



HISTORISCHE **BELGIEN**FORSCHUNG

3

Diana Miryong Natermann

Pursuing Whiteness in the Colonies

Private Memories from the Congo Free State
and German East Africa (1884–1914)

Herausgegeben vom Arbeitskreis
Historische Belgienforschung im deutschsprachigen Raum

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To Marijn

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1. Introduction

“A man sows what he reaps. In reality, the Free State is the root cause of the uprisings. It is strange that people who claim to be civilised think they can treat their fellow man – even when he is of a different colour – any which way. The late Mr Rommel was without doubt one of the most ill-famed colonials. One shall not speak ill of the dead, but I feel obliged to mention a few details that prove the validity of the rebellion. [Rommel] threw innocent women into prison when the men refused to transport goods for him and sell him wares under market value. [...] He even shamelessly kidnapped girls from our mission school [...] to do the most unspeakable things with them”.¹

Ever since I first read this statement by the Swedish missionary Börrisson, I wanted to discover more about the inadequacy of the seemingly typical black-and-white depiction of the coloniser-colonised binary, which increasingly lost its clarity with almost all of the sources. The quotation relates to the uprisings of indigenous colonised in the Congo Free State (CFS) after many years of maltreatment, forced labour, and human trafficking. During those uprisings, the Belgian officer Rommel was killed and Börrisson wrote about the events in his letters to his congregation in Sweden. What struck me most after reading Börrisson’s public criticism of another white man was his obvious sense of divided loyalties. On the one hand, Börrisson saw the benefits of his superior position and accepted colonialism as a tool for his missionary activities. On the other hand, he also criticised the arrogant and racist behaviour of a fellow white man.

The men and women who worked in Leopold’s unlawful, although internationally accepted, colony repeatedly found themselves in situations of cultural in-betweenness.² The spotlight is directed at unknown people who concerned themselves with foreign civilisations and eventually found themselves living in between cultures, religions, nationalities, continents, and languages. One way to prevent a loss of cultural identity was to adhere to a constructed white culture whilst in Africa. These white colonisers came from different walks of life and I became increasingly engaged with accounts that discussed their identities, lives, and experiences in sub-Saharan Africa. I wanted to know more about the many facets of white colonisers in Africa and increased the data group to individuals who worked either in the CFS or German East Africa (GEA). The initial question was how to explain the disregard of

1 C. N. Börrisson, 2. February 1894, *Missionsförbundet 1894*, 132–134; Adam Hochschild, *Schatten über dem Kongo. Die Geschichte über eines der großen, fast vergessenen Menschheitsverbrechen*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2000), 180–81.

2 The term in-betweenness, as I define it, is comparable to the sensation of sitting between two (or more) chairs. The agent is torn between, for instance, different cultures, races, nation-states, or languages. This experience of being ‘in-between’ could cause confusion and feelings of being overwhelmed by the various multi-faceted impressions that came upon the coloniser in Central Africa. This particular confrontation often resulted in a desire to enforce one one’s identity, race, and culture, etc. more extremely than in Europe to avoid confusion or the impression of illoyal behaviour towards the homeland.

supposedly civilised people for the humanity and lives of others on the basis of race, ethnic background, religion, or other factors. This query, however, soon changed to the truly important question of how a sense of both racial and cultural whiteness featured in the lives of the colonisers and the manner in which they recorded them in their private memoirs. Moreover, did the creation of their white identities still have an influence on our world today?

Considering their lack of imperial experience, a question arises about how Belgians, Germans, and Swedes lived in the sub-Saharan colonies. How did they perceive their own identities in this period of new imperialism?³ It was a period later known for its contrasting cultural and social ideas as well as the creation of racial standards that would be used as excuses for the penetration of central-African territories. Late nineteenth-century Europeans, who lived in an increasingly secular post-Enlightenment and post-French Revolution Europe, demonised slavery, demanded general voting rights, and praised equal rights for all. Still, despite the *zeitgeist's* tendencies, people with these beliefs implemented and adhered to laws based on skin colour that allowed for forced labour and economic wars on the sub-Saharan continent. By analysing egodocuments through the lens of whiteness studies, I will juxtapose white and black while examining how 'young' colonial territories led colonisers to either confront or enhance their contemporary European cultural beliefs and how they portrayed these memories in their private writings.

Belgium and Germany were, relatively speaking, imperial amateurs; the men and women who took on colonial jobs in Africa did not have the luxury of consulting with imperial veterans. Neither empire could supply their fresh imperial employees with advice based on experience nor did they have colonial schools like in Great Britain. Indeed, almost two decades passed before Germany founded comparable schools for women.⁴ The few existing colonial societies in Germany focussed on

3 The third largest national group employed in the CFS were Swedes, because most of them were trained in military or navy schools. Like in Germany, the late nineteenth century brought with it major waves of migration from Europe to other continents (mainly to the USA). Hundreds of Swedish men signed up for employment in African colonies as soldiers, navy personnel, or steamboat mechanics and engineers. Another prominent group was that of Protestant Scandinavian missionaries. For more data on Swedes in Central Africa, see Shirley Ardener, *Swedish Ventures in Cameroon 1883–1923. The Memoir of Knut Knutson*, vol. 4, Cameroon Studies (New York: Berghahn, 2002); Sigbert Axelson, *Culture Confrontation in the Lower Congo: From the Old Congo Kingdom to the Congo Independent State with Special Reference to the Swedish Missionaries in the 1880's and 1890's* (Falköping: Gummeson, 1970); Nils Palmstierna, "Swedish Army Officers as Instructors in African and Asian Countries", *Revue Internationale d'Histoire Militaire*, no. 26 (1967); Harald Jenssen-Tusch, *Skandinaver I Congo* (Gyldendal 1902).

4 Chapter 4 offers more data on the connection between the German woman and preserving German culture abroad. See Anette Dietrich, *Weißer Weiblichkeit. Konstruktionen von ‚Rasse‘ und Geschlecht im deutschen Kolonialismus* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2007); Elizabeth A. Drummond, "Durch Liebe stark, deutsch bis ins Mark: Weiblicher Kulturimperialismus und der Deutsche Frauenverein", in *Nation, Politik und Geschlecht*.

how to convince German politicians to enter the imperial game instead of training future colonisers. Leaving aside successful explorers like Hermann von Wissmann, Henry Morton Stanley, and David Livingstone, the lack of experience meant that no one truly knew what to expect or how to efficiently manage a colony.⁵ Expeditioners like the German Duke Adolf Friedrich zu Mecklenburg who planned and executed research trips to central Africa were even rarer.⁶ Initially, the two empires therefore hired their colonials from the army, navy, private sector, and judicial system to work as military or civil imperial servants. Employee nationalities were not limited to Belgian and German citizenships.

The effects of nineteenth-century ideas linked to racial categories, above all cultural whiteness, have greatly influenced the last two centuries and are still visible. Despite their long-lasting effect, colonial history and whiteness studies have continually ignored each other. During the last decade, the potential of a dynamic interrelationship between these two fields has come under closer scrutiny, but more research is necessary. Most importantly, colonial sources have shown that there was no clear narrative or indestructible binary division between white and non-white. The plan of discovery is therefore twofold. On the one hand, this research compares two young and emerging empires and explores the experiences that shaped the occasionally blurred identities of their employees. The colonisers participated in imperial regimes that were condescending, systematically racist, and claimed a higher moral and civilisational ground than their colonial subjects. On the other hand, this project highlights the real-life experiences of colonials *in situ* and how moments of in-betweenness affected their whiteness. The aim is to study the individual agency of colonisers and the connected creation of new or altered identities. The study of Belgian, German, and Swedish egodocuments⁷ in the CFS and GEA from a trans-

Frauenbewegungen und Nationalismus in der Moderne, ed. Ute Planert (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2000); Birthe Kundrus, "Weiblicher Kulturimperialismus. Die Imperialistischen Frauenverbände Des Kaiserreichs", in *Das Kaiserreich transnational. Deutschland in der Welt 1871-1914*, ed. Sebastian Conrad and Jürgen Osterhammel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004).

- 5 For more data on General von Wissmann, see Hermann Wissmann, *Unter deutscher Flagge quer durch Afrika von West nach Ost: Von 1880 bis 1883. Ausgeführt von Paul Pogge und Hermann Wissmann* (Berlin: Walther und Apolant, 1889); *Meine zweite Durchquerung Aequatorial-Afrikas vom Congo zum Zambesi während der Jahre 1886-1887* (Frankfurt an der Oder: Troqitzsch und Sohn, 1890); N.N., "Hermann von Wissmann", in *Deutsches Kolonial-Lexikon*, ed. Heinrich Schnee (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1920).
- 6 See Mecklenburg, Adolf Friedrich zu. *Ins innerste Afrika: Bericht über den Verlauf der wissenschaftlichen Zentral-Afrika-Expedition 1907/08*. Leipzig: Verlag von P. E. Lindner, 1909; *Vom Kongo zum Niger und Nil, Berichte der deutschen Zentralafrika-Expedition 1910/11*. Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1912.
- 7 Jacques Presser (1899-1970) was a Dutch History professor who proposed the neologism egodocument for diaries, memoirs, private letters, and other forms of autobiographical writing. During the German occupation in the Netherlands, he was dismissed from his

national perspective will support my claims about the importance of implementing cultural whiteness to European colonisers.⁸ By combining the study of egodocuments with whiteness studies, I provide a new lens for the analysis of Belgium's and Germany's imperial pasts.⁹ Furthermore, I advocate "cross-contextualization"¹⁰ in this book by combining whiteness studies with gender, food, and friendship studies.

The time frame of 1884 to 1914 is linked, firstly, to the colonies' respective foundation dates and, secondly, to the outbreak of World War I (WWI), an event which changed the futures of both imperial powers and anyone involved with them. Both colonies therefore shared the same date of origin and imperial inexperience. Nevertheless, the two imperial powers differed greatly in their respective governmental attitudes towards the colonies and their workforces (both indigenous and European). The choice is to apply a broader geographical frame for the historical comparison, although neither a national framework *per se* nor a national paradigm of comparative history is applied.¹¹ Instead, this research employs primary sources to compare the phenomenon of a created white identity amongst colonisers in imperial Africa.

teaching post for being Jewish; however, he continued teaching at a Jewish community school. Anne Frank was one of his pupils and it is partly due to him that her diary was read by his colleague A. Romein-Verschoor, who wrote its introduction. In the post-WWII era, Presser wrote about Dutch Jews during the years of German occupation by taking reports from both victims and Dutch and German Holocaust perpetrators. See Jacques Presser, *Ashes in the Wind. The Destruction of Dutch Jewry* (London: Souvenir Press, 1968). As a contemporary historian, Presser regarded the writing of history as an art form rather than an academic discipline. His focussed on the literary aspect of egodocuments and was *contraire* to the analysis style applied to more official sources in the hierarchy of historical documentation. See Rudolf Dekker, *Egodocuments and History: Autobiographical Writing in Its Social Context since the Middle Ages* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2002); Winfried Schulze, ed. *Ego-Dokumente: Annäherung an den Menschen in der Geschichte*, vol. 2, Selbstzeugnisse der Neuzeit. Quellen und Darstellungen zur Sozial- und Erfahrungsgeschichte (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1996).

- 8 See chapter 2 for the historical background and an analysis of both colonies. Johannes Fabian argued that, despite his detailed work on German-African explorers, more research on European colonisers in Africa with regard to private writings still needs to be done. See Johannes Fabian, *Out of Our Minds: Reason and Madness in the Exploration of Central Africa* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000).
- 9 German and Dutch historians use the term egodocument whilst other regions refer to them as, for example, *écritures ordinaires* (Daniel Fabre in France) or vernacular writings (Great Britain and Sweden). See Daniel Fabre, ed. *Écritures Ordinaires* (Paris: POL/Centre George Pompidou, 1993).
- 10 Sivasundaram pleads that a cross-contextualised approach should include and combine a wider range of sources in the analysis of Asian history of science. His approach was very useful for this project. Sujit Sivasundaram, "Sciences and the Global: On Methods, Questions, and Theory", *The History of Science Society* 101, no. 1 (2010).
- 11 Historians like Michel Espagne criticise comparative history for being bound to nation-states and national self-description. Whilst the sources occasionally need to be analysed within the national frame of the source's author, such an analysis is not used to write na-

The decision to compare the above colonies is due to their proximity and the similarities and discrepancies between them.

The Belgian and German cases resemble each other in many respects, like in terms of their colonial goals and implementation, but there were also moments of utter divergence. The aim of this book is to discover contrasts between the two colonies and the colonisers of the three chosen citizenships as well as to identify possible generalisations about a coloniser's whiteness.¹² Where patterns exist, comparisons can help check generalisations. The comparative observation of specific forms of social behaviour in different central-African colonial communities can help to determine the link between a strict regime and individual agency (or the lack of it) and what influence this link had on the co-development of identity and whiteness.¹³ Patterns of convergence and divergence were related to the broader picture of the growing strength of the nineteenth-century European middle classes and the creation of whiteness as a cultural category.

This research is based on comparing Belgian, German, and Swedish egodocuments for following reasons. The Belgian and German units are related to their geographical locations and to the fact that citizens of both nations represented the majority of colonial employees. These two units are connected through their similar cultural backgrounds and as neighbouring states within Europe and Africa. Since I am asking about the importance of whiteness amongst colonisers, I chose to include Swedish subjects as a third unit of comparison. The goal is to analyse whether the trend of creating a white identity in Africa was limited to the dominant coloniser groups within the CFS or GEA or if it also existed in other European spheres, like in religiously uniform Sweden compared to the multi-confessional societies of Belgium and Germany.¹⁴

The question of cultural transfers between members of the three societies is important as well: how did these flows influence imperial agents and their self-perceptions, if at all? Studying the transfers and connections between these three groups allows us to determine the similarities or differences that resulted from mutual influences or relationships. Despite leaning towards a *histoire croisée* approach

tional history. See Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, "Comparative History – a Contested Method", *Historisk Tidskrift* 127, no. 4 (2007).

12 I refer to the distinctions between the entangled history and comparative history approaches as defined by Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka in Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka, eds., *Comparative and Transnational History. Central European Approaches and New Perspectives* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009).

13 See *ibid.*

14 The mono- and multi-confessional aspect is important because different religions, or interpretations of them, caused differing cultures. Sweden was entirely Lutheran whilst Belgium and Germany had various communities belonging to one of the Protestant beliefs, Roman Catholicism, Ultra Catholicism, Judaism, or even Russian Orthodoxy. Depending on location and religious affiliation, different holidays, fashions, and work ethics existed, which influenced self-perception and the creation or negation of identity markers.

of transfers between societies, the focus lies on the comparison of colonial agents and how they practised a cultural and structured whiteness.

The query into how the people colonising sub-Saharan Africa lived through this age of novel and comparable “cultural processes and practices”¹⁵ still remains open. Belgium and Germany were young nation-states with ambitious monarchs and a steadily ever-increasing degree of industrialisation. The sudden gain of African territories added yet another ingredient to the search for a stable national identity. The long nineteenth century was a time of constant and rapid change that demanded adaptation from millions of Europeans. The challenge is to connect the broader issues – the “stuff of real history”¹⁶ – with the constantly developing judgements of those individuals whose lives were influenced by the colonies. The goal is to identify patterns of behaviour, thought, and descriptions in their personal writings. Did their self-perceptions as bearers of imperialism change over time? Was their whiteness endangered or influenced by being ‘Africanised’?

This book seeks to unravel an experience of in-betweenness that was closely connected to whiteness and to discuss how this feeling was eternalised in private colonial sources. The egodocuments allow for a micro-historical analysis of African imperial realities and how these realities shaped or transformed colonial mindsets. The sources permit me to follow paths laid out by Antoinette Burton and Ann Laura Stoler, who call for a more complex historical analysis of the manifold pasts and histories of colonials *in situ*.¹⁷

The available egodocuments indicate that their authors were more diversified than is allowed by some post-colonial scholars. Edward Said and Frantz Fanon, for instance, described Western colonials in their respective works as groups of people with the same Manichean ideas on racial and cultural issues.¹⁸ By utilising Fanon’s approach in *Les damnés de la terre*, Abdul Jan-Mohamed states that the contemporary construction of a colonial mentality dehumanised non-white people to sanction colonialist actions in Africa that did not concur with white values linked to the ideas of the European Enlightenment, the bourgeois nineteenth-century revolutions, or the *mission civilisatrice*.¹⁹ He concludes that the European colonial mentality was “dominated by a Manichean allegory of white and black, good and evil, salvation

15 Haupt, “Comparative History”, 703.

16 Mary Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives. Generations and Violence through the German Dictatorships* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 12.

17 Antoinette Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Ann Laura Stoler, ed. ‘Mixed-Bloods’ in *Colonial Southeast Asia. In the Decolonization of Imagination: Culture, Knowledge, Power* (London: Zed Books, 1995).

18 See Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (London: Pluto Press, 2008); Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003).

19 See Frantz Fanon, *Les Damnés De La Terre* (Paris: F. Maspero, 1961); Abdul R. Jan-Mohamed, *Manichean Aesthetics: The Politics of Literature in Colonial Africa* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1983).

and damnation, civilization and savagery, superiority and inferiority, intelligence and emotion, self and other, subject and object²⁰. The source base, however, shows the thoughts and actions of colonisers who maintained their independent agencies by, for example, making assessments contrary to the ideologies imposed by their regimes.

Adding to Jan-Mohamed's argument, El Hadj Ibrahima Diop discusses how European enlightenment was tainted by a binary of black/white, brutality/civilisation, wild/refined, and even animal kingdom/humanity.²¹ Diop compares writings from Montesquieu, Voltaire, Kant, and Herder (to name but a few), and then elaborates on how these arguments collectively resound with a racial discourse that supported white Christian superiority. This gives the Enlightenment a white skin colour with strong religious elements.

Unlike both Jan-Mohamed and Diop, Ryszard Kapuściński argues that "in the eighteenth century [began] a gradual, admittedly partial, yet important change in atmosphere and attitude to the Other, to Others, who are usually non-European societies. It is the age of Enlightenment and humanism, and of the revolutionary discovery that the non-white, non-Christian savage, that monstrous Other so unlike us, *is a human being too*"²². Engaging with Emmanuel Lévinas and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Kapuściński made a case for the new ideal of the 'world citizen'. This idea saw the world as a place where all people were equal, even if they were at different evolutionary steps. Respecting otherness did not have to signify identifying with it. Ultimately, Kapuściński criticised the development away from the achievements of the Enlightenment, with its welcoming attitude to other peoples and their cultures, towards one of imperial arrogance and ignorance.²³ He lamented the shift from welcoming the Other to segregating him or her.

In retrospect, the nineteenth century showed that Diop's observation holds true in everyday life. White supremacy impacted upon modern scientific fields like anthropology and ethnology and it influenced how the Christian sense of mission was transformed into a more secular *mission civilisatrice*. Equally true are Anne Stoler and Frederick Cooper's claims about black-and-white colonial encounters being more of an ambiguous grey zone.²⁴ They argue that colonial reality was the result of at least two (racial) cultures, not of white domination alone. This book, does not contest the existence of Manichean patterns of thought among the colonisers; rather, it argues that the views often changed or adjusted after the colonisers' relocations to

20 Jan-Mohamed, *Manichean Aesthetics*, 4.

21 See El Hadj Ibrahima Diop, "Die Hautfarbe der Aufklärung", in *Koloniale und postkoloniale Konstruktionen von Afrika und Menschen afrikanischer Herkunft in der deutschen Alltagskultur*, ed. Marianne Bechhaus-Gerst and Sunna Gieseke (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2006), 45–54.

22 See Ryszard Kapuściński, *The Other* (London: Verso, 2008), 23.

23 See *ibid.*, chap. 2.

24 Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1997).

Africa. New colonial territories, for instance, needed local participation and transfers of knowledge that encouraged interracial exchanges. Differences in this regard might be discernible. Long-standing colonies had had sufficient time to emancipate themselves from the locals and decided to protect their own by using technological advances and segregation laws to prevent indigenous neighbours from gaining power.

Further avenues of investigation were inspired by Maya Jasanoff's *Edge of Empire*, Catherine Hall's *Civilising Subjects*, and Mary Fulbrook's *Dissonant Lives*.²⁵ Jasanoff applies egodocuments to research the lives of three European colonials who crossed borders between the British Empire, India, and Egypt. These men adapted to changes within both metropole and periphery, depending on their personal needs and professional requirements. Their sources survived and their contents do not support the picture of the ignorant white colonial. Moreover, Hall analysed the importance of non-conformists and their roles in the making of empire and the synergy of coloniser and colonised in the mutual creation of new identities. Another aspect is linked to the unpublished egodocuments preserved in European colonial archives. The hitherto absent aspect of colonial gender history and Hall's call for a more open-minded and less politically influenced picture of the abusive colonial provide the background and rationale for this book.²⁶

Fulbrook's work on Germany's twentieth-century history employs private sources to view democratic and dictatorial regimes from within. She claims that, by taking a more fundamental look at the private lives of Germans over a longer time period, the historian can gain a better understanding of how "not only the character of the German state, economy, and social structure changed over the century, but also the very character of people themselves"²⁷. To discover this new understanding of German history, Fulbrook analyses the 'inner eye of history' by focusing on ordinary people and retracing their active choices despite regime constraints. I apply her approach to egodocuments to write history from the inside out, gain a better understanding of the shaping of colonial identities within imperial regimes, and show that certain postcolonial ideas cannot be applied to white colonials as a norm in Belgian-German imperial history. Simultaneously, there is no intention to whitewash former colonials, the regimes that employed them, or their often atrociously inhumane deeds.

The two colonial regimes that are examined had access to limited resources and information: both Belgium and Germany were in charge of large territories and only

25 See Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives*; Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects. Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830–1867* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002); Maya Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire. Lives, Culture, and Conquest in the East, 1750–1850* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005).

26 Catherine Hall, "William Knibb and the Constitution of the New Black Subject", in *Empire and Others. British Encounters with Indigenous Peoples, 1600–1850*, ed. Martin Daunton and Rick Halpern (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 303–24.

27 Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives*, 2–3.

had limited manpower to control and maintain them. On the surface, state officials and employees were racists; nonetheless, the sources also show that colonials on-site were less inherently racist and brutal than was believed in the metropolises. The experiences of the sources' authors made their views more nuanced than the metropole's theories about colonising. In fact, the colonisers' views often related more to ideas regarding a just society than to racist designs. Despite the colonial systems in question, these individuals maintained their independent judgement, which repeatedly gave leeway to certain degrees of acculturation without losing their whiteness.²⁸ One aim is thus to uncover how the authors' opinions changed or acculturated and if their sense of in-betweenness alter their Eurocentric worldview.

1.1 The Importance and Influence of Cultural Whiteness

This book refers to colonisers as white, Christian, or European (this also includes white North Americans). The colonised are referred to as non-whites, Africans, Afro-Arabs, indigenous people, subalterns, or the Others. The terms 'native' and 'black' for Africans or 'Caucasian' for white people are not applied because these terms either have negative connotations or derive from so-called racial science. Moreover, using the term 'black' would suggest that being either black or white (or any other racial colour) was or is a stable concept. Racial concepts are unstable concoctions, particularly because ideas of cultural whiteness are based on a cultural racialisation of being a European Christian. Just as cultural gender constructions of femininities and masculinities have always been unstable and dependent on their time, so too are racial categories.

The construction of whiteness as a means for categorising humans occurred when national groups (German, French, Swedish, French, etc.) joined forces outside of Europe to create a powerful new group. The first powerful occurrence was in the USA in the nineteenth century, but it affected people globally in the long run. Whiteness became an issue when white-skinned people entered the territories of non-whites.²⁹ Whiteness is defined by its juxtaposition to the colonised and is used to justify the economic exploitation of the latter and white domination over non-whites.³⁰ Other historians back this theory by stating that the idea of a white Euro-

28 For accounts of British colonisers 'going native', see Linda Colley, "Going Native, Telling Tales: Captivity, Collaborators and Empire", *Past and Present*, no. 168 (2000).

29 A good example is the migration of numerous Europeans to the USA. Different Europeans closed ranks against Native Americans to conceive of themselves as white people as opposed to being Germans, Swedish, French, etc. Outside of Europe, these people were not English or Spanish; they were white. See Gregory Jay, "Who Invented White People?", in *The Thomson Reader: Conversations in Context*, ed. Robert P. Yagelski (Boston: Thomson/Heinle, 2007), 96–102.

30 See Catherine Hall, "Missionary Stories: Gender and Ethnicity in England in the 1830s and 1840s", in *Cultural Studies*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula Treich-

pean identity relies on the existence of a colonial other.³¹ Whiteness is as much an ideology as a political entity, and it was applied as a tool of power over non-whites in different locations across the world.³² Whiteness refers to a cultural grouping based on post-Enlightenment European-Christian values, not merely skin colour.

Organised white racism against non-whites was a nineteenth-century creation and far more structured than in previous centuries. Contemporary Europe saw the construction of what was considered white in cultural, political, scientific, and religious terms. It is often unclear whether this construction was intentional or if it was a by-product of having previously determined what was dark, i. e. non-white and Otherness was closely linked to the definition of non-white. Yet, there were cases, as with Irish immigrants in the USA or English Jews in South Africa, where being fair-skinned did not suffice for acceptance into the 'white club'. Despite being racially white(-skinned), they needed to prove that their whiteness was both external and internal to be considered white socially and thus profit from the political and economic advantages that came with it.³³ 'White, but not quite' was how those in power initially considered the Irish and the Jews.³⁴ The remarkable trait of whiteness is that it became invisible over time; Spivak referred to it as the "unmarked marker"³⁵. Being white came with automatic privileges. Was whiteness considered the norm, therefore making non-whites aberrations? If this was the case, how did it affect colonials' memories or experiences in Africa?

Deliberate or not, contemporary developments surrounding race created an understanding of white vs. black or light vs. dark. Distinctions used to be based on social class, but the growing power of the bourgeoisie and the increasing debilitation

ler (New York: Routledge, 1992); Kimberley Christensen, "With Whom Do You Believe Your Lot Is Cast? White Feminists and Racism", *Signs* 22, no. 3 (1997).

31 See Nado Aveling, "Reading Whiteness across Different Locations", in *Weiß – Weißsein – Whiteness. Kritische Studien zu Gender und Rassismus/Critical Studies on Gender and Racism*, ed. Gabriele Dietze, et al. (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2006); Hall, "Missionary Stories"; Ruth Frankenberg, "Local Whiteness, Localising Whiteness", in *Displacing Whiteness: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism*, ed. Ruth Frankenberg (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

32 For an introduction into whiteness studies, see Jay, "Who Invented White People?"

33 See Eitan Bar-Yosef, *The Jew in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Culture: Between the East End and East Africa* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

34 On the fabrication of race, see also Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color. European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 1998).

35 The term was coined by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak as cited in Gabriele Dietze et al., "Weiß – Weißsein – Whiteness. Kritische Studien zu Gender und Rassismus", in *Weiß – Weißsein – Whiteness. Kritische Studien zu Gender und Rassismus/Critical Studies on Gender and Racism*, ed. Gabriele Dietze, et al. (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 2006), 8.

of European nobility changed the older social models.³⁶ They were replaced by notions of enlightened vs. backward, modern vs. underdeveloped, and Christian vs. heathen.³⁷ With the creation of whiteness came the conviction that white equalled modern and non-white meant backward. Colonised dark-skinned peoples were thus considered to be in need of development and Western aid. This development inadvertently brought with it a racial aspect to colonisation, one which had not been there to such an extent in previous centuries.³⁸

History “often leaves out the wider context of Europe and the rest of the non-imperial world”³⁹. A significant level of convergence between coloniser and colonised was necessary if colonising was to be a successful endeavour from the coloniser’s point of view. Without convergence, colonisation would have been economically inefficient, perhaps even impossible. Creating intercultural, or rather coloniser-colonised, alliances facilitated the colonial endeavour for agents on the spot by teaching them how to find and retrieve food, communicate with locals, and gather local knowledge.

Belgium and Germany were dependent on the locals’ survival skills when dealing with disease-transmitting insects, knowing which animals and plants were edible, and how to interact with Afro-Arabic and other African peoples. Interpreters and cultural middlemen were equally indispensable. Apart from obvious intercultural conflicts between Europeans and Africans (different gender roles, religious beliefs, and living standards, for example), co-operation often exceeded the degree of mutual opposition. Despite the fact that the balance of power was tipped very much in favour of the white masters, acting jointly with locals facilitated the imperial project and was particularly important in the early stages of colonising new areas. Despite their position at the top of the colonial pecking order, Westerners relied on co-operation with indigenous elites and local communities. Interaction was essential, but it simultaneously imposed exploitation of indigenous peoples. The perception that colonisers remained European does not hold. It is the duality of new identities

36 For a variety of studies concerning the (re)creation of socio-cultural values in the nineteenth century, see Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters. The Social Construction of Whiteness* (London, New York: Routledge, 1993); Volker M. Langbehn, *German Colonialism, Visual Culture, and Modern Memory*, Routledge Studies in Modern History (New York: Routledge, 2010); J.A. Mangan, *Making Imperial Mentalities: Socialisation and British Imperialism* (Oxford: Routledge, 2011); John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth Century Britain. Essays on Gender, Family and Empire* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2005).

37 See Jana Husmann-Kastein, “Schwarz-Weiß. Farb- und Geschlechtssymbolik in den Anfängen der Rassenkonstruktionen”, in *Weiß – Weißsein – Whiteness. Kritische Studien zu Gender und Rassismus/Critical Studies on Gender and Racism*, ed. Gabriele Dietze, et al. (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2006), 43–60.

38 See Radhika Mohanram, *Imperial White. Race, Diaspora, and the British Empire* (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), chapters 1 and 2.

39 Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire*, 4.

on which I elaborate. Of especial interest to me are the moments of either adapting African habits or decisively denying them.

Researching imperialism and culture in nineteenth-century sub-Saharan Africa has also shown how Europeans and North-Americans aggressively implemented Protestant or Roman Catholic cultures in supposedly less civilised areas of the globe.⁴⁰ The *mission civilisatrice*, a popular contemporary buzzword and justification for civilising Africa via Christian beliefs, was repeatedly applied as a smoke screen for entering *terres vacantes*.⁴¹

Civilising Africa needed a sound justification. The ideological aftermath of the Enlightenment era, anti-slavery movements, and increased emancipation in Europe of the lower social strata and female groups had influenced public opinions of colonising. Despite an increase in racist and social Darwinist ideas at the time, colonising Africa needed a moral reason. Justifying a colonial agenda in Africa was achieved by changing the public's opinion on Africa and its peoples. The public image shifted from the romanticised "noble savage"⁴² to that of the brutish and barbaric African, a quintessence of evil incapable of morals and values who needed rescuing by the white man.⁴³ Rudyard Kipling's famous poem *The White Man's Burden*⁴⁴ is a good example of *zeitgeist* literature that informs us of the European's duty to save the "uncivilised, primitive African"⁴⁵. Both fiction and non-fiction painted a one-sided picture of European colonialism, one that emphasised and romanticised its glory while proclaiming the new colonialist venture to be a patriotic duty.

