ca. 1938: 3). Thus, Harrison’s claim to our attention in the public eye or history of the Christian Church seems to rest on the nature of her untimely and seemingly self-sacrificial death – though she was not universally applauded as some of the newspaper cuttings in the Birmingham University archive attest. It may be true that Harrison desired, as the memorial suggests, to realise the life and death of Christ through her actions in returning to China. Yet after a lifetime’s work, the place itself, the mission station, its companionship and routines might have been just as much a draw, in spite of the danger. It is quite possible that after the death of her parents there was no longer any obvious role for her in England except in terms of a common gender stereotype, as one more single lady or, in a common and derogatory phrase of the period, an “old maid” (Jasper 2012: 136). As a missionary, Harrison was certainly pushing back the boundaries of a view of Victorian womanhood based upon Coventry Patmore’s hugely influential poetic work, *The Angel in the House*. According to Jenny Dagggers (2002: 6), this had absorbed the monstrous Eve of earlier centuries, but turned woman, in the late 19th century, into another limiting construction, this time of refined but still dependent, domestic femininity. Harrison, however, was unmarried and earned her living independently for many years. She went to Tangtau on the island of Hai-tan to open a new mission station; she learned Chinese; she had medical expertise and could help people who were sick. Yet more than this – shifting our focus – we can just as appropriately describe or translate Harrison’s underlying female genius, as the capacity to create new relationships and negotiate new beginnings for the settlement of a much larger range of singular desires and ambitions in unpropitious and ill-fitting circumstances, beyond the mere need for survival in a man’s world. Combined with theological alignments with new birth and liberation that include the acceptance of some kinds of chosen vulnerability, in Harrison’s case, female genius allows us to understand this story, not simply abandoning it as a footnote in the missionary history of the Christian Church in China, or as an ill-advised missionary misadventure. Harrison, like Soothill, committed herself to serve in a way that arguably defied some of the conventional structures of dominance within which she was entangled in a colonial and patriarchal context, but also gave her scope to address not simply the needs of others but also her own desires and subjectivity as a woman.
Of the five women presented here, Mildred Cable achieved the widest public recognition, as the co-author of over twenty books, of which *The Gobi Desert* (1942) is perhaps still the best known and which received an award at the time of its publication from the Royal Central Asian Society. Although few if any of these books remain in print, they are still widely available. In 1984, the feminist press, Virago, in acknowledgement, it would seem, of the authors’ status as historical feminist figures of stature, produced a new edition of *The Gobi Desert* with an introduction by the feminist writer and mythographer, Marina Warner (Cable with French [1942] 1984). Information about Cable has thus been garnered in this case from books – including her own – rather than from special collections or archives.

Cable was brought up and educated in Guildford and decided in her early teens that she wanted to be a missionary in China. Impatient with denominational differences and disputes (Cable with French [1942] 1984: xii), she found her Christian inspiration and motivation in tales of missionaries and martyrs. Before she left school, Cable spent holidays at the China Inland Mission (CIM)’s Women Candidates’ Home in North London and, in spite of her parents’ attempts to dissuade her, chose to study pharmacy, anatomy, surgery and midwifery at London University because these were subjects likely to be most useful for missionary work (ibid. xiii). She had at first intended to get married to a fellow missionary (ibid. xiii; Stockment s.a.). It would appear however, that her fiancé decided, given the violent hostility being expressed towards Christians during the Boxer rebellion and in the light of advice from CIM itself, that it was too dangerous for them to go abroad in 1900. The couple fell out over this; he issued her with an ultimatum which she disregarded. Describing the broken engagement several decades later, the sentimentality of her expression (Cable with French [1942] 1984: xiii) belies, perhaps, the satisfaction she gained from a choice that resulted in the kinds of freedom and opportunity that marriage and motherhood might have severely curtailed.

Aged twenty-two, Cable arrived in China on her own, quickly striking up a friendship with another CIM missionary, Eva French, with whom she worked in Huozhou, Shanxi Province. For many years, Cable, French and French’s sister Francesca worked as missionaries, running a girls’ school. They committed themselves tirelessly to good works as they saw them: dispensing medicines, teaching girls to read and providing refuge for opium addicts, holding fast at all times to their uncompromising understanding of the Gospel and the general superiority of the Christian west. Unlike
Soothill, who expresses some understanding of Chinese hostility to the missionaries, they seem to have been unaware of, or untroubled by, western colonial exploitations and humiliations of China and the Chinese in the late 19th century. Cable and the French sisters are unimpressed by and sometimes deeply suspicious of the indigenous Confucian family pieties or Buddhist spirituality that regulated the lives of the people whom they sought to help and ultimately convert to Christianity. The irony, as Warner notes, is that they were probably much less successful in achieving Christian conversions during this period than as harbingers of huge cultural changes in terms of ideology, values and forms of government in China (in Cable with French [1942] 1984: xvi).

After more than twenty years, with the school flourishing and an expanded provision of girls’ education within the province being taken out of their hands by its Chinese administrator, the women reached a kind of hiatus. Cable – perhaps we can say in the spirit of female genius – believed that missionaries should be wanderers, channelling spiritual forces by carrying the Christian message into new places (in Cable with French [1942] 1984: xvi). So an agreement with CIM to undertake a form of “itinerant evangelism” (Cable and French 1932: ix) along the Tibet border, into the North Western parts of China and beyond, could hardly have suited the women better. They were still in their forties. They had no family responsibilities, and with considerable experience as Christian missionaries in China and also excellent knowledge of the languages, they appear to have been eager for the new challenge. These were known to be harsh, unfamiliar desert areas in British missionary circles, but they were undeterred. The actual account of the trio leaving Shanxi is framed in terms of a military commissioning and in strongly evangelical terms. The women are under “Sealed Orders” and thus “as with all soldiers, such instruction from the Commander-in-Chief brooked no delay” in spite of “all the dear familiar ties” that had to be broken (Cable and French 1932: 2). Once again, the general high spirits of the party at this new departure seem very much to have tempered any regrets they had about leaving these “dear familiar ties”.

In terms of female genius and its translation as a kind of liberation from stereotypes and patriarchal impositions, it has to be said that through their sacrifice – if such it was – of conventional marriage ties, these particular women were able, in Warner’s terms, “to lead very exciting lives without incurring much criticism, but rather praise” (Cable with French [1942] 1984: xx). One might say that in this sense their celibacy also delivered the freedoms that, in Christian terms, have been promised to those who choose to prioritise the will of their Heavenly Father over that of earthly
family ties (as referenced in the Bible, Matthew 12: 46–50). This does not mean that the women themselves were always fully aware of how far their actions were in fact contesting common gender expectations. In a passage in *Through the Jade Gate* (Cable and French 1932: 41) in which the authors describe their evangelical *modus operandi* in the Gobi desert during the 1920s, they make little of their obvious differences from the female population; it is hard to say how far the irony of their own distance from mainstream European gender conventions was clear to them:

A brief stay in some small village has often been made delightful because a resident has sought us out and with simplicity, kindness and courtesy invited us to his own home. Such a wayside host has, in his turn, often been surprised to see how easily women from foreign lands fitted in with his own unlettered womenfolk; there was no mistaking the easy ways which showed long and intimate familiarity with Chinese home-life. The women were pleased when they were addressed and answered in the local *patois*, and the word went round among the neighbours: “Come and see them. They are just like ourselves. They wear our clothes, they eat our food and they too have fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters. There is no difference at all.”

Another passage on a similar theme in *The Gobi Desert* suggests, however, that they were in fact, rather more aware of the ways in which their lives were different. It is possible that they had reflected on the ways in which their vocation as missionaries had freed them from the tediousness and limitations of life for many middle-class women in Britain. However, it was perhaps more acceptable for them to focus instead on a contrast with the Gobi Chinese women. It was these women, bound by the sordidness of their lives in which continuity of existence in general and any kind of secure position within the household could only be secured through the birth of a son, who were to be pitied. They express themselves – in the first person, as was their preferred literary style – confidently as immune from such earthly vulnerabilities: “I shall never be an orphan spirit seeking shelter, for Christ has secured me immortality and has planned all my future” (Cable with French [1942] 1984: 75).
Although internal evidence in the books produced by Cable and the French sisters (see Illustration 1) indicates that they are written by missionaries, their joint experiences in many ways evoke what Rana Kabbani (2008), in the title of her study of orientalist travelogues, has described as *Imperial Fictions*. Their mission in the Gobi desert, for example, may be to “find the lost” (Cable and French 1932: 17), but this is not simply the account of how God’s providence frames every event – or an account of how the woman of faith should lead her life. This is also a story told to entertain, with a fine eye for the dramatic and changing scenery and an ear for conversation and character along the way. Moreover it is a context in which to express western Christian confidence about the strangeness of Chinese customs or the Western desert “Moslem Inn” (Cable with French [1942] 1984: 72–75). In so far as female genius can be a kind of heuristic for alternative ways of determining the agency of women within patriarchal contexts – at the very least we can say they were undaunted by gendered conventions and that they dedicated their lives to developing new
pathways towards the fulfilment of their lives and desires in unprecedented ways. Although they did not take on administrative or leadership roles within the CIM, they created new relationships, negotiated new pathways and made new beginnings in every new place. They might have been said at the time to have given up marriage and motherhood, but even if they experienced this as genuinely sacrificial, there was clearly considerable compensation to be found through the richly embodied and connected nature of their adventures and through the creative work of writing. Of course, their complacency as purveyors of a thoroughly colonial Christianity cannot be overlooked, but with an altered focus we can more easily recognise what Cable and the French sisters achieved in terms of female genius as they worked to imagine and satisfy singular desires for the fullness of life in the context of otherwise ill-fitting spaces.

5 Annie (Sharpe) Torrance (1883–1980)

Writing the account of her early life much later, as a married woman with children, Annie Torrance ([until 1927]: 2) describes her grandfather – in whose care her widowed mother left her as a very young child – as “a kind of Victorian tyrant” and it is clear that she took the earliest opportunity she could to move away. In London, her cousins took her to a Wesleyan Methodist Mission, and Torrance, who had grown up attending the local Church of England without much enthusiasm, found this new form of worship much more to her taste. In this context, she first began to think about becoming a missionary herself. She applied to Redcliffe College in Chelsea where she spent two years, followed by a further year at the CIM Women’s Candidates’ Home at Canonbury, Grove Park; the same college that Mildred Cable had attended six or seven years previously. She went to China in 1907 and shortly thereafter met Thomas Torrance, a young Scottish minister working, at that time with CIM, in Chengtu. They were married and had six children, all born in China, over the following ten years. Her return to Scotland coincided with the unrest and violence that occurred in the course of Chiang Kai-Shek’s nationalist takeover and continuing communist resistance towards the end of the 1920s. These details of Annie Torrance’s life come largely from an unpublished account of the years up until 1927, which was deposited in the Archives of Yale University Divinity School in 1985 by her son, the Scottish theologian, T. F. Torrance. Annie Torrance was also the author of an extended essay on the upbringing of children entitled How Shall We Train the Child? Plain talk to parents, particularly mothers, on Christian training in the home ([1959] 1997).
In comparison with the work of Cable and the French sisters, Torrance’s unpublished account is more confessional in tone, although the style is not uniform. She prefices her account with a dedication – profoundly biblical in resonance and taken verbatim from the preface to Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor’s account of the early years of James Hudson Taylor, founder of CIM:

Praying that the cleansing of the precious blood of Christ may be upon all that is not of Him, we commit it now to His blessing whose touch alone can turn water into wine (Taylor and Howard 1911: vii).

Torrance’s memoir reflects the pattern of the Taylors’ book particularly in its plentiful references to the providential guidance of God through all the joys and misfortunes of life. Could it then be said that her negotiations with circumstances constrained by gender achieves a kind of translation that liberates her from the margins of a more conventional institutional theology in terms of which she is invariably overshadowed by men such as her husband and son? Torrance certainly appears to believe that women can have a missionary vocation; she exemplifies this in herself. This is not to say that her view is unaffected by the gendering of western middle-class life-styles or missionary organisations of the period. This is subtly illustrated in the difference between the way in which she describes the situation of her future husband before their marriage, and her own experiences of missionary life prior to marriage. His life is described in terms of its loneliness, discomfort and lack of care and understanding (Torrance [until 1927]: 39). In fact, her own early missionary experience at the time does not appear all that different; she recounts how she was also often cold and uncomfortable and that day-to-day life was a struggle with very rudimentary sanitary arrangements (ibid. 24) or dogs that would constantly attack (ibid. 35) passers-by in the streets. On one occasion, when she was left on her own in the compound for some weeks, with nothing but her language and Bible studies to distract her, she ate so little and badly that she became very ill (ibid. 40). Yet she does not dwell on these circumstances as a justification in her own case, for seeking marriage. Rather this points towards another gendered constraint: the single woman trained missionary should not be too eager to marry, having forfeited her expectations of marriage by taking the missionary path. Torrance notes, looking back to her early days in China, that “there seemed to be always a fear that the young woman missionary would get engaged”, and in her first year in China, in spite of her missionary training, Torrance indicates that she was still quite closely chaperoned (ibid. 39). Having chosen marriage to another missionary herself, however, it is not surprising that Torrance does not characterise this
choice as limiting or of secondary importance to the work of the fully-paid missionary, although after marriage, her life in China would undoubtedly have been poorer financially as well as punctuated by pregnancy and the preoccupations of childcare. In this sense, Torrance conformed to gendered conventions. In her later essay on raising children she expresses the view that children are a gift from God and that, as the words of its title suggest, it is mothers in particular who are responsible for their care (Torrance [1959] 1997).

However, whilst marriage may not have been her motivation for taking on the missionary life, it certainly became determinative for the way in which she negotiated her own identity as a woman and as a missionary. At the same time, indicating that the work she undertook as Annie Torrance, wife and mother, and as Annie Torrance, missionary, were not mutually exclusive, she clearly sees nothing to object to in the conduct of a “lady doctor” from Canada who travelled down from the hills with her own “little daughter” to attend a missionary wife giving birth (ibid. 37). In other words, she does not think that women should be disqualified from particular forms of work on the basis of gender, marital status or that they should be prevented from exercising this profession for reasons of female propriety or considerations of childcare. Moreover, towards the end of the period covered by her account, Torrance herself taught at the Canadian Girls’ High School at a period in which, in Britain, it would have been extremely unusual for a married woman with children to be doing this. On the other hand, it has to be said that her life style, given the Chinese context publicly, remained recognisably western and middle-class in the privacy of the domestic sphere and missionary compound. In the end, she left China with her children, whilst her husband continued working there on his own as a missionary for some more years.

The case for female genius comes not so much from a rather limited degree of resistance to conventional British middle class practices of marriage or childcare – though there was clearly some independence of mind on these issues – but much more from her singular and disciplined reading of her own desires for something different from what she had been offered as a child and young woman. She came to understand this desire as a desire for God, but it was influenced, at the very least, by openness to what was new and different and the willingness to follow that through. Her commitment to the missionary life was a new beginning that led to others: natality in relation to children, relationships and to the singularity of her own writing as a creative exercise as well as a reflection on the workings of divine providence.
Jessie Douglas (Cuthbert) Emslie (?–1973)

Jessie Emslie, née Cuthbert, was married to the Rev. William (Willie) Emslie, another missionary employed by the CIM in the early years of the 20th century. Papers relating to the Emslie family in China from 1909 are located at Stirling University. They appear to have been part of a larger collection that was partly destroyed before they were donated to the special collections, but what remains still provides intriguing insight into Emslie’s missionary experience, containing as it does, letters addressed to her husband, but a much larger proportion to herself. The internal evidence of these letters indicates that William Emslie came from Aberdeen; he is described as one of “the first fruits of the first tent mission” conducted by a correspondent from Torry, Aberdeen City. Like the Torrances, Willie and Jessie Emslie had six children, and in 1909 all six of them were in China, the older children attending the CIM school in Chefoo, many hundreds of miles away from their parents in Zhuchou, Hunan province. In the early correspondence, Emslie is often referred to as being unwell. The cause of her illness is not discussed directly, although perhaps six pregnancies in relatively quick succession might have been a contributory factor. Her poor health prompts, on the whole, sympathy and solicitousness but also some frustration from at least one correspondent suggesting that its causes may not have been simply physical.

The documents in the Stirling collection give no indication of the Emslies’ education or courtship or of much that happened before 1909. It is not clear how they came to work for CIM or whether Jessie, like Mildred Cable and Annie Torrance, had first trained as a missionary, or, like Lucy Soothill, had married into the missionary life. More work remains to be done on this collection. Sadly, however, the Emslies’ story as a married couple comes to an abrupt conclusion when William succumbs to illness himself and returns in 1914 to Aberdeen to join Jessie who had already retired by that time. He died in June 1915, following surgery. The letters that have been preserved indicate that life was far from easy for Emslie in the period immediately following her husband’s death, although the CIM continued to support her for some months. However, it seems that, ultimately, her health improved and it would appear that she continued to live in Scotland until her death in 1973.

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5 Letter from Alexander Malcolm to Mrs Jessie Emslie, 18.06.1915, Emslie Collection, University of Stirling Archives.
In relation to the idea of female genius and of translating women’s experience within a constraining patriarchal tradition without losing the traces and indications of natality, there is not a great deal to go on here. Sickness is not an uncommon theme in relation to missionary work, and we need not imagine that Emslie lived her life, as de Beauvoir had suggested ([1949] 2011: 10) in her analysis of the feminine condition, as a collaborator in her own oppression – a missionary in a state of “bad faith”. It is notable, for example, that Annie Small, the founder of St. Colm’s missionary college for women in Edinburgh, only attempted the founding work for which she is mostly remembered after she had returned to Scotland due to ill-health following sixteen years in India (Green 2015: 14). Whatever Emslie’s experience in China then, it would be unfair to assume that all that can be said about her was – as one thread in the correspondence suggests – that she was deliberately malingering. There is here little to suggest Emslie had any desire to return to missionary work in China once she left, or even that she found her faith of great comfort at the time of her husband’s painful death. However, the heuristic dimension of female genius suggests that the point in such cases is not to try to trace how far a particular woman conforms or behaves unconventionally but in so far as we can find the evidence that she found ways to exist or even to flourish in ill-fitting spaces. If we adjust our focus – recognising how normative assumptions routinely limit out view – it becomes possible to conceive of Jessie Emslie’s progress in more positive terms. If, after struggling for years with her young family in the challenging conditions of China in the early years of the 20th century, Emslie decided that she had had enough, it is certainly worth considering her actions and decisions as the consequences of a strong desire to bring about a very different sort of new beginning that allowed her scope for a greater fullness of life away from that missionary context.