Naturally, the power balance between Europe and its colonies was lopsided; even though colonialism was never a unilateral business. The sources reveal this ambiguity. They present an existence that was filled with inner moral, racial, or political struggles against which colonials were not immune. These struggles impacted the

40 In the late nineteenth century, some US Protestant missionaries participated in the *mission civilisatrice* to convert Africans to Christianity. Simultaneously, the US government discussed with Afro-American church congregations the founding a new African nation state for Afro-Americans named Liberia.

41 For more on the *mission civilisatrice* and the use of *tabula rasa* instead of *terres vacantes* in a German context, see Boris Barth and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds., *Zivilisierungsmissionen. Imperiale Weltverbesserung Seit Dem 18. Jahrhundert* (Constance: Universitätsverlag Konstanz, 2005).

42 Susan Arndt, "The Racial Turn: Kolonialismus, Weiße Mythen Und Critical Whiteness Studies", in *Koloniale und postkoloniale Konstruktionen von Afrika und Menschen afrikanischer Herkunft in der deutschen Alltagskultur*, ed. Marianne Bechhaus-Gerst and Sunna Gieseke (Königswinter: Peter Lang, 2006), 16.

43 On the debate of the noble savage in Enlightenment terms and more on Enlightenment anti-imperialism, see Sankar Muthu, *Enlightenment against Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

44 Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden", (1899). This poem was a response to the American take-over of the Phillipines after the Spanish-American War. See Appendix IV.

45 Arndt, "The Racial Turn", 16.

colonisers daily lives. These sources show a colonial reality that does not fit into the picture of the overbearing white *Übermensch* who used the *mission civilisatrice* as an illusionary pan-European goal to gain riches or experience adventures abroad.⁴⁶ During the twentieth century, views on Western colonialism shifted steadily from justifying foreign imperial encroachments to condemning them. Ironically, the modern condemnation of the atrocities committed, and some colonial discourses connected to it, are occasionally still made from a supposedly superior highground and not as equals. In the past, Western scholars presented European legal systems as a means of bringing the rule of law to non-white peoples and stressing that Africans neither had laws before colonisation nor understood Western judicial systems. This assumption is wrong. The colonised had their own laws, even if they were not engraved in stone or documented on paper. Imperial legal historians have proven that the colonised Others, from the seventeenth century onwards, understood very well the importance and meaning of Western laws and also how to (ab)use them to defend their own indigenous rights and make claims against the colonisers.⁴⁷

As much as the creation of a colony had strong cultural, economic, and social effects on the conquered territory, many colonial powers changed as a result of ongoing interaction with their colonised peoples. Both ends of the colonial endeavour should therefore be seen as one analytical unit.⁴⁸ Ultimately, “European cultural traditions, far from being self-generated, were the product[s] of constant, intricate, but mostly unacknowledged traffic with the non-European world”⁴⁹. Even when this circumstance was unacknowledged by members of colonial powers, Salman Rushdie displays nicely his *Satanic Verses*, how the “trouble with the English is that their history

46 See Hall, *Civilising Subjects*. Fitzpatrick and Monteath argue that the introduction of European work discipline by means of the civilising process was seen as a pan-European task. However, in the German case, its globalisation could not depend on the state until 1884. See Matthew P. Fitzpatrick and Peter Monteath, “Globalising Germany: Exchange Networks in an Age of Nation Empires”, *Itinerario* 37, no. 1 (2013). I chose the term ‘reality’ because the sources’ authors reported to their audience what they thought of as experienced reality. Yet, I am aware of the weight this terms brings with it. The historian Roger Chartier suggested that historians should apply the term ‘practice’ instead. Roger Chartier, *Inscription and Erasure. Literature and Written Culture from the Eleventh to the Eighteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

47 For more on legal claims by indigenous peoples, see the latest work of Saliha Belmessous, *Native Claims: Indigenous Law against Empire, 1500–1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

48 See Cooper and Stoler, *Tensions of Empire*.

49 Peter Hulme, “Subversive Archipelagos: Colonial Discourse and the Break-up of Continental Theory”, *Dispositio* 14 (1989): 6. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that contemporary German scholars had no colonial experience but instead informed the public about its colonies from a theoretical point of view which did not reflect colonial reality. These scholars often denied that interactions between coloniser and colonised happened.

happened overseas so they don't know what it means"⁵⁰. Cultural interdependency was not a coincidental and unwanted by-product, but a necessity for creating and maintaining a colonial hierarchy based on skin colour. Fanon argued that imperial success depended on a racial hierarchy that, from the 1900s onwards, deliberately created an inferiority complex amongst the colonised to dominate them. This cultural interplay caused long-term identity problems and a feeling of duality amongst both colonial groups.⁵¹ Ultimately, "colonizer and colonized were themselves unstable categories with multiple forms"⁵². Nonetheless, creating colonies coincided with making "new subjects, colonizer and colonized". Any form of stability in imperial governance depended heavily on constructing a culture, and "the constitution of new identities, new men and women who in a variety of ways would live with and through colonialism, as well as engaging in conflict with it"⁵³. The treatment of the indigenous peoples often depended on the colonial's choice of career; for example, some missionaries tended to treat their subjects better than soldiers, tradesmen, and imperial officers did.⁵⁴

Ironically, both active and former colonials were referred to as *africains* or *Afrikaner* in Belgium and Germany and both terms had slightly negative connotations. The *africain/Afrikaner* was said to be impure due to his/her exposure to African life and culture; however, reading their egodocuments shows their dedication and loyalty to their respective European homelands.⁵⁵ The sources also portray the measures taken by colonisers to lead a white life in faraway Africa. These testimonies highlight how colonial realities were influenced by human interaction in an inhumane colonial atmosphere and how these opposites made it impossible for the colonials to act according to official European behavioural guidelines for colonisers in Africa.

This research lays bare a vast number of personal statements from colonials about their sub-Saharan lives. Moreover, it proves the colonisers' cultural entanglements and in-betweenness at a time when imperial borders were drawn and new cultures discovered. These private sources are the legacies of colonials who moved

50 Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses* (Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers, 1992), 343.

51 For a post-colonial analysis on how the colonised learned to see themselves only through the eyes of the colonised, see Fanon, *Black Skin*. For more on the discourse about the construction of identity in post-colonial times, see Lacina Yeo, "Die Rehabilitation Subsahara-Afrikas in der deutschen Literatur nach 1960. Ein Beitrag zum postkolonialen Diskurs", in *Koloniale und postkoloniale Konstruktionen von Afrika und Menschen afrikanischer Herkunft in der deutschen Alltagskultur* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2006), 195–213.

52 Hall, "William Knibb and the Constitution of the New Black Subject", 304.

53 Ibid. 303. For a more elaborate use of identity creation, see *Civilising Subjects*. Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question. Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005).

54 See exemplary extracts by Edvard Vilhelm Sjöblom in chapter 4 on this issue.

55 On the dilemma of belonging to different identities depending on geographical location, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Three Ways to Be Alien. Travails and Encounters in the Early Modern World* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2011).

back and forth between occidental and oriental, Christian and heathen, metropole and periphery. By reading between the lines, one discovers more about the effects of hospitality, alcohol, ailments, intimate encounters, cruelty, gender issues, and abuse of power.⁵⁶ The reader is handed a mirror image of everyday life in the colonies. The combination of source material from colonials of different genders, nationalities, and employments allows me to concur with Cooper's demands on how differences between colonial identities need to be emphasised. He stresses the need to focus on processes of self-definition amongst colonised and colonisers, which often took place in personal writings but not in publicly available documents.⁵⁷ The egodocuments provide detailed insights into a variety of different and colourful images of a normal day in the CFS and GEA that depend on the author's gender and occupation.

The colonisers, more often than not, found themselves torn between patriotism and a love for Africa. Being branded as an afroophile (or arabophile) during the mid- and late nineteenth century at a time of nationalising movements was taken seriously and came close to being incriminated with unpatriotic or even subversive behaviour.⁵⁸ Numerous colonials established good contacts, if not friendships, with local tribal or Afro-Arab elites, which resulted in elite-to-elite relationships. Unfortunately, these friendships were destroyed by inevitable economic wars in the CFS and GEA.

Since imperial governments did not approve of close coloniser-colonised relations, colonials 'going native' (*verkaffern*, *verniggern*, or *verkanakern* in German), the metropolises did not object to disturbing established interracial friendships.⁵⁹ Having

56 Stoler's works on intimacy in colonial Indonesia asks why the management of sexual arrangements and affective attachments was so critical to the making of colonial categories and who decided who was ruler and who was not. Stoler shows that matters of the intimate were central to imperial politics since it was the intimate sphere of home and servants where European children experienced what they were required to learn about place and race. Gender-specific sexual sanctions, too, were at the heart of imperial rule, since European supremacy was asserted in terms of national and racial virility. Stoler analyses how cultural competencies and sensibilities entered the construction of race in the colonial context and proposes that cultural racism predates its postmodern discovery. Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley University of California Press, 2002).

57 Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 70–71.

58 An afroophile person was a Western colonial who showed too much private interest and gusto for African peoples and cultures. The same applied to arabophile Europeans who were interested in and respected Arab-Muslim cultures. For more on this topic, see chapters 2 and 4 of Fabian, *Out of Our Minds*.

59 There is a valuable vintage book on colonial agents who adopted Indian dress and religious manners and were then deemed to be relics of a soft and obsolete British approach. See William Dalrymple, *The Last Mughal. The Fall of a Dynasty* (Delhi: Vintage, 1857 (2008)). Jasanoff also elaborated on this particular subject in Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire*.

arabophile sentiments could abruptly end an otherwise successful imperial career.⁶⁰ Apprehension of intimate interracial relationships caused further debates on white supremacy and the fear of creating a new populace that would not only be racially inferior but also potentially insubordinate towards the motherlands. In her works on Dutch sovereignty in Indonesia, Stoler elaborated on the metropole's fear of losing clearly identifiable borders between races (i. e. coloniser and colonised) and how this anxiety was a common colonial phenomenon that also applied to Belgium and Germany.⁶¹ Mixed alliances, especially official marriages and the resulting offspring, were to be avoided for political reasons and to avoid racial and cultural confusion and acculturation amongst a colony's white populace.⁶² The belief was that children of two cultures tended to feel torn between two worlds and were often not at home in either of their parents' heritages.⁶³ National loyalties were therefore linked to race and thought to be unpredictable: colonial governments wanted to prevent disloyal offspring from their own European citizens.

1.2 Why (these) Egodocuments?

Even though Sweden was never directly involved in colonising African territories, the third largest group of nationals in the CFS after the Belgians and Italians consisted of Swedish citizens.⁶⁴ Belgium hired hundreds of Scandinavian colonisers because it needed their nautical and mechanical skills and the Swedes were the largest

60 A famous German example was the traveller and explorer Jerome Becker, who would not back down from friendly relationships with Afro-Arab leaders such as Tippu Tip even though Belgium, Germany, and Great Britain had declared him a *persona non grata*. See Fabian, *Out of Our Minds*, 48–51.

61 Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge*.

62 For more on acculturation processes in colonies, see Peter Burke, *Cultural Hybridity* (Stafford BC: Polity Press, 2009).

63 Even today, people with a mixed heritage spend a large part of their youth and early adulthood figuring out to which race or culture they belong and how to define their identities as a member of multiple groups. Being of mixed race myself, I sympathise with Barack Obama when he spoke about his own memories during his first trip to Kenya and talked to a British co-passenger about apartheid and Africa's sorry state on the plane: "Maybe I was just angry because of his easy familiarity with me, his assumption that I, as an American, even an Afro-American, might naturally share in his dim view of Africa; assumption that in his world at least marked a progress of sorts, but that for me underscored my own uneasy status: a Westerner not entirely at home in the West, an African on his way to a land full of strangers". Barack Obama, *Dreams of My Father* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2008), 374.

64 During the first 25 years of Belgium's colonial activities, ca. 180 Swedes worked in the CFS. After losing its ports to the Netherlands in 1830, Belgium's merchant fleet relied on foreign seamen. Among these were Scandinavian captains, helmsmen, ship carpenters, and machinists. Later these men accepted jobs in the CFS. The same period saw an influx of over a hundred missionaries. A third group consisted of ca. 60 commissioned

national group amongst the Scandinavians. Apart from being from a religiously homogenous society, the reasons for including them are linked to numerous references to Swedish colonisers in various contemporary works on the CFS. And yet, despite this reoccurring phenomenon, Swedish participation in the Congo has been largely ignored by academia.⁶⁵

Moreover, this research explores those imperial egodocuments that portray personal events which often caused internal (emotional) battles and accounts of cultural confrontations as seen through the colonial's eye and how they were reported to their friends and families in Europe.⁶⁶ The contradictory processes within colonials' minds often manifest in their inconsistent statements about the colonial Other, since they simultaneously give and refuse recognition. Their documents show their frames of mind in relation to the empires that employed them, their experiences on-site, and the extent to which personal, political, social, and cultural settings influenced their everyday lives.⁶⁷

and non-commissioned officers. Additionally, about 20 Swedish nationals worked as tradesmen, engineers, doctors, lawyers, or scientists.

- 65 The few publications include: Axelson, *Culture Confrontation in the Lower Congo*; Palmstierna, "Swedish Army Officers"; Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (Rockville (MD): TARK Classic Fiction); Palmstierna, "Swedish Army Officers". Not necessarily relevant here but noteworthy is the fact that Swedish soldiers were also active during the Congo crisis of the early 1960s. See Andreas Tullberg, "'We Are in the Congo Now'. Sweden and the Trinity of Peacekeeping During the Congo Crisis 1960–1964" (Lund University, 2012). A further reason is that the *Riksarkivet* in Stockholm holds a large collection of documents by Swedes who lived and worked in the CFS or other parts of sub-Saharan Africa. The *Riksarkivet*, the Department of Missionary Studies from the University of Uppsala, the *Svenska Missionskyrkan* (Swedish Missionary Church), and the Swedish Institute of Mission Research hold a large amount of data on Swedish colonials in Africa. See Gösta Stenström, *Les Archives De Bruxelles. The Brussels Archives*, ed. Swedish Institute of Mission Research, vol. 27, Missio (Falköping: Svärd & Söner Tryckeri, 2009).
- 66 By degree and intensity, I mean to find out what impact cultural exchanges had on the colonials. I am aware that it is impossible to measure this exactly. Nevertheless, the narrator's style and choice of words or repetitions when relating, for example, a special encounter or experience gives the reader an idea of the importance dedicated to certain people or events.
- 67 My intention was to search for disregarded and (un-)published sources that are mainly known to specialists but not to the broader academic public. None of the chosen sources were written in English, but in French, German or Swedish; this narrows the overall size of its readership group. To make them accessible, I translated fragments of the sources into English. Differences exist according to gender and employment. The sources suggest that male colonisers were more inclined to brag about their experiences in letters and diaries than their female counterparts. A general observation I made is that delicate topics usually prevented the publication of colonials' writings. Even so, the original substance of my project is the analysis of the degree and intensity of cultural exchanges, entanglements, and interdependencies between colonisers and colonised in Central Af-

Apart from their late entry into the imperial game, the Belgian and German colonies were not only neighbours but also shared the same date of birth, thanks to the Western powers who participated in the Berlin Conference of 1884/1885, which allotted the territories to Belgium and Germany.⁶⁸ Within this geographic frame, I use whiteness studies as an overarching umbrella that encompasses the subfields of intimacy, identity, race, gender studies, and food history. I analyse egodocuments to establish a discourse between African experiences and colonial identity-shaping events as portrayed by the colonials.⁶⁹

History from below and microhistory may be the best approaches to analyse the egodocuments of Europeans from mainly middle-class backgrounds and the effects of colonial realities on their identities. Historians have increasingly paid attention to these sources that represent personal thoughts on social practices, experiences, relationships, and living environments as encountered by so-called ordinary people and their ordinary writing culture.⁷⁰ These records of the self open new approaches that show historical personae as sentient, perceiving, and suffering people.⁷¹ Some-

rica. Due to the regrettable lack of African sources, the Congolese voice is non-existent and a dominant European voice is unavoidable.

68 The Berlin Conference of 1884/1885 is also known as the Congo Conference or the West Africa Conference. For a map of colonial Africa in the early twentieth century, please see the maps section.

69 Exemplary for the influential historical literature that discusses and analyses the sources in their appropriate context are Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire*; Linda Colley, "Clashes and Collaborations. Review of *Empire: The British Imperial Experience, from 1765 to the Present*, by Denis Judd, *Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire*, Edited by P. J. Marshall and *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France, C.1500-C.1800*, by Anthony Pagden", *London Review of Books* 18, no. 14 (1996); Sebastian Conrad, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte*, 1 ed. (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2008); Dekker, *Egodocuments and History*; Fabian, *Out of Our Minds*; Fanon, *Black Skin*; Hall, *Civilising Subjects*; Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire*; Sandra Maß, *Weisse Helden, Schwarze Krieger: Zur Geschichte kolonialer Männlichkeit in Deutschland 1918-1964* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2006); Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983); Jürgen Osterhammel, *Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*, trans. Shelley L. Frisch; with a new foreword by Robert L. Tignor (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2005); Said, *Orientalism*; Schulze, *Ego-Dokumente*; Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge*; Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*; Lora Wildenthal, "Race, Gender, and Citizenship in the German Colonial Empire", ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, CA: California University Press, 1997). Two equally important works by non-historians are Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost. A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*, updated ed. (London Pan, 2006). David Van Reybrouck, *Kongo: Eine Geschichte* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2012).

70 The focal shift in direction during the past two decades resulted from various developments: archival networks became more accessible globally, travelling is easier and more economic than ever before, micro and gender history have risen in popularity, and many personal documents have not yet been analysed.

71 Schulze, *Ego-Dokumente*, 7.

times, the sources inform the reader about the degree of interconnectedness between directives from the centre and the difficulties of implementing them in the colonies.⁷² Power relations between metropole and periphery were unequal, yet they could not prevent colonisers and colonised from mutually affecting each other, thereby creating new identities.⁷³ The hierarchical nature of this relationship, with the coloniser exercising authority over the colonised, does not alter the fact that they mutually influenced each other's identities or that political pressures and ideological debates from the metropolises could influence personal experiences encountered in the course of fulfilling imperial duties.⁷⁴

Jacques Presser coined the term 'egodocument' for sources that describe the author's thoughts, feelings, or actions. Introducing both oral and written private sources to the field of historical analysis was rejected by most historians until the 1980s (and at times still is) because they were thought of as unofficial scribbles that were too personal and not sufficiently objective.⁷⁵ Private sources often portray memories that were so emotional they required rewriting: they were changed consciously because the experiences were too painful to put on paper, much less share them with another person. Subjectivity was a taboo which made egodocuments peripheral in academia because of the preference for governmental and statistical data. The return of narrative history, the history of mentalities, and the creation of micro-history revealed the scientific value of egodocuments. Their acceptance as a

72 Accordingly, this project differs from Said's *Culture and Imperialism*, Antoinette Burton's works on challenging the West-to-the-rest attitudes, or the opinion that influences were only linear and went from the metropole to the colony. See Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993); Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire*.

73 Being a Trinidadian and British citizen and an imperial product himself, the historian C. L. R. James demonstrated, as early as 1938, how to write a study on the complex dialectic running between colony and metropole. He was the first to establish that influences between homeland and colony were a two-way street. See C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins. Toussaint Louverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (London: Vintage, 1989). Frantz Fanon also illustrated that being colonised by another race ultimately created new colonised identities. See Fanon, *Black Skin*.

74 For more on similarly experienced constraints by nineteenth-century European travellers and explorers of Africa, see Fabian, *Out of Our Minds*, chap. 10; Wissmann, *Unter deutscher Flagge quer durch Afrika*.

75 For more on the history and use of oral and written sources, I recommend the collection of essays in Dekker, *Egodocuments and History*. Jan Vansina also encountered challenges when he introduced oral history as a new scientific tool. Vansina successfully subjected oral tradition to intense functional analysis. Since the first edition of his pioneering *Oral Tradition* in 1961, the work has become indispensable for history, ethno-history, anthropology, and especially African history due to the lack of African written sources. See Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (London: James Currey, 1988). Another inspiring book on oral traditions in a Congolese context and how descriptive names for European colonials were created and influenced collective memory in the Congo is Osumaka Likaka, *Naming Colonialism. History and Collective Memory in the Congo, 1870–1960* (Madison (WI): University of Wisconsin Press, 2009).

genre was also a result of the linguistic and cultural turns. Despite their academic acknowledgement as viable sources, their use comes with certain ambiguities and complexities. Interpreting egodocuments remains a challenge because they are often the (autobiographical) output of a recreated identity that, according to Michael Mascuch, reflects the flexible, shifting, and chameleon character of personal identities.⁷⁶

Despite initial doubts, egodocuments have been used to answer unsolved questions since the 1980s. Historians who study previously ignored people and groups through diaries, memoirs, letters and photographs have been accepted by the academic community. However, there remains a debate about how to define and group egodocuments. When is a text or an oral or visual source an egodocument? Academia has agreed that there are four main categories: genre, language, period, and discipline. These boundaries are then subdivided into further subcategories. After categorisation, the purpose and initial audience – if there was one – of each egodocument needs to be clarified. Were they of a private nature or did the author have a certain person or group of people in mind when composing them? Certain concerns are related to potentially fictional aspects of egodocuments. To what extent are they prone to be products of an author's overly ambitious self-portrayal? Such portrayals tended to rely heavily on the intended audience. In her analysis of nineteenth-century Dutch bourgeois families, Arianne Baggerman argues that these personae wrote autobiographical texts to inform future generations about their family history, which explains why many egodocuments remain part of family archives.⁷⁷ Such history was written in a slightly polished style for intimate use only and was aimed at sustainability. Nonetheless, every writer has their own style: even a collection of polished documents can be analysed once the pattern has been discerned.

Egodocuments are fortunately no longer seen as a mere “mirror of the soul”⁷⁸. Their analysis has become more sophisticated. This development is vital because many diaries were continued after the original author's demise by the surviving relatives. Moreover, the styles and shapes of egodocuments differ. Some give detailed narrations of every single day with the exact times of every deed whilst others consist of hastily jotted-down bullet points. There is also the question of when the egodocument was first produced. Was it created at the same time as the recorded events or was the source produced months, or even years, after the event had occurred? Humans are a forgetful species and memories are often constructed in ret-

76 For more on the terms autobiography and egodocuments, see Michael Mascuch, *Origins of the Individualist Self. Autobiography and Self-Identity in England, 1591–1791* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997).

77 Baggerman also highlights how several hundred mainly Dutch diaries from the early modern period were collected in family archives, which then became bourgeois status symbols. See Arianne Baggerman, “Autobiography and Family Memory in the Nineteenth Century”, in *Egodocuments and History. Autobiographical Writing in Its Social Context since the Middle Ages*, ed. Rudolf Dekker (Hilversum: Verloren, 2002).

78 *Ibid.*, 161.

respect (some more so than others).⁷⁹ The reconstruction of past events can be a difficult task when memories are incomplete or certain past events are amended for the sake of being more interesting or less scandalous. Consciously or not, memories undergo a selection process and are adjusted according to emotions, personal agendas, and later occurrences.⁸⁰ In a heavily masculine imperial context, for instance, letters, memoirs, diaries, and autobiographies were used to recount special deeds and tell stories of difficult colonial existences that boast about virile traits like endurance, patriotism, or feats of arms.⁸¹ The study of egodocuments is still a young subdiscipline in the social sciences; nevertheless, it has enabled historians to raise new questions and formulate new hypotheses. The approach of combining egodocuments and whiteness studies assists in gaining an alternative view on the interplay of culture and colonialism as it was experienced by ordinary Europeans during their postings in Africa.⁸²

Ulrike Lindner claims that national ties between British and German colonials in their respective African colonies developed into supra-national European affiliations. Knowledge of how to colonise and occupy was exchanged between the two

79 This is especially true for memoirs and letters that were written long after an event occurred. Here too we can see strong similarities to the advantages and disadvantages of oral sources.

80 For more details on how memories are selected in order to be constructed, see the experiments of the psychologist W. A. Wagenaar. He compares human memories to wooden building blocks with which children play and which can be arranged in different ways depending on varying perspectives of one and the same situation changing throughout time. See Willem Albert Wagenaar, "My Memory. A Study of Autobiographical Memory over Six Years", *Cognitive Psychology* 19 (1986). Elisabeth Loftus has also published several works on this topic.

81 See Robert Aldrich, "Colonial Man", in *French Masculinities. History, Culture and Politics*, ed. Christopher E. Forth and Bertrand Taithe (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

82 Another rich source for biographical data was the *Bibliographie Coloniale Belge* (BCB), which helped in retrieving authentic, but not necessarily critical, information on colonials' biographical data. The BCB is a biographical encyclopaedia consisting of five volumes. The tomes were published consecutively throughout the 1950s and early 1960s on behalf of Dr Marcel Luwel (Director of the MRAC and *Chef de la Section "Histoire de la présence belge à l'étranger"*). He commissioned the gathering and cataloguing of data on thousands of former and active colonials of the CFS. These colonials were contacted to supply the MRAC with personal and job-related data for the BCB. For contemporary historians working on former personnel of the CFS and the Belgian Congo, the BCB has proven to be highly useful and valuable as a first point of access on colonials' biographies. The BCB does not differentiate between colonials' nationalities, rank and the amount of data available. Some entries are short and incomplete, while others fill twenty columns. Even so, the BCB was published when colonialism was highly unpopular and independence was being declared by a large number of African countries. This timing and that it was commissioned by a colonial museum might explain a pro-colonial undertone that glorified the CFS' and the Belgian Congo's former colonials. See Fernand Dellicour, *Biographie Coloniale Belge* (Brussels: Falk, 1948–1958), vols. 1–5.

imperial powers just as much as intellectual ideas; in other words, a transcolonial exchange happened.⁸³ Lindner argues for combining the terms ‘transnational’ and ‘colonial’ based on her research on British-German intellectual exchange within and between their respective colonies. After all, there were no imperial handbooks or guides to colonising. Knowing ‘how to colonise’ was built upon accumulated colonial experiences. On a national level, colonising was a highly classified affair and at times led to wars, as was the case between British and French troops in Egypt.⁸⁴ Yet, despite this secrecy and competition, colonials of different citizenries employed by opposing nations often shared their knowledge of imperial everyday life with each other. This exchange of expertise tended to run counter to the more nationalistic interests of the metropolises. Sharing knowledge within similar geographic regions would ensure that patterns from one colony could be involuntarily implemented in another.

As in Lindner’s British-German example, Belgian, German, and Swedish colonials also exchanged knowledge when the opportunity or need arose. Despite governing, the sense of being a minority not only caused them to feel like (uninvited) outsiders, but also produced a joint feeling of Europeanness. This was a feeling of commonality amongst white colonials that, so long as they remained in central African territories, was stronger than any national citizenship or Christian affiliation. At a time of rising nationalism in Europe, being European, white, and Christian often became a substitute for nationality in colonial Africa. Amongst white Protestant missionaries from different nations, a “we-spirit” dominated, caused by shared experiences of “work, illness and death”⁸⁵. This phenomenon was unique in comparison to other colonies. Confessional differences were less important than the collective feeling of being European in Africa.⁸⁶

The first step in analysing the sources was to conduct a group analysis of the male and female colonials to create a common base of information about everyday colonial life. This grouping helped to elaborate on the different job sectors. The established job-related common ground was followed by an indepth analysis of the individuals’ lives, and lastly a thematic grouping according to topics of intimacy, gender issues,

83 Ulrike Lindner, *Koloniale Begegnungen. Deutschland und Großbritannien als Imperialmächte in Afrika 1880–1914* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2011), 22–23.

84 Jasanoff elaborates on the military strategies of France and Great Britain in their mutual battles and the hopes to gain a territorial and political upperhand in Egypt in the early nineteenth century. She shows how both governments did not shy away from military manouevers to reach imperial dominance and control in Egypt. Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire*.

85 Stenström, *The Brussels Archives*, 27, 206.

86 This circumstance should not hide that national differences could determine their views on the colonial endeavour. In the 1890s, Germans were aware of their African colonies and public opinion had changed from seeing them as oversized adult playgrounds to tools of global power. Colonial politics was increasingly referred to as *Weltpolitik*. *Lebensraum* and *Weltpolitik* became political keywords for supporters of German colonialism. See Woodruff D. Smith, “‘Weltpolitik’ und ‘Lebensraum’”, in *Das Kaiserreich transnational. Deutschland in der Welt 1871–1914*, ed. Sebastian Conrad and Jürgen Osterhammel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004).

and food history.⁸⁷ The next step was to ascertain whether differences existed between the two colonies or not, and who those men and women were. Did choosing a colonial career affect their whiteness? Why did so few wives accompany their husbands to Africa? Where did these colonisers relocate to once their imperial careers ended?

The Swedish employees of the CFS had the luxury of being independent of national ties to a colonial master, but the Belgian and German citizens had to face their respective governments' unexpected changes of course. Belgian and German colonialism emerged from the longing for international recognition and prestige as well as from the turmoil of British and French rivalry. Belgians and Germans were challenged by the altered behavioural patterns that developed from modern phenomena like emigration, new gender roles, the creation of whiteness, and job opportunities brought about by territories in Africa.⁸⁸ Any individuals affiliated with either or both colonies experienced radical and rapid changes in terms of their colonial and employment contexts.

Furthermore, thousands, if not millions, of Belgians, Germans, and Swedes lived at a time when new ideas on race were being culturally accepted. Thanks to their (pseudo-) scientific backing, these were applied as tools for penetrating central Africa. Colonising for the sake of generating profits was frowned upon.⁸⁹ Officially, colonising sub-Saharan Africa was to abolish the slave trade, civilise Africans, and minimise Muslim power structures in the CFS and GEA. The unofficial motive was to maintain a European political balance, which had suffered due to Leopold's meddling in the colonial power game. To declare war on the slave trade and slavery whilst simultaneously using cheap or forced labour in the two colonies, the imperial regimes and their agents needed a sound justification: the wish to civilise, develop, and educate the African subaltern.

Despite the restrictions and harsh living conditions, many European colonials repeatedly renewed their employment contracts with the CFS or GEA. They did not remain in Europe after their leaves of absence from imperial service. At times, it was even suggested that their love for Africa went further than their loyalty to Europe. Living and working in the sub-Saharan territories was appealing to them, for otherwise they would not have repeatedly returned to Africa. Some colonials, of course, returned because they did not find employment in Europe. The salary, the social

87 Most male employees served in the armed forces or were employed by private or state-owned trade companies. Swedes, however, were typically either seamen or Baptist missionaries. Swedish colonials with Belgian labour contracts in the CFS can be divided into three employment groups: seamen, missionaries, and commissioned and non-commissioned officers. For more statistical data on Swedes and Scandinavians in the CFS, see Axelson, *Culture Confrontation in the Lower Congo*, chap. 6.

88 For readings on critical whiteness studies in an imperial British context, see Mohanram, *Imperial White*. For the development of the so-called New Woman and New Man, see Andrew Michael Roberts, *Conrad and Masculinity* (New York: Palgrave, 2001); Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*.

89 Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost. A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*, updated ed. (London Pan, 2006).

esteem, the African landscapes, peoples, and food, or the lack of social pressure and control in the colonies, drew them back to Africa repeatedly. The difference between a voluntary and an involuntary return to Africa was that members of the first group enjoyed and cherished their time abroad. They even identified with life in imperial Africa. As is to be expected when diverse cultures confront one another in everyday life, confusion between different traditions and cultures developed that led to a lived ambivalence, which connects to the following section on issues of gender, career opportunities, and dining cultures.

1.3 Masculinities, Female Cultural Imperialism, Career Choices, and Food

Research on former central African colonies from a gender studies perspective is rare, despite the influential role of gender in the decision-making processes of Europeans applying for colonial service. While essential works have been published recently on South Africa, Egypt, and the Maghreb area, colonial gender history has so far neglected the former sub-Saharan colonies.⁹⁰ This circumstance is most likely due to Anglophone dominance in the field of masculinity studies. Perceptions of masculinity were usually based on a “set of values”⁹¹ by which men judged other men. It is even argued that these issues also applied to the writing of national and international histories in the late nineteenth century.⁹² Public ideals of manly qualities changed during nineteenth-century Europe from “morale, physical courage and Christian virtue to physical endurance and stoicism”⁹³. At the time, “assertiveness, courage, independence and straightforwardness” were considered to be manly attributes.⁹⁴ Unlike families that were defined and restricted by cultural and social factors, masculinity was defined within a homosocial continuum.⁹⁵

90 Recommended publications on African masculinities are Robert Morrell, *African Masculinities: Men in Africa from the Late Nineteenth-Century to the Present* (New York and Scottsville: Palgrave and University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2005); “Of Boys and Men: Masculinity and Gender in Southern African Studies”, *Journal of Southern African Studies – Special Issue on Masculinities in Southern Africa* 24, no. 4 (1998). Wilson Chacko Jacob, *Working out Egypt: Effendi Masculinity and Subject Formation in Colonial Modernity, 1870–1940* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

91 Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, 5.

92 For more on French colonial masculinity, see Robert Aldrich’s essay on the Colonial Man in Christopher E. Forth and Bertrand Taithe, *French Masculinities. History, Culture and Politics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 123–40.

93 See Robert Shoemaker and Mary Vincent, *Gender and History in Western Europe* (London: Arnold, 1998), 6; George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

94 Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, 5.

95 Especially factors like Christian moral values instead of patriarchal power or sexual inequality. David Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity* (New

Masculinity studies devoted to the study of Western history have analysed the socialisation of young men by highlighting the creation of homosocial environments like military schools, fraternities, and youth groups. Members of these institutions were expected to perform rites of passage to attain proper manhood. All this took place at a time of shifting gender identities caused by the development of the New Woman and the New Man.⁹⁶ Apart from motivating factors like social and economic betterment, the slow but steady increase of female empowerment in the public and private spheres of modernising Europe also played a vital role in prompting those white men who wished to maintain a more traditional and male-dominated society to apply for colonial service.

Notably in German colonial territories, gendered duties were clearly distinguished. The male figure continued to represent the master of the house (*Herr im Hause*) while the woman was responsible for keeping the home in order, rearing children, and safeguarding German culture (*deutsches Kulturgut*) abroad. Simultaneously, feminist movements in Europe were beginning to challenge the implementation of traditional gender roles in the colonies. Whilst the domestic German woman emancipated herself, the German colonial female tended to be more conservative and traditional. She became a tool for preventing German colonials from acculturating too much in Africa: the *Frauenbund der Deutschen Kolonialgesellschaft* (FDKG, German Colonial Society Women's League) did its utmost to train future female colonials accordingly.⁹⁷ The so-called "*Weiblicher Kulturimperialismus*"⁹⁸ (female cultural imperialism) was transformed into an essential tool for national expansion and the preservation of *Deutschtum* (Germanness) abroad. Apart from

Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 27–29. One might also wonder how age/experience impacted upon these concepts. A youngish single man would be judged differently than an older, married, veteran colonial, or missionary. Related to this is the connection between manhood, indigenous labour, and white settler-workers. For more, see Angela Woollacott, ed. *Political Manhood, Non-White Labour and White-Settler Colonialism on the 1830s-1840s Australian Frontier*, In *Rethinking the Racial Moment: Essays on the Racial Encounter* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011).

96 See Roberts, *Conrad and Masculinity*.

97 The *Frauenbund der Deutschen Kolonialgesellschaft* (female branch of the *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft*, founded in 1907) not only promoted the German colonial project and the preservation of *Deutschtum*, but there were also schools for the education of proper German women who would secure Germanness in the colonies. These schools taught women everything that was considered important to promote Germany's, cooking, language, and culture. After graduating, they married German colonisers. From a culture-political standpoint, these women's main goal was to prevent German men founding families with indigenous women. See Kundrus, "Weiblicher Kulturimperialismus", 219. For more on the female role in German imperialism see Drummond, "Durch Liebe stark, deutsch bis ins Mark: Weiblicher Kulturimperialismus und der deutsche Frauenverein". Lora Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884–1945* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).

98 Kundrus, "Weiblicher Kulturimperialismus", 219.

becoming accustomed to indigenous populations, missionaries, explorers, and settlers were also confronted with maintaining “their own German identities in a state of diaspora”⁹⁹.

Processing the selected sources also means comparing the authors’ educational backgrounds and upbringings to discover patterns and differences. Unlike Belgian, German, and Swedish men, contemporary British colonials were directed by graduates from public schools. They had received military training, lessons in physical toughness, and were brought up with a sense of class superiority.¹⁰⁰ This upbringing, combined with an eagerness to apply force and a belief in the grandeur of combative action, characterised the contemporary British colonial man.¹⁰¹ Despite the similar time frame, the British example differs from the continental cases. In the monarchies of Belgium, Germany, and Sweden, men born before the 1880s could attend military schools, but not colonial military schools. There might have been similar ideas of manliness within the aforementioned monarchies, but schooling cultures were not identical.

As “Europe was only Europe because of that other [colonial] world”, the idealised man could only exist with an unmanly and undesirable opposite; specifically, the effeminate (often non-white) or homosexual man.¹⁰² “[B]oth modern masculinity and modern homosexuality were born at a similar moment in the nineteenth century, each creating the possibilities for the other and each regulating the other’s boundaries.”¹⁰³ At the end of the nineteenth century, the homosexual man was degraded to the same inferior social level as non-white men, an example being the oft-mentioned noble African savage, who, during that era, was degraded from an idealised child of nature to an uncivilised creature that only understood brute force.¹⁰⁴ In connection with this cultural development within Europe, Michel Foucault stated

99 Fitzpatrick and Monteath, “Globalising Germany”, 9.

100 Such lessons included team sports (football), gymnastics, and survival skills in the nature.

101 These attributes were remnants from the European Middle Ages which are still partly applied today. They were also a reaction to the foppish feminine male types that were popular in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century among the middle and upper classes.

102 Hall, *Civilising Subjects*, 10.

103 Robert D. Tobin, ed. *Homosexuality and Masculinity in Nineteenth-Century Germany*, Masculinity, Senses, Spirit, Aperçus: Histories Texts Cultures a Bucknell Series (Plymouth: Bucknell University Press, 2011), 131.

104 Initially, the term ‘savage’ stood for someone with a strange and foreign background, especially in terms of celebrating different cultural traditions. Its definition changed gradually from the discovery of the Americas to the nineteenth century, when it reached the current interpretation of a person, a people, or a culture being less civilised than another. For more on the meaning of savage and its influence on the European world see Kate Fullagar, *The Savage Visit: New World People and Popular Imperial Culture in Britain, 1710–1795* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

that modern homosexuality was created in 1869.¹⁰⁵ Combined with social Darwinism, ideas of white superiority, and male heroism, this pattern of contemporary thought formed many of the racist attitudes towards Africans among the colonials.¹⁰⁶ Science changed racism.¹⁰⁷ Power hierarchies were re-defined and, just like in other areas of gender history, it is necessary to understand the numerous influences that motivated human behaviour like psychology, biology, ideologies, and political agendas. Gender history has thereby been pulled into colonial history, which was previously thought to be immune to it.¹⁰⁸

The contemporary trend has developed from writing men's history to rewriting mainstream history from a masculinity studies' approach. Imperial history is alluring in particular because it was a well-researched historical field long before gender history or cultural history emerged.¹⁰⁹ Modern research also suggests that colonialism was a male enterprise.¹¹⁰ The fact that "imperial history was one of the last bastions of gender-blind history up until the mid-1980s reflects the near-monopoly which men had on the colonial enterprise itself"¹¹¹. So far there is no research that connects Belgium's colonial past with masculinity studies.¹¹² Even in the German case, only a few publications with this specific research agenda exist. Luckily, the past decade has shown an increase in high-quality contributions to this field by German academics.¹¹³

105 Foucault bases his argument on the German psychiatrist Carl Friedrich Otto Westphal's 1869 article on sexual inversion, "*Die conträre Sexualempfindung, Symptom eines neuropathischen (psychopathischen) Zustandes*" (Engl.: contrary sexual sensation, symptom of a neuropathic (psychopathic) condition), Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley, vol. 1 (New York: Vintage, 1990).

106 Some scholars even claim that European imperialism produced social-Darwinist racism in the late nineteenth century. See Woodruff D. Smith, *The Ideological Origins of Nazi Imperialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Das Deutsche Kaiserreich 1871–1918*, 7 ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975).

107 See Richard Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler* (New York: Palgrave, 2004).

108 See Shoemaker and Vincent, *Gender and History in Western Europe*, 6. and Mosse, *The Image of Man*, 13–15.

109 Since the 1990s, gender historians like Raewyn Connell have argued that imperialism was important for gender. Within the imperial context, the main focus of imperial history lies on men and tends to ignore female and non-heterosexual perspectives. Raewyn Connell, "Towards a New Sociology of Masculinity", *Theory & Society* 14 (1985).

110 See Shoemaker and Vincent, *Gender and History in Western Europe*; Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*. Empires were not only created by men; they were the result of masculine energies, like courage, aggressiveness, and assertiveness but also of masculine insecurities. See *ibid.*, 1.

111 See *Manliness and Masculinities*, 7.

112 A new book that combines Belgium and masculinities but not colonialism is Tine Van Osselaer, *The Pious Sex. Catholic Constructions of Masculinity and Femininity in Belgium, C. 1800–1940* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2013).

113 The following are notable examples of the interaction between German colonial research and masculinity studies: Maß, *Weisse Helden, schwarze Krieger*; "Welcome to the Jungle.

The aspect of migration and its effects on Europe and Africa has seen an increase in academic attention. Woodruff D. Smith pointed out that colonial migration was part of gaining new *Lebensraum*.¹¹⁴ This development had an inescapable demographic and social impact on society at large: it disrupted interfamilial relationships and deprived nations of their work force.¹¹⁵ Since both Belgium and Germany needed human capital for their colonial projects, they gladly sent men and women abroad to lessen national tensions caused by unemployment, discontented workers, and political unrest within Europe. Nonetheless, most colonials in the CFS and GEA had temporary employment contracts for two to three years at a time, which meant that they returned to their homelands eventually.¹¹⁶ Since neither was created for settling, they supplied Europe with natural resources like iron, red rubber, and a few agricultural wares. Exceptions were missions and plantations that either produced rubber to be for Europe or whose produce was used for scientific purposes or provisions for the *Force Publique* (FP).¹¹⁷

In addition to the masculinity aspect, the different reasons for migrating can enlighten us about colonials' backgrounds and their motivations for creating new homes and work places. What did they think about their old homes in terms of class, gender, and race? The possible causes that led towards emigration were usually related to unemployment, unsatisfactory posts, or the desire for social betterment. Some agents had adventurous and romanticised notions of colonial life in the African jungle while others dreamt of being their own masters or simply escaping small-town life and nagging parents, as was the case with Léon Rom, a former Belgian officer.¹¹⁸ Moreover,

Imperial Men, 'Inner Africa' and Mental Disorder in Colonial Discourse", in *Helpless Imperialists. Imperial Failure, Radicalization, and Violence*, ed. Maurus Reinkowski and Gregor Thum (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013). For publications on women's history in a German colonial context, see Dietrich, *Weißer Weiblichkeiten*.

114 See Smith, "Weltpolitik' und 'Lebensraum'". This usage of new *Lebensraum* was based on the assumption that African lands were *terres vacantes* and 'up for grabs'.

115 See Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*.

116 In Belgium, soldiers and colonial officials (duties that were often represented by the same person due to lack of applicants) received employment contracts for 3–4 years from the CFS. They were expected to work three years in the Congo, followed by six months of furlough. See Palmstierna, "Swedish Army Officers"; Emile Robert Janssens, *Histoire De La Force Publique* (Brüssel: Ghesquière, 1979).

117 Whilst trade companies were interested in the cultivation of lucrative produce like rubber, scientists studied Congolese flora and fauna for pharmaceutical and academic reasons. See Léon Rom, "La Compagnie Du Kasai À L'exposition De Tervueren En 1910. Exhibition Catalogue of the Royal Museum of Central Africa", (Brussels: Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, 1910). See Appendix I for photographs.

118 Rom wanted to rid himself of his small-town life. He was a Belgian citizen with a lower middle-class background who used his military and office training to escape from his family connections in the Hainault and climb the career ladder by signing up for colonial service several times. For more on his career see Diana Maria Natermann, "Léons Aufstieg im Kongo. Ein Leben in imperialistischer Zeit" (Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität

“emigration has been the poor relative of imperial history”¹¹⁹ because research has generally focused on the economic and political aspects of imperial emigration history. Neither modern Western researchers working on nineteenth-century imperial history nor African historians have paid sufficient attention to emigrants’ personal experiences and identities. Connected to emigration is the influence that masculinities (this includes the influence of masculinities on female societies) had on choosing a colonial career.¹²⁰ The appearance of the New Woman caused some men to yearn for older, more patriarchal gender roles. Unlike British citizens, few of the Belgian, German, and Swedish nationals had a relative, friend, or acquaintance who supplied them with first-hand accounts of what to expect from colonial life and how to live it. Unmediated accounts were rare or altogether absent.

The only available accounts were those of explorers. They were also not subject to Belgian or German imperial political and legal systems during their expeditions, which were usually funded by scientific societies or the private sector. Therefore, colonial candidates for the CFS and GEA could only follow advice provided by contemporary press articles or novels. Travelogues by explorers and natural scientists were the closest genre available.¹²¹ Furthermore, despite their scientific nature, “it is hard to tell how much censorship was formally exercised by those who sponsored exploration, but that it existed, given the fact that these travellers were also in the business of gathering political, economic, and military intelligence, cannot be doubted”¹²². Reading travelogues funded by external investors – especially those linked to governments, political parties, or colonial societies like the *Deutsche Kolo-*

Frankfurt, 2011). He is also said to be the real-life role model for Joseph Conrad’s literary figure Mr Kurtz in the anti-imperial novel *Heart of Darkness*. Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*. For more on the proof of this declaration see Hochschild, *King Leopold’s Ghost*.

119 Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, 174.

120 Tosh states that the “motivation and mentality of those who cut their losses and opted for the draconian course of emigrating” needs reassessment by questioning the role of masculinity. *Ibid.*, 176.

121 The most contemporary famous travelogues written in English, French, or German were Camille Coquilhat, *Sur Le Haut Congo* (Paris: J. Lebegue, 1888); Leo Frobenius, *Im Schatten des Kongostaates: Bericht über den Verlauf der ersten Reisen der D.I.A.F.E. von 1904–1906, über deren Forschungen und Beobachtungen auf geographischen und kolonialwirtschaftlichem Gebiet.* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1907); Paul Pogge, *Im Reiche des Muata Jamwo: Tagebuch meiner im Auftrage der deutschen Gesellschaft zur Erforschung Aequatorial-Afrika’s in den Lunda-Staaten unternommenen Reise.*, vol. 3, Beiträge zur Forschungsgeschichte Afrika’s (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1880); Henry Morton Stanley, *Mein Leben – Band I*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Munich: Die Lese Verlag, 1911); *Mein Leben – Band II*, 2 vols., vol. 2 (Munich: Die Lese Verlag, 1911); Wissmann, *Unter deutscher Flagge quer durch Afrika; Meine zweite Durchquerung Aequatorial-Afrikas vom Congo zum Zambesi während der Jahre 1886–1887*. In addition, this book offers the most complete and interesting comparison of explorer tales of the sub-Saharan continent from an anthropologist’s angle: Fabian, *Out of Our Minds*.

122 Fabian, *Out of Our Minds*, 13.

nialgesellschaft (DKG) or the *Association Internationale Africaine* (AIA) of Belgium – meant viewing reports whose authors might have been subject to gagging orders or a certain level of political censorship. It might be best to view these publications with a pinch of salt and not take them at face value.

Apart from the link between migration and masculinity, I inspect the interplay between contemporary masculine attributes and how colonial settlement could provide a landless white man with his own real estate and even the right to hunt (big) game. Hunting was seen as a right for all members of the white colonial community and “a sign of the higher cultural status of the Europeans”¹²³. Whenever the colonisers felt like presenting themselves as the masters or kings of the colony, they described the right to hunt as an aristocratic privilege. Hence, all the trophies found in imperial homes acted as a means of visualising their superior status and increased manliness. In short, colonial life promised social mobility, economic self-reliance, and traditional gender roles.

Achieving upward mobility by joining colonial work forces was a risky gambit: the death rate in both colonies lay between 30 and 50 %. Accordingly, there was a continual need for new employees. The typical candidates were often second or third children (mostly sons) or from less fortunate families with poor job prospects in Europe. Fortunately, though, due to the high literacy rate among these men and women, the abundance of source material available today is staggering. Whilst the ability to read and write was once thought of as magical, this changed in the nineteenth century: writing became increasingly mundane and integral to daily life and human interaction.¹²⁴ Neglecting the analysis of ordinary writing has a long tradition involving renowned historians like Peter Burke and Eric Hobsbawm. Instead of writing history from below, historians used church and official state records or relied on oral, demographic, and labour history. Therefore, even historians who “were capable of enormous sympathy with the culture of ordinary people in the past seemed surprisingly unaware of the rich subterranean world of ordinary writings”¹²⁵.

Gender history offers a close connection to the history of race and class, especially when analysing the oppressed and the reasons for their oppression.¹²⁶ Colonies were filled with situational tyrants and their victims. Oppressors’ motivations

123 Daniel Rouven Steinbach, “Carved out of Nature. Identity and Environment in German Colonial Africa”, in *Cultivating the Colonies. Colonial States and Their Environmental Legacies*, ed. Niels Brimnes, et al., Global and Comparative Studies Series (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2011), 60.

124 Ordinary writings by ordinary people went from being a neglected to a primary source. See Martyn Lyons, *The Writing Culture of Ordinary People in Europe, C. 1860–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

125 *Ibid.*, 6.

126 See Giulia Calvi, “Global Trends: Gender Studies in Europe and the Us”, *European History Quarterly*, no. 40 (2010); Paul R. Deslandes, “Manly Poses: Identities, Politics, and Lived Experience in the History of Masculinity”, *Journal of Women’s History* 23, no. 2 (2011); Joan W. Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis”, in *Gender and History in Western Europe*, ed. Shoemaker and Vincent (1998), 43–45.

are often located within the “Holy Trinity”¹²⁷ of gender, race, and class within any given system. Therefore, scholars need to pay attention to how ideas of “blackness or whiteness – or colonized or colonizer”¹²⁸ came into existence and analyse their influence on both sides of the colonial experience. Masculinity is further defined as dominating the female; however, to be considered an equal, you also had to be white, Christian, and be either a middle or upper class member. “Working class, black and gay men”¹²⁹ were excluded from the *Mindete* Club (the club for white men). The analysis of interpersonal contacts between men and women, European and African, poor and rich, but also between equals is essential because the spheres of the Holy Trinity depended on and influenced each other.¹³⁰ The shapes which masculinities took were strongly constituted by factors like class and race. Its contours were socially constructed and fluid.¹³¹ Scholars like Raewyn Connell, Joan Scott, and Ann Oakley theorise femininities and masculinities as social and cultural constructs rather than as biological categories.¹³² Gendered identities were unstable, for they relied on social constructs of what being male or female meant at the time in question.

Besides the mechanisms of female empowerment and the reconfiguration of manly markers, intergenerational tensions in late nineteenth-century Europe led men to take up employment in Africa. The newly established working opportunities supplied Europeans with the chance to satisfy their need to migrate and return to their homelands as more experienced persons. These pioneers, usually men, were crucial for Belgium and Germany’s status as colonial newcomers. Before 1884, this group was mostly made up of unmarried men in their twenties and thirties. In or out of uniform, they were patriots who fought for their country’s colony and desired rewards afterwards. Unfortunately, the arrogance of youth or a lack of peer control

127 Shoemaker and Vincent, *Gender and History in Western Europe*, 8.

128 Pamela Scully, *Race and Ethnicity in Women’s and Gender History in Global Perspective* (Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association, 2006), 1.

129 Morrell, “Of Boys and Men”, 608.

130 See Natalie Zemon Davis, “Women’s History in Transition: The European Case”, *Feminist Studies*, no. 3:3/4 (1976); Calvi, “Global Trends”.

131 See Morrell, “Of Boys and Men”.

132 Joan Scott stated that “gender is [...] a social category imposed on a sexed body”. Scott, “Gender”, 46. The sociologist Ann Oakley argued that “‘Sex’ is a word that refers to the biological differences between male and female [...]. ‘Gender’, however, is a matter of culture: it refers to the social classification into ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ [...]. The constancy of sex must be admitted, but so also must the variability of gender”. Ann Oakley, *Sex, Gender and Society* (London: Maurice Temple Smith, 1972), 16. The same categorisation applies to P. Scully’s opinion: that the definition of race is related less to skin colour and a biological category of difference than to culture. Connell was part of a group of scholars in the 1980s and 1990s who rejected an essentialist, biological understanding of men and produced the ‘New Sociology of Men’. Connell, “Towards a New Sociology of Masculinity”.

could precipitate problems like unruly and rash behaviour, sexual misdemeanours, emotional outbursts, anarchical tendencies, or psychological imbalances.¹³³

1.4 History from Below, Archives, and Chapter Outlook

The more established methods of conducting a history from below, like the Annales School that relied on group analyses and emphasising statistical data, related to the middle and lower classes, thereby producing a collective and impersonal account.¹³⁴ In contrast, this research fits into the newer history from below because it uses ordinary writings and egodocuments to analyse the lives of historical agents thereby giving them a voice. This kind of history from below studies individual experiences rather than collective activisms, “and it considers this study neither marginal nor secondary but instead central to the broader picture of social and cultural change”¹³⁵. I search for the personal voices of ordinary people and consider both ordinary readers and private writers as active agents in the construction of their own lives and cultures.

Focusing on individual agents and their egodocuments does not mean that the broader questions of whiteness, identity shaping, and cultural development will disappear. In fact, quite the contrary is the case. The colonisers’ removal from their homelands will be seen within the broader context of social and cultural changes. Within this framework and always related to whiteness, the four themes that lie at the forefront of this research are types of friendships, masculinities, female imperialism, and dining cultures. This selection of topics is based on the findings of which themes were most important to the the daily lives of the sources’ authors. In discussing egodocuments and whiteness jointly, the upcoming chapters will also highlight the balance between the private and public spheres of the respective source authors.

Chapter 2 gives a historical summary and analysis of the unusual cases of the Belgian and German colonies. The former metropole applied unofficial back channels to obtain lands whilst the latter followed public ambitions to acquire international prestige comparable to that of Great Britain and France. The Belgian case is extraordinary, for King Leopold II managed to create an unofficial private colony with international approval yet without its knowledge. In the German case, both Emperor Wilhelm II and Chancellor von Bismarck were initially uninterested in founding

133 According to Fabian, sexual misbehaviour was rare at the start of Central Africa’s exploration and the sources do not sketch a different picture. See Fabian, *Out of Our Minds*. For more on youth, see Richard Waller, “Rebellious Youth in Colonial Africa”, *Journal of African History* 47, no. 1 (2006).

134 The Annales School believed that the members of the lower classes could be investigated in a collective manner only. Equally, the British neo-Marxist School failed to analyse the private lives of such people because its focus was on public action rather than the private sphere. I echo the opinion of Tim Hitchcock, “A New History from Below”, *History Workshop Journal*, no. 57 (2004).

135 Lyons, *The Writing Culture of Ordinary People in Europe*, 16.

colonies; however, once the German public started demanding foreign territories, they decided to embark upon colonial endeavours. The aim of the second chapter is to provide the reader with an understanding of the similarities and differences between the CFS and GEA and how their particularities influenced the way in which colonisers saw those two colonies.

Chapter 3 displays the racial intricacies of befriending non-whites in a colonial central-African setting. I analyse the concept of friendship and its link to race and social class. This chapter engages with the difficulties of social and cultural rules that limited befriending non-white people: even keeping a pet dog could be seen as a marker or creator of separation between the coloniser and the colonised. An examination of the relationship between whiteness and friendly relationships in their various shapes offers an understanding of how colonial friendships were made or prevented. For example, friendly relations with Afro-Arabs were considered more acceptable by white colonisers than befriending indigenous Africans. Afro-Arabs were deemed more cultured and respectable because, as Muslims, they believed in a monotheistic book religion. Whilst this could bring people together, the ownership of a non-working pet dog could achieve the opposite. In fact, small pedigree pet dogs like Terriers or Pomeranians were seen as white status symbols and thus often received better treatment than indigenous workers.¹³⁶

Masculinities and their relevance to Belgian and German colonial history will be discussed in chapter 4. It does not surprise that colonial history was a predominantly masculine affair due to the initial preponderance of male authors and actors. Its depiction was created by a predominantly masculine view, but the development of masculinity studies has enabled historians to review this field from different and very versatile angles. New approaches include the development of what was considered manly in the nineteenth century, its connection to whiteness, and the creation of an effeminate (non-white) Other. Some of the most dominant manly issues in the sources were matters of comradeship, honour, endurance, and the will to survive tropical diseases.

The following chapter approaches the female gender by presenting cases of white women who ventured into colonial Africa and created varying accounts of their lives and experiences there. It compares emancipated women with those who adhered to more traditional bourgeois values that dictated female behaviour within the patriarchal framework of the late nineteenth century. It discusses and elaborates on the development of the 'New Woman', and I enlarge the field by including what I have termed as the 'Old Woman'. White women in sub-Saharan Africa were a rarity at the

136 Swart analyses the important connection between a pedigree dog breed and pure race. She also makes a case how nowadays Western dog breeds are social status symbols amongst indigenous South Africans. See Sandra Swart, "Dogs and Dogma: A Discussion of the Socio-Political Construction of Southern African Dog 'Breeds' as a Window onto Social History", in *Canis Africanis. A Dig History of Southern Africa*, ed. Lance van Sitter and Sandra Swart (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 267–87.

time: I show the different ways in which they maintained, enhanced, defended, or even lost their whiteness.

The final empirical chapter leads us into the world of European dining culture and its significance to the colonisers' whiteness as it was experienced or questioned in Africa. Food, drink, and European dining cultures make up a very large part of the sources, which proves their importance to the authors. The colonisers, independent of their nationality and gender, went to great lengths to ensure their whiteness during meals in Africa. The men and women cooked and ate their Belgian, German, or Swedish meals whenever possible and did not shy away from paying high prices and waiting for long periods of time just to have an occasional sip of Belgian beer, a morsel of Swedish salted fish, or German canned sausage.

The primary sources were unearthed in the *Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale* in Tervuren (MRAC), the Military Museum (MM) in Brussels, the *Bundesarchiv* in Berlin and Freiburg (BAB and BAF), the *Deutsches Tagebucharchiv* (DTA) in Freiburg, and the *Rijksarkivet* (RA) in Stockholm. The various egodocuments from the above archives are mostly unpublished sources and the translations into English are mine. The published memoirs came from libraries in Europe, the USA, and Canada.

Ultimately, the cultural transfers between colonisers and colonised led to a common middle ground which, to differing degrees, allowed the creation of new sub-cultures.¹³⁷ Despite the many major cultural and traditional differences, colonisers and colonised created new ways to communicate, haggle, and live with each other. Belgians taught indigenous FP soldiers how to use a rifle, European colonial officials became accustomed to handling issues of cannibalism,¹³⁸ and, in some cases, economic partnerships between European colonisers and Afro-Arab slave traders resulted in the creation of new friendships. Likewise, Africans taught Westerners jungle survival skills, showed them where to find edible foods, and introduced them to local traditions. During the first two decades in the CFS, for example, Swedish

137 Unlike the concept of contact zone or imperial go-betweens, the middle ground is most suitable for this project. The Belgians, Germans, and Swedes in the colonies honoured their customs, but they also learnt from indigenous tribes. To facilitate communication both sides adapted to each other. For the concept of the middle ground, see Richard White, *The Middle Ground. Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). On the topic of imperial go-betweens, see Alida G. Metcalf, "Go-Betweens", in *Go-Betweens and the Colonization of Brazil. 1500–1600* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2005), 429–40; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place. Some Afterthoughts", in *The Brokered World. Bo-Betweens and Global Intelligence, 1770–1820*, ed. Simon Schaffer, et al. (Saga-more Beach: Science History Publications, 2009).

138 See Sidney Langford Hinde, *The Fall of the Congo Arabs* (New York Negro Universities Press 1969); Rochus Schmidt, *Deutschlands Kolonien. Ihre Gestaltung, Entwicklung und Hilfsquellen* (Berlin: Verlag des Vereins der Bücherfreunde Schall & Grund, 1898); Carlyle Smythe, *The Story of Belgium. With a Chapter on the Congo Free State* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1900).

Baptist missionaries adapted to the custom of “buying children”¹³⁹ from parents or tribal chiefs to relieve them from their slave status and then educate and Christianise them.