7 Conclusion

I began by saying that my approach to these missionary figures crosses over with a concern with feminist theology. As a feminist theologian, I look at these Christian missionaries of the late 19th and early 20th centuries as actors or, perhaps better, in relation to the idea of female genius and natality, improvisers within what Judith Butler (2004: 1) might call “scenes of constraint”; that is male-normative institutional and discursive contexts in which theological growth and development have been trained in prescriptive patterns relating to gender over centuries, if not millennia. What is at
stake in relation to my references to translation in this context, however, is the difficulty of knowing how to talk about or describe the things women have said or done within these prescriptive, male normative contexts. Butler’s theoretical contribution in terms of performativity – the view that gender roles are not only imposed but naturalised through repeated practice – might weigh in the balance against any notions of women’s agency. So, if we do try to talk about their achievements, it needs to be done in such a way as not to underestimate sometimes profoundly internalised restrictions. At the same time, I have argued there has to be some re-calibration of our responses to or readings of these women. We need purposefully to attribute significant value to the new things they bring to birth through their contrivances and refashionings as well as through more obvious forms of resistance such as we have seen in the direct action of feminist movements over the last century in support of universal suffrage or other equal rights. From the perspective of feminist theology, this means that we need to recognise and try to unify these women’s narratives and their improvisations in terms of the pursuit of desires – from the desire for relationships both embodied and intellectual with human and divine others, to the desire to open up new possibilities or create new inventions to improve the lives of others. This does not mean that these women can be accounted as theologians in the conventional sense which invokes a particular form of academic or institutional qualification, or that in every sense their lives have to be seen as exemplary; they too were clearly marked by the patriarchal and colonial contexts in which they were embedded and entangled, and we see this as much in Mildred Cable and Eleanor Harrison’s involvement in divinely sanctioned risk-taking/adventures, as in Jessie Emslie, Lucy Soothill and Annie Torrance’s efforts to conform to patterns of the good wife and/or mother. What it does imply, however, is that we as readers or audiences of these particular narratives should be prepared to consider what these women achieved in terms of their female genius and make, in this way, a theological gesture towards the equal value of all human beings in a world that is still marked by patriarchal structures and male-normative assumptions, not the least within the Christian Churches and the remnants of the theological academy.
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Part 2

Literature and Scholarship
Nathan der Weise in Jerusalem:
Elias Haddad’s Re-appropriation of Tolerance in Mandate Palestine

Sarah Irving

Abstract

In 1932 Elias Haddad, a teacher at a German orphanage in Jerusalem, published the first Arabic translation of Gotthold Lessing’s Nathan der Weise. The play is famous as a call for interfaith tolerance and recognition of the place of Jewish people in European societies. But what might its publication in Mandate Palestine signify, at a time of rising tensions between local Arabs and Jewish immigrants? I explore Elias Haddad’s translation and paratextual materials, arguing that they show continuities from other expressions of Jewish belonging in the Levant, and challenge stereotyped notions of Arab attitudes in interwar Palestine. [Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Nathan the Wise, Nathan der Weise, Arabic, Translation, Elias Haddad, Palestine]

1 Introduction

Nathan der Weise (Nathan the Wise), the last and perhaps best-known play by the German Enlightenment writer Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1781), has been the subject of copious discussion of and enquiry into its message of tolerance and kinship between Jews, Christians and Muslims. Set in a Jerusalem under the rule of the Muslim prince and general Salah ed-Din (Saladin), the play presents its Jewish and Muslim characters (Saladin, his sister Sittah, and Nathan himself) as essentially wise, tolerant and compassionate, whilst offering the possibility that Christians can – although not always do – share these qualities. Nathan der Weise is often discussed against the background of later German ideas about its Jewish citizens and the play’s revival after WWII and the Holocaust, or in the light of controversies over assimilation and the extent to which Lessing’s vision genuinely encompassed emancipation for Europe’s Jews on their own cultural and religious terms.
This article, however, examines the context and the paratextual materials of the first translation of the play into Arabic, published in Jerusalem in 1932 and carried out by Elias Nasrallah Haddad (Lessing 1932), a Christian Arab born in Lebanon and living in Mandate Palestine. I argue that in the case of Haddad’s Arabic version of *Nathan der Weise*, we witness a translator into Arabic taking a European play with an ‘Oriental’ setting and using it to convey a specific set of ideas about his own society and its political trajectory. This would not have been an unusual act by an Arabic translator. As Mona El-Shakry (2014: 11) discusses, figures such as the Syrian-Egyptian man of letters Jurji Zaydan had throughout the *Nabda* (Arabic renaissance) period seen translation as key to social and cultural renewal in the Arab world, by bringing new ideas and understandings of the world into the Arabic language. But rather than see Haddad as taking European values and introducing them to an Arab audience, I argue that he was articulating a particular vision of Palestine, one which drew on a mythologised history in order to convey a vision of a hoped-for future. In choosing to do this by translating a canonical German play, rather than deferring to European values as superior and ‘enlightened’, he was re/claiming these values as native to Palestine itself and consciously exploiting the cultural capital attached to European sources to help reinforce his claim.

In articulating this argument, this article proceeds as follows: I introduce the relevant issues surrounding the writing and reception of Lessing’s play, focusing particularly on his oriental scholarship and research for the work, and the main ways in which its message of the potential for amity between Jews, Christians and Muslims has been interpreted. I then present Haddad’s version of the play, placing what is known and what my research has uncovered of the translator’s life and the circumstances under which this translation took place into their intellectual and social context. I analyse aspects of Haddad’s text, both the translated play itself and the paratextual materials, written by Elias Haddad, which accompany it in the published edition, and discuss these in relation to their political and social context (including their reception in the Arabic-speaking world) and to theories of translation, suggesting a possible reading of Haddad’s intentions in carrying out this particular piece of cultural-intellectual work.

1 Although plays were staged in the Levant in the 19th and earlier 20th centuries, they were more often read as texts. At present I have no evidence of any performance of Haddad’s version of *Nathan*, although, as Haddad was a senior teacher at the Schneller School, his translation may have been intended for performance there.
2 Nathan der Weise

The German Enlightenment thinker and writer Gotthold Ephraim Lessing published *Nathan der Weise* in 1779, towards the end of his career. Having become embroiled in a bitter theological dispute with one Pastor Goetze of Hamburg over the relationship between faith and evidence, which resulted in Lessing’s exemption from censorship being revoked, he turned to the theatre as a forum to express his views (although motifs, which appear in the play are identifiable in writings of almost three decades earlier [Nisbet 2013: 601]). The play is set in a Jerusalem ruled by a wise and open-minded Salah ed-Din, and features a Jewish central character (Nathan) and his adopted Christian-born daughter Recha. It is often held up as a model for tolerance and inter-faith dialogue, and is still considered to be one of the most significant and widely-performed German plays (Fischer and Fox 2005: 1).

In the classic mode of European orientalist scholarship, Lessing did considerable textual research into Arab and Crusader-era history in order to “secure[e] a correct historical background for the proposed drama ... His notes and excerpts ... have been found in his posthumous papers appended to the first draught of the drama” (Gruener 1892: 76). An entirely fictitious and somewhat bizarre plot twist involving Saladin’s sister and her marriage to a Crusader noble has been seen by some commentators as signalling that Lessing was willing to play fast and loose with Middle Eastern history. In his defence, though, it can be said that the details of Ayyubid family relations are poorly known and understood, so that while the tale is thoroughly ahistorical, it is not necessarily *counter*-historical. Lessing seems to have delved deep into some of the less-known byways of Islamic history for other inspiration, with the Sufi renunciant Bishr bin al-Harith al-Hafi (c.152/767–227/842) popping up in the shape of Al-Hafi, the ‘Dervish’ and friend of Nathan. Michael Cooperson suggests that Lessing may have come

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2 Such a positive figure of Saladin was a well-established character in Western writings since the medieval period (Hillenbrand 2005: 500–504; Lessing had certainly been aware of positive images of Saladin since early in his career, as in 1751–2 he published a translation of some of Voltaire’s historical essays, which included a tribute to the Ayyubid leader [Nisbet 2013: 91].

3 The Ayyubid dynasty was founded by Salah ed-Din al-Ayyubi, the Kurdish military leader known in the West as Saladin. Based mainly in Egypt, the dynasty ruled a large area of the Levant and North Africa in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, but was riven by disputes between Salah ed-Din’s sons and brother after the founder’s death.
upon the historical figure “from Johann Jakob Reiske, the Latin translator
of Abu ‘l-Fida, or perhaps come across it in d’Herbelot’s Bibliothèque Ori-
entale” (Cooperson 2008: 175).

During its early history, Nathan tends to be seen as emblematic of toler-
ation, with some German Jews apparently changing their names in “grati-
tude” to the playwright, and “[t]hroughout the nineteenth and early twen-
tieth centuries, German Jews appealed to Lessing, and above all to Nathan,
as evidence that a symbiosis of German and Jewish culture was possible”
(Robertson 1998: 105). This has tended to be the dominant liberal reading
of the play through the twentieth century: Nathan der Weise was used to re-
open most of the major public theatres of Germany after the fall of the
Third Reich (Meyer 2005: 290–291) and, as scholars of Lessing have noted,
it tends to be staged for its political rather than its aesthetic qualities (ibid.
286, 289). Other readings, however, challenge this ‘accepted version’, see-
ing Nathan as a world in which Jewish liberation comes only through re-
nunciation of Jewishness – through assimilation and, in accordance with
the values of the Enlightenment, a blurring of ethnic or religious differ-
ences. This view may partly be based on the widespread assumption that
the character of Nathan was based on Moses Mendelssohn, a close friend
of Lessing and a controversial figure in the debate over assimilation/ism in
German Jewish history (Curthoys 2010: 75–78). It has also been suggested
that the absence of ‘Jewish’ detail in Lessing’s depiction of Nathan as a
‘Jewish’ character detracts from this very aspect of him; the character is
that of a ‘good Jew’ because outwardly he is not very Jewish at all – not a
Jew but an Enlightenment ‘Mensch’, Lessing’s preferred image of man,

This tendency to see Nathan through the lens of nineteenth and twenti-
eth-century German history, however, may also influence present-day read-
ings; as one scholar has put it, it is “an emblematic Enlightenment-era play
whose evaluation has been drastically affected by the appalling history of
the twentieth century” (Curthoys 2010: 70). As Curthoys suggests, in an at-
tempt to transcend interpretations of the play, which are bounded by the
tendency to seek ominous precursors of Nazi anti-Semitism, we might in-
stead see in Nathan the Wise something more akin to Haddad’s possible
perspective:

a genealogical sensibility that reads the play as an enthusiastic com-
mentary on the pluralistic and polyglot societies of the Levant and
Moorish Spain ... a convivencia, a sometimes fragile but productive co-
existence of Muslim, Jew, and Christian (ibid. 70–71).
Other commentaries have also sought to push the play’s message beyond the binary of in/tolerance, seeing in it instead a more radical positioning of multi-faith societies. Some draw on Ella Shohat’s critique of the domination by Ashkenazi and Zionist experiences of many discussions of Jewish life and of anti-Semitism (ibid. 80–81), others on readings of the play, which see in it not a message of ‘tolerance’ (with its implications of a more powerful party ‘tolerating’ or contingently and perhaps reluctantly ‘putting up with’ an inferior partner), but one of fundamental equality and a searching critique of Christian cultures (Goetschel 2005: 186–187, 200–201). What they have in common is that they present the possibility that Lessing, in Nathan the Wise, is actually offering a much more challenging view of a world where different faiths and peoples exist on a genuinely equal footing. The question is, of course, which of these various readings Elias Haddad hews closest to, writing in the early 1930s in the increasingly tense atmosphere of Mandate Palestine.

3 Elias Haddad and the Palestinian context

Elias Haddad was a Lebanese-born Palestinian Christian schoolteacher who spent most of his life – first as a pupil and then as a teacher – at the German-run Syrische Waisenhaus (Syrian Orphanage) in Jerusalem. Born in 1878, Haddad came to the orphanage as a child and lived there fairly continuously until 1948, teaching at the orphanage and sporadically delivering Arabic tuition to senior British Mandate officials, and broader cultural advice to archaeologists and anthropologists, including the Finnish ethnographer Hilma Granqvist and the American Biblical archaeologist W. F. Albright (Irving 2017: 43–44). He was also an ethnographic scholar in his own right, contributing a number of articles to the Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society; he is identified by scholars with the nativist school of Palestinian Arab anthropology often seen as typified by the works of Tawfiq Canaan (Tamari 2008: 110; Furani and Rabinowitz 2011: 479). When the Schneller School was finally closed by the 1947–48 war, which heralded the birth of the State of Israel, he accompanied a number of the students into refuge in Lebanon and helped to found a new school in his home village of Khirbet Qanafar; it remains operational today (Irving 2017: 47–49).

Haddad’s first significant translation from German into Arabic was a biography of the Syrian Orphanage’s founder, Johann Ludwig Schneller; the book was published in Beirut in 1909 (Schneller [1898] 2009). Elias Haddad’s main body of work, though, was a series of Arabic language text-
books and manuals for native speakers of English and German; these started with the co-authored Manual of Palestinian Arabic, written with the German-American scholar H. H. Spoer in 1909, and continued after WWI with a number of similar textbooks, some produced with other local and foreign colleagues, the last of which was issued in 1955 (Irving 2017: 113–129).

Illustration 1: Lessing’s “Parable of the Three Rings”, translated by Elias Haddad (2016 [1932], p. 101) (Courtesy of the Lessing-Akademie e.V., Wolfenbüttel, Germany)

Haddad published his translation of Nathan der Weise – in Arabic Nathan al-Hakim – in 1932 (Illustration 1). Given that he had a family, was a senior teacher at the Syrian Orphanage, and was involved in other intellectual and parish affairs, the date suggests that he may have been working on it in the late 1920s and early 1930s. This was an era of fluctuating tensions between Palestinian Arabs and immigrating Zionist Jews in Palestine, which
had peaked in 1929 with the Buraq Riots/Hebron Massacre. Although the most famous victims were 60 members of the Hebron Jewish community, the total number of dead was given in Mandate government figures as 249, including 45 Jews in Safed and 116 Palestinians, mainly killed by the British security forces (Matthews 2006: 64). In addition to these violent outbursts, day-to-day factors were also reinforcing the lines between Jewish and Arab Palestinians; the “nation building” project of the Yishuv⁴ was increasingly apparent, providing substantial educational and medical services to the Jewish population (Simoni 2000: 53). The British Mandate authorities’ policy of classifying people according to faith created a sense of separation and competition, with both communities demanding support from the Mandate’s coffers and from the politicians and officials who controlled them (ibid. 58). And the overarching environment – of population growth, economic downturn and rapid urbanisation (Haiduc-Dale 2013: 62; Lockman 1996: 71, 234) – created social tensions, which were exacerbated by Zionist immigration and Arab and Palestinian nationalism. For Palestinians who – as seems to have been the case for Elias Haddad – had seen in Western ‘modernity’ and education a route to nation-building, facilitated by the British Mandate authorities, there was a growing realisation that they were not going to be allowed to follow the likes of Iraq, Egypt and Lebanon into some form of independence.

However, the rising tensions of Mandate Palestine had not yet reached the heights of the 1936–39 revolt. Indeed, it could be argued that this translation and its publication could only have taken place at a very specific time, in the few short years of a “plastic period”,⁵ when in some quarters there was a desire for rapprochement after the violence of 1929, in which hundreds of Jews and Arabs had been killed across Palestine. Zionist immigration was comparatively low at this point, curbed partly by the Passfield white paper (Edelheit 1996: 120), and Palestine had not been hit as hard as much of the rest of the world by economic depression (Nicosia 1985: 38). Only a year or two later, the play’s conciliatory message would, perhaps, have been too challenging in the face of rapidly rising Jewish im-

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⁴ The Jewish community in Palestine comprised both long-standing Jewish families from the Ottoman period or earlier, and newer immigrants, usually inspired by Zionist ideologies or, especially in later years, fleeing anti-Semitic violence in Europe.

⁵ The artist C. R. Ashbee, who worked for the Mandate authorities in the 1920s, used this phrase to talk about an earlier period of possibility in Palestine’s political and community relations, the years between the end of WWI and the April 1920 Nebi Musa riots (Hoffman 2016: 282–283).
migration, spurred by Hitler’s seizure of power in Germany (Edelheit 1992: 62, 103; Nicosia 1985: 100). As Tarek Shamma (2009: 5, 15–16, 121) elaborates in his study of Victorian British versions of Arabic literature, sometimes translation is influenced not only by the general social and political environment, but by events and attitudes which can be pinpointed with a fair degree of precision.

Indeed, to locate Haddad’s translation of Nathan in a different political and cultural context – that of Elias’s Germanophone personal and professional environment, with its ongoing process of cross-fertilisation between Palestine and Protestant communities in Germany itself – the Nazis had been trying to suppress Lessing’s play for a decade by the time of Nathan al-Hakim. They had sought to stop screenings of a 1922 film based on the script, and instead promoted performances of Shakespeare’s Merchant of Venice, with its anti-Semitic portrayal of the Jewish character Shylock (Schmiesing 2005: 265). Was Elias Haddad aware of these trends, too, and trying to make a point to his German colleagues at the Syrian Orphanage about their own histories of tolerance? In Germany, the full weight of Nazi censorship fell on the play the year after Haddad’s publication, when the National Socialists consolidated their rise to power. One might wonder, then, whether the editions of Nathan al-Hakim which found their way into German university libraries during the 1930s did so under the noses of Nazi officials who could not read the Arabic script and therefore did not know that they were witnessing a banned text, but perhaps with the full knowledge of Arabic-reading librarians enacting their own small moments of resistance.6

4 The translation: Nathan al-Hakim

Having considered the environment in which Haddad’s work on Nathan der Weise took place, I now turn to the translation and paratextual materials themselves. Before turning to the actual text of Elias Haddad’s Arabic version of Nathan der Weise it is worth commenting on his choice of play. In selecting this specific text, we might well read Haddad’s objective as a reclamation of Palestine, and Jerusalem in particular, as a city in which

6 At least one definite example exists of a copy of Nathan al-Hakim lodged in a German university library during this period. The University of Leipzig’s copy bears institutional swastika-and-eagle stamps, which can be seen through the (now faded) solid ink circles which were printed over them post-1945.
Jews, Muslims and Christians are meant, and able, to live together. In choosing a play in which the Crusader Christians of Jerusalem are portrayed as fanatical and duplicitous in their attempts to regain a hold over the city, Haddad also emphasises the fact that no single faith should be dominant, and that those who seek to dominate are those who do not live up to his, and Lessing’s, standards of moral excellence (Haddad 1932: 3–6).

Haddad’s translation itself is fairly straightforward, employing a formal literary Arabic (al-fusha) in a style which largely replicates the late-eightheenth-century German of the original. It is fairly ornate language, but comprehensible to the vast majority of Arabic speakers with education of primary level or above. Although colloquial Arabic is well-known for its regional diversity, al-fusha is the written form, which is largely territorially continuous in grammar and vocabulary, so Haddad’s translation would have been accessible to any reader of Arabic at the time of its publication. Even non- or semi-literate speakers of the language would have probably found it comprehensible to the ear, as newspapers (which were often read in community spaces such as cafes and village guesthouses [Ayalon 2004: 17–24, 50, 99–103]), radio and all religious texts were also written in this formal register. The way in which such readers or listeners might have encountered the play’s content is addressed below, in a discussion of its reception in the 1930s Arab-speaking world.

One aspect of Lessing’s original which has been controversial is his alleged elision of Nathan’s Jewishness into a kind of nominally Jewish but ultimately culturally non-specific Enlightenment Mensch (Curthoys 2010: 72–75; Robertson 1998: 105–106). In the light of this, it is worth noting that Haddad changes the Jewish name of Lessing’s character Recha (Nathan’s adopted daughter), giving her the Arabic name Rihana. Changing this character’s somewhat unusual name is not unknown: a 2003 British production of the play, for instance, called her Rachel (Lessing 2003). But the name Rachel still has an identifiable Jewish heritage, whereas Rihana does not have the same overtones in Arabic. It is not a particularly common name, one that does not carry the religious associations of many Arabic forenames, and it has no particular link to any faith, sect, or ethnicity. What, then, are we to make of this choice? Might Haddad’s selection of name be read as glossing over the overtly Jewish signifiers in Lessing’s play? This is possible, but there is another, intriguing, possibility. With his broad education and friends of Muslim as well as Christian faith, Elias Haddad may have known about the figure of Rihana/Rayhana bint Zayd, a Jewish woman who, after her husband was killed in battle, became a wife of the Prophet Muhammad. According to some versions of the tale, she even converted to Islam – although the histories differ as to whether or
not this was voluntary (see e.g. Yitzhak 2007). Might Haddad, then, be making an oblique reference to another example of Jewish-Muslim familial encounter from deep in Arab/ic history?