The cultural collaborations that came into existence could cause feelings of being in-between. The “middle ground grew according to the need of people to find a means, other than force, to gain the co-operation or consent of foreigners”¹⁴⁰. The aim of this research is to discover the life stories of formerly ignored colonials and analyse how everyday African realities influenced their lives and their attempts to be white. It is certain that the sources will contribute to, as Linda Colley stated, increasing attention on “a complex saga of the collisions, compromises and comings together of many different cultures”¹⁴¹ by viewing them as pieces of the same puzzle. Burton suggest that colonial identities “have not historically been unified but [were] instead fragmented across a variety of cultural axes, and [...] they have been determined in part in the social relations of the everyday – at the intersection, in other words, of the public and the private, the personal and the historical, the social and the political”¹⁴². Moreover, Fabian stated that “since [his] critique of ethnography in its early manifestations is also a historical study, [he has] taken care to respect historiographic standards. However, for practical reasons alone, [he] was unable to cover two kinds of sources that historians would normally consult”¹⁴³. The reason for this neglect was the vast and diffuse materials these authors contributed to newspapers and magazines.

The following chapters present the private voices of ordinary people who were active historical colonial agents writing about experiences that shaped their identities. The three main themes in this context are individual identity, racial identity, and cultural identity. Possible changes of direction or stubborn adherence to established habits are viewed within the frames of social, economic, and scientific changes of the time.

139 Axelson, *Culture Confrontation in the Lower Congo*, 247. See also David van Reybrouck, *Kongo: Eine Geschichte* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2012), chap. 2.

140 White, *The Middle Ground*, 52.

141 Colley, “Clashes and Collaborations”, 8.

142 Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire*, 15.

143 Fabian, *Out of Our Minds*, 13.

2. Imperial Latecomers

Look! These are the European powers as God created them, and as I have dusted off their bones, and stretched their very white skin. They did what they wanted with their servants and their Negroes – and I, I own their big heroic skeleton; I do with it what I like. I awaken them life again and present them, like circus monkeys, big winner apes in an ocean of misery.

And what is that good for? To relieve us of our grief and our anger. It is the year of 1884, the year of the Berlin Conference, Africa is being split into parts, and for a few hours the diplomats lend us their beautiful suits and the sound of their voices.

Because we were born to the world both as a prince and a Negro, both rich and poor, yes, filthy rich; no one comes into this world other than in those two ways. We entered this world as a prince and a Negro and know this deep inside us all too well.¹

Leopold II and the German Empire were imperial latecomers when they partook in the scramble for Africa. They evolved from being colonial mavericks to imperial powers and did so with international backing from various monarchies and nation states. Even though their respective starting points differed greatly from each other, both Belgian and German agents profited from the other colonial powers' preoccupation with their own colonies, since this enabled new imperial players to join the ranks of empires. In particular, the century-old imperial animosity between the French and the British and their seemingly endless competition to be the most powerful Empire enabled other European states to successfully join the colonial game. The following chapter provides a guide to the historical development of Belgium and Germany from 1884 until the outbreak of WWI. It will show that the biggest winners of the Berlin Conference – as seen from a colonial politics point of view – were Belgium and Germany. This chapter also elaborates on how the CFS and GEA developed within their first 30 years of existence.

2.1 How to Colonise? From the Berlin Conference to Central Africa

In 1885, Belgium and Germany were the main beneficiaries of the Berlin Conference and the scramble for Africa; however, they were utterly inexperienced newcomers to the imperial game. The testimony of the German coloniser Rochus Schmidt upon his arrival in GEA is a good example of his employer's (and his own) colonial inexperience:

There I was, marching into a sphere entirely unknown to me at a time of uncertainty combined with a lack of knowledge concerning my professional duties, the language and

1 Éric Vuillard, *Kongo* (Berlin: MSB Matthes & Seitz, 2015), 7.

traditions of the indigenous peoples, but filled with bravery and eagerness. Due to the novelty of the imperial reality, the DOAG had no colonial experts yet.²

Compared to colonial nations like Great Britain, the Netherlands, France, Portugal, and Spain, who had been subject to the movements of thousands of colonial employees from the metropolises to the peripheries and back again for centuries, the international cultural vests of Belgium and Germany were rather unblemished. But this ‘innocence’ changed by means of the Berlin Conference of 1884/1885, held at the invitation of the German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck. Representatives from 14 powers were invited: Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden-Norway, the Ottoman Empire, and the United States.³ The conference’s purpose was to regulate freedom of trade on the Congo and Niger Rivers and to control European colonisation in Africa.⁴ The conference’s outcome can best be described as the formalisation of the “scramble for Africa,”⁵ since its final document – the General Act – constituted the official foundation for the division of Africa into separate and partly new colonies. Most existing forms of sub-Saharan self-governance and autonomy were suddenly eliminated by a group of European leaders who simply applied a ruler and a pen to the African map and drew (at times arbitrary) lines on it to mark new borders for (partly entirely new) colonial territories. Whilst the official reason for colonising central Africa was to abolish slave trade, civilise Africans, and minimise, or even eliminate, Muslim economic and cultural power, the unofficial motive was to ensure European political balance by defusing tensions via the African continent.⁶ The

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- 2 German: Ich marschierte also unter den damaligen, eben nicht viel versprechenden Verhältnissen, so gut wie unbekannt mit dem Feld meiner Thätigkeit, mit Sprache und Sitten der Eingeborenen, aber großen Muts in das mir fremde Land hinein. Erfahrenere Leute standen ja damals der DOAG bei der Neuheit der Sache überhaupt noch nicht zur Verfügung. Schmidt, *Deutschlands Kolonien*, 23.
 - 3 The USA did not send representatives to the conference for two reasons: it was unable to take part in territorial expeditions and they did not want to give the conference further legitimacy. However, it had acknowledged Leopold’s claims to the Congo six months prior to the Berlin Conference. See Franz Ansprenger, *Geschichte Afrikas* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2007), 75–76; Max Büchler, *Der Kongostaat Leopolds II. Schilderung seiner Entstehung und wirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Leipzig 1914), 155–56.
 - 4 The conference commenced on 15 November 1884 and lasted until 26 February 1885.
 - 5 Ansprenger, *Geschichte Afrikas*, 75.
 - 6 A Muslim culture had developed in Africa. It possessed a common language and a “culture of seafaring and long-distance trade. In the East African interior, Islam started to spread [...] in the nineteenth century only. The possible emergence of Muslim states, as in Buganda, was stopped by encroaching colonial rule. We have to understand thus the historical development of Muslim East Africa as two separate histories: the long history of Muslim societies on the coast which were oriented toward the Indian Ocean; and the short history of the Muslim populations of the East African interior, upcountry Kenya, Uganda, mainland Tanzania, and also the eastern Congo [...]. While the history of Islam in the East African hinterland is a comparatively recent development, Muslim societies

latter had come to suffer due to Leopold's meddling in the colonial power game and the European and American powers saw a need to bring order to the sudden chaos. Ultimately, the partition of Africa was a side effect of a Christian urge to civilise and pan-European political power games.⁷

Unlike Belgium's constitution, Leopold II was an anti-democratic monarch who decided, independently of the Belgian parliament, to heighten the prestige of his country abroad as well as that of his own persona. As crown prince, Leopold had already shown a lively interest in colonial and expansionist policies and undertook numerous journeys for this purpose.⁸ When only 20 years of age, he declared to the Belgian senate on 18 December 1855 that he "will penetrate the darkness of barbarism. [He] will go to central Africa and present it with the benefit of a civilised government. And if need be, [he] will take this gigantic task upon [himself]"⁹. Another example of Leopold's ambitions took place a mere day before his accession to the throne. On 17 December 1865, Leopold declared to Baron Lamermont, one of his associates and confidants that his "biggest hope is to bequeath [his] people with a stronger and more beautiful Belgium"¹⁰. He opined that this goal was best reached by acquiring a colony and profiting from its economic produce. Several of his attempts to purchase colonial territories from the established empires failed. At the time, in the mid-1870s, the British ruled vast areas south of the Sahara and the Boers were in South Africa. Portugal, Spain, Great Britain, and France owned various islands and scattered smaller areas in West Africa. The weakened Portuguese Empire attempted to resurrect its former claims to most of the West-African coastal areas as well as the east coast of Mozambique. Yet, despite this European intervention, about 80 % of Africa's land surface was still ruled by indigenous rulers.¹¹ Of course, Brussels, Berlin, and other non-imperial metropolises had already come into contact with imperial goods like ivory, pepper, and silks, but this had been thanks to

on the coast could look back, in the nineteenth century, on a history of more than one thousand years". Roman Loimeier, *Muslim Societies in Africa. A Historical Anthropology* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013), 210.

7 Drayton nicely evaluates the interplay between pan-European exchanges of knowledge and political rivalries. See Richard Drayton, "Masked Condominia: Pan-European Collaboration in the History of Imperialism, C. 1500 to the Present", *Global History Review* 5 (2012).

8 As a young man, Leopold traveled to Egypt and Palestine in 1854 and to India and China in 1864. See Büchler, *Der Kongostaat Leopolds II.*, 1, 35.

9 Ibid., 36. A further example of his colonial ambitions occurred one year before his accession when he presented the liberal Minister with a stone from Athens on which was written: "Belgium has to have colonies". (French: Il faut à la Belgique des colonies.) Ibid., 37.

10 French: Je n'ai pas d'autre que désir de laisser la Belgique plus grande, plus forte et plus belle. Ibid., 37.

11 See Hochschild, *Schatten über dem Kongo*, 62.

intermediaries.¹² Home and empire were, neither before nor after, separate spheres.¹³ Africans had also encountered European goods for centuries, yet, unlike in the case of the colonisers, there are very few egodocuments by Africans about their voyages to Belgium and nearly none about travels to Germany.¹⁴

Both Belgium and Germany were young nations with constitutional monarchies that desired international renown, prestige, and recognition from the established European empires. After numerous struggles for political and religious independence from William I of the Netherlands, the Belgians finally succeeded in founding their own nation state in 1831. Even so, another eight years would have to pass until the Dutch monarchy accepted its territorial losses. Europe's five great powers (Austria, France, Great Britain, Prussia, and Russia) quickly and officially recognised the new Belgian mini-state, its constitution, and the parliamentary monarchy and they chose Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha to be Belgium's first king. This was a clever diplomatic move, as Leopold, a member of a German noble family, was related to the British royal family through his late wife Princess Charlotte. He was also connected with France via his second marriage to Princess Marie Louise of Orléans. On 21 July 1831, he ascended to the Belgian throne as King Leopold I. Nevertheless, Belgian unity was doomed to suffer in the long run due to conflicts between the Catholics and the Liberals on the one hand and the Flemish and Walloons on the other. The initial wish to gain liberty from the Netherlands had glued these different groups together; however, once liberty was achieved and a new order established, this glue slowly evaporated and it no longer sufficed to maintain internal peace. Discrepancies between Vatican-oriented ultramontane groups and anti-religious liberal policies increased. Generally, the Flemish people were socially, politically, economically, and culturally discriminated against by the Walloon upper class. Additionally, the co-determination law and nepotism were combined to deny the Flemish population its vote. It was not until 1898 and the Equality Act that the Flemish population of Belgium, which even today constitutes the numerical majority, received the right

12 Historians working on Germany's colonial past in particular stress that, despite the *Kaiserreich's* short imperial career, its colonial peripheries had a remarkable effect on the metropole. See for example Andreas Eckert and Michael Pesek, "Bürokratische Ordnung und koloniale Praxis. Herrschaft und Verwaltung in Preußen und Afrika", in *Das Kaiserreich transnational. Deutschland in der Welt 1871-1914*, ed. Sebastian Conrad and Jürgen Osterhammel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004). Even before Germany became an imperial power, many bourgeois and noble households would show off their oriental carpets (amongst other things) to their guests. Thus, Middle Eastern colonial goods were already exerting an influence on German households before 1884. See Sebastian Conrad and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds., *Das Kaiserreich transnational. Deutschland in der Welt 1871-1914* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), 16-20.

13 For a comparison with the British-Indian case, see Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire*, 7-9.

14 See Conrad and Osterhammel, *Das Kaiserreich transnational*, 17f.; Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire*.

to vote. Long overdue, the same act also recognised Flemish as Belgium's second official language.¹⁵

Even though Belgium's nineteenth-century economic boom and industrialisation was built upon the backs of the Flemish lower and middle classes, a large percentage of them were dependent on financial aid from the state, the Church, or private relief organisations. The negative social effects of a capitalist economic system were obvious; the widening gap between rich and poor had not only led to a new Belgian electoral law, but also inspired individuals to seek their fortunes abroad. This is what occurred in the Congo.¹⁶ The CFS was considered *terres vacantes* and Leopold II, the colony's governor and indirect owner, was in desperate need of human capital. When the CFS was founded, its territory was far from being completely explored, despite numerous scientific expeditions led by the likes of Henry Morton Stanley from Great Britain and the German Hermann von Wissmann, both of whom had mapped territories and laid the first foundations for future trade stations and towns.¹⁷ The FP and the newly-founded *Compagnie du Congo pour le Commerce et l'Industrie* (CCCI) systematically scouted, mapped, occupied, and populated the territory whilst also building military and trade stations at strategic points along the Congo River. Regardless of the professional measures taken to map the exact borders, minor disagreements concerning dominion over territories adjoining the

15 For a more detailed history of Belgium, its creation and development from the sixteenth to the twentieth century, see Rainer Eisenschmid, *Belgien*, 9 ed. (Ostfildern: Baedeker, 2010); Johannes Koll, *Belgien. Geschichte, Kultur, Politik, Wirtschaft*, ed. Johannes Koll (Münster Aschendorff Verlag, 2007).

16 The CFS had a 37km long coastline along the Atlantic Ocean and is as large as the USA. It was divided into six provinces: Léopoldville, Équateur, Province Oriental, Kasai, Kivu, and Katanga, with their respective capitals Léopoldville, Coquilhatville, Stanleyville, Luluabourg, Bukavu, and Elizabethville.

17 H. von Wissmann explored almost the entire Kasai area in the mid-1880s and H. M. Stanley (1841–1904) was a British journalist and explorer. A native Welshman, he migrated to the USA (1861) and enlisted in the Confederate regiment in the *Dixie Greys* in Arkansas. After ten months of service, he was captured; six weeks later, he changed sides. Due to dysentery, he was discharged from the army. In November 1862, Stanley returned to Liverpool as a sailor; subsequently, he joined the US Navy in 1864, which he deserted a year later and went to New York. There, he got his first job as a journalist. In the course of his work with the *New York Herald*, he reported on the Suez Canal in 1867. In 1868, James Gordon Bennett gave Stanley the job to locate and interview the English politician and explorer Sir David Livingstone, who had gone missing in Africa two years previously. After various illnesses, deaths, and battles against Africans and Afro-Arabs, Stanley found Livingstone in 1872. Through this discovery, he acquired international fame and recognition as explorer of the African continent. In 1874, he was commissioned to traverse Africa from the east to the west coast. The expedition began with 300 people in Zanzibar and ended three years later, after more than 12,000 km and 145 deaths, in the Congolese port city of Boma. See Felix Driver, "Stanley, Sir Henry Morton", in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. From the earliest times to the year 2000*, ed. H.C.G. Matthew, Harrison, Brian (Oxford Oxford University Press, 2004), 214–21.

CFS with the Portuguese at the Angolan frontier or with the French at the Congo-Brazzaville borders were unavoidable. The same held true for German quarrels in GEA with British interests in Zanzibar, South Africa, and Kenya. Apart from political skirmishes with the Portuguese and French in the CFS, the two main stakeholders were the Mahdi and other indigenous groups led by Afro-Arab slaveholders. Further clashes occurred between the FP and cannibal tribes, which were linked to the recruitment of cannibal soldiers into the FP.¹⁸

Ever since Belgians and Germans were legally entitled to explore territories in Africa under their own respective flags for the first time the relics, stories, or scientific findings they returned with to Europe had a transformative effect on their homelands as much as on cultures of movement and the flow of ideas. Due to the short duration of German imperialism, the effect of the periphery on the metropole was limited in comparison to the Belgian case. In contrast to Berlin, Brussels was revamped by Congolese money, which Leopold II used to finance his architectural follies.¹⁹ (To this day, the Congolese quarter – the Matonge – is a prominent part of Brussels' city centre, next to Naamse Port.²⁰) With this new imperial status also came the first colonised non-white subjects.

The most glaring difference between Belgium and Germany lies in their respective initial ambitions. On the one hand, a Belgian monarch wished for, and ultimately gained, a territory eighty times as big as Belgium (or larger than Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy, and Spain combined) that was effectively his private property. On the other hand, there was Germany, with its public call for colonies and more “*Lebensraum*”²¹.

18 For more on the FP and its often atrocious actions in the CFS, see Martin Ewans, *European Atrocity, African Catastrophe: Leopold II., the Congo Free State and Its Aftermath* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

19 Leopold II (aka the *Builder King*) commissioned various buildings, urban projects, and public works with *Congolese* profits. Examples for his building craze are found in Brussels, Ostend, and Antwerp. They include the Hippodrome Wellington racetrack, the Royal Galleries, and Maria Hendrikapark in Ostend; the Royal Museum for Central Africa and its park in Tervuren; the *Cinquantenaire* Park, triumphal arch, and complex and the Duden Park in Brussels, and the Antwerpen-Centraal railway station. Further private projects were the expansion of the grounds at the Royal Palace of Laeken, the Royal Greenhouses, the Japanese Tower, and the Chinese Pavilion near the palace. In the Ardennes, his domains consisted of 6,700 hectares of forests and agricultural lands, a golf course, and the castles of Ciergnon, Fenffe, Villers-sur-Lesse, and Ferage. He also owned country estates on the Côte d'Azur, including the *Villa des Cèdres*, its botanical garden, and the *Villa Leopolda*. See Koll, *Belgien*.

20 In Matonge, you can enjoy Congolese cuisine or buy Congolese fashion items and traditional wears.

21 For the definition of the term *Lebensraum* and the policies connected to it, see Smith, “‘Weltpolitik’ und ‘Lebensraum’”.

Leopold employed Stanley to continue the exploration of central Africa.²² Ultimately, Stanley's service to the king helped lead to the recognition of the CFS at the Berlin Conference. Leopold was convinced that his small kingdom, which had industrialised expeditiously in the textile sector since its formation in 1831, needed a colony in order to further its industrial expansion abroad. Thanks to the Berlin Conference, he could fulfill his dream and obtained the CFS for Belgium. However, it was not until after this event that Leopold shouldered the effort of convincing the Belgian people of their new colony's overall potential. Neither the Belgian people nor their parliament were truly interested in their king's ambitions. Therefore, the only way to justify his imperial goal was by applying a humanitarian alibi: "Combating the slave trade, raising the standard of morality, advancement of science, were the aims he advertised; he never mentioned profits."²³ His most prominent tool to promote Belgium's duty to develop and civilise was the organisation of the Brussels International Exposition of 1897 (*Exposition Internationale de Bruxelles*),²⁴ which was succeeded by the MRAC.²⁵ Events like the aforementioned world fair showcased

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- 22 Leopold II was a cunning regent who understood how to apply his charms and arguments effectively to convince Europe's governments and royals in order to fulfil his dream of a Belgian colony. He succeeded by means of half-truths and, most remarkably, without the support of his people. For a deeper analysis of his shrewd and effective methods for acquiring a private colony I recommend the following two works Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*; Reybrouck, *Kongo*.
- 23 Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, 63.
- 24 It lasted for six months. 27 countries participated and approximately 7.8 million people visited it. The colonial exhibition in Tervuren attracted more than 1.2 million visitors over six months. See Jan-Bart Gewald, "More Than Red Rubber and Figures Alone: A Critical Appraisal of the Memory of the Congo Exhibition at the Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, Belgium", *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 39, no. 3 (2006).
- 25 The MRAC was commissioned by Leopold II. His original plan was to add a colonial wing to the Natural History Museum and to 50th Anniversary Park (both in Brussels). When these plans were not carried out quickly enough, the king opted for an exhibition on his royal estate in Tervuren, an area he had known very well as a young prince. African products, ethnographic objects, and stuffed animals were exhibited in the Art-Nouveau style Colonial Palace, built especially for the occasion. Entire Congolese villages were erected in the park. The 1897 International Exhibition piqued scientific interest in the people and animals of Central Africa; thus, Leopold decided to build the MRAC for the promotion of the Congo. After the world fair, the museum was established in 1898 as a permanent museum and the scientific institution responsible for mounting exhibitions for the Belgian public and encouraging the study of Central Africa. In 1901, Leopold set out to make Tervuren his *little Versailles*, comprised of an African museum, Chinese and Japanese Pavilions, a conference centre, and French gardens. The first stone was laid in 1904. The striking staircase, domed rotunda, and marble halls were intended to add prestige to the young Belgian state. Construction continued until 1909. When Leopold died in 1909, the CFS was renamed the *Belgian Congo* and the Belgian government suspended all construction. The Museum of Belgian Congo was finally inaugurated by

the king's personal property, the CFS. Its main attraction was the colonial exhibit at the MRAC in Tervuren, a Flemish town located just outside Brussels. It featured a variety of Congolese villages inhabited by real Congolese people. Their fashion, livestock, cuisine, and weapons (spears) were put on display; even central-African freshwater fish were showcased in a subterranean passageway.

Contrary to the Belgian case, Chancellor von Bismarck had initially been against any kind German engagements in imperial endeavours. Ultimately, however, his stance changed and he was *peu-à-peu* directed towards undertaking imperial actions in Africa and Asia. During the 1880s, the number of public voices within the German Empire – and especially from seatriade-driven cities like Bremen and Hamburg – demanding colonial engagements increased. At first, Bismarck refused because he focused his foreign policies on Europe rather than faraway territories. Bismarck's ideal concept of overseas politics was one comparable to the British East India Company: a private company which was only partially supported by the state.²⁶ Nonetheless, increasing social and economic problems forced him and the *Kaiserreich* into action. As in the Belgian case, it was claimed that Germany's economy lacked new and bigger markets for yielding great wealth. Prevailing economic and capitalist circles hoped to weaken the resurgent labour movement by using emigration campaigns to encourage members of the lower classes to help create a 'German India' overseas. This idea of solving the *soziale Frage* (the social question) by acquiring colonies fell on particularly fertile ground in nationalistic circles within the bourgeoisie and nobility.²⁷ In addition to trying to "overcome class conflicts and

Albert I; after the Congo's independence in 1960, it was renamed the *Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale*. For further information on the MRAC, its history, and contemporary activities see "Musée Royale De L'afrique Central", www.africamuseum.be.

26 See Conrad, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte*, 22. For the English edition, see *German Colonialism. A Short History*, trans. Sorcha O'Hagan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

27 The term *soziale Frage* refers to the social ills that accompanied/ followed the transition from an agrarian to an industrial society and urbanisation. In Germany, this transition occurred from the early nineteenth century onwards. Populations were growing, old industries declining, and gradually emerging factories taking over. The core problems of the *soziale Frage* were pauperism, which referred to the insecurity of farmers, rural servants, artisans, workers, and clerks. The problems shifted over time. Between the 1850s and the 1870s, industry experienced a strong upswing, while the decline of domestic crafts and handicrafts continued. From the 1870s onwards, the *soziale Frage* had turned primarily into a labour question. Mass exodus from the countryside to urban industrial centers, the side effects of metropolitan education, and the social integration of industrial workers caused political leaders as well as the bourgeois public sphere to search for solutions. Depending on perceptions and interests, different solutions to the *soziale Frage* were developed, colonialism being one of them. See Wehler, *Das Deutsche Kaiserreich; Bismarck und der Imperialismus* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 1984).

antagonisms at home”;²⁸ Bismarck called the Berlin Conference at the behest of the Belgian monarch and in recognition of Franco-German legal and political interests, which would be enhanced by weakening the British Empire politically.

The driving force behind the foundation of Germany’s largest colony was Carl Peters, a pastor’s son who, by means of his *Gesellschaft für Deutsche Kolonisation* (GDK; Society for German Colonising), received a mandate to bring areas of East Africa into German possession.²⁹ Peters, like Stanley, was an ambitious man with delusions of grandeur. In November 1884 he and his companions arrived in Zanzibar. They travelled in disguise to keep the German colonial project hidden from the British and the sultan of Zanzibar. Before long, the first *Schutzverträge* (protection treaties) were signed by indigenous tribal chiefs from the African mainland, thereby allowing Peters’ colonial society to secure claims to areas in contemporary Tanzania for the *Kaiserreich*. Since Bismarck was initially against the founding of colonies, he instructed the German representative in Zanzibar to deny Peters his support. Nevertheless, when the latter returned to Berlin with signed protection treaties and threatened to engage in an agreement with Leopold II, Wilhelm II signed a letter of protection on 27 November 1885, which provided legal footing for the occupation of East African territories. Henceforth, the *Deutsche Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft* (DOAG; German East African Society) had the official support of the German Empire and the latter’s territorial influence expanded accordingly.³⁰

As in the Belgian case, the German public’s first broader contact with objects and persons from its new colonies was the *Berliner Kolonialausstellung* (the Berlin Colonial Exhibition) of 1896 in Treptower Park. It was part of the *Gewerbeausstellung* (trade fair), which Wilhelm II himself inaugurated.³¹ Enabling over seven million visitors to view the physical transfer of exhibits from Germany’s imperial peripheries to the metropole in the form of tribal dance performances, drinking coffee, eating bananas, and simply watching Africans imitating indigenous rural life behind fences, this exhibition left no doubt about racial and civilisational hierarchies. Apart from – intentionally or not – implementing social hierarchies based on race, the exhibition’s aim was to advertise both the imperial project itself and *Kolonialwaren* (goods from colonial territories) like chocolate, coffee, and bananas to the broader public. The hope was to increase revenues by selling exotic luxury wares to new customers. Even though Edward Said explicitly excluded German orientalism from his

28 Richard J. Evans, “Hans-Ulrich Wehler Obituary. Historian Who Revolutionised the Study of German Society and Became One of the Country’s Leading Public Intellectuals”, *The Guardian*, <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/jul/18/hans-ulrich-wehler/print>.

29 Apart from Tanzania, Germany also acquired the colonies Cameroon, German South-West Africa (Namibia), New Guinea, and Togo.

30 Carl Peters renamed the company to *Deutsche Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft* – the German East Africa Company.

31 For general accounts on German colonial history and imperial discourses connected to it, see Conrad, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte*.

critique, there is no doubt that the German perception of its colonies was orientalist to a certain extent.³² In other words, Europe had invented a perception of Africa that Toni Morrison refers to as Africanism.³³

2.2 Implementation of Goals

Leaving Bismarck's foreign policy aims aside, there were four official objectives behind the establishment of the German colonies that laid the foundations for their administration. Firstly, there were trade interests: the colonies were to supply Germany with natural resources and new markets for domestic products. Secondly, there was the matter of emigration. Long-term migration from Germany to other countries saw its peak in the early 1880s, when over two million of its citizens left their homeland. German politicians knew that large-scale departure could not be prevented; however, it was best to avoid, or at least minimise, German migration to the USA. As a result, the idea of 'new Germanies' spread: lands where German heritage and culture would be preserved and not Americanised. The third argument is linked to the *Sozialimperialismusfrage* (question of social imperialism). This was similar to the previous British-Australian case in that it was suggested that colonial territories could be used as outlets for social unrest and criminals in the homeland, here in the *Kaiserreich*, thereby also presenting the public with a solution to the *soziale Frage*. However, there too were critical voices from members of the Catholic party *Centrum* and the *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (SPD; Social Democratic Party of Germany). They considered colonialism to be nothing more than a "export of the social question",³⁴ arguing that migration would only relocate social issues but not solve them. Lastly, Germany highlighted its cultural duty to civilise its future colonial subjects. The latter goal in particular succeeded in uniting the otherwise opposed representatives of school education, both churches, and the groups for the so-called *Erziehung zur Arbeit* (implementation of good work habits). This was because the implementation of German (Western) culture and Christian missionary goals were thought to be complementary.³⁵ Thus, the civilising mission was a major impetus, although it was not the only advertised objective for colonising.

Leopold II too made sure to convince influential people and the broader public that his only interest in the Congo was to enlighten its African inhabitants with Christian beliefs and Western education. Stanley announced in the *Daily Telegraph* as early as 1879 that his central-African expeditions were financed by a "philan-

32 Said excluded German orientalism from his critique because it focused on academia and the arts instead of manifesting itself in foreign politics, as was the case in France and Great Britain. See Said, *Orientalism*; Conrad, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte*.

33 See Arndt, "The Racial Turn".

34 Conrad, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte*, 28.

35 For more information on German aspects of the civilising mission, see *ibid.*, 70–75.

thropic society”³⁶ which forbade the use of violence against indigenous peoples. Moreover, Stanley also testified that neither his employer nor he himself had any economic goals in mind. Of course, as we know today, neither declaration was true. Stanley applied forced labour to keep infrastructure and transport costs at a minimum whilst mining ivory and rubber from the territory’s heart and transporting it to the coast, and he did so with Leopold’s permission. Furthermore, road tolls were created and controlled by a small private mercenary army, the FP’s unofficial predecessor, to gain even higher profits. Months before the CFS became official, Stanley had already acquired over 450 contracts from indigenous tribal chiefs, who transferred their lands to Leopold II. All that was left for the Belgian king to do was to safeguard those documents in case other Western powers tried to dispute his legal claim to the Congolese territories.³⁷

The public spheres of both colonies were dominated by Europeans, who conducted the affairs of state on the ground in Africa either as civil servants, military officers, or both.³⁸ They were recruited via Belgium or Germany and, as far as the climatic conditions made it possible, led a contemporary European lifestyle, trying to introduce Western laws and cultural practices throughout the two colonies.³⁹ The FP held military and police functions in the CFS and was responsible for the public’s adherence to the colony’s laws. In GEA it was the *Kaiserliche Schutztruppen* (KS) – imperial troops for protection – from which police officers were later recruited.⁴⁰ The KS had emerged from the *Wissmanntruppe*, which was originally formed to end GEA’s first colonial uprising initiated by Arab traders along the coastline.⁴¹ Comparable to the FP, its duties were to protect the colonial regime’s social,

36 BÜCHLER, *Der Kongostaat Leopolds II.*, 1, 95.

37 Stanley gave the contracts to Leopold in June 1884. See *ibid.*, 111.; HOCHSCHILD, *Schatten über dem Kongo*, 102–3.

38 Due to a severe lack of white personnel during the first years in the new African areas, it was common for colonisers to simultaneously hold positions as members of military and civil services.

39 People employed for military or public posts were generally Germans due to the direct link to Berlin, but German citizenship was not obligatory. In the CFS, your nationality did not matter as long as you spoke French and passed the health tests at the CFS colonial offices in Brussels prior to signing a work contract. See TANJA BÜHRER, *Die kaiserliche Schutztruppe für Deutsch-Ostafrika. Koloniale Sicherheitspolitik und transkulturelle Kriegführung 1885 bis 1918*, ed. Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, vol. 70, Beiträge Zur Militärgeschichte (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2011); CONRAD, *German Colonialism*; HEINRICH FONCK, *Deutsch-Ost-Afrika. Die Schutztruppe, ihre Geschichte, Organisation und Tätigkeit*, 2 ed. (Wolfenbüttel: Melchior, 2011); JANSSENS, *Histoire De La Force Publique; Reybrouck, Kongo*.