The published text of the translated play itself appears to be targeted at readers of Arabic; the volume is orientated right to left, both covers and contents, and all text, including the contents listing, is in Arabic. This suggests an Arab audience, perhaps amongst the pupils of the Syrian Orphanage and Haddad’s broader Arabophone community. However, Haddad also issued a short dictionary, a Wörterbüchlein, of vocabulary from and relating to the play. The text of this was orientated left-to-right and is given in alphabetical order according to the German, not the Arabic, suggesting that the user would be approaching the text from the German angle (Haddad s.a.: 1–32). Kühne (2011: 7) regards the existence of this booklet as evidence that Haddad’s project overall was one of “teaching the German language, while attempting to introduce Secularization and Enlightenment into the Arab world”. I argue, however, that whilst the internal evidence points to this purpose for the word booklet itself, that of the printed translation of the play does not. If Haddad was using the play to teach German, why undertake such a complete Arabic translation and annotation, along with explanations and discussions of the play and its context, which stray far from the issue of language-learning? A German text with Arabic annotations would make more sense as a pedagogical tool. And if the Wörterbüchlein had the same purpose as the rest of the text, with its copious paratextuals, why publish it separately? This evidence (along with the coverage the book received in the Arabic press) suggests, rather, that in the main translation Haddad was attempting a more in-depth engagement with the Arabic-speaking world than the limited realm of German language classes.

5 Haddad’s paratextual materials to Nathan al-Hakim

Elias Haddad’s paratextual materials (in Arabic) further support the idea that his project was founded in a desire to engage with the Arab community to promote tolerance and rationalism as necessary and non-alien values in his own era. The materials (apart from the Wörterbüchlein) were published with his translation of Nathan der Weise in a single volume, printed at the Syrian Orphanage Press in Jerusalem in 1932. They consist of: a translator’s introduction; background to the play (in terms of Lessing’s ideas and theology); historical background; the setting; an outline of the plot; the story’s characters; theme of the play; biographical background on
Lessing; a summary of the main plot and events of the play, divided into chapters; a brief note on Arabic translation; and footnotes throughout the text of the play itself.

What is immediately noticeable from the first paragraph of Haddad’s introduction is that there are two main, interlinking, themes, which he seeks to draw out of the play and the story of its writing. One of these is the conventional focus on tolerance between faiths; the other is a ringing condemnation of fanaticism and extremism by people of any faith. Haddad’s concentration on this second point is especially worthy of note because – as he acknowledges from the first – the characters in the play who epitomise this evil are from his own religion, Christianity. But Haddad does not see the conflict between the Patriarch and his allies in Nathan al-Hakim as an issue of conflict between faiths, but one between rationalism and fanaticism. “When a country is affected with religious fanaticism”, he writes in his introduction, “it results in degeneration and retrogression” (Haddad 1932: 3–4). Instead, Haddad holds up as an example the separation of religion and politics – or ‘church and state’ – as seen, he says, in the Turkish Republic after World War One (it is notable that even in this case, Haddad does not select Europe or America as an example of the separation of powers, but another Islamicate state). But, he says, religious toleration and mutual respect must precede such a political development: “to you, your religion and to me, mine,” going on to quote the Qur’an and the New Testament side-by-side (Haddad 1932: 4).

In his biographical description of Lessing, later in the book, Haddad returns to his defence of enlightenment values of rationality and humanism, highlighting Lessing’s role in “demolishing all the traditions which his country clung to” (Haddad 1932: 13). Haddad roots his arguments for rational humanism not only in the text of the play, but also in the historical background he describes, citing the conflict between Lessing (whom Haddad described as part of the “school of thought which favoured doctrines which permitted rationalism”) and the Pastor Goetze as a “fanatical follower of [traditional] Christianity”. Goetze’s “zeal”, he says, led him to “bigotry” and to unwarranted personalisation of his quarrel with Lessing, which resulted in Lessing being censored by the authorities of the time (Haddad 1932: 5). Haddad is particularly focused on Lessing as a figure of

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7 All translations from Elias Haddad’s Arabic paratextual materials in his 1932 edition of Nathan al-Hakim are mine, working from the copy of the book provided by Leipzig University Library and a scanned copy from the National Library in Berlin. Two copies also exist in the library of the American University in Beirut.
rationalism and toleration, with lessons for the communities amongst whom Haddad himself lived – both Jews and Arabs caught up in nationalist conflict, and perhaps also Germans increasingly influenced by Nazism. But, in keeping with my argument that he is not blindly promoting ideas drawn from European colonial influences, Haddad’s use of the clash between Lessing and Goetze highlights the fact that it is not any specific faith – Islam, Judaism or Christianity – which is fanatical, but that believers in any of these religions can be led down this dangerous path.

Haddad also follows the example of various critical editions of Nathan the Wise, such as Maxwell’s 1917 version (which he also may have used to prepare his translation notes), to assemble the story – already well-documented by then – of the influences of Cardanus, Boccaccio and other writers on Lessing’s ideas, and on his use of Boccaccio’s motif of the three rings for the centrepiece of the play. Haddad does not name any of his sources for his research, but as German was one of Haddad’s everyday languages, it can be assumed that most of this translation was done from an original text of the play. However, internal evidence within the footnotes (a confusion of the word ‘hamlet’ for a small village with that of Shakespeare’s character) suggests that he may also have used Patrick Maxwell’s English edition as a source for some background material (Lessing 1917: 385, n. 48).

In his summary of the play’s plot and characters, Haddad (1932: 3–9) remains completely willing to critique his own faith, highlighting the death of Nathan’s wife and seven sons at the hands of Crusaders in a massacre in the town of Darun. Perhaps significantly, he does not try to create a distance between ‘Christians’ (massibiyyun) and ‘Crusaders’ (salibiyyun) by using the latter term for those who kill or have bigoted opinions, whilst reserving the former for ‘good’ Christians. Instead, he uses the terms interchangeably, suggesting that he is willing to acknowledge the potential for violence within his own faith and community. Haddad also seems particularly keen to mention a fairly minor character, indeed one who is already dead before the beginning of the play. This is As’ad, the brother of Salah ed-Din, who married a Crusader noblewoman and went to Germany with her, fathering both a son, who appears in the play as a Templar Knight, and a girl, Blanda or Rihanna/Recha, who is brought up by Nathan. As’ad, as Haddad (1932: 15–16) points out, is “Muslim by birth, converts to Christianity, and is a friend of Nathan the Jew who brings up his daughter Rihana. Uniting Leu von Filnek with his sister Rihana and with Nathan and Salah Eddin as a single family symbolises the coming-together of the followers of the three doctrines and the overcoming of fanaticism”. This final scene is always commented upon in analyses of the play, but it is more
unusual to find the character of As’ad – and his background as a Muslim (a Kurd, not an Arab) – foregrounded in such a commentary. Haddad (1932: 19) insists later in his summary that “Lessing reckoned the three united religions at a single level and described the character of Salah ed-Din as honourable and noble and high-minded and as not exceeded in humanity by any of the other characters”. He asserts that “Lessing believed that every one of the monotheistic faiths was necessary and important for the instruction of humankind” and that quarrels over dogma were fruitless, but that the best way to argue a religious position was to demonstrate it by moral excellence – and that this was something which was possible from within all three faiths (Haddad 1932: 4).

The possible significance of these paratextual writings are several. Firstly, I would like to stress the significance of a work like this in challenging the prevailing stereotypes of Mandate Jerusalem. There is a tendency amongst many writers on the period to contrast Jerusalem and other Palestinian cities with the likes of Beirut, Damascus and Cairo, seeing the former as backwaters and Jerusalem as a provincial city, which, if it were not for its religious significance and its resulting focal role in Zionist ambitions, would have been of little interest. Whilst it is true that Jerusalem did not contribute to Arabic culture to the same extent as larger and more exciting cities, it did, I contend, have a lively and wide-ranging intellectual community, and I suggest that we see an example of it here – Arabic literary translation, drawing on German art and possibly also on English scholarship, and reviewed in the Egyptian press. Elias Haddad may not have been a member of the cosmopolitan elite, educated in Istanbul or Europe, but he was a man of learning and sensibility with a genuine contribution to make both on an aesthetic level and in the key issues of his time.

Secondly, there is also a tendency to see the competition for Palestine in ethnic terms, pitting Arabs and Jews against one another, and to focus on the public aims of the main political actors in the different communities.

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8 Ami Ayalon (2004: 4), for instance, calls Palestine “a secondary branch of an empire that had known better days” and states that the nabda, or Arabic renaissance of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, reached Palestine long after Cairo and Beirut (ibid. 49). Roberto Mazza (2009: 11) refers to Jerusalem as a “small provincial centre”, although he goes on to point out that Ottoman rule was not as “calamitous” as it is often portrayed when seen through the lens of the Empire’s final years. Rashid Khalidi (1997: 41) goes to the opposite extreme, citing Jerusalem alongside Cairo and Beirut as a “centre of Islamic learning”, which is perhaps too optimistic.

9 This tendency, has, however, in recent years been significantly challenged, for example by studies of the role of Jews from Palestine and the Middle East in...
In Haddad’s work, however, we see a very different vision – a plea not only for ‘tolerance’ but also for ‘equality’ between different religions. If we go back to the different ways in which Lessing’s original work has been read, discussed at the beginning of this article, I suggest that we need to look to the most radical readings of Nathan the Wise to see where Elias Haddad seems to be coming from. His is a model which is not just about ‘tolerating’ or behaving well towards the ‘other’, but about not seeing them as other. Whether or not Haddad’s reading of Lessing’s own views is correct is beside the point; it is the nature of Elias Haddad’s own position which is significant here, in disrupting assumptions that all discussions of Christian, Muslim and Jewish identity in Mandate Palestine must have revolved around competition and conflict. And yet, Haddad’s account is not a naively idealistic one; at this point in history it would have been difficult for such naivété to have survived. He fully acknowledges the dangers of fanaticism and of the desire of people of one faith to dominate those of another – he even acknowledges it most strongly of those within his own faith. His solution – a call for enlightenment values, for modernist ideas of rationalism and humanism, for tradition to be swept away in a search for a universal humankind – may seem in some respects dated and colonial. But put into context, he should be seen as putting forward a position which seeks to reclaim Palestine as the place in which such values originate and can flourish, and as such it remains radical even today.

6 Translation and power

Much discussion of the power and politics of translation assumes that power lies with the translator and with the translator’s culture. The act of domesticating the text – changing names or characteristics to make them accord with the cultural or aesthetic expectations of the reader – tends to be seen as one of violence, based on a perspective from the colonising West and its translation and appropriation of other cultures. Lawrence Venuti’s seminal work, such as his 1995 volume The Translator’s Invisibility, on this aspect of translation, whilst undoubtedly valuable and significant in identifying and uncovering some of these power relations, has been critiqued as assuming this unidirectional relationship between source and target cultures. Elias Haddad’s translation of Nathan der Weise, however, can be read...
as an example of the potential for domestication to function as a form of empowerment for the colonised translator. Haddad returns Lessing’s original story to its home setting and in doing so reclaims those values from within the text which he not only believes are praiseworthy, but wants to assert as indigenous to the Orient. In returning Nathan to its home – perhaps the ultimate in translational domestication – and in making domesticating changes such as the shift from Recha to Rihana for the name of Nathan’s stepdaughter, Haddad adds layers of meaning beyond those in the play, re-Easternising the story to create a polemical statement about his own time and place.

For theorists such as Shaden Tageldin (2011: 7–23 et passim), to resort to translating European texts into Arabic, rather than an expression of empowerment or independence, signals the vulnerability of the colonised translator to becoming a means of colonial seduction, the route by which Western ideas and distortions have entered the thinking of colonised subjects. Other scholars, however, have interpreted the phenomenon differently. Sami Zubeida (1999: 20), for instance, has seen foreign texts as potentially offering a neutral space in which different peoples can meet on “common ground outside the religious boundaries”. Written neither by an Arab (whether Christian or Muslim) nor a Jew, but by an Enlightenment-era German with liberal attitudes towards both, Lessing’s play offers, in this light, a triple advantage. It is both external/foreign, written by a representative of values seen (in the 1930s) as associated with ideas of objectivity and proof in the modernist sense, and from a part of Europe not associated with the Mandatory powers of the contemporary Levant.

In addition to Zubeida’s argument, various writers have noted that translations from other literatures have been enlisted by national movements all over the world as a source of enrichment, and at times to support particular ideas or cultural trends against political opponents or colonial domination. Venuti (2005: 179, 186–187) mentions the cases of Qing China and of Prussia during the Napoleonic Wars as examples. One might also add Martí-López’s contention that translation from French was key – and consciously so – in the development of a national Spanish literature during the nineteenth century, and Birkalan’s discussion of the turn towards Western literature as part of the Turkish secularisation project (Martí-López 2002: 77–79; Birkalan 2005: 232). As both Martí-López and Venuti suggest, one of the dynamics in this deliberate use of translation by anti-colonial and national movements is that actors select for translation texts containing specific values or discourses – national pride, democracy and so on – with which they wish to be associated, and that the text may be selected “as illuminating of the problems that a nation must confront in
its emergence” (Venuti 2005: 187; Martí-López 2002: 66, 82–90, 180). As I have argued above, Elias Haddad does just this with Nathan al-Hakim, whilst also firmly insisting that these are not foreign values, but ones indigenous to his own society, regardless of the distortions and stereotypes imposed by European colonialism.

7 Awareness and reception of Haddad’s translation

If my claim that Haddad saw the tolerant values of Nathan der Weise as belonging not just to Enlightenment Europe but also to the Levant, the question arises of how his translation and these views were received when they were exposed to the public eye. As such, it is important, firstly, to understand the literary and discursive traditions into which Haddad’s translations fit, and secondly to identify actual reactions from amongst Arab/ic readers of the play itself.

Being the first – and until the 1990s the only – Arabic edition of Nathan der Weise (Buck 2011: 23), Elias Haddad’s version was published (or printed; at this time the difference was still slender [Ayalon 2004: 65–66]) in 1932 at the Syrian Orphanage printing press, a vocational training workshop at the Schneller School, which was one of the most advanced printshops in Jerusalem (ibid. 59). As noted above, Haddad (1932: 2–4, 185) also produced a short dictionary of vocabulary specific to the play and wrote a “Foreword”. These prompt Jan Kühne (2011: 9) to interpret his motives for the work as combining two aims: “teaching the German language, while attempting to introduce Secularization and Enlightenment into the Arab world. In the foreword to his translation, Haddad emphasizes the necessity of this enterprise”. This body of work positions Elias Haddad as an (albeit minor) member of a largely ignored Palestinian current within the Arabic translation movement. Demonstrating that this current of translation as part of the nahda, or Arabic renaissance, was not confined to the centres of Cairo and Beirut, this Palestinian strand was exemplified by the writer, journalist and educator Khalil Baydas (1874–1949?), who made a significant contribution to theorising translation in the Arabic context, as well as translating (in Baydas’ case Russian) literature for a local audience (Scoville 2015: 223–225).

In the German-speaking world the existence of Elias Haddad’s translation seems to have been consigned to the memory hole; according to Walter Koch, director of the Hannah Arendt Library:
it is one of my duties to search for such texts about international understanding. I started many enquiries regarding the Arabic translation of the Lessing text. Experts in Middle Eastern and oriental studies in Wolfenbüttel and Göttingen as well as German language specialists in Beirut told me that it did not exist. Even the Lessing museum in Kamenz, which even had translations of “Nathan” in Aramaic and Urdu, knew nothing of an Arabic translation (Buck 2011: 23).

The Ballhof Theatre in Hannover, however, managed to track down a copy in the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek in Berlin for their trilingual performance of ‘Nathan’ in 2000 (an edition also exists in the Leipzig University Library, whilst two copies are still to be found at the American University of Beirut). The potential meanings attached to a 1932 Arabic translation of a play written by a German Jew about Muslim-Jewish rapprochement are, in Walter Koch’s eyes, exciting. His comments portray the environment in which Haddad translated ‘Nathan’ in line with later stereotypes of Palestinian Arabs, describing it as a place of “fanatic racism”, with “Jewish immigration in full swing in the Palestine administered by the British” (Buck 2011: 23). Whilst believing that the translation had little impact, having been effectively ‘lost’ for many years, Koch sees Haddad himself, at least, as a kind of lone beacon of “enlightened” values – a view, which does not seem to be supported by reviews from the time of publication, as discussed below.

To what extent is this assumption of Haddad’s peculiarity in the Palestinian society of the early 1930s the product of European assumptions about Palestinian and wider Arab anti-Semitism, coloured by the particular experiences of the Second World War? Kühne, for instance, writes that readings or performances of the play were carried out by:

- youth projects in the Muslim societies of Karachi, Dakar, Addis Ababa, Cairo and Los Angeles, albeit all of which were initiated mostly by German Protestant organizations, by the Goethe Institute and with funds from the European Union. However, none of these projects developed into autonomous productions or were received beyond their Christian-German initiatives, nor did they become part of respective local-culture canons (Kühne 2011: 8).

This may be true. But it is also worth asking why one might expect such a play to “become part of ... local-culture canons”, particularly in cities (Cairo, Addis Ababa), which have or had their own, indigenous Jewish populations and their own (in the case of Egyptian Arabic publications, substantial) literatures tackling relations between Jews, Muslims and
Christians. The idea that Islamic communities have ‘failed’ to show their tolerance by not absorbing a German play, staged by the modern equivalent of missionary bodies, seems to convey more about the Eurocentrism of the writer than the religious views of the audiences.

A facet of Nathan’s reception in the Islamicate world of which Kühne and other writers seem ignorant is the existence of at least two possible versions of Nathan der Weise prior to Haddad’s printed translation. The first of these was a play written in Beirut in the 1870s, which, several writers argue, drew heavily on Lessing’s work. Intisar al-Fadila aw Hadithat al-Ibna al-Isra ‘iliyya (‘The Victory of Virtue, or The Story of the Jewish Girl’) was penned by Antun Shihaybar Bey, a Lebanese lawyer, teacher and writer, of Jewish or Christian origin (scholars differ), who taught at various Christian and Jewish schools in Beirut during the 1870s (Moreh and Sadgrove 1996: 83–96; Dressel 2006: 350). There is no indication that Shihaybar spoke German (Moreh and Sadgrove 1996: 86), which was not one of the major international languages of Ottoman Beirut, with its French-influenced cultural elite, but he may have read Lessing’s play in French at the Tiferet Yisrael school, at which he taught and of which he became director in 1878 (Dressel 2006: 351). Antun and his brother Ilyas Shihaybar were authors of a number of plays performed at Tiferet Yisrael between 1875 and 1883 as end-of-year events; Intisar al-Fadila was produced as one of this series in April 1879. The suggestion that Intisar al-Fadila could be based on Nathan would not have been a slur to the Shihaybars; adapting works from European writers was normal amongst Middle Eastern writers of the period, and the brothers drew on Molière for several of their other plays (Moreh and Sadgrove 1996: 89).

In a speech of unknown date at Tiferet Yisrael, Shihaybar called himself an advocate for “the noble religion of Judaism”, but combined this with an identification as “[w]e, the Syrian Arabs” and a hope of “[l]ong live the Syrian, Arab, Jewish director” of the school (Dressel 2006: 351). This recognition and promotion of a combined Arab-Jewish identity and of the Jewish role in Arab linguistic and cultural revivalism chimes with the themes and messages of Shihaybar’s play. Intisar al-Fadila, according to both Moreh and Sadgrove, and Dressel, replicates Nathan’s themes, plot and characters (Moreh and Sadgrove 1996: 104–105; Dressel 2006: 350), but also expresses a sense of Arab-Jewish cultural unity, which Dressel links to the political and social context in which Shihaybar was writing. Both the 1860 Druze-Maronite conflict and Damascus anti-Jewish ‘blood libel’ incident of 1840 were within living memory, and portrayals of unity may have been intended to counter sectarian ideas (Dressel 2006: 370). Whilst an end-of-year school play may seem a parochial environment, reviewers refer
to the Shihaybars as “amongst the most prolific playwrights and translators from French in Beirut” and note that Antun had “acquired a reputation for his poetry” and spent time as the editor of one Beirut newspaper. The plays at Tiferet Yisrael were announced in the local press (other plays by the brothers had been produced at the National Theatre), and the Governor of Syria, Midhat Pasha, attended the April 1879 production, which was staged again later that year (Moreh and Sadgrove 1996: 86, 88, 90). So, with this “first time in the history of modern Arabic drama that plays had been written with modern Jewish dramatis personae, set in a Jewish milieu ... with the entertainment of a Jewish audience in mind” (ibid. 87) a surprisingly wide and influential audience may well have been reached.