40 For more on the training and recruitment of GEA police officers, see FONCK, *Deutsch-Ost-Afrika*, 61–62.

41 See N.N., “Wissmanntruppe”, in *Deutsches Koloniallexikon*, ed. Heinrich Schnee (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1920). For an example of a German imperial military career in the GEA and the other African colonies, see Christoph Kamissek, “Ich kenne genug

cultural, and economic interests and to keep indigenous insurgents or rioters at bay. The main difference between these two troop formations was their employers and their respective status: the FP was officially linked to the CFS alone while the KS was officially German. FP members were employed by the CFS and had no direct official connection to the Belgian monarchy, army, or state, while the KS was recognised by Wilhelm II, Bismarck, and the Reichstag. KS members were of German citizenship, but the FP was not limited to Belgian soldiers. Furthermore, the soldiers' prospects and perspectives varied as well. White soldiers in the CFS, for example, could not expect automatic (re-)employment by their respective national armies. Germans who were employed as soldiers of the KS, however, would be (re-)instated in the German army upon return to the *Kaiserreich*.⁴² The period of service in the two forces was the same: two-and-a-half years. However, the KS dedicated four of the 30 months to furlough, while the FP assigned six.⁴³ Despite the general differences, both colonies relied heavily upon their armies for safety, protection of their 'own' people (i. e. whites), defence against intruders (African and European), repression of uprisings by different groups of the colonised, and safeguarding economic interests.

Apart from acquiring lands for cultivation, building rail tracks, sending steam boats down the Congo River, building ports at Lake Tanganyika, a harbour in Dar es Salaam, and supplying white colonials with residential and office buildings, it was also essential to maintain the peace in both colonies. At first, colonising the central-African territories happened relatively peaceful. However, after it became increasingly clear to the African colonised that the white 'masters' were staying for good, both colonies were confronted with the first wave of uprisings: the *Campagne Arabe* (CA; 1892–1894) in the CFS and the Maji-Maji Rebellion (MMR; 1905–1907) in GEA. The CA was about gaining access to and maintaining positions of territorial and economic power in the east of the CFS. The MMR was similar to the Congo-Arab war, but it was not founded on economic interests; rather, it had its roots in cultural grounds and was fuelled by indigenous African pagan religious leaders opposed to both the established Afro-Arab Muslim merchants and the new white colonisers.

Although not much is known about the origins of the Arab slave traders in sub-Saharan Africa, their first settlements on the East African coastline can be traced back to the tenth century.⁴⁴ A permanent settlement of Arab settlers, however, did not develop until the nineteenth-century rule of the imams of Muscat, which led to a mixture of Arabs and non-white continental Africans on the East African

Stämme in Afrika'. Lothar Von Trotha – Eine imperiale Biographie im Offizierskorps des Deutschen Kaiserreichs", *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, no. 40 (2014). For a British example with which to compare the German case, see David Lambert, "Reflections on the Concept of Imperial Biographies. The British Case", *ibid.* Imperial biographies too allow for previously ignored historical agents to be brought to the foreground of analysis.

42 The same applied for colonial civil servants from the GEA returning to Germany.

43 For more data on employment conditions, see Fonck, *Deutsch-Ost-Afrika*, 61–66.

44 See Hinde, *The Fall of the Congo Arabs*, 1–2.

islands of Pemba and Zanzibar.⁴⁵ The construction and expansion of large trade routes for ivory, slaves, and other tropical goods between the eastern coast and the continent's hinterlands occurred in the same century. Without this widespread net of trade routes and camps, several famous European geographers and explorers, like David Livingstone, Stanley, or Wissmann, would not have succeeded.⁴⁶ Afro-Arab traders had not only built several smaller routes, but also constructed a direct route between Zanzibar and Ujiji, an Afro-Arab city located on the eastern shore of Lake Tanganyika.⁴⁷ Some routes went even further into the Congo. Afro-Arab slave traders from Zanzibar, who had already settled in the Congo region as tribal rulers and distributors of various goods (e.g. ivory and slaves), were the regional rulers of the area when the CFS was established and therefore stood in the way of Belgian political interests.

Sefu, the son of the legendary Afro-Arab slave trader Tippu Tip, had decided not to follow in his father's pacifist footsteps and instead took up arms against the FP and colonial rule in general.⁴⁸ Sefu aimed to regain the social status his father had lost after the Europeans took away his economic control of the Congo's eastern territories. Other traders like him (Gongo Lutete, Bwan N'Zigi, Musembé, Sultan Muhara, Rumaliza, and Munié Kibwana) did not hesitate long before joining the

45 Ibid., 2–3.

46 David Livingstone (19 March 1813–1 May 1873) was a Scottish missionary and one of the most famous explorers of the nineteenth century. His expeditions took him to South Africa, along the Zambezi River, and to Lake Tanganyika, where he partially explored the areas with Stanley. Livingstone discovered the Victoria Falls and published travel-guides on Africa. During an expedition, he succumbed to dysentery and was buried a year later in April 1874 in Westminster Abbey. See A.D. Roberts, "Livingstone, David", in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford2004).

47 Hinde, *The Fall of the Congo Arabs*, 21.

48 Tippu Tip, birth name Hamed bin Muhammed el Murjebi, was mainly responsible for the strong position of the Afro-Arab slave traders in the Eastern Congo. In 1876 Stanley described him as being roughly forty years old, so his birth year is estimated at 1832. More specific data is not available, apart from that his father was Afro-Arab and his mother was African. His nickname Tippu Tip means *the collector of great wealth*. He came from a merchant family and used this knowledge to build an empire. As a young man, he went to the west with 100 men, raided villages and tribes, and took prisoners, which he sold into slavery in Zanzibar. Over the decades, he pushed ever further west into then still unknown regions and built his own empire this way. His most valuable assets were ivory and slaves. He also traded with various African tribes and applied the *diviser et reigner* tactics to increase his power. Stanley had once bought carriers from Tippu Tip for his first Congo expedition and, for a while, they were his companions. Livingstone and Tippu Tip met in 1867. See *ibid.*, 7–10.; Hochschild, *Schatten über dem Kongo*, 187–88. Auguste-Éduard Gilliaert, *La Force Publique De Sa Naissance À 1914*, vol. XXVII, Section Des Sciences Morales Et Politiques (Brussels: Institut Royal Colonial Belge 1952), 206–08.

opposition to European interference in their areas of influence.⁴⁹ However, despite possessing modern guns and rifles as well as some knowledge of combat tactics, the CA did not end in their favour. The Afro-Arab traders' defeat was probably due to their failure to join together against the so-called white forces. The CFS could not tolerate a second power in its own country, particularly not one that controlled a major part of the commodity trade. A positive outcome from the CA was therefore essential for the FP, since it would enable the CFS to expand and secure its territorial power. Consequently, Leopold made sure that the FP would do its utmost possible to triumph against the slave traders' uprisings.

Equally important for GEA was the defeat of its African insurgents. The Germans had only weak control over their East-African colony, although they maintained a system of defensive forts throughout the interior to enable them to exert a sufficient degree of supervision. To maintain their fragile, yet efficient control over their African territory, the Germans resorted to violent repressive tactics in order to dominate the population. GEA introduced head taxes in 1898 and, just like their Belgian neighbours in the CFS, relied on forced labour to build roads and accomplish various other infrastructural tasks. In 1902, Peters also ordered villages to grow cotton as a cash crop: every village was charged with producing a quota of cotton and their respective village chiefs were left to oversee the production, which set them against the rest of the population.⁵⁰ On top of the increasingly unpopular tax policies came the effects they had on the indigenous social fabric. In order to face colonial fiscal needs, men were made to leave their villages to work on cotton plantations, build roads, or similar such projects. The lack of able-bodied men in the villages forced the women to assume traditional male roles; nonetheless, the men's absence strained the villages' resources and affected the limits of their self-sufficiency. Animosity against colonial rule with its abhorrent labour policies rose; after a drought in early 1905, nothing could hold back full-scale insurgency like the MMR.

The MMR was an indigenous uprising against German colonial rule in the southern parts of GEA.⁵¹ Nowadays, it is considered one of the greatest colonial wars in the history of the African continent. Unlike anti-European resistance in other parts of Africa, the MMR was characterised by an unprecedented broad alliance between members of dozens of different ethnicities and tribes. Its name was derived from the religious cult of the *Maji Maji*, which played a major role in encouraging the

49 For more detailed information on the CA and the different Afro-Arab slave traders from a contemporary standpoint, see Hinde, *The Fall of the Congo Arabs*.

50 Under German rule, these village chiefs were trusted indigenous agents put into office by the colonial administration. Their different cultural or tribal backgrounds tended to cause problems and villagers did not trust them. See Conrad, *German Colonialism*. An increase in cotton production was part of Germany's official colonial policies to increase revenues and make GEA more self supporting economically.

51 *Maji* is Swahili for water. For more on the rebellion's set up and its participants, see John Iliffe, "The Organization of the Maji Maji Rebellion", *The Journal of African History* 8, no. 3 (1967).

insurgents to join forces across ethnic lines and turn against the far superior colonial military power. This particular cult relied on magic to drive out its white oppressors. Kinjikitile Ngwale, a spirit medium, was declared to be possessed by the snake spirit Hongo. He renamed himself Bokero and was believed to have been summoned to eliminate the Germans with the help of his fellow Africans. It was recorded by German anthropologists that Bokero planted a belief in his followers' minds that his godly war medicine would turn European bullets into water or that they would just bounce off the rebels. However, his war medicine was just a mix of water, millet seeds and castor oil and, of course, was no match to real metal bullets or cannon fire.⁵² The MMR ended with a devastating death toll and defeat for the African population, but it also formed a decisive turning point in German colonial policy.⁵³

The successful outcome for the CFS and GEA in these colonial wars probably prevented both territories from becoming Islamic empires, as was the case after the British lost the Mahdi Rebellion in the Sudan. Apart from advertising the colonial goal to abolish slavery in central Africa, the existence of a Muslim cultural presence in the form of the Afro-Arab merchants was utilised as just another excuse for sending colonising forces to sub-Saharan Africa to spread the Christian word. Be that as it may, both imperial armies succeeded in gaining, defending, and maintaining authority over their territories by means of warfare and repressive policies.

Besides enforcing the European presence by means of military and naval dominance, Christian missionaries also participated in the penetration of sub-Saharan Africa. Today, approximately 90 % of Congolese are Christians with a Catholic

52 For more on the MMR, see Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa. White Man's Conquest of the Dark Continent from 1878 to 1912* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), 616–21; Conrad, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte*, 53.

53 The MMR was one of the better organised rebellions in colonial history. It was aimed at the colonial government and its subsidiaries (which also included missionaries), rather than plantation owners. The rebellion began among the Matubi people, who hated colonial rule in particular and who had previously resisted Arab and Bantu control for decades. Ngwale distributed *maji*, a medicine of the gods. Through this, Ngwale created a secret mass movement, originally consisting of Matubi members, on 30 July 1905 when the rebellion broke out. By 4 August, the Germans had captured and hanged Ngwale. However, ideas of *maji* had spread to other tribes in the meantime. The KS slowly realised the extent of the movement they were facing and reinforcements arrived in October 1905. Soon the German Commander Wagenheim saw that simple military force would not crush the *Maji Maji* rebels due to their strong convictions and wish to keep fighting. The Germans then seized food, destroyed crops, and pillaged hostile territories. Ultimately, hunger led to submission. Death tolls are imprecise, but estimates place Tanganyikan deaths between 250,000 and 300,000 people (appr. 30 per cent of the population). European deaths were considerably less due to modern weaponry and tactics: 15 European settlers, 316 German soldiers, and 73 askaris were killed. Iliffe, "The Organization of the Maji Maji Rebellion"; Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*. Simultaneously, the war and genocide against the Nama and Herero tribes in German Southwest Africa took place from 1904–1908.

majority while the former German areas contain almost equal numbers of Muslim and Christian followers. Christian infiltration is directly linked to the colonial era. Under Leopold's semi-supervision, the *Witte Paters* (White Fathers) were the most dominant order, although they were not the only Catholic missionary order active in the CFS.⁵⁴ In fact, due to the Belgian king's admission of different Protestant orders, particularly British, American, and Scandinavian ones, to evangelise in his colony, there were initially more Protestant than Catholic missions. It was not until the CFS became an official Belgian colony in 1908 that the Catholic missions received more political and educational influence.⁵⁵ Both churches had state authorisation, but only Catholic missions received royal subsidies to build and maintain schools and hospitals. The state's ambition was to create a healthy, literate, and disciplined labour force that was obedient to colonial authorities. The Church measured its civilising successes by means of counting adult and child baptisms.⁵⁶ Generally, the same reasons and stipulations for missionary work existed in GEA, with the difference that some missions, mainly French Jesuit, *Sacré Cœur*, and British Protestant ones, already existed on the East African coastline prior to Germany's interference.⁵⁷ In fact, the infiltration of Africa by Christian missionaries was part of the colonial conquest and the missions held similar interests to the colonial governments most of the time. They were inherent to the colonial project. They were not only the beneficiaries of colonial state development, but also spurred it on ideologically.

From the perspective of the indigenous Africans, missions and colonial governments were often seen as two sides of the same coin; however, the missions sometimes became advocates for indigenous people and often contributed to the discovery of colonial scandals.⁵⁸ Missions were also involved in fighting against the proliferation of liquor, opium, and slavery. In GEA, the deeper rift was not between

54 White Fathers (the Society of Missionaries of Africa) are a Roman Catholic religious order. The community of brothers and priests was founded in 1868 by the archbishop of Algiers and Cardinal Charles Martial Lavigerie of the Africa Mission, who was also their superior general until 1892. Their name is derived from their religious habit. However, because *white* was often confused with the marking of the skin colour, the term *Missionaries of Africa* is preferred. The White Fathers have the form of a clerical institute, whose members undertake an oath of lifelong missionary work. In 1885 they were confirmed initially and finally in 1908 by the Holy See. See John Forbes, "White Fathers", in *Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912); Max Heimbucher, *Die Orden Und Kongregationen Der Katholischen Kirche*, vol. III (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1908); L. Kaufmann, "Weiße Väter", in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, ed. Josef Höfer and Karl Rahner (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1965).

55 See Stenström, *The Brussels Archives*, 27; Osselaer, *The Pious Sex*.

56 See Koll, *Belgien*, 16.

57 For contemporary accounts on these missions, see the following diary: Frieda Freiin von Bülow, *Reiseskizzen und Tagebuchblätter aus Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Berlin 1889).

58 The most prominent examples are Edvard V. Sjöblom and William Shephard. See Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*; Edvard Vilhelm Sjöblom, *I Palmernas Skugga* (Stockholm: Perssons Offsettryck AB, 2003).

Christian missions and the colonial state, but between these two and the settlers and planters on-site.⁵⁹ Furthermore, people with Boer origins had already settled in the Kilimanjaro region, a fact welcomed by the German government since it strengthened the white presence in the area. Russo-Germans were also invited to migrate to GEA.⁶⁰ It can be asserted that missionary work in both colonies was the most important pillar of the education system. However, for many Africans, Christianity was not at the forefront of their encounter with the missionaries; rather, their principal contact was with the education that the missionary schools offered. The emancipation of Africans was indeed intended by Westerners, but not equalising them to white people. The creation of perfect indigenous Christians was the aim of the civilising mission, but not to create “black Europeans”⁶¹.

Last but not least, commercial trade companies and their agents were private sector instruments who ensured that economic demands were met and that trade routes were kept open. More often than not, they acted as middlemen between colonial administrators, indigenous labourers, and the free market. Equipped with governmental licences (but lacking state financing), the agents participated in the geographical penetration of the territories and the development of colonial stratagems. Colonial governments willingly accepted the trade agent’s knowledge on gaining profits without involving themselves financially; should the business men become greedy or simply incompetent, the colony’s leaders could always threaten with the withdrawal of licences or by increasing taxes.

To sum up, the CFS and GEA were led by predominantly individual white men (and very few women) with different social backgrounds, professions, and motivations. Nevertheless, they were all inherent parts of the implementation and preservation of colonial aims, be they educational, military, or economic in nature.⁶²

2.3 Status Quo at the Outbreak of World War I

The decade leading up to the outbreak of WWI brought distinctive developments to both colonies. Leopold II and the CFS were increasingly drawn into a public scandal

59 See, for example, the letters of a Danish planter in GEA: Jane L. Parpart and Marianne Rostgaard, *The Practical Imperialist: Letters from a Danish Planter in German East Africa 1888–1906* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

60 See Fonck, *Deutsch-Ost-Afrika*, 39.

61 Conrad, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte*, 74. See also Frederik Schulze, “German Missionaries, Race, and Othering. Entanglements and Comparisons between German Southwest Africa, Indonesia, and Brazil”, *Itinerario* 37, no. 01 (2013).

62 In the German it has also been argued that due to its unification and national strengthening, the world view shifted increasingly from a more local one to a colonial global one. See Jeff Bowersox, “Classroom Colonialism. Race, Pedagogy, and Patriotism in Imperial Germany”, in *German Colonialism in a Global Age*, ed. Geoff Eley and Bradley Naranch (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

that resulted in the nationalisation of the Congo territory. Meanwhile, GEA experienced a time of (relative) tranquillity after defeating the MMR.

In November 1878, the *Comité d'études du haut Congo* (CEC; Exploration Committee for the Upper Congo), a Brussels-based organisation, was founded: later they supposedly employed Stanley to explore the Congo.⁶³ To this day, it remains unclear whether it was the *Association internationale pour l'exploration et la civilisation de l'Afrique centrale* (AIC; International Association for the Exploration and Civilising of Central Africa) or the CEC that employed Stanley.⁶⁴ This uncertainty is a direct result of Leopold's order in August 1908 that all documents from his archives concerning the CFS should be burnt to avoid scandals after the official handover of his colony to Belgium. The king's employee Gustave Stinglhamber recalled that, whilst visiting the premises of the CFS headquarters in Brussels during a hot midsummer day, the heating was turned on at full blast. Stinglhamber was informed by the building's caretaker that the king had ordered him to burn all files of the National Archives in the furnace room. During that summer the ovens ran for eight days straight. The Belgian king had thus unilaterally destroyed the files, commenting to Stinglhamber that he "will give them [his] Congo, but they have no right to know what [he] did there"⁶⁵. What is undoubtedly known is that Leopold founded the aforementioned committees and that either he or Colonel Maximilian Strauch, one of his most loyal advisers, held their presidencies.⁶⁶

A most striking fact is that neither Stanley nor any other members of the CEC were allowed to publicly comment on Stanley's job or the committee's objectives because "Leopold was determined to keep up the appearance of a purely philanthropic enterprise. The treaties Stanley entered into [...], forbid him to issue anything about the purpose of their work"⁶⁷. It was not until 1911, almost 30 years after the CEC's creation, that the committee's real purpose became public: it was an "association for the exploration of the Congo and the possible establishment of a railway company

63 Engl: Committee for the exploration of the upper Congo. See Hochschild, *Schatten über dem Kongo*, 93. The CEC's founders were probably Leopold II, Oberst Strauch (Baron Greindl's successor as general secretary of the AIA). See Büchler, *Der Kongostaat Leopolds II.*, 1, 92.

64 The AIA's headquarters were in Brussels. It collected donations from all over Europe. The AIA's founding was supported by national representatives from Belgium, Germany, France, England, Italy, Austro-Hungaria, and Russia. They were later joined by the Netherlands, Portugal, Switzerland, and Spain, and they elected Leopold II as its President. The AIA was followed by the creations of further organisations: the *Commission internationale de l'Association africaine* (engl: Committee for the Exploration of the upper Congo) followed by the *Association internationale du Congo* (AIC) (engl: International Society of the Congo). Leopold used all three organisations as smoke screens to construct his colony. All three of them even used the same flag at assemblies. Later it became the CFS' flag. See Hochschild, *Schatten über dem Kongo*, 93–94, 50.

65 *King Leopold's Ghost*, 294.

66 See *Schatten über dem Kongo*, 93.

67 *Ibid.*, 93.

in Africa as well as a trading company in the Congo, and [to] simultaneously locate commerce and trade opportunities in the upper Congo”⁶⁸. This organisation was obviously created to conduct preliminary studies for the construction of a railroad and steamship connection between the lower and upper Congo regions. Furthermore, if the study’s results were favourable, the plan was to found a “*Société internationale des chemins de fer en Afrique*”⁶⁹ (SIDFA; International African Railway Society) for establishing trade routes. Even in the CFS’ very first moments, Leopold already hoped to found a trading company! What can be said for sure is that the Belgian king was aware of his wrongdoings; despite (or maybe because) losing the public relations campaigns against his critics, he had no intention of providing the general public with even more information or proof about his nebulous dealings in the Congo.

Due to reports of the maltreatment of indigenous people, the colony was no longer Leopold’s from 1908 onwards. The king did not succeed in preventing the likes of the Swedish Baptist missionary Edvard Vilhelm Sjöblom, the American Presbyterian William Henry Sheppard, or the Anglo-Irish diplomat Roger Casement from reporting publicly on the colony’s slave-like living and working conditions, forced labour, and unrealistic rubber tax quota. The most shocking reports, however, regarded the abominable practice of hacking off body parts of indigenous workers. As a result of the anti-Leopold PR campaigns and to prevent further negative press, even private letters sent from and to the CFS were censored as early as from the late 1890s onwards. Public allegations of recurring atrocities in the CFS nevertheless became more frequent and the Casement Report (1904) gave rise to an official international investigation as to whether or not the Belgian king was exploiting the territory’s natural resources for private aggrandisement and if organised abuses took place in the colony.⁷⁰ The eyewitness reports about the abuse of the indigenous work

68 Alphonse-Jules Wauters, *Histoire Politique Du Congo Belge* (Brussels: L’Eglantine, 1911), 24.

69 *Ibid.*, 24.

70 Roger Casement was appointed British consul for eastern French Congo in August 1901. In 1903, Casement, then the British consul at Boma in the CFS, was commissioned by the British government to investigate the human rights situation in that colony. A long, detailed eyewitness report exposing abuses, Casement’s report would be instrumental in Leopold relinquishing his personal holdings in Africa. When the report was published, the Congo Reform Association, founded by E. D. Morel, and Casement demanded action. Other European nations followed suit, as did the USA; the British Parliament demanded a meeting of the 14 signatory powers to review the 1885 Berlin Agreement. The Belgian Parliament, pushed by socialist leader Emile Vandervelde and other critics of the king’s Congolese policy, forced Leopold to set up an independent commission of inquiry. In 1905, it confirmed the essentials of Casement’s report. On 15 November 1908, the Belgian parliament took over the CFS from Leopold and reorganised it as the Belgian Congo. See Aldwin Roes, “Towards a History of Mass Violence in the Etat Independant Du Congo, 1885–1908”, *South African Historical Journal* 62 no. 4 (Dec2010); Hochschild, *King Leopold’s Ghost*.

force brought about a public ruckus, which caused Leopold to order his staff to control and censor both official and private correspondence sent to Europe. Further unfavourable media coverage was to be prevented: letters that used Belgian channels of transportation were often subject to some form of censorship.

The scandals were not limited to white colonisers; they also included non-white colonised in the relatively powerful positions awarded to them by their European superiors. Indigenous soldiers, who had often been involuntarily drafted into the FP, became infamous for leading forced labour crews, pillaging entire villages and crop fields, chopping off hands and feet, and taking women and children hostage in order to force the men to fulfil rubber quotas on time; this had been going on since 1888.⁷¹ The idea to chop off hands and feet was introduced by Léon Fiévez as a means of keeping an eye on the total amount of bullets used by indigenous soldiers.⁷² The latter were instructed that it was only permissible to fire at insubordinate African persons when attacked (usually by other indigenous people or Afro-Arab traders). One bullet therefore symbolised one dead body, i. e. a chopped-off body part. Because long military treks through the Congolese jungle were a common occurrence for FP members, troops often ran out of food, so they hunted game whenever possible. To hide the illegal use of bullets for hunting game, soldiers hacked off body parts from living people instead to avoid trouble with their superiors.

These atrocious circumstances did not seem to interest the Belgian monarch. Indeed, Leopold did not pay much attention to previous agreements or promises to Westerners either. For example, he knowingly and willingly broke formal agreements with the USA and other participants of the Berlin Conference by failing to adhere to free trade agreements.⁷³ Over a period of almost 25 years, the Belgian king enriched himself by exporting ivory, copper, gold, diamonds, and rubber to Europe and North America.⁷⁴ Until the very end, when Leopold was forced to hand over his colony to Belgium in 1908 by the *Charte coloniale*,⁷⁵ the colony's new constitution, he had never set foot in or seen his colony; yet, he successfully sucked almost all of the profit out of its economy and transferred them to his private bank accounts.

The implementation of the colonial economy and the integration of production areas into world market structures were associated with deep social deprivation. Specific to colonial working conditions was that conflicts between employers and workers were perceived as part of foreign rule. This was particularly the case because the official abolition of slavery did not lead to an enforcement of free labour conditions; instead, the boundaries between free and unfree labour were highly

71 See *Schatten über dem Kongo*, 177.

72 See Vuillard, *Kongo*, 71–6.

73 See Wolfgang Mommsen, “Das Zeitalter Des Imperialismus”, in *Fischer Weltgeschichte*, ed. Wolfgang Mommsen (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlage, 1969), 155–56.

74 See Koll, *Belgien*, 16.

75 See *ibid.*, 16; Walter Kucher, *Belgien und der Kongo. Ein Beitrag zu den Beziehungen zwischen Afrika und Europa* (Nürnberg Naturhistorische Gesellschaft Nürnberg, 1962), 16.

indistinct as a result of numerous economic constraints. Many Africans responded to the new situation by becoming migrant labourers. This had lasting consequences and, in many cases, even led to the dissolution of the family structures of entire villages. The country's demographics changed forever. In contrast to the situation in the CFS, however, the vast majority of Africans in GEA still lived in a rural agrarian environment that was hardly integrated into colonial market economy, especially in the internal regions. The colonial empire was a bottomless well into which the German government threw substantial subsidies. Hardly any of the areas under imperial control could sustain themselves economically. Even when private companies were profitable, the *Kaiserreich* hardly benefited. The costs of administration and warfare were extraordinarily high, particularly given the short time span of colonial activity.

After WWI, the inhabitants of the former German colonies and their future rulers were able to use the infrastructure built during German rule. These included the railway lines, road-building projects, and the port facilities, all of which had been financed with loans from the *Kaiserreich*. Germany declared that these investments were part of official development policy. In fact, this infrastructure was oriented at providing short- and medium-term necessities for European markets. Railway lines were built to connect inner regions with the ports on the coast. Industrial plants were never constructed in Africa: the materials for building railways, for example, were all brought in from Europe. The aim of colonial investment was to establish markets and mine raw materials for European industry, not the implementation and modernisation of industrial infrastructure for the benefit of local companies or inhabitants.

Leopold passed away only a year after his forced parting from his colony on 17 December 1909. At the time of the outbreak of WWI, the CFS was officially a Belgian colony and it remained so until June 1960, when Leopold's great nephew King Baudouin handed over the Belgian Congo to the Congolese people and granted them their independence after 75 years of colonialism. Nevertheless, despite the CFS' official transformation into Belgian territory in 1908, not much had changed. Forced labour continued to exist (especially in the more remote areas) and the maltreatment of indigenous workers persisted. Some European FP members faced charges, but they were either never convicted or received only light punishments. 'Never change a winning system' describes the Belgian state's unwillingness to improve living conditions for the Congolese on a broader scale. Instead, more control mechanisms were introduced, such as the *carte d'identités* that put an end to labour migration, thereby hindering workers from leaving horrendous working conditions for better ones or returning to their home towns.⁷⁶ Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja rightfully states

76 For a more elaborate investigation into the anthropological creation of tribes and indigenous identities to categorise Congolese and hand out identity cards, see Reybrouck, *Kongo*.

that “the Leopoldian system was replaced by a colonial regime that was just as oppressive, albeit in a less brutal manner”⁷⁷.

In GEA, certain contradictions remained even after the end of the MMR as a result of the extreme demographic imbalance between colonisers and colonised. While there were over 7.5 million indigenous inhabitants in the colony, there were only some 5,000 Europeans, who mainly resided in the coastal areas and in official residences. In the years before WWI, a small number of Europeans began to settle around Mount Kilimanjaro and in the Usambara Mountains.⁷⁸ Europeans considered the mild mountain climate more bearable than the southern savannahs and swamps. Nevertheless, despite the arrival of white settlers, there were still only 882 Germans (farmers and planters) in the colony in 1913, compared to the 70,000 Africans who worked on German plantations. Most of the remaining Germans were government officials (551) or members of the KS and police force (260 and 65 respectively).⁷⁹ Different European mentalities between plantation owners and the urban population were very visible and often caused discontent. According to the farmers, the townspeople were responsible for the excessive bureaucratisation of the colony and for implementing an excessively soft-hearted country policy. In addition to Africans and Europeans, many Arabs and Indians continued to play an important role in trade and the local government of the colony. However, their position was often uncertain, since their groups were not fully recognised either by the African majority or the European elite.⁸⁰

Whilst the Belgian Congo did not see any major fights during WWI, numerous battles took place in GEA throughout the Great War.⁸¹ From 1916 onwards, the war caused severe devastation in the country. Amongst the civilian population, there were hundreds of thousands of victims, mainly due to the many deaths in the forced transportation service for the military carriers, a worsening famine in 1917, and

77 Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo: From Leopold to Kabila: A People's History* (London: Zed Books, 2002), 26.

78 In the following chapters, I will introduce at various points the German couple Magdalene and Tom von Prince, who built their own plantation in the western Usambara region.

79 See Bernd G. Längin, *Die Deutschen Kolonien* (Hamburg/Berlin/Bonn: Mittler, 2005), 217.

80 See Conrad, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte*, 64.

81 By 1915, the KS successfully maintained safety in most German areas against the first attacks from Kenya and had repelled an attempted landing of British-Indian troops in Tanga. In 1916, the Allies had contracted stronger forces and marched into GEA from Kenya, the Belgian Congo, and Nyasaland. Within months, they pushed back the KS into the south of the country. After heavy fighting, the KS suffered large losses under their commander Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck in Portuguese Mozambique in November 1917. Several months later, the rearguard gave up to the Allied forces. Shortly before the end of the war, the KS still managed a march from Mozambique through the south of GEA to northern Rhodesia, where, they capitulated on 25 November 1918. See John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

the effects of a worldwide flu epidemic in 1918–1920. The latter event in particular caused suffering and death amongst the weakened population. In the end, the Treaty of Versailles stipulated that Germany gave up all its colonies. As of 20 January 1920, GEA was placed under the administration of the League of Nations. Its territory was divided according to earlier agreements made between Belgium and the UK. Belgium received mandates on Burundi and Rwanda and the UK was awarded the mandate over the Tanganyika area. In the south, the small Kionga Triangle fell to Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique), which meant that its border was pushed all the way to the Rovuma delta.

2.4 Conclusion

Both the CFS and GEA were colonies that – even if to differing extents – (ab)used the concept of *mission civilisatrice* as a smoke screen for economic and political colonising. The buzz word *mission civilisatrice* was a powerful term that occluded the true nature of the so-called liberal imperialism of the nineteenth century. In reality, instead of fighting evil and barbarism, most colonial endeavours caused them.⁸² Therefore, the European military structures needed the *mission civilisatrice* to introduce and maintain their political, legal, and military power within both colonies. They abused African labourers, who worked for little or, in the case of the CFS, nothing and both implemented exploitative taxes *per capita* based on natural sources like cotton in GEA or rubber in the CFS. Colonisation caused ruptures in local traditions and cultures, which most often led to the destruction of villages or even entire regions. In terms of major conflicts, a distinction should be made between the CA and the MMR. The former was based on territorial economic privileges linked to Afro-Arab trade routes, while the latter was the result of discontented locals from various social strata and ethnicities who wished to regain their independence. On top of this, while GEA was in constant need of subsidies from its motherland, the CFS involuntarily turned over all its profits to Leopold II.

Another major distinction was the legal standing of colonisers and their respective employers. In the ‘Belgian’ case, Belgium itself was not the employer during the first 25 years of the colony’s existence; in GEA, however, it was the *Kaiserreich* that employed state officials, the military, and the police. The exceptions here for both colonies were Christian missions and their employees. This difference resurfaces in several of the sources in relation to patriotic sentiments and deeds. For example, the independent German nurse Freiin Frieda von Bülow recounted in her diary that she travelled with a framed picture of Bismarck all the way from Berlin to a hotel in Zanzibar. A few days after arrival at the hotel, her local servant Umadi, who was very devoted to her, asked her about it:

82 For more on the debate connecting liberal colonialism with European evil and barbarism, see Tom Crook, Rebecca Gill, and Bertrand Taithe, eds., *Evil, Barbarism and Empire. Britain and Abroad, C. 1830–2000* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

[He] saw the picture of Lord Bismarck which I had placed on my table. He gazed at it intently, pointed his finger at it and said: 'Is that your Sultan?' [...] I said to him: 'It is not our Sultan, but a very important sir'. [...] Umadi then replied: 'I know all your grand houses, O'Swald and Hansing and Meyer are his subjects!' I answered: 'Indeed.'⁸³

In a different context, Frieda von Bülow also remarked on how "here [in German East Africa] every German is, in one way or another, seen as a representative of German culture"⁸⁴. In contrast, Belgian members of the FP do not mention their king at all and do not stress the importance of personal duty and honour when introducing Belgian culture in the CFS.

To sum up: Leopold II of Belgium, who pursued his private egomaniac desires as well as those of his entrepreneurial allies (shipping and trading companies and other nations with economic interests in sub-Saharan Africa), managed to establish an organisation for the geographic exploration of central Africa, advertising it as an enterprise in the service of humanity. The IAA and its German affiliates sent numerous expeditions to sub-Saharan Africa, which again caused the famous and, at times, wildly competitive scramble for Africa that found its resolution in the Berlin Conference of 1884. The white men and women *in situ* who found natural resources, routes of communication, *terre vacantes*, and commercial prospects paid an extreme price for their toils. Many of them died or became seriously ill or injured at least once during their service in Africa. Many more of them returned to Europe prematurely due to chronic health issues. However, there were exceptions like Wissmann and Stanley who survived to become rich and famous from lecturing and writing books about their African adventures.⁸⁵ Yet, despite the high death toll, the short life span of the *Kaiserreich's* imperial adventure, and the initially unofficial status of Belgium's colony, the experiences of entering the international colonial stage left their marks on both nations. Public awareness of the colonies and their indigenous peoples, flora and fauna, cultural artefacts, and export goods had risen accordingly. Travelogues by Europeans exploring Africa, world exhibitions like those in Tervuren or in the Treptower Park in Berlin showing off indigenous Africans, and adventure

83 German: Heute sah der Hôteldiener Umadi, der mir sehr zugethan ist, auf meinem Tisch das Bild des Fürsten Bismarck stehn. Er betrachtete es aufmerksam, zeigte mit dem Finger darauf und fragte: „Das ist wohl Euer Sultan?“ [...] Ich sagte ihm: „unser Sultan ist es nicht, aber ein sehr großer Herr.“ [...] Umadi meinte: „ich weiß schon! alle Eure großen Häuser, O'Swald und Hansing und Meyer stehen unter ihm!“ Ich sagte: „jawohl“. Bülow, *Reiseskizzen und Tagebuchblätter aus Deutsch-Ostafrika*, 5–6.

84 „[...] hier, wo noch jeder Deutsche mehr oder minder als Repräsentant des Deutschtums empfunden wird [...]“ *ibid.*, 196.

85 See following books Stanley, *Mein Leben – Band I*, 1; *Mein Leben – Band II*, 2. And by Wissmann see Wissmann, *Unter Deutscher Flagge Quer Durch Afrika; Meine zweite Durchquerung Aequatorial-Afrikas vom Congo zum Zambesi während der Jahre 1886–1887*.

tales for a young male readership were the ultimate hype of the time.⁸⁶ This was a new kind of globalisation that brought the world on a grander scale to Belgian and German living rooms for the first time of their national histories.⁸⁷

A further method of transporting colonial imagery and stories into the homelands was by the colonisers themselves; they wrote about their experiences in letters, memoirs, and diaries and informed the metropolises about their day-to-day lives in Africa. One of the most common topics in their writings was linked to friendships and friendly relationships that they established in the colonies. The following chapter will elaborate on the importance but also the difficulties that came with making friends in the colonies.

86 For more on the perception of world exhibitions in Germany, see Alexander Honold, “Ausstellung des Fremden – Menschen- und Völkerschau Um 1900. Zwischen Anpassung und Verfremdung: Der Exot und sein Publikum”, in *Das Kaiserreich transnational. Deutschland in der Welt 1871–1914*, ed. Sebastian Conrad and Jürgen Osterhammel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004).

87 For more on German perceptions on colonialism and contemporary developments linked to it, see Geoff Eley and Bradley Naranch, eds., *German Colonialism in a Global Age* (Durham, London: Duke University Press, 2014).

3. Friendship

At the start of the origin of awareness of the *self* lies the presence of *you*, and perhaps even the presence of a more general *we*. Only in dialogue, in argument, in opposition, and also in aspiring towards a new community is awareness of *my self* created as a *self-contained being*, separate from another. I know that I am, because I know *another* is.¹

Friendships are social institutions that vary depending on culture, religion, and social settings. Ordinarily, they rely on shared beliefs, gender, social class, and the promise of enriching each other. Friendships tend to be fostered and cultivated by common interests. An oft-repeated proverb also states that, unlike lovers, friends are forever. And yet, more often than not, reality has shown how friendships can disintegrate when commonalities and shared interests change or fade entirely. In other words, different types of friendships tend to be linked to different stages in life. Friendships might not be forever after all. They can be highly circumstantial for individuals who work abroad in a globalised world. Changes of residence, career improvement, and a change in social class or education can lead to new friendships, but also end old ones.

It is easy to assume the probability that most human societies believe in a sense of blood being thicker than water, a belief that, no matter the circumstance, family ties will always be more important, trustworthy, and reliable than relationships with persons from outside the 'blood circle'. It is often believed that individuals like friends, colleagues, and other acquaintances are less inclined to be supportive during dire times than blood relatives. Up to a certain point, this view might well be true, since it is based on centuries-old experience. Nonetheless, when discussing colonial employees separated from their families and ancestral homes by thousands of kilometres, family ties are helpful only in a very limited manner. Naturally, such ties still offered comfort, inner strength, and a feeling of belonging to a 'tribe', yet, far away from home and without modern technology, contact was limited to a handful of letters that would arrive at random times. Sometimes, a parcel of goods from the homeland would arrive every other month. In such an environment, the idea that blood is thicker than water could only stand true to a certain extent. Interpersonal contacts were, and still are, a human necessity, even if it meant befriending strangers one would otherwise never have noticed or regarded as friendship material at home. However, in a colonial setting, it was more difficult to uphold such social standards and categorisations. Friendships that would have been undesirable due to differing social classes, educational backgrounds, or even 'clashing' races suddenly became desirable or at least a sought-after distraction.

When white colonisers made unusual choices in friends, it was mostly due to three circumstantial facts: firstly, the physical separation from Europe, secondly, the limited number of white or non-black individuals who could be befriended in the

1 Original by Józef Tischner, *The Philosophy of Drama* (Krakow: Znak, 1998). Cited in Kapuscinski, *The Other*, 68.

first place, and, thirdly, the angst of experiencing loneliness and isolation. Taking these three points into consideration and linking them to the aspect of white identity left the colonisers in a potentially confusing position. To avoid isolation and loneliness, these agents entered into friendships that accorded neither with their social backgrounds, races, age groups, genders, professional group, nor religious beliefs. As will be discussed throughout this chapter, friendships with white Europeans from different social strata, inter-racial friendships with Afro-Arabic traders, or attachments to non-human entities like pet dogs were part of a colonial reality that sometimes made it difficult to not lose track of one's own (white) identity. The one social border that seems to have been crossed very rarely was the sex border between unmarried Europeans. The source base offers almost no examples of such friendships. In fact, at least from a female colonialist's point of view, the sources suggest that it was more probable that white women would become friends with indigenous African women than with an unmarried white man.

Moreover, friendships also have the ability, the power even, to (re)shape identities, particularly when they are founded on unusual circumstances or if they clash with contemporary cultural, religious, and social norms. When a deliberate selection of friends in a colony did not adhere to contemporary social standards, these choices tell the historian a story about the agents concerned and their sense of personal identity. Unusual choices in friends could cause frictions within all communities involved. One of the examples to be discussed further below includes a white Belgian officer and an Afro-Arab trader. Such a friendly relationship would have been impossible in Europe, yet might have been unavoidable in central Africa. At times, the person you befriend can be a statement in itself. It can testify to whether you are a follower, a sophisticated manipulator of rules, or a freethinking rebel. The German saying 'show me your friends and I will tell you who you are'² is very revealing in this regard.

This chapter on friendships in its various forms and constellations highlights some of the aforementioned aspects of the personal relationships that were created in the new colonial central Africa by highlighting social customs and political rules that forbade certain kinds of ongoing friendly contacts. The following sections elaborate on three different topics linked to friendship, friendly relationships, and acquaintances. Firstly, the limits of who could be befriended will be explained in more detail by giving background information on the formative experiences of male colonials in their respective home countries. I will consider this subject alongside the frequently experienced and feared feeling of loneliness. The sensation of feeling alone tended to make colonisers forget or deliberately ignore rules against fraternisation with the colonised. Secondly, friendships between the white colonisers and the African colonised, either in the shape of Afro-Arab traders or servants indigenous to sub-Saharan Africa, will be discussed more thoroughly. The fact that white colonials tended to rank Middle Eastern Muslim Africans higher than non-Muslim Africans

2 German: Zeige mir deine Freunde, und ich sage dir, wer du bist.

also played an important role in forming friendships between white colonisers and non-white colonised. Indigenous servants, both male and female, might have been the general exception to the rule in this particular setting.

Finally, I will present the concept of friendship between colonisers and their pet dogs. This section will show that the ownership of non-working pets such as European lap dogs was linked to social distinction, a display of financial status, and the wish to prevent limit if not loneliness.³ The ownership of a (pedigree) pet dog was also symbolic of white identity and white supremacy.

The analyses are conducted by describing the importance and influence of such relationships, and by showing that they affected the colonisers' identities in respect to their whiteness. In some cases, the Belgian, German, and Swedish colonials chose friendships with non-whites for no other reason than to have company. In other cases, close relationships with either humans or dogs were nourished in order to enhance the coloniser's whiteness and distance oneself from colonial subalterns.

3.1 Limits to Befriending

The traditional political history of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was interested in the structures of friendship among great men who were (or still are) considered important subjects of study. It was not interested in researching friendship as a phenomenon among commoners. Post-war social history treated the topic of friendship on a micro level and, from the 1970s onwards, scholars attempted to examine interpersonal relationships on the basis of micro-politics and interdependence in the patronage system. I aim to enrich this field of research by using egodocuments from a colonial environment. Furthermore, since whiteness is a socio-political construct and refers to more than just biological skin colour, I exemplify how whiteness manifested itself in different cultural contexts, of which friendship is one. The idea is not to apply a sociological definition of friendship, but to define friendship as a relationship between two individuals who recognise each other as friends by referring to each other as such publicly and behaving accordingly.⁴ Another marker of recognising friendship is the mutual interdependence

3 John Berger illustrates in his work on animals how, up until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, animals were always closely linked to daily human life. Animals were also often seen as companions and to ward off loneliness. Industrialisation and its influence on mass urbanisation caused a retreat from living closely with animals. After millennia of humans and animals living together, this alienation led, amongst other things, to the newly developed need to to keep pets. As it turned out, human fascination for the nature has not lessened, despite its constant removal from it. John Berger, "Why Look at Animals?", in *About Looking* (New York: Vintage, 1980).

4 For more on the classification of friendship as a historical research tool, see Christian Kühner: *Freundschaft im französischen Adel des 17. Jahrhunderts*, In: *Adel im Wandel (16.–20. Jahrhundert)* (5. Sommerkurs des Deutschen Historischen Instituts Paris in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Centre de recherches sur l'histoire de l'Europe centrale der

between two people or a human and an animal. The past two centuries have seen numerous shifts in the socially contested and accepted norms regarding how and whom to befriend. Friendship with members of other classes, races, and genders was not always accepted by the general society, a rule that proved even truer within a colonial context. This means that, at times, certain friendships needed justification to avoid or withstand public criticism.

There were social or political limits on the kinds of people that colonials were allowed to befriend in the colonies. These social limitations took shape in the form of traditional class or gender roles and were not dissimilar to the kind of interpersonal social and cultural rules that every European, or indeed any human who is part of a community, is taught from an early age onwards. The political rules on interpersonal relations in a colonial setting added racial and religious aspects to traditional norms. Leopold's colonial office and Germany's imperial ministry, for example, both forbade their colonial employees (military, religious, and civil) from engaging in private relationships with the colonial Other. In some cases, these colonial regimes even threatened punitive measures if white colonisers disobeyed the rules. The following section will demonstrate how friendship was dealt with in the faraway CFS and GEA and how it was described or referred to in egodocuments. Befriending strangers and bonding with them can often be a two-way affair. Personalities can be misjudged or a very deep bond can develop unexpectedly between two people.

The Belgian king and the German *Kaiserreich* relied heavily on male and female Europeans to actively colonise central Africa. These men and women were the backbone of their employers' central-African imperial projects. All of the colonial employees were literate and had benefited from at least six years of basic schooling, for example in a German *Volksschule*,⁵ before entering the job market, continuing on

Universität Paris IV–Sorbonne, 2008) – La noblesse en mutation (XVIe–XXe siècle) (5e université d'été pour jeunes chercheurs de l'Institut historique allemand Paris en coopération avec le Centre de recherches sur l'histoire de l'Europe centrale de l'université Paris IV–Sorbonne, 2008), hrsg. von/éd. par Christiane Coester, Bernd Kleßmann, Marie-Françoise Vajda (discussions, 2), URL: http://www.perspectivia.net/content/publikationen/discussions/2-2009/kuehner_freundschaft. 28.08.2013; Ute Pott, ed. *Das Jahrhundert der Freundschaft. Johann Wilhelm Ludwig Gleim und seine Zeitgenossen* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2004).

5 A *Volksschule* (school for the people) was an eighteenth century system of state-supported primary schools established in the Habsburg Austrian Empire (1840) and Prussia (1717 for boys and 1794 for girls). Attendance was compulsory, but a 1781 census revealed that only one quarter of school-age children attended. At the time, this was one of the few examples of state-supported schooling. Public secondary and higher schools for boys were widespread by the middle of the nineteenth century but female secondary education remained largely in the hands of private institutions and religious schools. See chapters 1 and 2 of Jennifer Drake Askey, *Good Girls, Good Germans. Girls' Education and Emotional Nationalism in Wilhelminian Germany* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2013).

to military school, or taking up an apprenticeship.⁶ While most middle class Belgian and German men who entered the colonial services were trained by the military or as engineers, their female counterparts did so as nurses (either as nurses with religious affiliations or financed by the private sector) while a select few came with their husbands. Women like Frieda von Bülow, an unmarried woman employed as a nurse in GEA, or colonial wives like Gabrielle Sillye, Berthe Cabra, Ebonne Sjöblom, and Magdalene von Prince will be introduced and discussed in more detail later.⁷

In late nineteenth-century Belgium, it was typical for boys and male adolescents to attend so-called *Athenées*, which were usually run and financed by the state. *Athenées* were schools where attendance was obligatory until the age of 16; they were first introduced in Belgium in 1815.⁸ In contrast, the *Volksschule* (school for the people) required regular attendance in Germany from the late nineteenth century onwards. It educated and trained young Germans not only in reading, writing, mathematics, and religion, but also provided them with knowledge about physical health and cleanliness. The last two points were deemed particularly crucial by German military recruitment offices, for they had long complained to the government that too many young candidates were in poor health, which they mainly ascribed to child labour and a lack of personal hygiene. German military and naval organisa-

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- 6 Due to Belgium's highly developed and industrialised textile industry and decreasing child mortality, most members of the lower social classes took up employment in weaving factories, especially men. Some women would work in the factories, but the majority of them worked from home as seamstresses. That way they could be employees, wives, and mothers at the same time. There was a similar situation in Germany during the nineteenth century, where industrialisation had succeeded on a large scale. In addition to this, and as a direct result from obligatory school attendance for all citizens and a growing bourgeoisie, new jobs were created for literate employees, like nannies and office clerks. Apprentices were usually family members – sons, nephews, cousins – who received training from their relatives in order to one day take over the family bakery, carpentry, and the like.
 - 7 Frieda von Bülow first worked on the island of Zanzibar and later in Dar-es-Salaam before she returned to Berlin after disagreements with her employers. She published a diary and was known as the founder of the *Kolonialroman* genre; see Bülow, *Reiseskizzen und Tagebuchblätter aus Deutsch-Ostafrika*. Gabrielle Sillye and Berthe Cabra were the first two Belgian wives to accompany their husbands to the CFS. They did not publish books, but Sillye left behind diaries and Cabra a selection of articles. Magdalene von Prince was the first German woman to enter GEA as a wife and settler. She was married to Tom von Prince and they settled in the Usambara region. Her published diary was very successful; see Magdalene von Prince, *Eine deutsche Frau im innern Deutsch-Ostafrikas*, 3 ed. (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1908).
 - 8 Standard school curriculum consisted of Latin, Greek, mathematics, history, geography, and the natural sciences. See Nan Dodde, Lenders, Jan, "Reform, Reorganisation und Stagnation. Der Schulunterricht in den Niederlanden und Belgien 1750–1825. Ein Handbuch zur europäischen Schulgeschichte", in *Revolution des Wissens?. Europa und seine Schulen im Zeitalter der Aufklärung (1750–1825)*, ed. Wolfgang Schmale Nan L. Dodde (Bochum: Winkler Verlag, 1991).

tions also criticised the absence of a national patriotic education; at this time of increased nationalism, there was concern that this was not yet available as a school subject. Given Germany's new role as a major player in the European political scene after its unification and victory against France in 1871, it was believed that this specific educational situation should be rectified. All the aforementioned educational establishments were financed either by local communities, private foundations, the state, or, in a few cases, by institutions supported by either the Protestant churches or the Roman Catholic Church. In the long term, these educational changes had a vital effect on the formation of Belgian and German men and would play a role in the recruitment of colonisers.

The vast majority of male European colonials who tried their luck in the CFS or GEA came from the petty bourgeoisie of rural areas or from the smaller cities, although some others were members of the lower upper class or the upper working class. Several of the men who signed up for colonial posts did so because they wanted to experience an adventure or to earn fame and fortune, while others were simply in need of a job. A few colonisers – more so in the German than in the Belgian or Swedish cases – believed and actively supported the idea of a greater nation, for example a greater Germany. Unlike German or Swedish emigrants to the USA, who were obliged to fund their trans-Atlantic passages themselves, the imperial offices paid for their employees' voyages to the colonies. On top of this, they also paid salaries to the colonisers, which often helped achieve the goal of social advancement. As well as these financial and social perks, the sources show that several colonials cultivated a romanticised image of colonial life when they took up employment in Africa. The most common visions of Africa included untamed nature, freedom, or a desire to 'civilise' the indigenous peoples.

What the above images were lacking were thoughts of loneliness or insularity, elements that often played all too large a part in the reality of colonial life. In the Congo, for instance, European colonisers were often assigned to remote and utterly lonely jungle stations in a murderous climate to which they were not accustomed. The heat and humidity were unrelenting and, like all people unaccustomed to these exotic latitudes, they frequently suffered from tropical fevers, dysentery, and malaria. That the latter was transmitted by mosquitoes was as yet unknown; the common cure was to take quinine, followed by red wine and milk. A young man in the prime of his life could wake up at night sweating, feverous, shivering, vomiting, and possibly tormented by thoughts of all the other white companions who had suffered the same symptoms and eventually died. Being ill in a remote part of the earth without a friendly face close by was horrible and could even cause psychological episodes. Sunstrokes took their toll on Europeans and often ended lethally. The German colonial officer Tom von Prince, for example, recounted in his memoirs that, during a standard day of caravan-trekking, his comrades "Zitzewitz and a sergeant were healed in time from approaching sun strokes. [But] three further sergeants had died

from it *en route*⁹. In the midst of all this geographical and cultural unfamiliarity and hostility, human contacts were more important than ever.¹⁰ Yet, neither of the two colonies introduced any preventive measures to avoid social isolation or to facilitate human contacts with other Europeans whilst servicing a remote station, trekking within the colony, or participating in campaigns against indigenous rebels.

Even when caravans started out with dozen Europeans, illness and battles tended to quickly decimate the number of white employees, suddenly leaving one coloniser as being the last white man standing. Such was the case in the following excerpt of a member of the German Antislavery Committee, which conducted business and founded friendly connections with local Africans in GEA. The author, Lieutenant Meyer, was a German national with military training who had volunteered to enter GEA as a member of an expedition exploring the colony's lakes and – where necessary – to combat slave traders. He recounted a change of heart concerning his non-white African companions in a letter to his employer where he reported about how he felt as the only European amongst Africans:

The team's behaviour was praiseworthy, the Askari and both the Sudanese and Somali showed courage in battle. [...] The porters, in particular the Pangani (Bweni) and the Tanga, proved themselves to be reliable and persistent. I witnessed once more how commendable this human material is, especially the Swahili. Who could believe that there was a time when I thought it lamentable not to travel with a white companion?¹¹

Simultaneously, it was forbidden to befriend indigenous people. Race, or more precisely whiteness vs. non-white (and, in certain circumstances, Christian vs. Muslim), was the central issue that stood in the way of colonials befriendng non-white subalterns.¹² The general sentiment at the end of the nineteenth century was that whiteness was endowed with an inherent authority. This authority was closely linked

9 German: Zitzewitz und ein Unteroffizier wurden noch vom drohenden Hitzschlage errettet. Drei andere Unteroffiziere waren unterwegs daran gestorben. Tom von Prince, *Gegen Araber Und Wahehe. Erinnerungen Aus Meiner Ostafrikanischen Leutnantszeit 1890-1895*, 2 ed. (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1914), 15.

10 See pp. 116–122 on further examples of how loneliness could lead to emotional and mental stress in the CFS and possibly cause radical behaviours and loss of sanity. Reybrouck, *Kongo*.

11 German: Das Verhalten der Mannschaft war ein durchaus lobenswertes, die Askari, sowohl Sudanesen als Somali, waren vor dem Feinde mutig [...]. Die Träger, besonders die Pangani (Bweni) erwiesen sich selbst den größten Anforderungen gegenüber und zeigten eine Ausdauer, welche mir neuerdings bewies, welch bewunderungswürdiges Menschenmaterial wir an diesen vielgeschätzten Swahili besitzen. Die Abwesenheit eines weißen Reisegefährten habe ich einmals als Mangel empfunden. Letter dated 12.04.1892. Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde, Antisklaverei, Lt. Meyer, Sig. R8023–824.

12 Thanks to Catherine Hall's introductory chapter to *Civilising Subjects*. I was pointed towards the essay on whiteness and blackness by James Baldwin, "Notes of a Native Son", in *The Art of the Personal Essay. An Anthology from the Classical Era to the Present* (New York City: Anchor, 1995).

to the legacy of having created the modern world and therefore of being at home anywhere on the globe: the white (wo)man stood apart from and especially above members of all non-white races. The construction of the African person by Europeans was, by contrast, based on stereotypical images that refused him or her full human complexity. One of the most frequently recurring general statements in the sources is the comparison of indigenous Africans to naïve and complying children or to loyal and well-trained dogs. Dr Ludwig Deppe, a contemporary of the famous German explorer and general in GEA Paul Emil von Lettow-Vorbeck, referred to indigenous African subjects as having a “naïveté which is inapprehensible for us [white people]”¹³. Hugold von Behr described how, when a white coloniser treated the Zulu soldiers well, those grown soldiers would be “easy to lead and the Zulus would be obliging and modest like well-behaved children”¹⁴. Even a more open-minded coloniser like Tom von Prince could not refrain from comparing one of his loyal soldiers to a dog. The following situation occurred when Tom and the KS were attacked by a local tribe while returning from a Kilimanjaro expedition:

One of my Zulus died as early as four days after our arrival in Moschi. He was wounded during our attack on the fortress. It was pitiable to watch his body stiffened like violin strings by cramp attacks until only his head and feet still touched the floor; and it cut through my soul whenever he looked at me like with the pain-filled and grateful eyes of a loyal dog that tried to mouth words of thanks from between his clamped lips.¹⁵

The Swedish colonials Möller, Pagels, and Gleerup describe the Congolese colonised as only semi human with the other half being ape-like.¹⁶ Comparisons with other animals like apes occurred when colonisers were unhappy with their colonised subjects’ deeds. Without exception, the comparison of indigenous Africans to either dogs or children occurred when the authors of the sources recounted events where the colonised Other showed the utmost loyalty towards Europeans (i. e. like dogs), the ability and willingness to submit entirely to the coloniser (i. e. like children to-

13 Ludwig Deppe, *Mit Lettow-Vorbeck Durch Afrika* (Berlin: Scherl, 1919), 102.

14 German: lassen sich die Sulus leicht leiten und sind dann folgsam und bescheiden wie gutgeartete Kinder. Hugold von Behr, *Kriegsbilder Aus Dem Araberaufstand in Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1891; repr., 2012), 95.

15 German: Einer meiner Zulus starb schon am vierten Tage nach Rückkehr in Moschi an einer Verwundung, die er bei unserem Angriff auf die Befestigung erhalten hatte. [...] Es war jämmerlich anzusehen, wie der arme Kerl von den Anfällen steif gespannt wurde wie ein Fiedelbogen, bis er nur noch mit Kopf und Füßen den Boden berührte, und es schnitt mir in die Seele, wenn er mit den Augen eines treuen Hundes schmerzverzogen und dankbar mich anblickte und Worte des Dankes zwischen den festgeklemmten Lippen hervorzudrücken versuchte. Prince, *Gegen Araber Und Wahehe*, 60.

16 See E. Gleerup, P.A. Möller, and Georges Wilhelm Pagels, *Tre år i Kongo* (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt, 1887).

wards their parents), or when they behaved with “an almost childlike clumsiness”¹⁷. Comparisons with other animals like apes occurred when colonisers were unhappy with their colonised subjects’ deeds.

These moments of comparison were repeatedly framed as instances where the civilised European coloniser was confronted with the wild colonised African.¹⁸ One clear example of this attitude can be seen in Captain Max Prager’s report describing when he and his Belgo-Dutch-English-German crew were stranded on the East African shore close to Kismayu. The crew had run out of coal, food, and drinking water, and attempts to forge amicable connections with the local Somali men failed, which made buying fresh supplies difficult, if not impossible. As Prager and his crew went ashore in the hope of hunting game, they were stopped by a big group of Somali warriors, who first surrounded and then threatened them with sharp spear tips. Captain Prager and his men were thus forced to return to their ships empty-handed. Prager refers to the Somalis as the “naked guys”¹⁹ and his conclusion about the angry indigenous African was that “[w]hen agitation hits, which later turns into rage, the negro loses all sense of self, he is incapable of foreseeing the effects of his doings and instead follows his bestial urges, destroys and kills, without acknowledging the results of his actions”²⁰.

In the Belgian context, there is the case of Louis De Walsche, who began his colonial career as *sous-lieutenant* (second lieutenant) in the FP in 1888.²¹ The following episode took place in 1893, just a few weeks after his latest arrival in the CFS. He was

17 German: fast kindliche Unbeholfenheit. Behr, *Kriegsbilder aus dem Araberaufstand in Deutsch-Ostafrika*, 92. The aspect of racial stereotyping in relation to behaviourism became a scientific field of analysis amongst British psychologists; however, due to the different time frame, I cannot include it in my research. For more see Erik Linstrum, “The Politics of Psychology in the British Empire, 1898–1960”, *Past and Present*, no. 215 (2012).

18 It can be argued that scientific and technological advancement are still perceived as markers of a higher degree of civilisation when cultures are compared. See Kapil Raj, “Beyond Postcolonialism ... And Postpositivism: Circulation and the Global History of Science”, *Isis* 104, no. 2 (2013); Warwick Anderson, “Asia as Method in Science and Technology Studies”, *East Asian Science, Tehcnology and Society: An International Journal*, no. 6 (2012).

19 German: die nackten Kerle. Max Prager, *Der Araber-Aufstand in Ost-Afrika*, Deutsche Marine-Zeitung (Kiel: Carl Jansen, 1898), 30.

20 German: In Momenten der Erregung, die schließlich sich zur Wuth steigert, ist der Neger nicht mehr Herr seiner selbst, er vermag nicht die Tragweite seiner Handlungen zu ermessen und folgt blindlings dem thierischen Triebe, zerstört und tötet, ohne sich der Folgen bewußt zu werden. *Ibid.*, 32.