The second possible version of Nathan der Weise was performed on April 16, 1882 in Cairo. Faraq ba’d al-Diq (‘The release from suffering’) was, like Lessing’s play, set in Crusader Jerusalem and featured a similar central character, an elderly Jewish man named Nathan, and a similar theme of religious toleration. This play was also staged before an august audience, including the Khedive, ministers, foreign consuls and other figures from the local elite. It was reviewed in al-Abram, which “praised the excellent performance of Shaykh Salama in singing the role of Nathan. Some Europeans were heard to remark that even their actors were not up to his standard and again the audience demanded encores” (Sadgrove 2007: 158, quoting al-Abram of 15th and 18th April 1882). So, whilst present-day assumptions about the Arabic-speaking world see Nathan der Weise and its values as novel and alien, evidence from that cultural milieu itself suggests that such understandings of the relationships between Jews, Christians and Muslims were far from unusual.

We find similar views in the press reception of Elias Haddad’s version of the play. Nathan al-Hakim was reviewed in the widely-distributed Arabic magazine al-Hilāl in the summer of 1932, in the general book reviews section, in a two-paragraph piece which occupies one of the page’s two columns. Headed “Riwayat Nāthān al-Hakīm – authored by Lessing, the German poet”, the article notes that “[t]his is a religious tale of five chapters, which has been translated into many European languages” and then goes on to summarise the play and its moral position. It quotes Haddad’s introduction at length in a way which foregrounds the message of co-existence, which he draws from the text, but there is no indication of surprise at the theme or plot:

The play represents the three revealed faiths – the Mosaic, the Christian and the Islamic; in As’ad, the brother of Salah ed-Din, the three faiths are embodied. He is Muslim by birth and converts to Christiani-
ty and is friends with Nathan the Jew who becomes stepfather to his daughter Rihana. And Von Filnek is brought together with his sister Rihana and Salah ed-Din as a single family, symbolising the uniting of the three doctrines, and the absence of religious differences, and the connection of the people of each with those of the other — and this is the message of the tale (Anonymous 1932a).

In Palestine, the newspaper Mirat al-Sharq also reported on the publication of Nathan al-Hakim, describing it as a “poetic” play by the “great German poet” Lessing (Anonymous 1932b). The article, which occupies two-thirds of a column on the inside front page of the paper, starts by summarising the plot of the play as set in the times of the “Crusader wars” and Salah ed-Din, and as depicting encounters between the faiths. Haddad’s introduction and explications of the text are described; the article’s author then comments on the difficulty of translating classical European literature due to issues of style. This unknown journalist interprets the message of the play in terms of “longing” for past civilisations and values. These “values” are, then, apparently seen as normal and local to the Palestinian context.

Mirat al-Sharq was a paper edited by the Christian Boulos Shehadeh and associated with the Nashashibi opposition to the nationalist Husseini family; it had on several occasions criticised the Husseinis and Palestinian Muslims more generally for raising communal tensions, and had defended Jews living in Palestine (Haiduc-Dale 2013: 45, 69, 74, 87). But Shehadeh also differentiated between Zionism and Judaism, and emphasised the need for tolerance towards and good relations with Jewish people, whilst calling on Palestinian Arabs to use parliamentary rather than militant means to assert their demands in the struggle against Zionism as a political movement (ibid. 45, 69). One of the other editors of Mirat al-Sharq in the period immediately preceding the publication of this article on Nathan al-Hakim was Akram Zuaiter, a lawyer from Nablus and later co-founder of the Istiqlal [Independence] Party. In 1931, he was arrested for his criticisms of the Zionist movement; when the article on Nathan was published he was under house arrest in Nablus. The short review article thus suggests that Haddad’s translation was uncontroversial to the writers of a newspaper with a history of support for the British authorities in Palestine, but also with links to political radicalism in the Mandate period, and a usually, but not exclusively, mild critique of Zionist efforts. The notion of Muslim-Jewish-Christian co-existence in Palestine seems, not only to an international Arabic-language journal but also in the local press, to be entirely comprehensible and acceptable in the historical and cultural arena, even if it was more controversial in political discourses.
This Mirat al-Sharq article was the only reaction I could find in the Palestinian press to Haddad’s translation; however, the memory of the play seems to have survived long enough to appear in a list of ‘Palestinian Arabic books’ issued by the Committee for Arabic Culture in Palestine in 1946 (Anonymous 1946: 25). How this list was compiled is unknown, but it is not comprehensive and thus does not seem to be drawn from, for example, printers’ order books. Someone in the Palestinian cultural milieu, therefore, still recalled Nathan al-Hakim, fifteen years after its publication and across both the 1936–39 Palestinian Uprising and the Second World War.

8 Conclusion

I argue, therefore, that the combination of the contents of Elias Haddad’s edition of Nathan al-Hakim, the reactions to it from the Arabic press, and the precedents already set for this translation, show that what Haddad is doing in choosing to translate Nathan der Weise into Arabic in this time and place is not an urging of foreign values onto the translation’s Arabic-speaking audience. Rather, the play’s foreign author and characters offer Haddad the opportunity to highlight values which he sees as needed in his immediate environment – tolerance and the transcendence of difference – but not only in order to promote them to his audience but to re/claim them as indigenous to that audience. Contra Tageldin’s argument that the colonised subject is seduced into making foreign values seem indigenous through translation into Arabic, Haddad’s intention is to bring this play, set in Jerusalem, ‘back home’, to reject the claim of the European Enlightenment to be the sole possessor and arbiter of tolerance, and instead to assert the Palestinian Arab domesticity of toleration and religious equality. In this reading, I see conflict between Jews, Christians and Muslims not as intrinsic to the Levant, but as something introduced to or imposed on the region by European (Zionist and British colonial) interventions. This is not to argue that Haddad’s translation should be seen as part of the ‘national movement’ in Palestine; the particular discourses he highlights are not ones on which nationalist leaderships in Palestine focused at the time. Rather, he articulates a version of Palestinian identity which was taken almost for granted in daily discourse. Haddad incorporates European Enlightenment ideas drawn from his German-influenced upbringing and blends them with his view of the Levantine social environment and Palestinian history and values to create a coherent whole. But, as both his fundamental claims and the reactions to them in al-Hilal and Mirat al-Sharq
show, he is effectively reminding Arabic audiences of their cultural her-
itage, not proposing something new.

As Mona El-Shakry says of late nineteenth century translations and dis-
cussions of Darwin in the Arabic-speaking world:

If we understand translation to be a creative act, or a complex process
of textual arbitrage, then we can no longer assume that the original
text is the only source of meaning. If we want to understand how
knowledge production is “socially embedded,” then we need only view
the same text read in different contexts (El-Shakry 2014: 18).

Gotthold Lessing’s eighteenth-century play was intended to display Jewish
virtue and monotheistic brotherhood to an anti-Semitic European audi-
ence, and thus to promote tolerance towards Jews in pre-emancipation Eu-
rope. Shifting its context to 1930s Palestine and re-orientalising the play
and its characters, Haddad’s version conveys a new set of meanings, pro-
jecting values of tolerance not specifically towards a marginalised Jewish
population but instead demanding equality for Arabs being pushed aside
by both the Mandate authorities and Zionist immigrants, basing them on
a message of kinship between these three groups. Whilst Elias Haddad may
to some extent be urging toleration towards Jewish incomers on the part of
his Arab brethren, the re-orientalisation of Recha to Rihana and its Quran-
ic echoes, especially when set alongside the positive portrayal of Salah ed-
Din, highlights the narrative of Christian and Jewish well-being under Is-
lamic rule – a central theme of much Arab nationalism of the era.

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“Ou libéré?” – Vodou and Haiti: Speaking the Language of Resistance, Remembrance and Freedom in the Writing of Edwidge Danticat

Fiona Darroch

Abstract

This paper analyses how vodou is embedded in the history of Haiti; it is central to the language, literatures, and narratives of the 1791–1802 Saint Domingue revolution. Referring to the writer Edwidge Danticat and scholar of religion, Brent Plate, it engages with the ways in which a new language of religiosity which prioritises the senses, can be creatively transcribed. This language of religiosity is in contrast to a European and Christian use of the term ‘religion’ which has a tendency to segregate the political and the religious, the spiritual and the material, the body and the mind. The language of religiosity used here is instead guided by a female historiography of Haiti and the goddess Erzulie. [Vodou, Haiti, Erzulie, Danticat, loa, material religion]

1 Introduction

Vodou is embedded in the fabric of Haiti; it forms the language, the literature and the narratives of the revolution. It confronts European Enlightenment categorisations and models of knowing through its refusal to contain itself within limited constructions and definitions. Haiti’s history of resistance and renewal is as equally contained in the many loa (gods/spirits) as it is in the colonial historical data, which often takes priority over the spiritual or metaphysical stories of a place. As with many places, a history of Haiti can also be mapped through a reading of contemporary fiction, for example, author Edwidge Danticat offers her readers one way of knowing

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and seeing Haiti. Vodou is integral to the narrative, and the loa inform symbolism, metaphor and dialogue. Rather than seeing contradiction and tension as weakness, in terms of the way in which memories of Christianity and colonial encounters are manifested in vodou, we can celebrate the human spirit in its both wonderful and painful paradox. The female loa, Erzulie, recurs, in her different manifestations, throughout Danticat’s novels, and particularly in Breath, Eyes, Memory (1994). Edwidge Danticat is a Haitian-born writer; she has lived in the United States since she was twelve and writes in English (see Illustration 1). Her collection of essays, Create Dangerously (2010), provides a vivid account of her life as (what she describes as) an “immigrant artist”.

Illustration 1: Edwidge Danticat (2007)

Through a reading of Breath, Eyes, Memory and the short story “A Wall of Fire Rising”, and in dialogue with Brent Plate’s and Heather Walton’s proposals of ‘material religion’ which prioritise the senses and our interaction with objects, I present a new language of religiosity which prioritises the female body as the painful carrier of history, but also as a site of transcendence, renewal and rebirth. In this paper, I will identify the limitations of the classification ‘religion’ and open up new possibilities for the term in the contemporary world.
A history of Haiti and locating the term ‘religion’

This is what history tells us and what is remembered: initially colonised by Columbus, Saint Domingue saw the first arrival of slaves from Africa (predominantly Guinea). The Dominican priest, Las Casas, in an attempt to save the rapidly diminishing indigenous population, suggested to the King, Charles V, to import “the more robust Negroes from a populous Africa”. 15,000 slaves were transported from Africa to Saint Domingue in 1517, ordered by Charles V “and thus priest and King launched on the world the American slave-trade and slavery.” (James [1938] 2001: 3.) In 1659 the French had taken ownership of Saint Domingue and it was rapidly established as France’s most profitable, and brutal, colony. As was common across plantations, slaves were intermixed so as to dilute any linguistic and familial ties, and to destroy any relationship with the motherland. Fernández Olmos and Paravisini-Gerbert (2003: 101) describe how vodou was formed by the slaves in response to this violent attempt by French Catholic culture to destroy a connection with their motherland, ‘Nan Guinée’, and with their gods. It is estimated that in 1791 three-fourths of the population in the capital of Saint Domingue (Cap Français) were slaves. Figures recorded at that time state that across the island there were 40,000 whites, 28,000 free-coloureds and 452,000 slaves. (Dayan 1995: 146.) Not only did the slave population massively outweigh the colonial population, but they were also organised.

Trinidadian-born journalist and historian, C.L.R. James ([1938] 2001: 69–71) describes the slaves of Saint Domingue as a “thoroughly prepared and organized mass movement” with vodou as the “medium of conspiracy”, which ignited the slave revolution of 1791 and gave the slaves the momentum, language and courage to stand against a heavily armed and violent colonial force. Here, James engages with an alternative descriptive language of religiosity (compared to other scholarly writing of the time) that is committed to an understanding of our bodies’ relationship with the material world, and is therefore intimately connected to brutalities experienced by the bodies of slaves. For James, this language revolves around the men of the Saint Domingue revolution (on both sides). On August 22nd, 1791, the recorded (male) leaders of the revolution, Boukman and Makandal, carried out a ceremony which would ignite the revolution:

Carrying torches to light their way, the leaders of the revolt met in an open space in the thick forests of the Morne Rouge, a mountain overlooking Le Cap. There Boukman gave the last instructions and, after Voodoo incantations and the sucking of the blood of a stuck pig, he
stimulated his followers by a prayer spoken in Creole, which, like so much spoken on such occasions, has remained. ‘The god who created the sun which gives us light, who rouses the waves and rules the storm, though hidden in the clouds, he watches us. He sees all that the white man does. The god of the white man inspires him with crime, but our god calls upon us to do good works. Our god who is good to us orders us to revenge our wrongs. He will direct our arms and aid us. Throw away the symbol of the god of the whites which has so often caused us to weep, and listen to the voice of liberty, which speaks in the hearts of us all’ (James [1938] 2001: 70–71).

In James’ account, we encounter a challenge to a colonial rhetoric of ‘religion’ or religiosity; rather than presenting a European Enlightenment model of Christianity that would like to neatly separate church and state affairs, James exposes the intimate link between colonial violence and the history of Christianity (“the god of the white man inspires him with crime”, ibid. 71) and confronts the European model of ‘religion’. James also makes space for a new emerging language of religiosity which prioritises the material aspects of religion – the forests and mountains, the incantations, the blood, the weeping; the physicality of these religious (although exclusively male) bodies. But it is also vital to note that this language was predominantly chosen and written for the consumption of a white European audience, albeit an audience ready to challenge dominant narratives, as we will shortly see in relation to one of Danticat’s short stories. What follows in dominant accounts is the notorious thirteen-year battle for independence, so notorious that so-called historical and fictional accounts, along with communal memory, blend to produce a deeply rooted and shared national history and identity.

More contemporary writers, such as Joan Dayan in her role as historian, and Edwidge Danticat in her role as author of fiction, are confronting the male dominated aspect of this history by writing women back into the records, both through fiction and history.2 Joan Dayan (1994: 17) writes that women were often “written out of the records of the revolution”. In-

2 Dayan has detailed fascinating aspects of the history of the colonial struggles in Haiti which focus on the relationships between white French women (and the struggles they faced at the hands of barbaric white colonial men) and black female slaves (and the horrors they encountered at the hands of their white mistresses). As will be discussed later in this article, these relationships are manifest in the characters of the loa, particularly the complex goddess Erzulie (or Ezili, as Dayan also calls her) (Dayan 1994; Dayan 1995: 54–66).
terestingly, what is often “written out” of the above and similar dominant accounts is that it was a female priestess, or *mambo* (whose name has not entered the national rhetoric of independence) who assisted Boukman in the ceremony and encouraged him to drink the blood of the pig to give them “future invincibility in battle” (ibid. 17).

James does, however, provide us with a sense that at the heart of this history is a notion of ‘religion’ that refuses to impose crude separations of space but rather intimately connects the political, social, spiritual, geographical and temporal, so that one cannot be understood independently of the other. Danticat relates this detail to contemporary Haiti:

The real marvelous [sic], which we have come to know as magic realism, lives and thrives in past and present Haiti, just as Haiti’s revolution does. The real marvelous is in the extraordinary and the mundane, the beautiful and the repulsive, the spoken and the unspoken ... it is in the elaborate *vèvès*, or cornmeal drawings sketched in the soil at Vodou ceremonies to draw attention from the gods. It is in the thunderous response from gods such as Ogoun, the god of war, which speak in the hearts of men and women who, in spite of their slim odds, accept nothing less than total freedom.

Whenever possible, Haitians cite their historical and spiritual connection to this heroic heritage by invoking the names of one or all of the founders of the country: Touissant L’Ouverture, Henri Christophe, and Jean-Jacques Dessalines (Danticat 2010: 103).

Danticat (ibid.) refers to Alejo Carpentier’s novel *The Kingdom of this World* ([1949] 1957) to tell her history of Haiti and to share this “heroic heritage”. What is often called magical realism is central to the retelling of Haiti’s history. To serve the gods in Haiti is to combine the “extraordinary and the mundane, the beautiful and the repulsive ...” (ibid. 103). Paravisini-Gebert (2004) describes how it was the intimate connection between history and magic within Haiti that inspired Carpentier to write *The Kingdom of this World*. For Carpentier, the tangible link that exists in Haiti between history and magic, inspired by faith, “represented the very opposite of the separation from the life of the spirit that had been the outcome of the West’s privileging of reason.” (Paravisini-Gebert 2004: 115.)

European Christian models of ‘religion’ have segregated the public, thinking, and rational mind from the private acts of belief (in God) in an attempt to keep our enlightened and civilized self separate from our spiritual behaviours. In her intriguing article, which examines the comparative ritualised language used by colonial historians to describe both the discov-
ery of electricity (an icon of the scientific enlightenment) and vodou ceremonies (the supposed “antithesis of enlightened modernity”), Kate Ramsey (2013) exposes an implicit irony of Western modernity and notions of progress: when describing spirit possession, the lawyer and historian, Moreau’s choice of language closely mirrors descriptions of electrical performances of his time (Ramsey 2013: 34). Moreau and other scholars of the time, through their writing, were in support of the so-called anti-superstition campaigns that criminalised vodou – a criminalisation that persists today in both public perception and popular representations of vodou. She exposes how erroneous their justifications for this scapegoating were by analysing their descriptive language for both scientific development of the west, and the supposed backward ritual practices going on in the colonies. Ramsey accurately captures how the limited and bounded concept of religion is challenged by vodou in the way it combines supposedly contradictory elements of its culture and past, such as aspects of Catholicism and healing practices. (Ramsey 2013: 31.) The European Enlightenment concept of ‘religion’ (built around Christianity and European models of civility and progress) is an inappropriate category to use to describe vodou and most other practices in/of the (postcolonial) world. We should identify the limitations of this classification and open up a new way of understanding ‘religion’ in the contemporary world.

In this sense, Brent Plate (2014) writes that it is “ultimately misguided” to explain ‘religion’ in the way that the above Enlightenment model does, that is as a “set of beliefs” which are contained in the thought process of the brain.³ He continues:

Religion, being a prime human activity throughout history, is rooted in the body and in its sensual relations with the world. It has always been and always will be. We make sense out of the senses. This is the first true thing we can say about religion, because it is also the first true thing we can say about being human. We are sentient beings, and religion is sensuous (Plate 2014: 7).

In his engaging text, The History of Religion in 5½ Objects: Bringing the Spiritual to its Senses, Plate provides his readers with a framework with which to not only embrace the supposedly paradoxical, extraordinary and the mundane but to see them as intimately linked. This framework therefore provides opportunity to break through the boundedness of the concept religion: it is through an interaction with the mundane objects which sur-

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³ See also Mary Keller 2002: 6.
round us, which we touch, treasure or discard, that we can find a more appropriate understanding of ‘religion’, and therefore start to build a theoretical language that will enable us to engage with vodou, and the history of Haiti, more creatively:

Ultimately, it is physical objects like stones, incense, drums, crosses, and bread, and our technological encounters with them, that give rise to our religious language and make sacred utterances meaningful. We see, hear, smell, taste and touch well before we speak (Plate 2014: 21).

Research into the significance of the relationship between humans and objects (named materiality or material religion) is gaining momentum in the arts; for example, Heather Walton’s article “The Consolation of Everyday Things” (2015) provides a vivid engagement with a range of theorists, from Karl Marx to Daniel Miller and Tim Ingold. She details the complexities of western theory which has led to the “habitual denigration of the significance of material objects within our common cultural imaginary” (ibid. 139) in order to find theoretical ground from which to harvest a recognition of the meaningfulness of the objects we touch and cherish on a daily basis: “Indeed these micro-material cosmologies sustain identity and help generate the resilience necessary to pattern life creatively and interact meaningfully with others” (ibid. 144). Both Plate and Walton prioritise the arts, and particularly literature, as the place that most poignantly teaches us a history of religion (Plate 2014: 18, Walton 2015: 148–149.) As will become clear through a reading of Danticat’s work, fictional accounts such as A Wall of Fire Rising (1995) and Breath, Eyes, Memory (1994) provide a unique and vivid reflection of not only Haiti’s history but also of materiality as they so provocatively connect the extraordinary with the mundane.