21 During his service in the CFS, De Walsche participated in the Van Kerckhoven campaign and he was the attaché at the poste in Gombari for a while. He climbed up the military ranks to finally become *commandant* of the *Compagnie du Bas-Congo*. See Patricia van Schuylenbergh, “La mémoire des belges en Afrique Centrale. Inventaire des archives historiques privées du Musée Royal de l’Afrique centrale de 1885 à nos jours”, ed. Musée Royal de l’Afrique Centrale (Tervuren 1997), 23.

stuck in Boma and was kept from continuing his travels because the caravan would not leave until another group of Europeans destined east had arrived. So, whilst waiting to journey on to the Haut-Uele district in the far northeast of the Congo, De Walsche passed his free time training indigenous soldiers. During this period, he made the acquaintance of various Congolese tribes, of which the Bangalas were one. They were said to be a fierce warrior tribe, but De Walsche found his encounter with them rather disappointing. He said that “despite their angst-inducing reputation, they carry an air of well-behaved children about them; it is obvious that they have been living amongst white [people] for several years”²². De Walsche had also stated in a previous letter to his sister Aimé that he was intrigued, but also disappointed, by how European the city of Boma looked.²³ No matter whether he referred to towns, buildings, or indigenous people, Louis was hoping to come across a more African Congo, but simultaneously he registered that white influence on non-white subjects had positive modernising effects.

Prager and De Walsche’s views are exemplary of opinions amongst contemporary colonials, even though Captain Prager had just commenced his colonial duties and De Walsche had already been a colonial employee for over four years. In the long term, neither of the two men changed their views on the colonised people significantly, although they did recognise that there were differences between varying African tribes and cultures. In addition, neither ever seemed to have sought friendships with the colonised. As far as I can retrace their steps and actions in Africa, their dealings with the non-white Other simply strengthened their pre-Africa personal opinions and convictions on white superiority. In fact, their identities became distinctly whiter the longer they served in Africa.

The exception proves the rule, as the next case concerning the German couple Magdalene and Tom von Prince shows. For reasons unknown, claims were circulated in the colonial community of GEA, and in Germany too, that the von Princes had died during travels from Africa to Germany. It was reported that they were killed by members of the Wahehe tribe. Neither of them understood how this rumour had started in the first place, let alone how it had reached Germany. In her published diary, Magdalene emphasised how her husband’s political talents for creating positive interpersonal relationships with their indigenous workers and neighbours made this horror story unrealistic. She wrote:

Thanks be to God for Tom’s political attitude towards the blacks[.] [H]is intelligent, friendly responsiveness towards the national peculiarities of their diverse tribes has won us the hearts of these big children[.] [W]e feel safe amongst them. Who would have

22 French: [...] qui malgré leur nom terrible ont l’air de bien bons enfants, il est vrais qu’ils vivent avec les blancs depuis plusieurs années. Letter to his goddaughter Colette, dated 10.06.1893. De Walsche, Louis. “Unpublished Private Correspondence with Family Members”. Brussels: Musée Royale de l’Afrique Centrale, 1893–1896, Sig. 56.4/13.45-54.

23 This is a summary from his letter to his sister Aimé, dated 04.05.1893. See *ibid.*, Sig. 56.4/13.44.13.

thought that these proud Wahehe warriors would one day work peacefully for white people?²⁴

Thus, the von Princes gained the Wahehe's loyalty via intercultural exchange and a willingness to learn from each other instead of enforcing white superiority over black subjectivity on principle. Nonetheless, Magdalene was a very pragmatic and realistic woman, confirming that "we are dependent on the negro and we need to bind him to us by making it profitable for him to stay with us"²⁵.

In all of the above cases, the condescending examples of Captain Prager and Second Lieutenant De Walsche or the more positive accounts from the von Princes, a distance with non-whites was maintained. The reasons for keeping apart were different, but the results, if not the same, were similar. Throughout his years of naval service in GEA, Captain Prager did not significantly alter his original views of Africans. At times, he made singular favourable exceptions and praised individual indigenous persons, but that was as far as he was willing to go in raising local Africans to a higher level on the ladder of civilisation. The von Princes payed more attention to their contemporaries and learned to distinguish between the different tribes and their cultures; thereby developing a more nuanced and educated view of their non-white contemporaries.

Being white, though, as Shankar Raman argued when he proposed the notion of the racial turn, was not about biology and skin colour, but a regime of looking. It was a cultural creation that became an allegory for being the master.²⁶ A further change of perspective linked to the term racial turn ascended within critical race studies. They recognised how racism was engrained in the fabric and system of colonial regimes. Racism was institutional and an inherent part of the dominant culture. These are the theoretical views and approaches that critical race studies apply in examining power structures. These structures are and were based on white privilege and white supremacy, which automatically perpetuated the marginalisation of coloured peoples. In an attempt to distance themselves from racist theories, Western democratic societies naively reconfigured whiteness into an unmarked marker and a non-racial

24 German: Gott sei's gedankt, Toms politische Haltung den Schwarzen gegenüber, sein kluges, freundliches Eingehen auf die nationale Eigenart der einzelnen Stämme hat uns die Herzen dieser großen Kinder Schritt für Schritt gewonnen, wir fühlen uns sicher mitten unter ihnen. Wer hätte früher je gedacht, daß die stolzen Wahehekrieger einst für die Weißen friedfliche Arbeit tun würden? Prince, *Eine Deutsche Frau*, 171.

25 German: Ich muß es immer aufs neue wiederholen: wir sind ja auf den Neger angewiesen und müssen ihn durch seinen Vorteil an uns zu ketten suchen. *Ibid.*, 224.

26 Raman argues that race as a term generally was not applicable to humans because we do not have any homozygous percentage. He defines the *racial turn* as a turn away from seeing race as a biological entity but instead as a cultural one. See Shankar Raman, "The Racial Turn: 'Race', Postkolonialität, Literaturwissenschaft", in *Einführung in die Literaturwissenschaft*, ed. Miltos Pechlivanos, et al. (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1995), 241–55.

concept. According to this view, white was seen as normal, neutral, and universal.²⁷ In his seminal work, Seshadri-Crooks argues that being white developed into a master-signifier which equally included and excluded people depending on the social, cultural, and religious abilities ascribed to specific races.²⁸ This meant that whiteness was not bound to ancestry but to the concept of having-become.²⁹ Being white was a racial creation of the late eighteenth century and gave white Europeans and Christians the privilege to rule. “Whiteness as a term of power” is one of the most important “socio-cultural currencies”³⁰. Being white also meant enjoying privileges. As Stoler and Partha Chatterjee state, racial differences were highlighted and they became a central organ of colonial policies that wanted to maintain these borders.³¹ This sentiment retained its currency until the mid-twentieth century. James Baldwin has shown that white people prefer to keep non-whites at a certain remove to avoid being called to account for crimes committed by their ancestors or companions.³² The same notion applied in the scientific and political creation of whiteness in Australian history, for race, nation, and citizenship were entwined while white skin colour functioned as a signifier for hygiene, Britishness, and bourgeois civility.³³

The aims to apply racial or cultural seclusion also caused emotional stress, which was difficult to handle for the white colonial in central Africa, particularly within military communities where white men lived and died next to non-white men. Despite their perceived and exercised superiority, the colonisers were still extremely vulnerable: they could be injured, fall ill, or even die. Furthermore, they too suffered hunger and stank of sweat after a day of trekking; regardless of their privileges and

27 Comparable to how masculinity and gender studies emerged from women studies, so did critical whiteness studies arise from critical race studies. They all share the common basis of representing a turn within the cultural turn as well as post-colonial studies. See Arndt, “The Racial Turn”; David Stowe, “Uncolored People. The Rise of Whiteness Studies”, *Lingua Franca* 1996.

28 See Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks, *Desiring Whiteness. A Lacanian Analysis of Race* (London, New York: Routledge, 2000).

29 See Arndt, “The Racial Turn”.

30 Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters. The Social Construction of Whiteness*, 15.

31 See Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, “Between Metropole and Colony. Rethinking a Research Agenda”, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, *Tensions of Empire. Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997) and Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments. Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

32 See Hall, *Civilising Subjects*, 6. Based on James Baldwin’s essay *Notes of a Native Son*. See Baldwin, “Notes of a Native Son”.

33 Anderson makes a convincing case about how politics and medical staff worked hand in hand on establishing a national white body in Australia, thereby creating the impression that, to be considered a ‘true Australian’, one had to be white and not aboriginal. See Warwick Anderson, *The Cultivation of Whiteness: Science, Health and Racial Destiny in Australia* (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 2005).

civilised pretensions, white colonials were by no means invincible.³⁴ As Bennett W. Helm underlined, it is vital for historians not to underestimate the effect that powerful interpersonal relationships had on individual lives and the process of shaping an identity.³⁵

People tend to link friendship to shared mutual interests, a plural agency that does not exclude individuality but increases the capacity to be both autonomous and emotionally connected at the same time. Following this line of reasoning, friendships are an intimate matter whereby emotional connectedness completes an individual's rational behaviour. Humans are rational and autonomous due to their in-built social nature. Forming emotional relationships with formerly unknown people can therefore be viewed as part of the maturation process in youth and adulthood. These relationships can leave their mark on the creation of new, altered, or blurred identities, especially in such restrictive settings as those of the colonial world. Working for regimes that propagated racial separation yet also advertised the need for an indigenous labour force (in the military as much as in the private sphere of a home), colonisers were usually required to manage a set of interpersonal contacts that necessitated maintaining a constant and steady balance between these two rationales. That is to say, rationality demanded distance, but the colonisers' social nature often tended towards intimacy where there was not supposed to be any. In various cases, the sources describe how close their authors became to those indigenous companions who lived with them day in and day out. In reality, it would have been very atypical for humans not to form friendly bonds with their fellow indigenous comrades, business friends, or servants.

But sometimes political developments involuntarily interfered with colonial relationships. Belgian colonisers who held friendly relations with Afro-Arab traders were forced to end them when, for example, the CFS ordered the CA against the economic power structures of Muslim Africans and concluded it successfully in the early 1890s. Colonial propaganda predictably celebrated the CA as a victory over the slave trade; but in reality it was a military campaign ordered by Leopold II and carried out by the FP.³⁶ Its official goal was to abolish slavery as well as trade in general by disempowering Afro-Arab slave traders with spheres of influences in East-

34 It is therefore also no coincidence that colonial troops who were sent by France and Great Britain to Europe or elsewhere to fight other European white soldiers, lost their respect or notions of 'white invincibility' after killing and maiming hundreds and thousands of white men.

35 See Bennett W. Helm, *Love, Friendship, and the Self: Intimacy, Identification, and the Social Nature of Persons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

36 The new state would not and could not continue with a colonial army that consisted of several hundred African mercenaries and a few dozen Europeans who controlled the territory. The FP became the CFS' largest employer. The era of unofficial and unstructured control over the CFS had to end. The CFS needed a proper army to implement public institutions and government: the FP. The latter's duties were described in the royal act of 30 October 1885, which said that the FP would govern the colony, create a government, and divide the territory into districts, which again would be split into sub-stations. Every

ern Congo and in the vicinity of Lake Tanganyika.³⁷ A similar situation occurred amongst German colonial troops, who experienced the same territorial issues with Afro-Arab slavers in areas east of Lake Tanganyika. For Belgian troops, however, the true campaign goal was to take over Afro-Arab territories to exploit their human capital and natural resources like ivory or red rubber. Before the CA started, the relations between Belgian colonisers and Afro-Arabs had, at times, resulted in lasting friendships and intellectual exchanges; declaring war on them meant “to the Arab-Swahili and even to some of their European contemporaries, [...] the betrayal of trust and friendship”³⁸.

3.2 Different Shades of Friendship

As we have seen above, the opinions expressed on indigenous populations in either the CFS or GEA varied depending on personal agency. Even so, a large number of the individuals discussed in this book were fond of and interested in the different African cultures they encountered. European men tended to be interested in African warfare, weapons, and hunting techniques, while their female contemporaries showed more enthusiasm for African culture in terms of language, food recipes, and local market goods. Even amongst the colonial females there were different attitudes towards the indigenous Other. The sources suggest that nurses and colonial wives actively searched for intercultural exchanges with locals in ways that the Christian nuns tended not to. Missionaries of both genders enjoyed close contact with indigenous Africans but, in their roles as guardians and educators (especially for Bible studies and “teaching them [the colony’s] official language”³⁹), they opted to keep a professional distance from their charges.

By contrast, the daily contact between colonisers and their household staff in far-off stations would frequently turn into friendly relationships, if not friendships themselves. Job-related shared spaces within private homes created a degree of intimacy that was unavoidable.⁴⁰ Intimate relationships between a colonised and his or her coloniser could take almost any shape; but, in the particular geographical contexts of the CFS and GEA, these relationships were rarely (if at all) of a sexual or romantic nature. Intimacy does not need to be physical. Common space, like a shared home or being members of the same (military) jungle trek for weeks and months, could create a strongly-felt connection between two otherwise very unequal – in terms of social, racial, and political power – individuals. A platonic intimacy could not only

district would have a governmental office controlled by the FP. Hochschild, *Schatten über dem Kongo*; Janssens, *Histoire de la Force publique*.

37 See section on maps.

38 Fabian, *Out of Our Minds*, 50.

39 French: [...] leur apprenaient la langue officielle. Taken from a letter dated 21.08.1893. De Walsche, *Unpublished Private Correspondence with Family Members*, Sig. 56.4/15.48.59.

40 See Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge*.

develop between friends, but also between an employer and his or her employee (e.g. coloniser and boy servant), taking on the form of a certain closeness that could lead to different degrees of intercultural exchange. In fact, the sudden death of a boy servant could be extremely emotionally distressing for his employer. In the case of D. Bossaerts and his boy Zaki, the former filled an entire notebook with notes about his servant's death.⁴¹ It was therefore not necessary for intimate relationships to be of a sexual nature or to be actively sought after in the first place.

A typical feature of the letters of African colonials writing home was that they were organised chronologically. Whilst travelling through the colony's interior, the authors of the egodocuments would write several sheets of text, collect them, and put them together before sending them to Europe. This was because the colonisers often did not have access to postal services for many weeks on end. So they wrote letters that resembled diary entries instead. In this way, every day was accounted for and reported. When they reached a post office branch or one of the European caravans heading towards the coast, all the sheets of paper were assembled and sent on their way as one very long letter. One author, Louis De Walsche, wrote numerous letters in this diary-like style to his siblings, his goddaughter, and his parents. These letters covered a period from 1 April 1893 to 23 March 1896.

Like all the authors, De Walsche wrote in patterns that sharpened an image of his identity and enabled me to develop an adequate analysis of his personal preferences and interests. One of the details that most of the egodocuments have in common is that their authors wrote only about what they deemed to be important, thus preselecting topics of interest for their readership. This observation might not be surprising, but, unlike letters, diary entries were often not preselected or limited to topics interesting for a specific reader in Europe. As a result, every batch of associated sources provides a detailed picture of their preferences as well as clarifying the prioritised subjects on which the colonials wanted to report to others in their letters, memoirs, and the like. Diaries, though, were also filled with less important or exciting experiences or thoughts and instead offer references to quickly jotted-down events and thoughts.

In De Walsche's case, one of these patterns was the enthusiasm with which he reported on encounters with other white colonials. In addition, he only applied the terms 'friend', 'friendship', and 'colleague' to white Europeans, showing us that he only sought to befriend white people. De Walsche told his siblings in a letter about two occurrences during a long trek from Boma to Likungu. The first took place when, despite having served five years of colonial service, he wrote that "it was the first time [he] spent the night [as the guest of the tribal chief of Kimpessé] amongst blacks who were not [his] porters" (i.e. indigenous people not bound to him in any job-related manner).⁴² This occurrence is unusual because reports on sleeping as

41 Bossaerts, D., "Notes sur la décès de son boy Zaki". Edited by Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, 1904–1906.

42 French: C'est la première fois que je vais passer la nuit au milieu de noirs autres que mes porteurs. Letter to his siblings, dated 05.07.1893. De Walsche, *Unpublished Private Correspondence with Family Members*, Sig. 56.4/13.46.52.

the guests of indigenous Africans are relatively common in writings by other white colonials. As it turned out, when morning broke, his host demanded payment for this hospitality: De Walsche refused to pay and instead demanded loyalty to himself as a white superior and official representative of the CFS. He also threatened the chief with punitive measures if he did not obey him and ordered that all official representatives (military and civil) of the state were to be hosted for free in the future. Eventually, instead of receiving payment, the local chief backed down and “went to choose a beautiful chicken and offered it to [De Walsche] with his best compliments”⁴³.

Another exemplary occurrence is De Walsche’s meeting with an old comrade. It happened during the same trek mentioned above and took place when he arrived at the station Luvituku, which was important as a transport nodal point. It was in Luvituku where he

had the pleasure of realising that the current head of the station was an old comrade [of his] who received the rank of officer the same day as [he] did. [...] Unnecessary to say with which manner he received [him], also unnecessary to highlight his joy to shake hands with a confrere and a fellow Antwerpian, [and] because [he] had to change new porters in Luvituku [he] decided to stay a few days longer [than necessary].⁴⁴

The enthusiasm with which De Walsche communicated his reunion stands out in comparison to his usual accounts of meeting other people. He is overjoyed not only about meeting an old friend, but also about encountering a non-black person. Nonetheless, and this fact strikes me as slightly strange, De Walsche does not at first mention his friend’s name, Second Lieutenant Stevelinck, until several months later. This oddity might be due to his family not knowing this man personally, because De Walsche always mentioned other comrades by name when his relatives in Belgium were already acquainted with them. Since his letters were virtually written in real time and he would hardly have delayed his trek and stayed with such a dear friend for nearly a week without knowing his name. De Walsche either did not recall his friend’s name or did not want to name him in his letters home at that particular moment.

Counter examples are when he referred to friends from home, like Léon Dassonville,⁴⁵ stationed in Léopoldville, or Franz Lacroix⁴⁶ in Boma. De Walsche did not seem to particularly like Lacroix. Whenever the former mentioned the latter

43 French: [...] il va chercher une belle poule qu’il m’offre avec forse compliments. Letter dated 03.07.1893. Ibid.

44 French: J’ai le plaisir de retrouver en le chef de la Station, un ancien camarade nommé officier le même jour que moi. Inutile de te dire la façon dont il m’a reçu, unitile aussi de dire avec quelle joie j’ai serré la main d’un confrere et de plus d’un Anversois, comme je dois changer de porteurs à Luvituku, j’y resterais quelques jours, 3, 4, 5 c.à.d. le temps de recruter une caravane. Ibid.

45 Ibid, Sig. 56.4/13.46.57; 13.48.18; 13.48.22; 13.49.08.

46 Ibid, Sig. 56.4/13.47.54; 13.47.58.

in his letters, he complained that he was a spoilt and unreliable person.⁴⁷ Yet, he preferred Lacroix' company, and any other white person's company for that matter, to that of non-Europeans and non-Christians. Maybe this choice was due to purely racist preferences or maybe it was based on his wish to obey the colonial office's rules on non-fraternisation with Congolese subjects. It was also possibly the result of his dislike for anything dirty and smelly. As he explained in a letter to his goddaughter Anna, she could not in her wildest dreams imagine how dirty, smelly, and primitive Africans could be. He sent her the following description:

The house of a black person comes with a repulsive smell. The black [person] himself smells so bad that [his body odour] announces his presence already from two to three meters distance.⁴⁸

Nevertheless, under different circumstances, De Walsche acknowledged that the indigenous African can improve when instructed adequately by white people over a certain amount of time, as was seemingly the case with the local police force in Boma: "The police station is staffed by negroes, who are already more or less civilised, they do their job just as well as our policemen at home in our Belgian towns do."⁴⁹ Another example of European colonisers expressing their idea of white community and solidarity is that of Mr Aricko's and De Walsche's meeting at Enguetra station whilst *en route* to Jaabir down the Likati River. Aricko was a former pupil of De Walsche's back in Belgium at military school; when the latter arrived at Enguetra on a log boat, he was shown the greatest hospitality by his former student, who was now the head of the Enguetra station. De Walsche explained to Aricko how in Africa "all white [men] are basically brothers"⁵⁰. In Europe, De Walsche was Aricko's superior, but in Africa they were equals and indeed brothers, not just colleagues. Both these examples show us De Walsche's undeniable and rather blatant preference for European companionship and his conviction in white superiority, modern European civilisation, and that white people were friendship material whilst the uncivilised Other was not. It was important to De Walsche and his sense of identity to feel and act superior to his African contemporary.

It was not only with indigenous African cultures like the Somali, Massai, and Wahehe tribes that contact occurred. Into this picture of European colonisation of central Africa, we need to insert an earlier group of traders in the sub-Saharan territories: the Muslim-Arabic (slave) traders who had conquered parts of the

47 Ibid, Sig. 56.4/13.47.58.

48 French: L'habitation du noir dégagé une odeur repoussante. Le noir lui-même sent très mauvais, au point d'annonce la présence à 2 au 3 mètres de distance. Letter dated 22.04.1893. Ibid., Sig. 56.4/13.43.24.

49 French: La police de la station est assurée par des nègres, qui déjà plus ou moins civilisés, font leur métier bien mieux que les agents de nos villes de Belgique. Letter dated 04.05.1893. Ibid., Sig. 56.4/13.44.19.

50 French: [...] en Afrique tous les blancs sont presque frères [...]. Letter dated 30.09.1893. Ibid, Sig. 56.4/13.50.25.

East-African coast decades before any Europeans had. Accordingly, the European colonisers I write about were required to establish relationships with this group as well. The earlier settlement of the Arabs had led to both a fusion between African and Arabic cultures, peoples, and between natural religions and Islam, making them the predominant communities in vast areas of both the CFS and GEA. The Afro-Arabic trader chiefs, usually referred to as sultans, had not colonised the African sub-continent as the Europeans sought to do, but they did their best to establish and control trade routes. No less than this, they introduced the indigenous populations to Islam wherever they settled. In fact, converting to Islam was seen as a noble goal to achieve because Muslims were seen by the indigenous African as better educated and more intelligent.⁵¹ The European powers thought the same and colonial envoys from Leopold II and the German Empire were sent to establish relations with the Afro-Arabic sultans on both sides of Lake Tanganyika.⁵² Their interaction was not limited to logistical support: “they included lasting personal friendship as well as intellectual exchange. [Colonials] gathered specific information about Africa and an Arab-Swahili perspective on their own findings (definitely not limited to a crusade against slavery, a cause many travellers recognized as propagandistic and hypocritical).”⁵³

Like the various groups of British, German, French, Italian, and other explorers who had travelled through these regions in earlier decades (and who had referred to a scenario first propagated in the fifteenth century when Portuguese seafarers had made their way along the African coast to abolish Islam by means of the mythical kingdom of Prester John), the colonials saw their endeavours as a confrontation between Occident and Orient as well as a competition between two different ideas of empire.⁵⁴ Said’s Orientalism places this kind of assumption into a framework that helps the modern scholar make sense of it: he argues that the entrance of European colonials into the Arab-Swahili sphere mobilised a collection of images and stereotypes of the colonial Other.⁵⁵ The offshoots of this epistemic complexity deserve a separate study on themes like the explorers’ view of their arrival in Africa as a clash

51 For more information on the introduction, acceptance, and spread of Islam on the African continent and especially in sub-Saharan Africa, see Loimeier, *Muslim Societies in Africa*.

52 The latter were seen as superior to African indigenous, yet still inferior to the Christian and white Westerner.

53 Fabian, *Out of Our Minds*, 50.

54 The legend of Prester John dates back to the twelfth century. It states that he lived in India, later in Mongolia and Ethiopia, in a huge palace made of crystals and emeralds and that he ruled over 42 smaller kings as well as several centaurs and giants. This legend was kept alive by Europeans from the Middle Ages and it caused them to hope that Christians who lived in India could help them in the battle against Islam. See Wilhelm Baum, *Die Verwandlungen des Mythos vom Reich des Priesterkönigs Johannes* (Klagenfurt Kitab, 1999), 7–9, 123–24. Hochschild, *Schatten über dem Kongo*, 15.

55 See Said, *Orientalism*.

between Christian and Muslim overlaid by other oppositions like coast and interior, and civilisation and savagery.

One useful theme of this analysis is the question of how Europeans dealt with the gap between the image of aggressive slave traders and the genuinely hospitable, urbane hosts that many Afro-Arab, usually Swahili-speaking, groups turned out to be in practice. Any European entering Africa in this era had certain pre-constructed ideas about indigenous people and Muslims, and these ideas were influenced by Orientalist images. Even countries that had not previously participated on the imperial stage had seen images of or read stories about Arabic people and Muslims in general, or enjoyed Middle Eastern goods like oriental carpets, coffee, and spices. Such goods, combined with Oriental fairy tales like 'Aladdin and the Flying Carpet' or 'Ali Baba and his Forty Thieves' in the book 'One Thousand and One Nights', had created an image amongst European communities of the exotic and turban-wearing Arab who drank coffee, smoked water pipes, and protected women who were so beautiful they needed to be veiled. From a nineteenth-century point of view, these images were romantic but old-fashioned. Adventure stories of explorers and travelogues were extremely popular at the time and they often came from British, French, or, towards the end of the nineteenth century, German explorers who had travelled through various parts of the African continent.⁵⁶ The question that arises is whether and to what extent these pre-formed ideas influenced decision-making processes once colonials arrived in Africa. Another aspect of this question is how imperialists reconciled the ideological creed of European (white) superiority with the admiration and envy they felt of the Afro-Arab colonial method of implementing and safeguarding trade routes and their often excellent business relations with indigenous peoples.⁵⁷

Colonisers with condescending views on central Africans did, in fact, acknowledge the positive influence of Arab culture in sub-Saharan Africa. They were often convinced that Arabs had brought at least some degree of civilisation to Africa, at which point the Europeans had taken over to continue and perfect the path of progress. This attitude can be seen in the following account by De Walsche, written after spending a few days in Jaabir. In this excerpt, he made a direct comparison between the indigenous African society and the Afro-Arab elite and trading community:

The (indigenous African) people of Jaabir were introduced to civilisation due to their contact with Arabs. They [know how to] work iron, [they make] pretty knives and nice lances, [they also] work a little with ivory and leather. Over a month ago, I discarded my

56 Most renowned explorers of the time were David Livingstone, Henry Morton Stanley, Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza, Hermann von Wissmann, Eduard Schnitzer (alias Emin Pascha), and Gaetano Cassati.

57 Johannes Fabian focuses on the more anthropological factors of colonial exploration in Central Africa, but his research on nineteenth-century travellers and explorers often supplied me with similarities between his research subjects and mine.

shoes from Europe [and instead] put on a native kind of shoes – like slippers – the top parts are made of goat leather and the soles of elephant skin.⁵⁸

De Walsche then continued to emphasise how intelligent the Arab elite of Jaabir was:

The Sultan of Jaabir and I had the pleasure of seeing each other several times. He is a man with a friendly and intelligent demeanour. His son, a young man of fifteen years, is [also] very intelligent. [Due to having] contact with white [people], he learned a little French and a little English and [this] in the course of a short time since the station of Jaabir was founded only approximately 3 years ago.⁵⁹

The author spent almost an entire page of his letter on the topic of Arab intelligence and their established culture. This display of praise and acknowledgement for a high degree of civilisation amongst Afro-Arabic people and their culture appears in all of the Belgian, German, and Swedish sources. European colonisers had a higher opinion of the Afro-Arab population in central Africa than of the region's original indigenous inhabitants. The inclination to think better of the Afro-Arabs than of indigenous Africans is probably also linked to the former's Muslim religion. Islam, like Christianity and Judaism, is based on a belief system that relies on scripture rather than oral tradition alone, as was the case for the allegedly backward local African natural religions. This opinion can also be found in relation to the Muslim-Arab influence on indigenous Africans, which De Walsche described in one of his letters. He preferred Africans not being semin naked but wearing kaftans because it made them look more civilised; he therefore welcomed this development:

According to Stoke's agent, many Arabs live in Karagwe who, like in Tabora, have also influenced the indigenous people of Karagwe. He claims that many of the natives have adapted to the clothing styles and the language of the [Arabic clan of the] Wangwanians.⁶⁰

58 French: Les habitants de Djabir se sont auc contact des Arabes quelque peu intitié à la civilisation ils travaillent le fer, font de jolis couteaux et des belles lances, travaillent un peu l'ivoir et le cuir. Depuis plus d'un mois, j'ai quitté mes souliers d'Europe pour mettre des souliers indigènes sorte de pantouffles dont les empeignes sont en chevreau et les semelles en peau d'éléphant. Letter to his siblings, dated 15.11.1893. De Walsche, *Unpublished Private Correspondence with Family Members*, Sig. 56.4/13.51.10.

59 French: Le sultan de Djabir que j'ai eu le plaisir de voir plusieurs fois est un homme à figure sympathique et intelligent. Son fils, jeune homme d'une quinzaine d'années est très intelligent. Au contact du blanc, il a appris un peu de français et un peu d'anglais et ce en peu de temps puisque la station de Djabir n'est fondée que depuis 3 ans environ. Ibid.

60 German: Es scheinen nach den Erzählungen [von Stokes Agent in Karagwe] viele Araber zu leben, die auf die Einwohner schon einen ähnlichen Einfluß wie in Tabora ausgeübt haben. Dieselben sollen schon vielfach Kleidung und Sprache der Wangwaner [arabischer Klan] angenommen haben. Meyer, N.N., *Die Expedition des Antisklaverei-*

Since white colonisers held Afro-Arabs in higher regard than indigenous Africans, befriending Muslim Afro-Arab people in colonial central Africa was accepted, unlike befriending dark-skinned indigenous people. While membership of the upper class usually brought with it a degree of respect, it was insufficient for dark-skinned indigenous Africans. The one exception was affiliation with a scripture-based religion and the practice of covering up one's body with, for instance, a Middle Eastern kaftan.

Another example of friendly contact between a European coloniser and an Afro-Arab territorial opponent is that of the Belgian officer Albert Sillye and the Arab-Congolese trader Mohammed ben Moussah. Albert had served a total of three terms as a military officer for the FP and (often simultaneously) as a colonial civil servant. In Albert's letters to his fiancée, Gabrielle Deman, he reported his adventures, his daily routines, and his views on African experiences. He decorated his letters with sketches in different sizes and about different topics: the most frequently recurring were food, hunting big game, negotiations with various indigenous peoples, elaborate meals with his European peers, expeditions through the jungles, and battles against Afro-Arab slave traders. Albert was one of the first Belgians to join Leopold II's colonial forces and his duties were manifold as a result. They included exploring territories, training indigenous troops, functioning as a judge to resolve disputes amongst colonisers and colonised, and many other obligations. During his first term of leave in Belgium, he married Gabrielle and signed up for a second stint in the CFS. Albert and Gabrielle left for central Africa together, apparently making her the first Belgian wife to follow her husband to the Congolese territories.⁶¹

Throughout his first term, the couple had enjoyed regular correspondence with each other (as far as mail travelling between Africa and Europe can be considered regular); after she joined him, Gabrielle kept private diaries which hold many photographs of and by her during some of her own African experiences. The episode described below by Albert in a letter to Gabrielle (dated 27 September 1900) predates their betrothal and is a typical example of an encounter between European colonials and Afro-Arab traders in the CFS. Albert returned to the colony a few years after the CA and he remembered how energetic Kirundu had been before the war.⁶² Kirundu was a lively trade town but it had suffered in the battles of the CA. It was where the Belgian FP officer Louis Napoléon Chaltin had defeated the Afro-Arab slave trader forces in 1893. Blood was spilled on both sides and it was not always a given that the local populations would seek contact of any kind with people affiliated to the victorious colonisers. Nevertheless, after some initial reluctance on the part of the

Komitees. Abschrift des Tagebuches von Leutnant Meyer, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde, Antisklaverei, Lt. Meyer, Sig. 27.2.93.