3 Flight and Transcendence in “A Wall of Fire Rising”

Danticat’s creative practice is a commitment to capturing stories of the revolution, stories that are undoubtedly rooted in the individual lives of Haitians. The volume Create Dangerously (2010) is witness to the fine line she treads between ethnography and fiction. A notion of ‘truth’ or historical accuracy is not what is important here – her works enable the (sensual) relationship with the place and its people to be captured, and the foundations of a historical memory to be laid; objects are a central part of this building process. In her short story A Wall of Fire Rising (1995), Edwidge Danticat places the revolution and vodou at the centre of contemporary Haiti’s national identity and pride, whilst simultaneously emphasising the
personal tragedy of so many individuals and families trying to find their liberation amidst the cruelty and poverty of everyday life. In the story, little Guy’s namesake, his father, is desperately struggling to lift his family out of poverty. After six months of unemployment, he finally gets a few hours work at the sugar mill scrubbing the latrines. Degraded, he comes home to tell his wife that he has at last found some paid work, but is interrupted by his son who is desperate to tell him the exciting news that he will be playing the part of the slave at the centre of the 1791 revolution for Independence, Boukman, in the school play. He recites his lines to his parents, lines that are purposefully reminiscent of James’s historical account of the revolution ([1938] 2001: 70–71):

‘A wall of fire is rising and in the ashes, I see the bones of my people. Not only the people whose dark hollow faces I see daily in the fields, but all those souls who have gone ahead to haunt my dreams. At night I relive once more the last caresses from the hand of a loving father, a valiant love, a beloved friend.’ It was obvious that this was a speech written by a European man, who gave to the slave revolutionary Boukman the kind of European phrasing that might have sent the real Boukman turning in his grave. However, the speech made Lili and Guy stand on the tips of their toes from great pride ... they felt as though for a moment they had been given the rare pleasure of hearing the voice of one of their forefathers of Haitian independence in the forced baritone of their only child (Danticat 1995: 48; italics in the original).

Danticat acknowledges the complexities of a postcolonial education and history: whilst it provides opportunity to celebrate the struggle for independence, the details are re-written in a European tongue so as to be palatable to that audience. These words are particularly reminiscent of C.L.R. James’ description of the night of the 22nd August 1791: “From Le Cap, the whole horizon was a wall of fire. From this wall continually rose thick black volumes of smoke, through which came tongues of flame leaping to the very sky” (James [1938] 2001: 71). Danticat purposefully provides her readers with aspects of the more standard historical accounts of Haiti and the revolution, whilst acknowledging the limitations of these accounts, and the individual lives which can be affected. Whilst little Guy’s parents are full of pride to hear the voice of the revolution coming from the mouth of their son, they are simultaneously aware of how this voice has been edited and adjusted to suit its audience, not the people it represents, and how little impact these words will have on the reality of their daily suffering. The words coming from the mouth of their son are another part of the performance of historical memory. Danticat uses the school play in the
story as a metaphor for the different performances of historical memory we all participate in, rightly or wrongly. By writing James’ account of the revolution into her story, Danticat reminds us of the ways in which history is collected, translated, and written-over to suit the needs of the current audience, and the individual stories that this process inevitably erases. In his engaging reading of the short story, Wilson Chen (2011: 46) acknowledges that the multiple layers of colonial history have lost the “magical quality of Boukman – his voice”. Danticat is acutely aware of this erasure, but through Little Guy’s grief this abstract performance of the past is given volume in the present, as he is faced with the immediate horror of this father’s death. The tragedy of the past is still intimately connected to the horrors of the present.

In the story, Guy Senior is obsessed by the sugar mill owner’s hot air balloon which lies behind a fence in the grounds of the mill. He becomes fixated on how to fly the balloon: “I watched the owner for a long time, and I think I can fly that balloon. The first time I saw him do it, it looked like a miracle, but the more I saw it, the more ordinary it became” (Danticat 1995: 56). The balloon symbolises his possibility of escape, his freedom from the poverty and neo-slavery he is trapped in, whilst also acting as a motif for economic migration. He confides in his wife: “Sometimes, I just want to take that big balloon and ride it up in the air. I’d like to sail off somewhere and keep floating until I got to a really nice place with a nice plot of land where I could be something new. I’d build my own house, keep my own garden. Just be something new” (ibid. 60). In the tragic conclusion to the story, Guy manages to fly the hot air balloon only to climb over the sides and fall to his death in a final act of escape from the grim circumstances of his life, with his wife and son watching hopelessly from the ground (ibid. 64). Little Guy stands beside his father’s body and begins to recite his lines from the play. His voice changes to a “man’s grieving roar” and in the intimate exchange of loa and human, Little Guy becomes a vessel for the gods and shoulders the grief of his nation. His cry exposes the human sacrifices still being made in the name of freedom: “now I call on our gods ... I call on everyone and anyone so that we shall all let out one piercing cry that we may either live freely or we should die” (ibid. 66). Little Guy’s childhood ends, and he calls upon the words of his ancestors to vocalise his own heart-breaking loss. Haiti’s history can all too easily be reduced to a metaphor of resistance and survival which fails to hear the individual stories of tragedy. Danticat weaves a narrative of individual loss within Haiti’s legendary history to provoke both remembrance of the individuals who lost their lives in the revolution, but also to ensure that the
entrenched poverty and neo-slavery in which many modern Haitians still live is not overlooked, romanticised or reduced to metaphor.

The hot-air balloon is the object that details the significance and meaning of Guy’s spiritual longings: the movement of people and economic migration. This tactile, yet often untouchable and vivid flying object (simultaneously a symbol of modernity and supposed ‘progress’) is the site onto which Guy’s spiritual desires are transcribed. Material theory, or ‘thing theory’ (the term Walton uses, 2015: 142) allows us, as readers, to extend and explore the significance of the object more fully. Danticat’s use of this intrusive, beautiful object, as the ‘thing’ that holds the story together, a story about spiritual flight, Haiti’s history of slavery and revolution and modern day poverty, is no accident. The use of the hot air balloon provides an opportunity to bring conversations of material religion and postcolonial fiction together, yet it also demonstrates that it is through our relationship with objects that we bridge the material and non-material (physical and metaphysical) world; by focussing on Guy’s relationship with this unwieldy and obscure object, Danticat distorts divisive binary thinking which is prevalent in western culture.

Danticat sets the story in the male historical narrative (through its vocalisation of Boukman and James) and male lineage, but the ever-present, if peripheral, voice is that of the mother and the burden she will continue to carry after Guy has ‘escaped’. The theme of flight recurs throughout Danticat’s work; it is a powerful trope for physical liberation and escape, whilst also symbolising the possibility of spiritual, or metaphysical, transcendence. In his article, Chen (2011: 41) maps legends of flight that recur throughout New World folklore, of Africans escaping slavery and returning to Africa, and of how this legend is repeatedly transcribed in oral traditions and twentieth century literature. He details how the story A Wall of Fire Rising evokes a Haitian legend of flight that holds central importance to communal remembrance of the revolution. I would like to add that Danticat uses the hot air balloon to confront over-simplistic and romanticised readings of the folkloric flights of the enslaved by detailing the brutal reality of Guy’s choice to fly; his violent death is witnessed by his son and wife whose poverty, as a result of his death, is further entrenched – there is no easy transference from worldly to non-worldly. Danticat ensures that, as readers of this story, we are equally infuriated by a system that causes Guy to feel that his only liberation is in death. These stories, and Guy’s choice to fly, symbolise the limitations of the human world alone to provide freedom. Yet these legends of flight are also witness to the continued possibility for creativity and healing in the face of the most brutal adversity, a
theme that is particularly drawn out in the character of Martine in the novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory*.

4 “Ou libéré?” Sexual exploitation and possibilities of freedom: following the flight of Erzulie in *Breath, Eyes, Memory*

Themes of flight are at the forefront of Danticat’s novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory*. Published in 1994, it is the heart-breaking story of the Caco family; Sophie Caco is brought up by her Aunt Atie in Haiti, after her mother is forced to emigrate to the United States. When she is around twelve years old, Sophie’s mother Martine sends for her daughter. When she arrives in the United States, Sophie discovers the shocking truth that her mother was raped as a child walking home from school, and this is how Sophie was conceived. Martine’s only option for survival in a regime that used brutalities against women and girls to assert power and fear, and to maintain patriarchal controls within society, is to leave the country, alone and utterly traumatised.\(^4\) Martine is unable to recover from the trauma, and is revisited every night by the rapist in the form of night terrors which Sophie repeatedly wakes her from:

I would stay up all night just waiting for her to have a nightmare. Shortly after she fell asleep, I would hear her screaming for someone to leave her alone .... She would cover her eyes with her hands. ‘Sophie, you’ve saved my life’ (Danticat 1994: 81).

As a consequence, Martine’s trauma becomes Sophie’s trauma:

Some nights I woke up in a cold sweat wondering if my mother’s anxiety was somehow hereditary or if it was something I had ‘caught’ from living with her. Her nightmares had somehow become my own, so much so that I would wake up some mornings wondering if we hadn’t both spent the night dreaming about the same thing. A man with no face, pounding a life into a helpless girl (Ibid. 193).

Unable to either understand or deal with the layers of her trauma, Martine becomes the fierce protector of Sophie’s virginity. When Sophie be-

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\(^4\) Donette A. Francis’s article “‘Silences Too Horrific to Disturb’: Writing Sexual Histories in Edwidge Danticat’s *Breath, Eyes, Memory*” looks in detail at the sexual trauma of Sophie and Martine and examines how in Haiti women’s bodies become sites of “national trauma” (2004: 77).
gins to show signs of becoming a sexual being, through her interest in their musician neighbour (Joseph, who later becomes her husband), Martine starts ‘testing’ her daughter; she puts her finger in Sophie’s vagina to ensure her hymen is still intact:

She pulled a sheet over my body and walked out of the room with her face buried in her hands. I closed my legs and tried to see Tante Atie’s face. I could understand why she had screamed while her mother tested her. *There are secrets you cannot keep.* (ibid. 85, italics in the original).

Because of the complexity of her own trauma, Martine is unable to break the generations of abuse and instead perpetuates the perverse and patriarchal system of purity and honour, so-called ‘testing’. In the process, Martine ensures that her own trauma becomes that of her daughter’s:

the faces that loom over you and recreate the same unspeakable acts that they themselves lived through. There is always a place where nightmares are passed down through generations like an heirloom (ibid. 234).

In the end, the depth of Martine’s trauma is realised when she becomes pregnant again. Unable to continue reliving the horror, she stabs herself in the stomach seventeen times in a final act to obliterate her maternal body, whilst simultaneously attempting to gain some control over it. The hope of healing in this world is lost for Martine; our only hope for her is that she finally finds peace in her return to ‘Guinea’: “She is going to Guinea,’ [Sophie] said, “or she is going to be a star. She is going to be a butterfly or a lark in a tree. She’s going to be free” (ibid. 228). And what of Sophie’s freedom? Is she able to heal?

Throughout the novel, Sophie is accompanied by the goddess Erzulie, from the bold colours and butterflies she sees, to the mother she imagines. Danticat weaves Erzulie into the fabric of the story, as she appears on almost every page. She is with Sophie every step of the way and integral to her survival. But who is Erzulie?

5 So, is Danticat’s manifestation of Erzulie in her novel a conscious act? In an interview, Danticat says: “Vodou is a part of my belief system as a Haitian. Erzulie, the goddess of love, has always intrigued me. She is the *loa* of Sophie’s family, their chosen protector, which is why she almost always stands by them as a character in their story. ... I identify with Erzulie in her many manifestations as young, old, loving, angry, beautiful woman and crow” (Palmer Adisa 2009: 350).
Erzulie, the goddess, spirit or loa of love in vodoun, tells a story of women’s lives that has not been told. A goddess was born on the soil of Haiti who has no precedent in Yorubaland or Dahomey. In her varying incarnations, her many faces, she bears the extremes of colonial history. Whether the pale and elegant Erzulie-Fréda or the cold hearted, savage Erzulie-gé-rouge, she dramatizes a specific historiography of women’s experience in Haiti and throughout the Caribbean (Dayan 1994: 6).

Erzulie is a multifaceted goddess with different personas that replicate the bitter realities for black women in Haiti, particularly during the 1800s and the fall of Saint Domingue. The rituals associated with Erzulie often represent the relationships between female slaves and the colonial French mistresses, shown in Erzulie-Freda’s pale skin, and the way she wears blue and is adorned with jewellery and make-up. In her many manifestations, she can be:

Ezili [sic] Freda, the pale, elegant lady of luxury and love, identified with the Virgin Mary ...; Ezili Dantò, the black, passionate woman identified with the Mater Salvatoris, her heart also pierced, with a dagger; and Ezili-je-wouj [also written as Erzulie ge-rouge who we encounter in the novel], Ezili Mapian, and Ezili-nwa-kè (black heart) of the militant Petwo family of gods (Dayan 1995: 59).

In Danticat’s novel, Erzulie is therefore Martine and Sophie. She embodies all the lives of the women who have been violated, tortured and raped at the hands of male systems of power in the form of slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism. But as Dayan warns, representations of Erzulie often replicate male fantasies of women: “the splitting of women into objects to be desired and feared” (Dayan 1995: 59). I would argue that Danticat’s representation of Erzulie, and the weaving of her into the fabric of the story, enables the prioritisation of the devastating, individual stories of abused women, whilst simultaneously providing a historiography of women’s experience in Haiti. Erzulie is a carrier of women’s history in Haiti in all its complexity and paradox: in its horror and laughter; its anger and kindness; its beauty and ugliness; the materialistic and charitable. *Vodou*, and Erzulie in particular, remind us that religion is best understood as a breathing force that is responsive to trauma inflicted on the human body, and its ability to redirect and re-imagine that trauma.

It is through the many *loa* that slavery is remembered, stored and revisited, but also where it is transcended. The brutality of the institution of slavery and colonialism, alongside Christianity, is manifest in the *loa*. What is
vital here is that *vodou* is not just compared to Christianity or understood as a simple translation; it is vital that, in order to do justice to Erzulie and to the historiography built up of women’s experiences in Haiti, we do not resort to analogy (as Dayan warns, 1994: 6) and describe her as the Virgin Mary, for she “bears witness to a far more complicated lineage” (Dayan 1994: 6). What seems more appropriate to remember is that our understanding of religion should be motivated by the sensual relationship between the body and world, as Plate recommends (2014: 7). But I would develop Plate’s (potentially) over-romanticised (and Christian) notion of a “sensual” relationship with the world so that it can enable us to understand *vodou* and the *loa* more appropriately; the *loa* replicate the violence and anger of the sensory experience of slavery, whilst also the deeply sensual desire to survive. If *vodou* is compared to exclusively Christian models of ‘religion’, as it has been in the past, at best it will be considered as ‘less religious’, and at worst, it will be rendered as a symbol for the inferiority and backwardness of New World practices, for it is intimately connected to the emotional and sensual journeys of the Haitian people from slavery to independence to neo-colonialism. Plate’s model provides some opportunity to avoid this and to focus on the heart of the tradition. Erzulie is a sensual *loa*, her devotees enter into a sensory relationship with her, which relives the complexities of the female embodiment of slavery and the colonial encounter.6

For the remainder of this article, I will map the journey Erzulie takes, as a character in the story, with Sophie and her family (her mother, Aunt and Grandmother), and how in the process Danticat develops the ‘material’ language of religiosity that emerges from this journey.

Sophie’s early childhood, with her Tante Atie, is presented as the happiest and most settled time for both of them; the intimacy and kindness of this maternal relationship provides her with the strength of character to survive the rest of her childhood and adult life: “When I stood in front of

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6 In her book, *Eroticism, Spirituality, and Resistance in Black Women’s Writing*, Donna Aza Weir-Soley ([2009] 2011: 5) demonstrates the “interrelatedness” of sexuality and spirituality in black women’s writing. The focus on a broad range of writers, places and practices pulled together using umbrella terms such as the singular, ‘black female subjectivity’ or ‘African-based spirituality’ undermines the impact of her ideas, and belittles the multiple voices contained there; but nevertheless she appropriately challenges the predominantly Christian division of sexuality and spirituality imposed on women, and how this needs to be challenged in order to engage with the work of writers such as Toni Morrison, Zora Neale Hurston, and Edwidge Danticat.
her, she opened her arms just wide enough for my body to fit into them ... she bent down and kissed my forehead, then pulled me down onto her lap” (Danticat 1994: 3). Danticat’s use of colour and objects is significant throughout the novel; Tante Atie and Sophie are always surrounded by yellow ‘things’. In the opening paragraph, we see a “drying daffodil” stuck on a card made by Sophie for Atie, and Atie watching children “crushing dried yellow leaves” (ibid. 21). Later, as Sophie is preparing to leave, “[s]he reached over and touched the collar of my lemon-toned house dress. ‘Everything you own is yellow’, she said, ‘wildflower yellow, like dandelions, sunflowers.’ ‘And daffodils,’ I added” (ibid. 21). This calm colour symbolises the joy and gentleness of this relationship. It is the colour red that is associated with Sophie’s relationship with her mother, symbolising both intense and burning love, but also danger and the arrival of their guardian, Erzulie-gé-rouge: “The tablecloth was shielded with a red plastic cover, the same blush red as the sofa in the living room” (Ibid. 44). In an interview, Danticat reflects on how her use of vivid colour is to provide contrast with the darkness of slavery; the dark, small spaces in which slaves lived were just for sleeping. There was no place for daylight there. According to the author, this is in stark contrast to the vivid colours of the Caribbean:

the skies, the trees, the flowers. When you go to a place like Haiti, you are struck by color: everything is in Technicolor. ... But I also remember as a child hearing how flowers had a certain meaning – yellow friendship, red love ... When I’m in Haiti and look at the hibiscus and the flamboyant, these are so strong for me. That’s how they make their way into the story (Interview with Renee H. Shea 1996: 384).

As readers, we are provided with a sensory experience of Haiti, both of the natural environment but also, I would argue, with the spirit world. As Plate (2014: 21) argues, it is through our sensory experiences with the natural world that we can begin to represent and/or engage with the spirit world. Danticat provides the reader with vivid and tactile images of plants, flowers and domestic objects (furniture and clothes). Similarly, we engage our senses in response to the narrator’s descriptions so we can hear and feel the “crushing dried yellow leaves” and Tante Atie’s touch of Sophie’s yellow collar, contrasted with the uninviting plastic covers on Martine’s red sofa. We open our senses, not only to the vivid descriptions of nature and human touch, but also to the spirit world that settles in these places.

Erzulie weaves herself into the material fabric of the story, in amongst mundane, everyday objects. Sophie’s nightmares begin when she is told that she is to go and live with her mother, and it is at this time, during her first days in New York, that Erzulie starts to emerge:
All along the avenue were people who seemed displaced among the speeding cars and very tall buildings ... We found Tante Atie’s lemon perfume in a botanica shop. On the walls were earthen jars, tin can lamps, and small statues of the beautiful *mulâtresse*, the goddess and loa Erzulie (Danticat 1994: 52).

Erzulie makes her first overt appearance amongst the seemingly displaced people and objects of the diaspora, reassuring Sophie that she is not alone. But also, importantly, she appears amongst other consumer objects in an overtly capitalist environment: Erzulie’s materiality is emphasised. But rather than responding to a more European and modernist understanding of religion, and seeing this as problematic, this detail captures both how capitalism in North America can arguably be understood as a form of religion, whilst also emphasising that religion can be understood in terms of our material relationship with objects. Later, Martine asks Sophie if she is the mother she imagined:

As a child, the mother I had imagined for myself was like Erzulie, the lavish Virgin Mother. She was the healer of all women and the desire of all men. She had gorgeous dresses in satin, silk, and lace, necklaces, pendants, earrings, bracelets, anklets, and lots and lots of French perfume. She never had to work for anything because the rainbow and the stars did her work for her. Even though she was far away, she was always with me. I could always count on her, like one counts on the sun coming out at dawn (ibid. 59).

Sophie’s simple reply to her mother is: “For now I couldn’t ask for better” (ibid. 59). Erzulie is a multifaceted goddess, and here Sophie is lamenting Erzulie-Freda, possibly the most complex manifestation of Erzulie for outsiders to engage with, for she is pale-skinned, beautiful, sexual and embellished with jewellery and fine clothes: the ‘desire of all men’, but simultaneously the Virgin Mary. Rather than seeing this mention as a direct comparison with Christianity, as Dayan previously warned against, we should, in one sense, understand the Virgin Mary’s part in this story, and Haiti’s history, as an engagement with patriarchial representations of women in a colonial context. Erzulie-Freda is the manifestation of the colonial French women, lavished with riches, yet ultimately the property of white men. As discussed, her presence in the pantheon of gods is testimony to the complexity of their relationship with Haiti, and female slaves. In another sense, the Virgin Mary’s part in the pantheon, as well as in the intersections of Christianity-Haiti-vodou-Europe, and in Danticat’s fiction, makes space for a deeply sensual relationship with Mary (particularly women’s relation-
ships with her). The complexity of Erzulie-Freda is witness to the complexity of colonial history and the need to remember this history even though that entails a confrontation with the seemingly paradoxical details of the lives of most women trying to survive within patriarchal, and white systems of power. For Sophie, Erzulie-Freda is both the ‘desire of all men’ and the ultimate mother, but also the goddess of the displaced, particularly displaced women and girls.

Erzulie offers transcendence for women who carry the history of displacement and migration on, and within, their often traumatised and sexually exploited bodies. After Sophie’s mother starts ‘testing’ her, she remembers the story of a haemophiliac woman “who walked around with blood constantly spurting out of her unbroken skin” (ibid. 87). Tired of doctors who could not help her, the woman consults Erzulie:

After her consultation with Erzulie, it became apparent to the bleeding woman what she would have to do. If she wanted to stop bleeding, she would have to give up her right to be a human being. She could choose what to be, a plant, or animal, but she could no longer be a woman ...

‘Make me a butterfly,’ she told Erzulie. ‘Make me a butterfly.’

‘A butterfly you shall be,’ said Erzulie.

The woman was transformed and never bled again (ibid. 87–88).

In a horrific attempt to end the testing and to gain some control over her own body and destiny, Sophie carries out a violent purging of her body:

My flesh ripped apart as I pressed the pestle into it. I could see the blood slowly dripping on the bed sheet … it was gone, the veil that always held my mother’s finger back every time she tested me.

My body was quivering when my mother walked into my room to test me. My legs were limp when she drew them aside. I ached so hard I could hardly move. Finally, I failed the test (ibid. 88).

Throughout the novel, Sophie develops a strategy of ‘doubling’. Here, while she inflicts this trauma on herself, she brings to mind her guardian Erzulie and the hope of being transformed into a butterfly in order to transcend her own painful and bleeding body. Her transformation does come, but it is gradual; she has to break through her own chrysalis before she can finally be free.
Sophie marries her neighbour, a kind and loving man but not her saviour, and all too quickly becomes a mother herself; as the trauma deepens, she returns to Haiti with her baby daughter, Brigitte, in the hope that she will find clarity and healing with Tante Atie and her grandmother. At this point, Erzulie is closer still: she is in the repeated references to butterflies: “[a] pack of rainbow butterflies hovered around the porch” (ibid. 144); the red of her mother’s umbrella when she comes to collect her (ibid. 158); she is in the intimate friendship between Tante Atie and Louise: “I will miss her like my own skin” (ibid. 145); and she is in the statue Sophie’s grandmother gives to her after being challenged about the female practice of testing. Erzulie can be seen to echo her dislike of this practice, as the “sky reddened with a sudden flash of lightning” (ibid. 156). Sophie’s grandmother gives her the statue of Erzulie, and, as if she has heard Erzulie’s rage, she says:

‘My heart, it weeps like a river,’ she said, ‘for the pain we have caused you.’

I held the statue against my chest as I cried into the night. I thought I heard my grandmother crying too, but it was the rain slowing down to a mere drizzle, tapping on the roof (ibid. 157).

Erzulie weeps with Sophie and with all the other girls who are victims of sexual abuse and who carry the injustices and perversities of history on their bodies.

Erzulie’s weeping continues as Sophie returns to the United States and to her husband. Sophie attends therapy sessions with other displaced women of the diaspora, who have been victims of sexual abuse. It is here that she comes “a little closer to being free. I didn’t feel guilty about burning my mother’s name anymore. I knew my hurt and hers were links in a long chain and if she hurt me, it was because she was hurt, too” (ibid. 203). She takes the statue of Erzulie with her, who watches over her, weeping: “the flame’s shadows swayed across Erzulie’s face in a way that made it seem as though she was crying” (ibid. 221). Erzulie is often depicted as weeping. We should remember Dayan’s warning that “those tears cannot be generalised out of history as the tears of the Virgin Mary” (Dayan 1994: 12) but rather are specific to the traumas of women in Haiti, as here represented in the lives of Martine and Sophie. Through Erzulie’s tears we can understand Sophie’s suffering as ‘a link in a long chain’ (Danticat 1994: 203) of women’s tragic stories. This paradoxical metaphor both pays tribute to the lives linked together in grief, dependant on each other for survival, whilst
simultaneously acknowledging the bondage that chains maintain, and the freedom they prevent.

After her mother’s tragic death, Sophie prepares her body for her final return home and the funeral:

I picked out the most crimson of all my mother’s clothes, a bright red, two-piece suit that she was too afraid to wear to the Pentecostal services.

It was too loud a colour for a burial. I knew it. She would look like a Jezebel, hot-bloodied Erzulie who feared no men, but rather made them her slaves, raped them, and killed them. She was the only woman with that power (ibid. 227).

Sophie channels Erzulie’s power through her mother’s dead body and into her own living body through the object of the red suit: for Martine, the transformation has finally arrived as she leaves her human body; for Sophie, through her mother’s death, she finds her agency and is finally able to speak through her inconsolable grief, with Erzulie acting as her guide. Sophie runs from the graveside to the cane fields – the place where her mother was raped and her grandfather died:

I took off my shoes and began to beat a cane stalk. I pounded it until it began to lean over. I pushed over the cane stalk. It snapped back, striking my shoulder. I pulled at it, yanking it from the ground. My palm was bleeding.

The cane cutters stared at me as though I was possessed … From where she was standing, my grandmother shouted like the women from the market place, ‘Ou libéré?’ Are you free?

Tante Atie echoed her cry, her voice quivering with her sobs.

‘Ou libéré!’ (ibid. 233).

Not only is this the place where Martine was raped, it is also the place that contains the history of slavery. In order for Sophie to heal, along with “all the daughters of this island” (ibid. 230), she must return to this site and confront its physical brutality. Riding with Erzulie, and as part of the chain of mothers, daughters, sisters and aunts, and “women from the market place”, she is empowered to fight and can finally be free. ‘You are free!’ is her aunt’s revolutionary battle cry.

The novel is drawn to a close with a lament that captures the language of religiosity I have portrayed, a language and theory which challenges...
standard discourses of religion, but which is effortless for writers such as Edwidge Danticat. It is for this reason that a history of religion is most fruitful when led by an engagement with the arts and, in this case, creative writing:

I come from a place where breath, eyes, and memory are one, a place from which you carry your past like the hair on your head. Where women return to their children as butterflies or as tears in the eyes of the statues that their daughters pray to. My mother was as brave as stars at dawn. She too was from this place. My mother was like that woman who could never bleed and then could never stop bleeding, the one who gave in to her pain, to live as a butterfly. Yes, my mother was like me (ibid. 234).

Danticat reminds us of the importance of material objects (“statues that their daughters pray to”), the intimacy with nature (“as brave as stars”, “to live as a butterfly”) and the function of the human body (“breath, eyes and memory are one ... carry your past like the hair on your head”, “never stop bleeding”) in representations of religiosity and spirituality. Sophie finds her freedom in the knowledge that the chain of women whose stories are intertwined are like a wall of fire rising: they are the feminists, activists and the revolutionaries; they are where hope and healing lies. And the ever-growing pantheon of vodou gods – is Martine now one of them? – is still at the heart of this revolution. We start to see Martine’s suicide as a sacrificial act – not only a way for her to secure her own freedom, but that of her daughter’s:

There is a place where women are buried in clothes the color of flames ... where the daughter is never fully a woman until her mother has passed before her ... she will ask you this question: ‘Ou libéré? Are you free my daughter?’ .... ‘Now ... you will know the answer’ (ibid. 234).

Sophie’s grandmother turns Martine and Sophie’s story in to a feminist/womanist legend and religious lament of female survival and liberation.

5 Conclusion

*Breath, Eyes, Memory* is a stunning portrayal of intersectionality and womanism: gender, race, religion, spirituality, body and class are intimately entwined in the lives of the main characters so that one aspect cannot be considered or understood without the other. Contained so effortlessly within the pages of this novel is a language of religiosity that refuses simple bina-
ries and neat boxes by utterly immersing us in a world where one categorisation necessarily bleeds into the other. Danticat builds a language of religiosity that is utterly sensual and intimately connected with our bleeding, loving, painful, maternal bodies and the objects we hold dear: Martine and Sophie’s legendary, yet equally individual, stories of survival and liberation can only be truly understood when we engage with the physical and sensual relationship between a loa, like Erzulie, and her devotee, in the form of bleeding and weeping female bodies. Danticat’s fiction demonstrates that the arts is the place that most vividly teaches us a history of religion by both exposing the limitations of standard classifications and opening up a new and vital linguistic threshold, that makes space for the broken and imperfect human body.

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Theological Revisionism and the Recomposition of the Religio-spiritual Field

Richard H. Roberts

Abstract

The fraught and contested relation between ‘theology’ and the ‘critical’ study of ‘religion’ invites contextualisation and clarification. The disjunction traceable in historical terms to Kant’s *Streit der Fakultäten* (1798) and the debate between F.D.E. Schleiermacher and Wilhelm von Humboldt on the place of theology in the newly-founded University of Berlin has now become increasingly problematic in Anglo-America. Above all, in the United Kingdom these tensions are embedded in a centralised and commodified tertiary education system much influenced by the goal of producing market-worthy human identities through controlled socialisation enabled through techniques of human resources management (HRM). In the United States, the exigencies of the academic labour market likewise impinge upon the direction and advocacy of theory in a distinctive way. In this setting the terms ‘theology’, ‘theory’ and ‘critical’ function as signs, the actual signification of which is less than obvious. This encoding is decipherable when they appear in a recent key overview of the debate. In an era of pervasive crisis alternative strategies are required if the study of ‘religion’ is better to serve the full range of legitimate demands made of a subject area that draws upon both the humanities and social sciences. We will then outline an alternative strategy taking as its starting point the problematic juxtaposition of the global and the local. [Theology, Religion, Religious studies, Phenomenological, Ideology, Human resources management (HRM), Globalisation]
1 Introduction

Anglo-American, and perhaps to a lesser extent European thought on the problematic relation between ‘theology’ and ‘religion’ has been characterised by frequently bitter ideological divisions. At a basic level, this has been evident in a tension between what is comprised in theology as a surviving field in the academy in the UK and mainland Europe, as contrasted with the now marginalised phenomenological and empathic approach to religious studies pioneered by Professor Ninian Smart in whose department at Lancaster University the present author first set out. Over the past quarter century, the word ‘theology’ has, however, come to be used in some quarters as a widely applicable *schimpfwort* directed against activities and opinions regarded as a residual uncritical *sui generis* or essentialist approach. Thus, ‘theology’ can be forcefully construed as an implicit ideology lurking within a ‘religious studies’ deemed insufficiently critical. The word ‘critical’ may, however, itself become a sign that fails to comprise and bring into expression the full range of forces that underlie its semantic construction.

The present writer has participated at all levels in theology and religious studies over a half-century, and it has become increasingly apparent to him that what was once a reasoned debate has now become a prolonged struggle based upon mutual exclusion in which, not least, the immediate casualties can be undergraduate students. The latter can be subjected to the systematic deconstruction of categories that might enable them to recognise and acknowledge the validity of their own life-experience besides that of ‘others’. The absence of such viable, critically conceptualised categories may inhibit the effective appraisal of the forces that inform the construction of their identities and life-chances. In short, there is an unhealthy collusion between the onset of the hegemonic modernity expertly manipulated by human resources management (HRM) and the perpetual deconstruction of viable categories of self-representation that leave the self naked, wholly vulnerable before the elasticity of pervasive power. This represents a deep failure of the principle of enlightenment.

Famously, Kant declared in 1784 that:

> Enlightenment is man’s emergence from his self-incurred immaturity.

> Immaturity is the inability to use one’s own understanding without

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1 I am much indebted to comments made on this chapter by Professor Geoffrey Samuel (University of Cardiff), Robert Morgan (University of Oxford) and Professor Gavin Flood FBA (Yale-NUS College, Singapore).
the guidance of another. This immaturity is self-incurred if its cause is not lack of understanding, but lack of resolution and courage to use it without the guidance of another. The motto of enlightenment is therefore: Sapere aude! [Dare to be wise!]. Have courage to use your own understanding! (Kant 2009: 1).

How can ‘enlightenment’ as genuinely critical awareness survive, when such consciousness is apparently redundant in commodified higher education systems that project discourses employing the term ‘critical’, whilst in reality promoting the development of the student’s capacity for informed docility, and thus preparing them for the surrender of agency required by human resources management (HRM). By contrast with this collusive scenario the enhancement of human agency on lines that resonate with the American sociologist C. Wright Mills’ idea of the “sociological imagination” (1959: 3–11) ought to remain at the core of what ‘Religious Studies’ as a multidisciplinary field exists to support. Wright Mills grasped the implications for sociology of the expansion of higher education and configured sociology as an emancipatory discipline that would furnish enhanced self-understanding to undergraduate students. Put simply, such imagination was “the awareness of the relationship between personal experience and the wider society” (Mills 1959: 5, 7). It is this kind of truly critical awareness that is now subject to multiple threats.

In the wider higher education context the humanities as a whole are currently subject to sustained negative economic pressure. In general terms, the humanities are difficult to monetise in a social world in which value is expressed almost exclusively in terms of quantifiable economic utility and residual human performativity. Under these unpromising conditions, the study of ‘religion’ requires constant reworking so as to sustain its relevance, yet the reductive elimination of categories and effective conceptual vocabulary induces an internal corrosion that complements external erosion. Kant’s challenge remains the ancestral standard by which any

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2 “Aufklärung ist der Ausgang des Menschen aus seiner selbst verschuldeten Unmündigkeit. Unmündigkeit ist das Unvermögen, sich seines Verstandes ohne Leitung eines anderen zu bedienen. Selbstverschuldet ist diese Unmündigkeit, wenn die Ursache derselben nicht am Mangel des Verstandes, sondern der Entschließung und des Muthes liegt, sich seiner ohne Leitung eines anderen zu bedienen. Sapere aude! Habe Muth dich deines eigenen Verstandes zu bedienen! ist also der Wahlspruch der Aufklärung” (Kant 1784: 481).

3 The definition of the terms ‘humanities’, ‘human sciences’, ‘les sciences humaines’ and ‘Geisteswissenschaften’ is explored in the introduction to Roberts and Good (1993).
truly ‘critical’ project is to be judged, but this demands reflexive contextualisation in the conditions of human production of contemporary higher education.

Both those who fund fields of study and students alike may not view with enthusiasm intellectual strategies that subvert any accessible hermeneutics and impose theories that serve as the basis of damaging in-group and out-group behaviour reminiscent of sectarianism. Even more problematic is the denial of referential or substantive value to key analytical categories, such as the problematic terms ‘religion’, ‘culture’, ‘human’, ‘self’ and their cognates. In the final analysis, this amounts to a rhetorical failure: all disciplines and subdisciplines require key categories, their loci or topoi, the commonplaces that allow for a persuasive representation and efficacious critical discourse pertaining to what is for any given constituency (Roberts and Good 1993: 1–10). Researchers, teachers and students alike should be in a position to contextualise and interpret experience in ways that promote understanding of the power of social construction in a managerialised and commodified life-world and thus enhance agency. Although occupying different positions on the political spectrum, the project of ‘Cultural Studies’ pioneered by Stuart Hall in the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham, and Ninian Smart’s ‘Religious Studies’ at Lancaster University were informed by this emancipatory liberal vision. Both projects have, unfortunately, shared similar fates in losing their distinctive organisational identity and relative autonomy through restructuring. There now exists a longstanding and complex crisis of representation that this chapter seeks to address.

2 The project of Religious Studies and its aporia

In broad terms, the expansion of the tertiary education sector in the post-war period in the optimistic nineteen-sixties was the context in which the first department of Religious Studies in the United Kingdom opened at the recently established University of Lancaster in 1967. The original mission of Lancaster University was to allow a relatively high degree of freedom to academics and students alike, a policy that owed much to the visionary first Vice-Chancellor, Sir Charles Carter. Carter was a Quaker whose advocacy of a non-theological approach to the study of religion resulted in the establishment of a chair, the holder of which could famously be ‘of any religion or none’. The first chair holder Ninian Smart was given a relatively free hand to build a department and set up an innovative programme.
Funding in that era was secure and sufficient for those fortunate enough to participate in what was still a relatively elite system of higher education in the United Kingdom. For students in Religious Studies programmes the regime comprised the acquisition of a range of skills and disciplinary insights derived from history, sociology, anthropology, psychology, linguistics, and so on. A major difficulty with most of the ‘new university’ bachelor of arts Honours degrees was that this importation and juxtaposition of disciplinary insights in consumable packages was based on the abbreviation or excision of the complex linguistic factors and historical developments that underlaid each perspective. Such packaging was essential in a three year Humanities degree designed to break with the traditional approach to the Single Honours degree. The Open University founded in 1969 moved fully in this direction from the outset: it successfully fostered the fully ‘rational’ management of a comprehensively predictable system of teaching and learning which modelled a future norm for ‘Quality’. By contrast, the excitement and challenge of life in the first wave of new universities of the sixties was that the tension between knowledge and receptive capacity was negotiated in each context by academic staff who then still enjoyed relative autonomy and security of tenure. A correlative outcome was that a fuller understanding of what lay behind and informed the locally packaged knowledge might only be available to a fortunate minority in a position to proceed further with postgraduate study.

The content of the Religious Studies syllabus set up by Ninian Smart was initially focused on the relative merits of the ideas of such figures as Rudolf Otto, J.G. Frazer, R.C. Zaehner, Mircea Eliade, Aldous Huxley, and Ninian Smart himself, on the nature and validity of religious experience. There was passionate existential engagement and lively debate on the distinctiveness of religious experience in the first year of the degree programme which was polarised around the juxtaposition of R.C. Zaehner’s *Mysticism Sacred and Profane* and Aldous Huxley’s perennial philosophy in *The Doors of Perception* (1954). This was an ongoing debate in which historians of religion, philosophers, and even a philosophical theologian (the brilliant and eccentric Donald M. MacKinnon) took part (Katz ed. 1978, 1984).

A critical dialogue then ensued with a range of canonical (almost exclusively male) explanatory and reductive figures that included Marx, Weber and Durkheim, besides Hegel, Nietzsche, Freud, Lukács and Althusser. Also present were texts drawn from theological and hermeneutical thinkers like F.C. Baur, Adolf von Harnack, Sören Kierkegaard, Ernst Troeltsch, Albert Schweitzer, Huston Smith – and even Karl Barth. This engagement took place apparently at a remove from the exigencies of eco-
nomadic survival. All these luminaries were later set within a historical framework in the magisterial three volume Lancaster-based collection, *Nineteenth Century Religious Thought in the West* (Smart et al. eds. 1985–88).

This initial liberal Lancaster ethos that valued the empathic, informed phenomenological approach lost ground in the longer term to a latent reductivism. What gradually emerged was an ideological drive directed against Smart and then John Bowker’s liberal recording and communication of the diversity of the religious experience of humankind (Bowker 1987). This was an ambition to banish the residual influence of Eliade and complete the nineteenth and early twentieth century quest for a fully satisfactory reductive account of religion (Idinopulos and Yonan 1994) and thus to dissolve any residual distinctiveness in religious experience. A colleague remarked that in the final analysis there was no substantive difference between the reception of the Host at a Catholic Mass and consumption of fish and chips after a football match at the Emirates Stadium in nearby Blackburn. Perhaps something of the grandeur of Rudolf Otto’s (1917, ET 1923/1953, pp. 5–40) phenomenology of the numinous, the “mysterium, tremendum et fascinans” had been lost.

3  The wider context of knowledge production and reception

The selection of the body of core material in the first programme in Religious Studies in the United Kingdom should be understood in the context of the societal optimism expressed in the post-war expansion of higher education in Anglo-America, and the policy of *aggiornamento* in the Roman Catholic tradition in the Second Vatican Council (1962–65). Both can be understood as a limited opening up of access to, rather than attacks upon privilege and hierarchy. Despite the presence of theories of religion in the early Religious Studies syllabus and what has been depicted above as the packaging of consumable knowledge, this was in important ways a pre-theoretical era. Smart’s own framework allowed for the ‘liberal co-existence of multiple perspectives’ here was not ‘much of an integrating theoretical position’.4 This eclecticism left an unstable vacuum others were all too eager to fill. A basic problem was that the polymathic, multi-disciplinary learning and publications of the outstanding scholar patriarchs of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries given centre stage in Religious Studies had

4 Personal communication from Professor Geoffrey Samuel, my colleague at Lancaster in the late nineties.
been made possible by specific set of circumstances. The latter conditions were underlaid by the emergence of the research-driven modern university pioneered in Germany, and emulated in France and the United States. This privileged system had generated vast knowledge and disciplinary differentiation that exceeded the receptive capacity of many of those destined to enter tertiary education through post-war university expansion in the Anglophone world.

The tension between elite knowledge generation and knowledge reception can already be seen in the nineteenth century, where, for example, the extraordinary efforts of the second Protestant Tübingen School led by F.C. Baur resulted in a research achievement which required introductory works, small-scale compendia that could make communication possible. Indeed one of the major achievements of the Tübingen School was to lay down the enduring *topoi* of historical periodisation. Knowledge creation and communication proceeded on the assumption that although the representatives of an academic mandarin class might well disagree with each other, this did not in any significant way diminish the legitimacy of their authority. This mode of knowledge production continued into the last quarter of the twentieth century in traditions upheld in the still cohabiting fields of theology and religious studies led for the most part by men like Eliade, Smart and Zaehner who had in various and sometimes problematic ways experienced at first hand the Second World War. There were significant connections between service in military intelligence, the acquisition of oriental languages and experience in the field.

How might the monumental complexity and breadth of knowledge sanctioned by an elite education for the dedicated few be communicated to an audience with limited linguistic skills other than their own who were undergoing socialisation in an unprecedented expansion of higher education? In immediate terms, the publication of major encyclopaedias answered this ecclesial and student demand by reinvigorating the strategy famously established in the early French Enlightenment by Diderot in the *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (1751–72). Thus, for example, publication of the magisterial *Sacramentum Mundi* (1967–69) edited by Karl Rahner and others, and *The Encyclopaedia of Religion* (1987, revised edition 2005) edited by a team led by the controversial figure of Mircea Eliade and the Chicago School organised and summarised scholarship on the basis of specific commitments not only to communicate, but to persuade. In effect, both projects set out theological and religious studies *topoi* which have subsequently undergone sustained attack, albeit for different reasons as their grand scheme of implicit universalism has given way to a multiplicity of interest-driven theories. Early on there
were significant differences between the more stridently theoretical History of Religions as practised in Chicago and the Lancaster approach to Religious Studies. Longstanding German efforts evident in the four successive editions of *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (I 1909–1913; II 1927–1931; III 1957–1965; IV 1998–2005) originated within a primarily Protestant (*evangelisch*) theological context and do not display the obvious ideological polarities between theology and religious studies to be found in the United Kingdom and North America.

As a field, ‘religious studies’ was able to draw upon a wide range of disciplinary and sub-disciplinary developments, such as, for example, the rise of historicism both in theology with Ernst Troeltsch and the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*; German philological research; great projects such as Max Müller’s *Sacred Books of the East*; the emergence of ‘*Religionswissenschaft*’ in Germany; the study of myth from Frazer’s *Golden Bough* onwards; the development of field anthropology from its so-called armchair nineteenth-century origins; the study of ritual from Arnold Van Gennep to Victor and Edith Turner, through to Roy Rappaport. One of the most cohesive blocs to appear after the Second World War was the ‘sociology of religion’, a subdiscipline that emerged from, then distinguished itself from the French Catholic ‘sociologie religieuse’ and nurtured the theory of secularisation as its unifying ideology. This kind of material provided a rich diversity upon which Religious Studies might draw but the latter failed to address adequately questions as to what if anything might hold the field together.

4 *Theology, religious studies and the struggle for identity*

The academy in theology and religion continues to manifest power struggles. The bid for the universal, for authority and the control of norms is contested because, like the term ‘religion’, the concept of ‘authority’ has itself undergone deconstruction in the face of a number of interconnected factors. These include the following: first, the emergence of second and third wave feminism and a correlative bid for the attainment of equality or hegemonic status; second, the proliferation of ‘theory’ as the polyvalent medium and instrumental agent of identity; third, the managerialisation and commodification of education as a planned system of social reproduction suffused by the theory and practice of human resource management (HRM); and fourth the correlative expansion of a highly competitive glob-
There are of course other factors arising in the contemporary crises of global ecological and societal sustainability, and not least in the contested phenomena of globalisation itself. All of this is now overshadowed by the return of nationalistic populism frequently suffused with fascistic tendencies, and energised by material taken from religious belief systems.

Suffice it to note that the optimism that attended the strategy of post-war mediation and encounter has now evaporated, and that subsequent generations of scholars in theology and religion have shown a predilection for the deconstruction of patriarchies, and for the assertion of new normative hegemonies. The stridency of some participants like the radical feminist Mary Daly who asserted that “[i]f life is to survive on this planet, there must be a decontamination of the Earth. I think this will be accompanied by an evolutionary process that will result in a drastic reduction of the population of males” (Daly 2010), and Monica Sjöö and Barbara Mohr’s highly influential visionary counter-narrative in *The Great Cosmic Mother* (1987) have appeared as bids for the assertion of womanist and matriarchal hegemony. As regards the new scholars in theology and religion in Anglo-America (and now increasingly in the Netherlands and Scandinavia), outside privileged contexts these under-labourers operate in an over-supplied labour market and undergo progressive immiseration, often surviving on part-time or zero-hour contracts whilst servicing an expanded tertiary education industry. In this post-normative environment, identity markers are required which have related but contradictory functions. On the one hand, means are needed that enable communicative recognition and sustain minimal social solidarity, but, on the other hand, these means also serve to differentiate and exclude participants in the labour market. As will be argued in due course, the medium of individual identity and sub-disciplinary collective validation is *theory*, and the difference between theories functioning as ideologies has important consequences in the context of a consolidated system of social reproduction.

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5 The Brexit vote and revanchism in the United Kingdom have had immediate implications for this market in that the significant reliance upon continentally-educated young scholars in British elite higher education outlets will in all likelihood cease. The *Times Higher Education Supplement* reported that four out of ten young academics recruited in British universities over the past decade were non-British EU citizens (Matthews 2016). Similarly, because of the uncertainties young British scholars are finding it increasingly difficult after the Brexit vote to secure employment in the EU.

The United Kingdom is distinguished by a longstanding programme of centralisation of key factors in what is in effect a state-controlled system of higher education (Roberts 1997, 2004b). Whilst in the United States tenure is difficult to achieve, the system of evaluation is nonetheless grounded in research and teaching, and sustained by an appropriate division of labour. By contrast in the United Kingdom, a wide range of administrative responsibilities is codified by HR (Human Resources) and this enables subliminal intimidation through systemic overload. Performance indicators in forms unknown to illustrious predecessors now preoccupy the academic labour force at all levels outside certain privileged contexts. Cumulative impact upon how knowledge is generated and transmitted is inevitable. The shift of the day-to-day control of work from individual academic staff or their co-responsible collectivities to HR, the implicit and ever-present impossibility of scoring on all performance indicators, and the arbitrary prioritisation of some as opposed to other performance indicators in retention and promotion facilitates all-pervasive uncertainty in organisations. The Kafka-Principle thus induces pervasive fear, a characteristic amplified in an ever more competitive labour market in which the value and utility of the humanities is subject to radical doubt. In this setting, theory as marker and bearer of identity provides a ready means for both the creation of strategic social solidarities and for the expression of ressentiment in the power-play and quasi-Darwinian struggle of individuals to survive in the global academic labour market.

5 Contemporary debate: “Theory in a Time of Excess”

In the significant recent collection, Theory in a Time of Excess edited by Aaron W. Hughes (2017), a number of established and emergent scholars confront some of the sharpest features of conflict over the role of theory in the contemporary field of the study of religion in the USA. Theory in a Time of Excess comprises a set of closely-related chapters that explore the strategic alternatives and ambiguities that confront aspirant academics in religion. The overt agenda of the volume is to re-establish the comprehensive role and priority of theory as organisationally entrenched in the North American Association for the Study of Religion (NAASR) and the journal Method and Theory in the Study of Religion (MTSR) over against what the main contributors regard as the proliferation of ‘method and theory’ courses in a wide range of teaching settings. This is purportedly an exercise in unmasking the deception that dilutes the truly critical theory that ought to inform the idea of ‘critical religion’.
With regard to its origins, the NAASR can be understood as a protest movement that established itself against the field dominance of the American Academy of Religion (AAR). At this juncture, the NAASR is now obliged to redefine its boundaries if it is to preserve its mission in the face of the ongoing dilution of theory imperative. The loss of rigour and vigour made manifest in the spread of ‘method and theory’ courses across many sectors of tertiary teaching and learning is evident not only in departments of religion but also in seminary programmes where theology is taught: this dilution must be challenged. If such widely dispersed developments were genuine and authentic, then there would be no need for the NAASR and MTSR; thus Theory in a Time of Excess addresses this existential threat. It is not, however, just theory which is under threat, it is also a matter of the economic survival of those who might resist the wider assimilation of theory.

Aaron Hughes argues that the appearance of ‘theory and method’ modules in many course plans has to be juxtaposed with the true demands of theory. He constructs a dilemma: “Either the field of religious studies is the most sophisticated in the humanities or the term ‘theory and method’ so transparent and amphibolous as to render it useless” (Hughes 2017: 1). The ironic tone of the first arm of the dilemma indicates that, as Hughes maintains, the expanded field is unhealthy and lacks work that is “critical, self-reflexive, interested in the genealogy of terms, and engaged in the analysis of social actors and social facts” (ibid.). As regards the scenario outlined in the previous section of this chapter, Theory in a Time of Excess can be understood as an attempt to renew and reinforce a distinct product ‘brand’, the success of which in the field of study marketplace has led to widespread imitation and inauthentic reproduction.

A price has to be paid for such a pure juxtaposition of excluded possibilities; the greater a stress upon a distinctive received identity, then the less it might be relevant. What Hughes denounces is that there are those, not a few, who deny the excluded middle, and resort to a via media. Hughes argues that a mediating axiom creeps back into use as proponents build bridges that dilute and subvert the purity of theory, and most objectionably assert the category of the ‘sacred’:

What does exist [sic], is a field whose members regularly make appeals to the “sacred,” seeking to show how religion intersects with diverse topics that often include social justice, environmental stewardship, and interfaith dialogue. Rather than have an entire field engaged in theory what we really have is the conflation of various ecumenical concerns and a now largely innocuous concept of theory (ibid.).
The latent Marxism within the MTSR standpoint surfaces when Hughes asserts the need for a distinction between ‘theory’ in its diluted and debased form as accommodation, and ‘critical theory’, albeit “understood a little more broadly than the Frankfurt School” (Hughes 2017: 2). The correct approach is presented in a rather oblique way that itself invites analysis:

Everything is a theory in the sense that there is no theory-less based knowledge. But not all theory is critical and by this I mean that it is not engaged in the systematic rethinking (i.e. theorization) of an object of study – in our case “religion” – as opposed to further reification (ibid.).

Decoded, this would suggest that the price of the survival of the ‘critical’ standpoint (and thus of posts and careers) is the relentless assertion of theory in its uncompromising purity together with the deconstructive reduction of key categories so as to prevent ‘reification’.

A scenario takes shape that comprises both a Marxist critique of reification and analytical reductionism in the Humean or Derridean traditions. This alliance simultaneously retains an ambitious claim to remain engaged in ‘systematic rethinking’, an assertion that may itself lead to further problems. In effect ‘the real’ is in danger of becoming the by-product of theory, and current difficulties in addressing all manner of ‘others’ may be reinforced. Paradoxically, whilst there may be ‘no theory-less based knowledge’, this can amount to a denial of reportable access to the ‘otherness’ of both self-experience and other selves. This kind of strategy resonates strongly with influential late twentieth century appropriations of Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Mind* (1807) by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978) and George Steiner in his T.S. Eliot Memorial Lectures, *In Bluebeard’s Castle* (Steiner 1971), that reify otherness and a ‘dialectic of aggression’, respectively. This is a nugatory trap out of which it is our responsibility to break, and its exposure and critique should be both an organisational imperative and individual moral obligation in higher education in the Anglophone world.

The prominent scholars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries took full advantage of privilege, both as regards the safety of travel in a time of empire and with respect to seeking to understand non-Western ‘others’. The Orientalist critique can be justified in its onslaught on the judging eye that projects meaning upon a subject ‘other’. When, however, such a stance is theorised as an unchallengeable transcendental principle, then it can become the justification of a retreat from the effort required to engage with the other, and thus lead to an undialectical capitulation to the self-assertion of the other. The complex reality of such involuted encounters is
exposed and analysed in, for example, Hugh B. Urban’s account of the history and representations of the goddess Kali in tantric traditions both in India and Euro-America (Urban 2003).

Key figures like Zaehner, Eliade and Smart benefited from extraordinary personal careers in the fragmentation of empire, yet these were engagements undertaken in ways that subvert their depiction as naïve agents of oppression foisting meaning onto subject minds. The subsumption of all such efforts under the label of ‘orientalism’ or ‘post-colonialism’, and their integration into an ideology of theoretical rectitude threatens the very possibility of communication. The trenchant exploration of the origins and use of such basic categories as ‘religion’ and the ‘sacred/secular’ dichotomy by Timothy Fitzgerald (2007) successfully amplifies and illuminates the difficulties of representation, but does not resolve them. Now, furthermore, the ‘critical’ stance is no mere pedagogical problem, but a less than adequate response to a world of multiple crises inflamed by a range of (highly debated) ‘fundamentalisms’.

One of the truly critical demands of the present time is to consider how best to resist a relapse into impotence in the face of ‘the other’. Informed empathic phenomenology may be terminally difficult to justify as a strategy undertaken in isolation, but the axiomatic denial of its very possibility is to be resisted. Theory in a Time of Excess provides useful insights into the various methodological ways now being deployed across the field of the study of ‘religion’, above all in the development of cognitive and neuroscientific approaches to complex and differentiated psycho-social phenomena. Whilst this is an important development (and connected to the Cognitive Science of Religion), this strategy can also be seen as a gambit that refracts the exigencies of self-preservation. The ad hominem attacks in Theory in a Time of Excess directed against senior figures in the American Academy of Religion represent the latter as having sold out inauthentic demonstrations of the relevance of their expertise to current concerns in order to attract funding. They are thus deemed to have failed to adhere to the true critical project safeguarded by the NAASR and MTSR. Yet competitive fund-raising to support research is the near universal sine qua non of survival in both junior and senior posts, and the status and ideological orientation of all research outcomes merits careful consideration.

In the United Kingdom it is apparent that careers are on the line when there is an outright contradiction between the tendency to assimilate research and teaching into utilitarian and ‘impact’ agendas, and an opposing move to consolidate and defend deconstructive ‘critical’ analysis. Commodification, self-marketability and branding are the backdrop to any attempt to engage with the field in general, or with the characteristics of any
particular topic in its relevant locale. What, given the dilemma outlined by Aaron Hughes, might be such an alternative “systematic rethinking (i.e. theorization) of an object of study – in our case ‘religion’ – as opposed to further reification” (Hughes 2017: 2)? An answer to this question first requires a brief visit to the historical background to the present contested dichotomy between ‘theology’ and ‘religious studies’.

6 Historical background: the ‘enlightened’ curriculum and the differentiation of the ‘human sciences’

The problem of the contested relationship between theology as inherited from the medieval university curriculum and modified at the time of the Reformation (Andresen) and the modern study of religion construed as a human activity evident in diverse forms across many cultures has an extensive history. Of great importance is the debate between Schleiermacher and Wilhelm von Humboldt concerning the place of theology within the faculties of the first and prototypically modern, research-based University of Berlin (Roberts 2006: 122–130). It can be argued from the side of ‘theology’ that despite von Humboldt’s allocation of this ancient discipline to its own faculty separate from the Geisteswissenschaften, Schleiermacher’s sensitivity to all aspects of the German Enlightenment and Romanticism besides his wider-ranging scholarly achievement permitted him to comprise both theology and the human sciences. More specifically, Schleiermacher’s intellectual trajectory combined both a proto-phenomenology of religious experience in the Speeches on Religion to its Cultured Despisers (Reden) (1799 ff.) and a ground-breaking and highly consistent systematic theology in The Christian Faith (Glaubenslehre) (1831). So conceived, Schleiermacher’s life-work can be regarded as a thwarted attempt to integrate theology within the conspectus of the Geisteswissenschaften, despite the institutional faculty displacement.

Two broad streams flow from the early 1830s through the nineteenth century. Efforts at their re-combination were not only ideologically problematic, but also reflect the overall problem of interdisciplinarity in an era of disciplinary/subdisciplinary proliferation. The present writer’s approach

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7 The terms ‘les sciences humaines’ and ‘die Geisteswissenschaften’ in French and German contexts respectively have an established status radically different from the British agenda set by the scientist and novelist C.P. Snow’s argument in his influential 1959 Rede Lecture, The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution.
to both the historical and the contemporary complexities has been to use rhetorical theory, both classical and as rehabilitated in Perelman and Tyteca’s (1973) nouvelle rhétorique, so as to make sense of the struggle for grounded discourse and convincing topoi (Roberts and Good 1993).

Rhetorical theory can be applied historically and deployed in relation to the contemporary development of a standpoint capable of meeting some of the demands of those who strive for theory that might break out of claustrophobic confines of serial deconstruction of categories in ‘religious studies’.

One consequence of the separation of the faculties was to facilitate nineteenth century theological protectionism. In summary terms, the defence of theological redoubts by Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox ecclesiastical authorities preserved the identity of, for example, the doctrine of God, but did so at the expense of existential immediacy for a wider populace. The latter countered this isolation through the emergence of new (or rediscovered) forms of piety and spiritual practice (Roberts 2017). The history of nineteenth century theology as thought systems is well documented, but consideration on the basis of sociological, and ever more relevantly, anthropological insights is less forthcoming. The present polarisation between ‘theology’ and ‘religious studies’, or to use a preferred term, the ‘critical study of religion’, tends to reinforce longstanding institutional and ideological dichotomies originating in the early nineteenth-century: this should be challenged.

Whilst theologians continued their task through the contextualised repetition of the traditional loci of systematic theology, a process of disentangling and opening up to examination of the perceived components of religious activity took place, of which the most pertinent example is the development of the phenomenological representation and the psychological understanding of religious experience. In the work of, for example, the German Lutheran theologian and comparativist Rudolf Otto (who was influenced by Kant, Schleiermacher and Jakob Fries), the founding father of American psychology William James (1842–1910), then later the Romanian scholar Mircea Eliade (1907–1986), and the British scholars R.C Zaehner (1913–1978) and Ninian Smart (1927–2001) impressive but not unproblematic efforts were made to locate, establish and specify the core funda-

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8 The definition of the terms ‘humanities’, ‘human sciences’, ‘les sciences humaines’ and ‘Geisteswissenschaften’ is explored in the introduction to Roberts and Good (1993).
mentals of religious experience. That is, of course, if there are such characteristics.

7 The quest for theory in a contested field

These emergent strands are indicative of the great historical and contemporary complexity that overshadows the ongoing debate on the status of critical theory reported and asserted in *Theory in a Time of Excess*. This context was addressed on a broad front in the three volume Lancaster-based collection, *Nineteenth Century Religious Thought in the West* (Smart et al. eds. 1985–88). As, however, the present writer pointed out in an article review, the project lacked comprehensive integrative theoretical perspectives (Roberts 1987). The collection did, however, mark a high point in the history of a project that was liberal in conception and based on assumptions about the accessibility of religious experience. Smart’s initial six dimensions of “religion”, “ritual”, “mythological”, “doctrinal”, “ethical”, “social”, and “experiential” (Smart 1969: 15–25) were underpinned by his advocacy of empathy and phenomenology. Later in *The World’s Religions*, Smart introduced a seventh ‘material’ dimension and expanded the titles of the other dimensions: the Practical and Ritual, the Experiential and Emotional, the Narrative or Mythic, the Doctrinal and Philosophical, the Ethical and Legal, the Social and Institutional, and finally the Material dimension (Smart 1989: 12–21). The “artistic” was allocated to the material dimension (ibid. 25). The absence of any overall unifying narrative or comprehensive theory was not of critical importance at a time in which the world religions could be explored through an informed celebration of diversity, rather than through the analysis of a residual human pathology.

Given the evident contrast between the relative optimism of the second half of the twentieth century and the present era of pathologically dangerous developments, there is a need for explanatory renewal that might begin to meet the legitimate demands of stakeholders including undergraduate students, researchers, teachers at secondary and tertiary levels, besides a wider public requiring insight into both toxic religiosity and the expanded global marketplace of spiritualities. The task now is to construct approaches that afford discursive and methodological space for understanding the polyvalent role of ‘religion’ and its cognate phenomena in terms of both the power of social construction and the quest for individual and collective agency.

It ought now be clear that there is a longstanding and problematic tension between ‘theology’ and ‘religious studies’, made all the more in-
tractable by an expanding range of contingent factors not encountered by earlier generations of scholars and thinkers in both contexts. Thus, not least, globalisation and the ‘glocal’, the information revolution and the power of virtual reality, the impact of artificial intelligence, the revival of ultra-nationalist populism, religiously justified violence, the global spiritual marketplace, amplified awareness of the liquefaction of gender, conflict over sexual orientation resisted by religious conservatives the world over, and ecological piety, deliver difficulty upon an unprecedented scale. How might we conceptualise the ‘return of religion’, or more appropriately of the ‘religious’ factor (often in toxic forms), when the quest for a pure critical theory would appear to bind theoretical insight to the protection of threatened academic and personal identities thus imperilling societal relevance and appropriate pedagogical practice?

8 The secularisation paradigm and the quest for a unified field theory

In terms of the assertion of a comprehensive critical perspective, secularisation theory inherited the nineteenth century sociological narrative in which religion could be understood in causal terms and be construed as a pre-modern phenomenon that would become progressively marginal and eventually expire. When, however, secularisation theory is represented as a ‘paradigm’, it can be understood as undergoing progressive attrition in the sense classically argued for by Thomas S. Kuhn. As an explanatory hypothesis, secularisation theory is heading towards a crisis of transition amounting to a “paradigm shift” (Kuhn 1962: 84–91).

Secularisation theory has, however, remained extraordinarily durable and its role sustained as what amounts to a core topos, indeed an ideology that unifies and legitimates an ongoing subdiscipline well supported by a range of vested interests. Whether this approach serves as a satisfactory basis for interpretation of the present explosive salience of religion in the world system is, however, another matter. This is not least because the secularisation debate central to this tradition was built upon basic assumptions that the pre-modern residuum represented by ‘religion’ would undergo progressive marginalisation and decline. Steve Bruce stands out as the uncompromising defender of the theory, and explicitly asserts the status of the secularisation theory as a “paradigm” (Bruce 2006: 35). In the face of sustained attempts to maintain sociological hegemony and confronted by the sheer mass of phenomena is the quest for unified field theory for the study of religion a superfluous aspiration?
The sociologist Roland Robertson was the first internationally important figure to assert the need for a radically new approach in the face of the inadequacies of the secularisation theory. Robertson asserted that globalisation should be made the “central concept” (Robertson 1992: 57–94). The displacement of an ageing paradigm and its supplanting with globalisation theory has, however, presented considerable, possibly insurmountable difficulties in attempts to connect an extremely high level of generalisation, putative universality and many-layered structure of globalisation with the particularities of the local. The ground-breaking work of Robertson, that of the leading German-Canadian sociologist Peter Beyer (1994, 2006), and the more recent collection edited by Csordas (2009), all demonstrate that there are acute problems in selecting and applying intermediate categories, relevant ‘middle axioms’ that might bridge the gulf between the extreme generality of grand theory that seeks to conceive of the world as a single place and the complexities presented by the global/local (‘glocal’) matrix in any locale.

As the present writer argued in Religion, Theology and the Human Sciences, cultural theory has not simply interpreted change but has actually been prefigured by fiction, as seen, for example, in the concepts of ‘Gibsonian space’ and Cyberpunk in effect derived from the work of the Canadian-American science fiction novelist William Gibson (Gibson 1984; Roberts 2001: 283–287). A further complicating factor to be taken into account in any adequate treatment of the religio-spiritual dimensions of the world system as they have evolved over the past two decades include the proliferation of theories of modernity, seen not least in an extended discussion of the “postmodern condition” (Jean-François Lyotard [1979] 1984), the “condition of postmodernity” (David Harvey 1992), later “post-post-modernity” (Braidotti 2005), and now the “post-human” (Katherine Hayles 1999). Debates have taken place on social construction and agency, the foregrounding of the ‘turn to the self’ in the context of ‘soft capitalism’, postcolonial theory and hybridity, and a prolonged pre-occupation with social and individual identity. Above all, in Europe and Anglo-America what this author has characterised as ‘managerial modernity’ has colonised and commodified both the public and private spheres and imposed acute pressures upon agency and self-identity, and this has had a negative impact upon the enhanced critical reflexivity that should to inform academia (Roberts 2004b).

Taken together, such theoretical developments should be taken into account in the study of the religious factor in the contemporary socio-cultural ‘glocal’ matrix. Both the pursuit of theology and the study of religion suffer from their relative isolation from the wider setting of the history of
the human sciences (les sciences humaines, die Geisteswissenschaften) associated with the development of the modern university, from the early nineteenth century onwards. In this setting ‘theology’ can be construed as the informed discourse of competent bearers of tradition who expound and relate its beliefs and practices to the context of the faith community to which they belong. This is obviously not the critical study of religion pursued in the manner required by adherents of the NAASR or Method and Theory, but the a priori assertion of an unbridgeable distance between these projects of inquiry does not well serve the demands of the overall field of study now afflicted by multiple crises in which ‘religion’ is a polyvalent factor.

9 An alternative approach?

The present extremely complex, even overwhelming situation suggests the need for viable and effective strategies capable of representing the matrix of religion, culture and society. Such an ambition rests upon certain assumptions about the interfusion between ecology and the world system in what the Club of Rome characterised many years ago as the “global problematic” in their report, The Predicament of Mankind (1970). This interconnection and its implications suggest that ecological anthropology, defined by Patricia Townsend (2009: 104) as “the study of relationships between a population of humans and their biophysical environment” has potential as a resource. This definition taken on its own sounds innocuous enough, but it is the translation of the theory and methods informing such anthropological research from relatively remote contexts and their application to the study of advanced modern societies that provides insights upon which to draw. This resource is not simply practical but ethical, the development of an engaged anthropology.

A highly relevant and compelling theorisation and application of this transposition of theory is to be found in the work of the anthropologist Roy Rappaport. In his posthumously published and contested masterpiece Ritual, Religion and the Making of Humanity (1999), Rappaport (pp. 137 ff.) argued that “ritual is the basic social act” and developed an ambitious theory of ritual, comparable in scale and implications with Durkheim’s achievement at the beginning of the twentieth century. In his introduction to Rappaport’s work Keith Hart claims that Rappaport’s project, “is nothing less than to lay the groundwork for the development of a new religion adequate to the circumstances humanity will encounter in the twenty-first century” (Rappaport 1999: iv). This approach challenges the historic and
contemporary disjunction between ‘theology’ and the ‘critical’ study of religion.

Rappaport stresses the universal function of ritual, but his argument neither reduces nor alienates other categories. On the contrary, he argues for the generative role of ‘ritual and religion’ in social construction. By contrast, we have argued that much theory deployed in both the study of religion and in continuing theological discourse has stressed the difficulties, sometimes terminal, in representing ‘the other’. The burgeoning of ‘postmodern theology’ in the late twentieth century purports to re-emancipate theological discourse, but appears to do so in problematic ways that claims to take theology beyond critique: it is a theology that celebrates its isolation (Roberts 1993). This stance denies and undermines the universals that ought to inform engagement with the realities of a shared and inescapable human-ecological global crisis. The argument that ritual and religion are fundamental to the emergence of humanity itself can serve as a hypothesis that facilitates exploration of the origins, development and present crisis states of what is gathered under the contested heading of ‘religion’ in the global/local matrix.

A second major theoretical bridge between concern with the dichotomy between theology and the study of religion is the long debate on modernity. For present purposes the ‘moments’ (Momente) of pre-modernity, modernity, and representations of the postmodern and ‘post-postmodernity’ are not to be understood in a strict sequential format in diachronic terms, but as compounded with synchronic factors. Each *topos* in an account of ‘religion’ may present itself with factors assimilable to one or other of these ideal-typical representations of the modernity matrix. Taken in isolation such a degree of abstraction is intimidating. The *topoi*, the focal points of a comprehensive analysis of the differentiated religious factor require a structure that incorporates the ‘from above’ of globalisation, sociological and anthropological ‘grand theory’, and a ‘from below’ located in anthropology and ethnography that focuses upon ritual processes, human communities, bodies and minds and their role in ecological and social adaptation. The history of the socio-scientific study of religion is intimately connected with the Enlightenment project, responses to the French Revolution, the onset of industrialisation, the eclipse of tradition and grand narratives, as well as the growth of the disciplines of the human and social sciences in the nineteenth century. Early anthropology and sociology of religion have to be understood against the background of a growing legitimation crisis that was a central concern of the ‘founding fathers’ of sociology (Marx, Weber and Durkheim). The increasing isolation of the religious dimension (and not least theology) from central issues in social science and
the ‘human sciences’ (Geisteswissenschaften, les sciences humaines) was not least the consequence of the role the analysis of religion played in the development of the thought of these key figures.

The relative isolation of the empirical study of religion (later formalised in the ‘history of religions’ and the ‘phenomenology of religion’), and their growing distance from formal anthropology and sociology concerned with ‘culture’ and ‘society’, respectively, have been explained in a variety of ways. In the recent work of Gavin Flood, for example, there is a standpoint that, whilst modified and augmented remains within textual and phenomenological traditions, still owes a measure of allegiance to Ninian Smart (Flood 2012: 81). Flood draws attention to the potential relevance to the study of religion of the renewal of French Phenomenology in the work of, for example, Claude Romano (2015), and of German research on social cognition by Kai Vogeley (his article in Vogeley et al. eds. 2008) and Gary Bento (et al. 2013).

At the turn of the millennium some religious activity could still be understood as a substitute for political action and/or deviance driven by dispossesssion and marginalisation and as challenged by the growth of activist Pentecostalism, liberation theology (both in the late seventies and eighties) and Shi‘ite fundamentalism in Iran and then in other forms of radical conservatism. Religious fundamentalism is now a global phenomenon, apparent in Christian, Jewish, Islamic and Hindu forms. The construction of typologies of the interpretations of global fundamentalism understood in relation to the analysis of theories of modernity affords some insight into the operation of the contemporary religious field. The mutations of violent fundamentalism drawing justification from monotheism cannot be subsumed into consideration of world system and globalisation theory, or indeed into what Martin Riesebrodt depicted as a ‘patriarchal protest movement’. Recent pathological developments in religious fundamentalism, and the cultivation of an eschatology of death sharpen questions concerning sustainable human development. As long ago as 1993 the Swiss theologian Hans Küng presented a declaration Toward a Global Ethic at the Parliament of the World’s Religions in Chicago (Küng 1997; Roberts 1995) and posed the question as to whether there are any human universals that can unify humankind in the face of systemic crisis. The anthropologist Roy Rappaport and others suggest that this is possible and indeed necessary. Urgent and prescient insight is now reinforced by desperate need.

The organisational and societal discernment and management of the construction of identity, both individual and collective, is a major dimension of the exercise of power. The proliferation and deployment of techniques of identity construction in a ‘performance culture’ and the emer-
gence into awareness of what, from a Neo-Durkheimian standpoint, can be represented as an immanent sublime, the ‘Performative Absolute’, the *hegemon* enacted by HRM. Many ambiguous phenomena arise with regard to agency and the integrity of the self. Whilst sociologists like Steve Bruce have written extensively on the decline of religion and the inexorable progress of secularisation, the rejection by such writers of the relevance of inner states as not empirically verifiable and therefore insignificant is problematic. In this setting such conceptions as “Self religion” (Heelas 1991) and the “spiritual revolution” (Heelas and Woodhead 2005) can be understood as defensive inner emigration in the face of totalising reality, or indeed as displaced self-maximisation. Now, however, the societal reality of the exceptionally widespread deployment of spiritual techniques in organisations and the workplace is but one aspect of a preoccupation with embodied selves, ‘mindfulness’, and ‘wellbeing’ that has moved from marginal ‘alternative’ status to become mainline.

Recent theories of the space/time matrix allow for a closely focused analysis of the modernity/postmodernity interface and the exploitation by the theory and practices of managerialism of post-human vulnerability with the still significant disintegration of traditions and ‘grand narratives’. A comprehensive account of the persistence of main-line religion, contemporary religious resurgence, innovative spiritualities, and quasi-religiosity should include analysis of degrees of correspondence and the elective affinities between the fluidity and transformations of spatiality and temporality (seen most notably in space/time compression) and corresponding characteristics in the traditional, de-traditionalised and re-traditionalising aspects of world religions and religiosities. Understood as a differentiated function of space-time matrices, the reconstitution of ‘the sacred’ might thus be placed in a shared framework in relation to other defining features of the contemporary categorial manifold, and not simply be dismissed by ‘critical’ theory as an illicit reification of camouflaged interests.

The development of feminist and gender theory within theology (or *thealogies*) and contemporary spiritualities represents a critically important response to patriarchal consciousness and a central impulse in the evolution of gender studies. What is striking is that the intensification encouraged within theology/thealogy takes such theory in directions that illuminate the mainstream discussion. The transformations of space and time, the impact of information technology and virtual reality, the mutability of ‘the human’, and the onset of the ‘post-human’ pose extraordinary questions as to how the religious factor affects, and is affected by such developments. Thus when seen in the setting of globalisation, the modern/postmodern matrix, feminist and gender theory, the proliferation of virtual re-
alities and the cyborg, and the wider dialectics of the cultural turn, the question of identity crisis cannot be adequately represented by simplistic notions of ‘life-style choice’. A battle for agency and the right to individual identity is taking place from which the theoretically and empirically informed study of religion and religiosities must not be excluded.

A further indication of the need to relocate the critical study of religion in sustained dialogue, indeed patterns of partnership, with the human and social sciences emerges when, to take a concrete example, consideration of the contested genealogy of ‘charisma’ and the juxtaposition of ancestral and postmodernising cultural factors in the debate on ‘primal religion’, global (neo-) shamanism and techniques/technologies of ecstasy is contextualised in the sociology of nature articulated by, for example, Klaus Eder (2009; cf. Roberts 2004a) and in the eco-philosophy of Bruno Latour (2017). The anthropologist Charles Lindholm (1993) argued that behaviour that manifests itself in ‘charisma’ has affinities with pre-modern ‘shamanism’ in predecessor cultures. The former has to be controlled and moreover repressed in ‘modernity’ because it lacks the appropriate community of interpretation and containment. Lindholm’s archaeology of ‘charisma’ and his assertion of its qualified identification with ‘shamanism’ is contestable. It is, however, a compelling example of the kind of work that locates debate concerning a classic component of the explanation of ‘religion’ outside the ghettoised enclave of religious studies constructed within a quasi-sacralised redoubt of pristine critical theory. Furthermore, the affinity between primitive and contemporary techniques (and technologies) of ecstasy can be related to basic questions as to the viability of human community in ‘post-emotional society’ where there is an equally problematic ‘disappearance of the sacred’ as highlighted by Stjepan Mestrovic (Mestrovic 1997). This kind of wide-ranging work is genuinely cross-disciplinary and returns the reader to the classic territory of religious studies and into a re-examination of primal origins beyond the misleading factors in the work of such figures as Eliade. The kind of engagement just outlined impinges upon the real world of multiple crises in which humankind has to find ways of surviving. The study of religion so conceived is pertinent and exciting for researcher and student alike.

10 Conclusion

In this chapter we have tried to show that whilst the field of ‘religious studies’ in its early forms was the product of magisterial and privileged scholarship, by contemporary standards it was under-theorised. Subsequent re-
Responses to these earlier generations range from a range of reductionisms to the proclamation of a purportedly interest-free and pure ‘critical theory’. Now, however, all parties are enmeshed in strategies of economic survival that, whilst camouflaged, may nonetheless promote inadequate engagement with the demands of the contemporary world crisis. Given a lack of engagement with the latter, it is hardly surprising that financial support is withdrawn from the field of academic enterprise comprised under the term ‘religious studies’.

An approach to the study of religion more informed by the social and human sciences of the kind outlined in this chapter might serve to decipher the ambiguous encoding of religio-spiritual field. A crucial step in reconceiving the role of religious dimension in the re-making of humanity demands a recovery of informed inwardsness and the development of the critically engaged but empathic ethnographic self. The defence and assertion of agency in the face of managerialism as all-invasive global ideology (Entemann 1993)9 depends upon this form of engagement, and the genuinely critical study of ‘religion’ in its diversity might once again serve such emancipatory understanding. It is, however, in the interest of global capitalism to exclude by all means, permissible or, if need be, unethical, any transcendental principles that purport to outflank its hegemony. The critical study of religion has to recognise that the critique and relativisation of the hegemonic power that seeks to achieve full spectrum dominance of human existence should be an end served by both it and indeed ‘theology’. The critique of ideology and of idolatry are, in the final analysis, aspects of a shared reality. These enterprises can and ought to be dedicated toward the shared goals of understanding and emancipation that lie at the core of true enlightenment.

The representation of the study of religion as merely the causal and analytical reduction of a pathological residuum of pre-modernity, the illicit reification of false consciousness, or the skilled commodification of solace in the face of multiple societal stresses is to sidestep and evade into the investigation of the conditions of the very making of humankind. Comprehensive crisis demands the individual and communal rediscovery and ownership of global indigeneity. This takes us into the consideration of human adaptation, and the ongoing task imposed by the gift and burden of reflexivity itself. To go any way towards achieving this goal, both the study of

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9 Interestingly, Entemann’s basic argument that managerialism in some way succeeds capitalism, socialism and democracy requires revision in that capitalism now fully harnesses managerialism.
religion and the critical reflexivity of engaged theological traditions should lie firmly within the multi-disciplinary remit of the human sciences, indeed of science itself.

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