61 Gabrielle Sillye will be discussed in more detail in chapter 5.

62 Kirundu was a station in the CFS and still exists today in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is located towards the north-east on the right bank of the Lualaba River. Before the appearance of the Belgians in the Congo, Kirundu used to be a slaving state headed by Kibonge and his Arab partner Said ben Adeb.

Afro-Arab slave trader Mohammed ben Moussah, Albert was greeted warmly and invited to stay as a guest at Mohammed's home:

At Kirundu the current head is named Mohammed ben Moussah. He owns slaves, livestock, plantations and his indigenous subordinates pay taxes to his administrators. This is a clever, intelligent man [...] and he was raised in the Muslim faith. The door of his house is directed towards Mecca, where he hopes to go one day. He passes for a saint and really deserves it. Mohamed bin Moussah welcomed me with all the deference that we owe to a braid and three stripes;⁶³ he did not call [for] me [at] first. But when he realised the *Mindele*, who was once part of the expedition who had beaten his enemies, he swore to me that I was his best friend and everything at Kirundu was also mine. He took me home, loaded me with gifts and compliments, and begged me to spend the night at his house. Ben Moussah's gifts consisted of rice, ducks, eggs, milk, pineapple, two Arab cups, and a knife with a handle from Kirundu. [...] The cups are beautifully engraved. It takes a month to make one. I accept and repay these courtesies with other presents in the future; in short, we were the best of friends!⁶⁴

Albert's accounts are precise; in his letters to Gabrielle, he does not seem to have either exaggerated or bragged dishonestly about his Congolese activities. Quite the opposite in fact: his letters are candid even when reporting on gruesome battle experiences or describing human corpses hanging from trees, as shown in the sketch below taken from a letter dated 4–7 February 1901. The legend reads: "African landscape after the passing through of an Arabic caravan."⁶⁵

The aforementioned types of encounters happened on the various occasions when the Europeans were traversing their colonial territories from one station to the next. In times of peace, such travels were most commonly conducted by state

63 The excerpt of 'one braid and three stripes' seems to be a reference to a general's military rank and insignia.

64 French: Á Kirundu le chef actuel de toute venter vermine est un nommé Mohammed-ben-Moussah. Il vit de l'esclavage, de l'élevage, des plantations qu'il fait faire aux indigènes et des impôts divers qu'il lève sur ses administrés. C'est un homme adroit, intelligent [...] et il a été élevé dans la crainte de Mahomet. La porte de sa maison est orientée vers la Mecque où il espère bien aller un jour. Il passe pour un saint et vraiment il le mérite. Mohamed ben Moussah m'a reçu avec toute la déférence que l'on doit à une ganse et trois galons, il ne me remettait pas tout d'abord. Mais quand il a reconnu le *Mindele* qui avait fait autrefois partie de l'expédition qui avait rossé ses ennemis, il m'a juré que j'étais son meilleur ami et que tout ce qui était á Kirundu m'appartenait. Il me conduisit chez lui, m'accabla de cadeaux et de politesses et me supplier de passer la nuit chez lui. Les cadeaux de ben Moussah consistaient en riz, canards, œufs, lait, ananas, deux bonnets arabes et un couteau dont le manche a été fait á Kirundu. [...] Les bonnets sont très bien brodés. Il faut un mois à un lundi ouvrier pour en fabriquer un. Je reprends à ces politesses en renvoyant d'autres présents, bref nous étions les meilleurs amis du monde! Sig. 59.40.18/11.01.46, 11.01.55, 11.01.58, Albert Sillye, "Archives Albert Sillye", ed. Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale (Tervuren).

65 French: Paysage africain après le passage d'une colonie arabe. Ibid. Sig. DMN 2012–03–29 11.17.35.

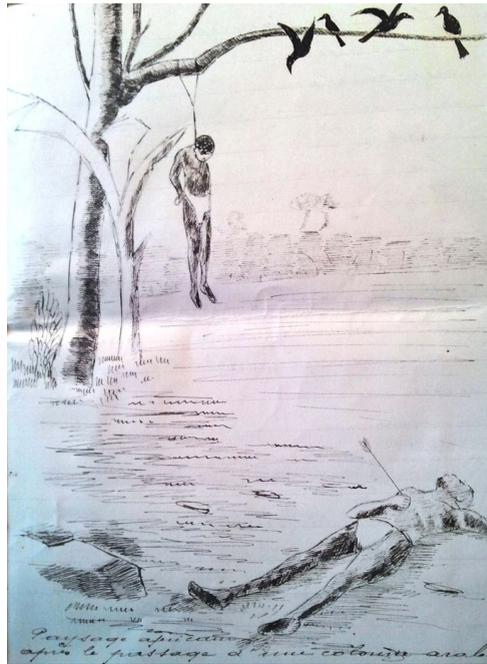


Figure 1:
“African landscape after the
passing through of an Arabic
caravan” (scetch, 1901).

officials to collect taxes or to work as judges over indigenous complaints and trials at so-called *shauris*.⁶⁶ In this case, a friendship between ben Moussah and Albert developed during one of these trips. The two men shared meals and pastimes, and exchanged thoughts on current developments. Albert’s reflections on his new Belgo-Afro-Arab friendship are filled with interest in his companion’s cultural habits, Arabic dishes, and how approachable and civilised ben Moussah was. In addition, he noted his new friend’s streetwise capacities and continues to give examples on how well-informed Afro-Arabs were, how they managed to negotiate the best deals with almost anybody, and how easily they befriended white people. Albert and ben Moussah remained friends until former’s colonial service ended. Of course, there was also a political side to befriending successful and influential Afro-Arab traders. The latter controlled many trade routes and contracts with indigenous tribal chiefs. To be in charge also meant to control trade; creating European-Afro-Arab friendships was also a tactical decision.

Did Albert break with convention, both in a cultural and legal sense, by befriending a Muslim and former slave trader or did he only pretend to be friends with ben Moussah for the sake of appearances? Albert’s letters to Gabrielle never took on a condescending or a paternal tone when he recounted his meetings with ben Moussah. Albert continued to praise his Afro-Arab friend’s distinguished behaviour, his civilised manners, and his economic cunning. This does not automatically signify that they were equals, however. On a more general note, it is safe to say that the

66 Both European powers had introduced their own colonial judicial system in their respective colonie, and thus eliminated previous indigenous and Muslim Sharia laws.

Europeans considered the Arabic, and therefore Muslim, societies in central Africa to be more advanced than their darker-skinned African contemporaries. They were deemed to be less uncivilised than the true indigenous peoples of sub-Saharan Africa. Nevertheless, despite being literate and possessing a high degree of civilised culture and business acumen, the Muslim Africans were still far from being accepted as equal to colonisers.

At times, friendly connections amongst soldiers also developed. This was the case between Captain Fonck and several (!) of his Askari and Zulu soldiers. They were comrades in the same troop, a fact which led to sharing many intimate moments during their spacial proximity to each other. Sleeping next to each other in the open, marching together for days, and witnessing the other's illnesses or wounds created shared experiences, even if both parties involved were not friends. Due to this circumstance, it often happened that a – usually unmarried – soldier would state in his testament that Captain Fonck was to inherit his earnings in case of death. African soldiers were illiterate at the time but in GEA they could ask the purser to note down the name(s) of their heir(s). In his memoirs, Fonck used these particular events to demonstrate that the 'negro' was a valued companion who did not deserve to be ridiculed or underestimated by white people.⁶⁷ In fact, in German colonial literature on Africa from the early twentieth century onwards, the so-called *Afrikabücher* (books about Africa), the Askaris were often referred to as *Kameraden* (comrades).⁶⁸ This term represented military camaraderie, trustworthiness, sharing the same experiences, and a sense of "equality in the face of danger"⁶⁹. In an interracial setting, this remark is unusual and exact in its reference towards a heartfelt and accepted equality between white and non-white.⁷⁰

A further example related to this is that of Dr Oscar Baumann, who in 1892 travelled through GEA to establish new trade routes, fight slavery, and generally implement and defend German interests in the colony. I have uncovered a handful of his diary-like reports (handwritten and printed). These documents are usually five to ten pages long and address his employer, the *Antisklavereibewegung* (German Antislavery Committee; ASB): in none of them did he ever apply the term 'negro'

67 See Fonck, *Deutsch-Ost-Afrika*, 57–58.

68 The, at times, idealised image of the loyal Askari soldier was one of the most important symbols for representing Germany as a just imperial ruler. It was often said that, if Germany was an unfair colonial sovereign, then the indigenous soldiers would all desert instead of celebrating the emperor's birthday and learning some bits of German. See Stefanie Michels, "*Reichsadler und Giraffe – Askari am Grab von Lettow-Vorbeck*", in *Koloniale und postkoloniale Konstruktionen von Afrika und Menschen afrikanischer Herkunft in der deutschen Alltagskultur*, ed. Marianne Bechhaus-Gerst and Sunna Gieseke (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2006).

69 Britta Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany. Memories of Empire in a Decolonized Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 26.

70 A noteworthy remark in this context is that Ludwig Deppe dedicated his *Afrikabuch* to his "comrades in GEA – both the whites and the blacks". (German: *Meinen Kameraden von DOA, den weißen und den schwarzen.*) Deppe, *Mit Lettow-Vorbeck*.

(*Neger* in German). Quite the contrary: Baumann usually approved of his Askari colleagues, including their wives and families. Moreover, he befriended Bakari, his Massai interpreter. Upon Bakari's tragic death as a result of an ambush attack by members of the Matusi tribe, Baumann kept referring to him in his writings and just stopped close of lamenting obtrusely about his former employee.

We were ambushed by one hundred Matusi warriors on 18th September, but, thanks to a timely warning by the Marundi, the damage to us and our casualties were limited, [...] only one man died on our side; unfortunately, this person was my loyal Massai interpreter Bakari.⁷¹

Towards the end of the same report, Baumann informed his employer of the successful completion of his tasks and took the liberty of mentioning his good friend Bakari once more. In the same report, Baumann also referred to another Askari by the name of Kihara madi Mwamba:

Even the elephant hunters proved themselves to be efficient; their women accompanied them on all the difficult mountain hikes, [...]. This time around our losses were marginal, except for the Massai interpreter Bakari, who was killed in Urundi; two further men died due to their illnesses and recently the last Sudanese who was still a member of the expedition, my loyal Askari [friend] Kihara madi Mwamba, who was held in captivity by Bushiri together with Dr Meyer and me in 1888; this loss is I mourn heavily.⁷²

It was rather unusual for colonisers to name their indigenous servants and soldiers in their reports. Usually, only the full names of members of the social higher echelons, like sultans, tribal chiefs, and kings, were mentioned in writing; other acquaintances, like the members of a caravan, were only referred to in terms of tribal membership or simply in the numbers of a death toll.

71 German: Am 18. September führten über 100 Matusi-Krieger einen planmäßigen Angriff aus dem Hinterhalt auf uns aus, der uns möglicherweise Schaden zugefügt hätte, wenn uns die Marundi nicht rechtzeitig gewarnt hätten. [...] auf unserer Seite [starb] nur ein Mann, leider mein treuer Massai-Dolmetsch Bakari [...]. Baumann, Oscar, "Die Expeditionen des Antisklaverei-Komitees. Ein Bericht des Dr. O. Baumann, Tabora, den 8. November 1892, in: Antisklavereibewegung. Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde, Berlin, Sig. 8.2.93.

72 German: Auch die Elefantenjäger erwiesen sich als tüchtig, ihre Weiber machten unermüdlich die mühsamsten Gebirgsmärsche mit, [...]. Unsere Verluste waren diesmal gering, außer dem Massai-Dolmetsch Bakari, der in Urundi fiel, starben noch zwei Mann an Krankheit und jüngst der letzte Sudanese, der sich noch bei der Expedition befand, und mein treuer Askari Kihara madi Mwamba, der 1888 mit Dr. Meyer und mir in Bushiris Gefangenschaft war: ein Verlust, den ich schwer beklage. Baumann, Oscar, "Die Expeditionen des Antisklaverei-Komitees. Ein Bericht des Dr. O. Baumann, Tabora, den 8. November 1892, in: Antisklavereibewegung. Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde, Berlin, Sig. 8.2.93.

Intimate non-sexual relationships comparable to friendships would often develop between a master and his boy servant. The term ‘boy’ or ‘boy servant’ in a colonial context originated from the habit of British colonials in India of employing pre-teen boys as servants. Like many other practical aspects of British colonialism, the term ‘boy’ was part of a transcolonial knowledge transfer between British and other European colonial systems. The term was thus adopted into non-English speaking colonies like the CFS and GEA. The wife of a German officer, Magdalene von Prince, stated that the British expression was so perfect and all-embracing in terms of the duties to which a boy attended that no better fitting German term existed with which to exchange it.⁷³ ‘Boys’ were colonial servants between the ages of eight to 14 who tended to and waited on their masters, black or white, around the clock. Their duties were manifold, including, among other things, “fetching water and fire wood, cooking, sewing, buying flour, goats, eggs, and cane sugar, watching the children and taking them for walks, making flour, cleaning the home, and all sorts of other duties in the home”⁷⁴.

Boys were essential for colonial life and colonisers often depended heavily on them. Therefore, De Walsche’s complaint about his boy being “as stupid as he is tall”⁷⁵ and his expressed hope for finding an adequate replacement were typical. Coincidentally, a Dr Van Campenhout was about to return to Belgium after working in Jaabir for two years, meaning that his boy needed a new employer. Since Van Campenhout spoke very highly of his boy, De Walsche exchanged his ‘stupid’ boy for Van Campenhout’s. De Walsche said of his new servant that “as is adequate, I named him Baptiste. He is a very welcoming and co-operative figure, and I believe he is very honest”⁷⁶. The fact that Baptiste was already trained and thus came with recommendations meant that another white person had already ‘civilised’ (i. e. trained and improved) him and introduced him to Western ways. Baptiste often helped De Walsche in verbal dealings with indigenous people because “[he] spoke a bit of English [and] served [De Walsche] as his interpreter”⁷⁷; sometimes he even functioned

73 See Prince, *Eine deutsche Frau*, 7.

74 German: [Der Boy] holt Wasser und Brennholz, kocht, näht, wäscht, geht aufs Land zum Einkauf von Mehl, Ziegen, Hühnern, Zuckerrohr, paßt auf die Kinder auf und trägt sie spazieren, stampft Mais und Negerkorn zu Mehl, reinigt die Wohnung und verrichtet so allerlei Dienste im Haushalt, [...]. Heinrich Fonck, *Deutsch-Ost-Afrika. Eine Schilderung deutscher Tropen nach 10 Wanderjahren. Die Schutztruppe; Reisen und Expeditionen im Inneren; Land und Leute; Wild, Jagd und Fischerei; Wirtschaftliche Verhältnisse*, 2 ed. (Berlin: Vossische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1910), 65–67.

75 French: Mon boy est aussi bête qu’il est grand, espérons qu’en Basoko ou environs j’en trouverai un plus intelligent. Letter dated 18.05.1893. De Walsche, *Unpublished Private Correspondence with Family Members*, Sig. 56.4/13.44.54.

76 French: Comme de juste je l’ai baptisé du nom de Baptiste. Il a une figure très avenante et très serviable et je crois très honnête. Letter dated 21.06.1893. De Walsche, *Unpublished Private Correspondence with Family Members*, Sig. 56.4/13.46.12.

77 French: [...] qui parle un peu d’anglais [et] me sert d’interprète. Letter dated 05.07.1893. De Walsche, *Unpublished Private Correspondence with Family Members*, Sig. 56.4/13.46.52.

as a spokesman in dealings with other Africans. His boy also prepared chicken broth with asparagus for De Walsche's ill colleague, which lessened the former's worries for his white companion.⁷⁸ Unfortunately, however, De Walsche was forced to dismiss his boy for theft. He wrote that this circumstance was:

[...] unfortunate because my former [boy] performed many tasks, he cooked meals for me and did his duties without me having to take care of anything. Regrettably, he who had not given rise to any complaints whatsoever during my entire trek [through the CFS] robbed me of cowries and mitakos shortly after our arrival at the station of Jaabir. If only I had been the sole person injured, maybe I would, after a just punishment, let this story pass, but two [of my] colleagues who were staying with me were also robbed, and the thing was then called to the attention of the head of the station, who then put my boy in chains. I now have a little boy with a smarter face than the other [one] who had served me well but [the new one might] still be as stupid [as his predecessor], that is to be seen, I will try to train him but I fear envisioning the troubles it will cost me.⁷⁹

De Walsche's assessment of the situation was not unusual. From time to time, boys would steal something from their master or be guilty of other misdeeds, like being unable to work properly due to bad hangovers. If the boy was reliable and self-sufficient, his colonial master usually kept him in service. And yet, a few weeks into De Walsche's new boy's employment (De Walsche did not even bother to communicate the boy servant's name to his family), the boy refused to accompany De Walsche to an Afro-Arab station because he was genuinely scared of Arabs. De Walsche recognised that forcing the boy to accompany him was a fruitless endeavour, since his servant would simply run away during the trek. So he left him behind, intending to look for a new servant upon arrival at his next destination in Gambary. This third boy seemed to be rather competent:

Some twenty kilometres and then "Stop". My tent is erected [by] my boy, the one [with me] in my portrait, and while he prepares my meals, I lay in my *chaiselongue* in the shade

78 See letter dated 24.07.1893. De Walsche, *Unpublished Private Correspondence with Family Members*, Sig. 56.4/13.47.16.

79 French: [...] c'est regrettable, car mon ancien me rendait beaucoup de services, il faisait ma cuisine enfin me faisait mon service sans que j'eusse à m'occuper de quoi que ce soit. Malheureusement lui qui n'avait donné lieu à aucune plainte pendant tout mon voyage m'a volé, peu après mon arrivée, à la station des cauries et des mitakos. Si seul j'avais été lésé, j'aurais peut-être, après une verte correction, tû la chose, mais deux collègues logeant avec moi étaient comme moi été volés, et la chose a été dite auch chef de la station qui a fait mettre mon gaillard à la chaîne. J'ai maintenant un petit boy, qui avec un figure des plus intelligents est aussi bête que l'autre me servait bien, ce n'est pas peu dire, je vais tâcher de le dresser mais j'ai peur en pensant aux peines que cela me coutera. Ibid., Sig. 56.4/13.51.13. In the CFS, cowries (snail shells) and mitakos (copper rings) were local currencies.

of a big tree where I read 2 or 3 newspapers and dream of the country whilst enjoying the spirals that describe the smoke of a good cigar. Ah! What a life; the life of a prince!⁸⁰

Even though we do not know his third boy's name, it is clear that De Walsche held him in high regard because he included him in his portrait, which was a rare occurrence. This privilege was usually granted only to very loyal and reliable servants who had proven their worth and of whom their masters were fond. I argue that the boy's appearance in the photograph was not merely a display of master-servant relationship or show of entourage, but that, for De Walsche, living life to its fullest was directly linked to his loyal boy, who made sure that his master was always looked after and treated like royalty.

The cases of the two Belgians (Louis De Walsche and Albert Sillye) as well as the two Germans (Dr Oscar Baumann and Heinrich Fonck) are exemplary for colonial societies of the time and how white colonials approached the company of non-whites in their private spheres. Members of the Afro-Arab elites were more often than not considered worthy of white friendship, while dark-skinned Africans were not. Servants like boys, who were very close to their masters and responsible for their daily wellbeing, received friendly recognition and a sense of mutual belonging awarded to them. However, this friendliness was most likely due to the boys' daily proximity to white men and women, and the unavoidable sense of intimacy that enabled such personal relationships, rather than to a personal interest in them.

3.3 Befriending the 'White' Dog

As stated at the beginning of the previous section, friendships can come in different shapes; sometimes they bear more resemblance to relationships of dependence than to two people meeting each other on equal terms. It is commonly accepted, however, that people who consider each other as friends automatically consider each other to be of similar, if not equal, standing. This sense of equality tends to be based on similar levels of education, comparable careers, the same social class, and race. Friends tend to be on a par with each other. Unlike friendships, friendly relationships between two individuals can exist without both agents being equals. A good example of a relationship that is close, sometimes even emotionally intimate, but which differs from one of mutual friendship is a relationship where one of the two components is dependent on the other; for example, in a master-servant relationship. Another example of the way in which white identity in colonial Africa was defined and separated from the indigenous population was to own and have a

80 French: Une vingtaine de kilomètres et puis "Halte" Ma tente est dressée, mon boy, celui qui figure sur mon portrait, s'occupe de ma popotte et moi allongé dans ma chaise longue, à l'ombre de quelque gros arbre je lis 2 ou 3 journaux ou je rêve au pays en admirant les spirales que décrit la fumée d'un bon cigare. Ah! quelle bonne vie, quelle vie de prince! Letter dated 10.03.1895. *Ibid.*, Sig. 56.4/13.55.42.

friendly private relationship with a pet dog. “The lessons we learn about the animals, and about the peoples and cultures who have lived beside and sometimes against them, enrich academic disciplines. But they do more than that; they enrich our understandings of ourselves.”⁸¹

The practice or habit of keeping various kinds of animals as companions can be traced back to antiquity, but it did not really become a dominant social feature in Europe until the seventeenth century. An animal qualifies as a pet when it lives indoors, has a name (in the past some were even properly baptised by a priest), and when it is not used for food or work. Another, rather seldom-mentioned, signifier of identifying an animal as a pet is the caring touch that needs to occur between human and animal. “Whether a dog, a rabbit, or a bird, an animal was not really a pet until a willing and trusting skin-to-skin contact had taken place between human and animal. This trusting touch was a key feature of the human-pet relationship.”⁸² In English, the etymology of the term ‘pet’ is quite self-explanatory. This term was first used officially in reference to baby lambs raised by a human hand instead of by the biological sheep mother. Throughout the decades, the term has been and still is applied to any animal that met the above requirements. Nonetheless, experiencing affection for a particular animal or a small group of animals was usually linked to the middle and the upper classes, for only they could afford to own a pet. Even so, this statement does not exclude the possibility of working animals experiencing human affection. However, since I will analyse the important role of pets in colonial Africa and not that of livestock, this section will focus on the pet dogs of selected colonials.

The importance of animals within human cultures across the world and throughout history should not be underestimated. I have for this reason chosen to partly base the following section on Clifford Geertz’ extraordinary analysis of Balinese cockfighting. Geertz discovered this was not just an integral part of Balinese culture, but also a social marker of masculinity, honour, and social status within local communities.⁸³ He also showed that owning, preening, and providing cocks for fights gave Balinese men positive acknowledgement from their peers, which was then sometimes followed by a higher social standing within their respective communities. Cockfighting and the traditions that it came with also provided for cultural behavioural patterns of loyalty and social affiliation to a family, circle of friends, or colleagues. Cockfighting was an inherent part of Balinese culture up until 1906, when the Dutch imperialist bureaucracy declared it to be an unethical and uncivilised pastime. I will make a case for how different kinds of animals were turned

81 Nigel Rothfels, “Foreword”, in *Other Animals. Beyond the Human in Russian Culture and History*, ed. Jane Costlow and Amy Nelson (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010), xi.

82 Constance Classen, *The Deepest Sense. A Cultural History of Touch* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 102.

83 See Clifford Geertz, “Deep Play: Notes on Balinese Cockfight”, in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 412–54.

into cultural markers by humankind depending on what these animals represented within different societies and eras.

In his essay *Why Look at Animals?*, John Berger was one of the first authors to make the basic claim about the important role that animals could play in the analysis of cultures.⁸⁴ How a certain culture views and treats animals can teach the observer about its established traditions, cultural values, belief systems, food habits, and other aspects of daily life. By analysing pet dogs from a cultural-historical perspective, the aim is to “learn something new by looking at how people have talked about, cared for, bred, imagined, illustrated, dreamed of, or used the [dogs] in their midst”⁸⁵. It is essential to understand, however, that this is not a history of animals, for that would be an impossible task. Instead, what animal historians research is, as Erica Fudge pointed out in her works on early modern British culture in relation to animals, the history of human attitudes toward animals.⁸⁶ Fudge also argued that stories and observations of humans about their animal companions are only ever a representation of how someone at some point in time perceived the animal(s) in question. Therefore, the animal itself is not to be analysed, but rather the human who described it and the social standing attributed to the pet. The animal should be treated as a symbol rather than as a real object. Therefore, the study of dogs as an integrated part of human history can open doors to other aspects of social history, like masculinity. In a Russian context, for example, texts and pictures of bears were, and still are, linked not only to nationalism, but also to masculinity.⁸⁷ In contrast to the masculine bear, there was the lap dog, which “from the Middle Ages on [...] was especially associated with women who were said to delight in such sensuous playmates”⁸⁸. These lap dogs were sometimes even referred to as living heaters.

In many Muslim and several central-African cultures, dogs are considered filthy, loud, and flea-ridden animals that have neither socio-cultural value nor agricultural

84 See Berger, “Why Look at Animals?”.

85 Rothfels, “Foreword”, x. For more on African dog history, see Robert J. Gordon, “Fido: Dog Taled of Colonialism in Namibia”, in *Social History and African Environments*, ed. William Beinart and Joann McGregor (Oxford: James Currey, 2003), 173–92; Tim Maggs and Judith Sealy, “Africanis: The Pre-Colonial Dog of Africa”, in *Canis Africanis. A Dog History of Southern Africa*, ed. Kenneth Shapiro (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

86 See Erika Fudge, *Perceiving Animals: Humans and Beasts in Early Modern English Culture* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000); *Brutal Reasoning: Animals, Rationality, and Humanity in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

87 Jane Costlow and Amy Nelson have convincingly presented the immediate social and cultural link between the image of bears and its inherent connection to Russia’s sense of nation as well as the meaning of what is manly. See Jane Costlow and Amy Nelson, “Integrating the Animal”, in *Other Animals. Beyond the Human in Russian Culture and History*, ed. Jane Costlow and Amy Nelson (Pittsburgh, PA: Pittsburgh University Press, 2010), 1–16. Another example would be the depictions of or references to strong horses in relation to Russian masculinity and the New Man, as Arja Rosenthal elaborates in her chapter. See Arja Rosenholm, “Of Men and Horses”, *ibid.*, 178–94.

88 Classen, *The Deepest Sense*, 99.

use. They do not hunt mice like cats, produce milk like cows and goats, or supply wool like sheep. Despite dogs being used as guards during the time of Prophet Mohammed, common Muslim beliefs hold that dogs expel angels from a household, that they are filthy animals, and that, even if they are touched ever so briefly, it is not possible to resume praying unless the hands are washed again, even if they were cleaned only minutes before.⁸⁹ Dogs were thus not seen as companions or pets in Muslim communities in sub-Saharan Africa at the time. However, for a nineteenth-century bourgeois or upper class European, dogs, in particular pedigree hunting dogs in their various shapes and sizes, were linked symbolically to nobility, financial independence, and the aristocratic, or even royal, privilege of hunting game. Dogs as we know them in the modern world are believed to have descended from the Asian wolf and were the first animals to be domesticated, which also changed them genetically in the long term. In fact, their domestication occurred centuries before humans discovered agriculture. This longevity of co-existence also explains why humans and dogs are still so drawn to each other today (even in non-rural areas).⁹⁰ Even so, most of today's known dog breeds were created during the nineteenth century.⁹¹

The following pages will refer only to pet dogs and not to dogs that 'worked' (i. e. guard dogs, shepherd dogs, or hunting dogs). Unlike later in the twentieth century, colonisers had not yet implemented police dogs, and even guard dogs were mainly present in the southern African territories. In fact, South Africa and Nigeria were among the few British colonies to use police dogs by the second half of the twentieth century.⁹² Nonetheless, pet dogs existed: the number of white colonials who kept pet dogs as companions are remarkable and more than just an occasional exception. They decided to keep them for the following three reasons: firstly, to lessen moments of loneliness in a distant foreign country, secondly, as a symbol of white superiority in terms of both membership of a higher social class and wealth, since keeping and feeding a pet that did not fulfil a practical duty was a luxury that not everyone could afford,⁹³ and, thirdly, the ownership of a pet dog helped to differentiate the colonials from the colonial Other.⁹⁴

89 See Mohammed Hanif, "Of Dogs, Faith and Islam", *The New York Times*, 26.07.2015 2015.

90 See chapter two of Kenneth F. Kiple, *A Movable Feast. Ten Millennia of Food Globalization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

91 See James Trager, *The Food Chronology. A Food Lover's Compendium of Events and Anecdotes, from Prehistory to the Present* (New York: Owl Books, 1997).

92 See Daniel E. Agbibo, "'White Men's Dogs': Colonial Policing and the Enforcement of Law and Order in British Colonial Africa", (2014); Lance van Sittert and Sandra Swart, eds., *Canis Africanis. A Dog History of Southern Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

93 In imperial Russia and the Soviet Union, lap dogs were referred to as parasitic beings that only a comparably parasitic bourgeoisie and nobility could own, let alone cherish. This attitude of sneering at non-working lap dogs did not change until the mid 1990s. See Costlow and Nelson, "Integrating the Animal", 11–14.

94 Nowadays, one of the most famous African breeds is the Rhodesian Ridgeback. However, as the name already suggests, we are here confronted with a dog breed that was African yet European in its creation. Research on dogs and their meaning for or influ-

De Walsche had a Pomeranian called 'Miss', which was given to him by his fellow Belgian colonial Van Leborglo. The new owner described his dog as "making him very happy and that [s]he knows him as if [s]he had never had a different owner previously"⁹⁵. Despite the obvious pleasure and welcome distraction that his new companion gave him, De Walsche was worried that he would be unable to take her with him to his final destination because she was heavily pregnant. De Walsche feared that the puppies would not survive the trek from Boma to the Haut-Uele region. In the end though, after Miss' five black puppies were born, De Walsche remained in Boma for a couple of weeks so that she and her litter could rest.⁹⁶ Upon finally departing, De Walsche decided to take Miss and one of her offspring with him, describing again how "happy he is and that the dog distracted him [from daily life]"⁹⁷.

Six months later, De Walsche described how he fell dangerously ill and had been tied to his bed at the station in Gambary. He was battling high fevers and he claimed that nothing, neither the laudanum nor the morphine, had helped ease his pain. The only thing that had the ability to cheer him up and help revive his spirits was his beloved dog Miss by "making him a present of four puppies, two of which were completely black, another was black with white paws, and one tan-coloured"⁹⁸. By keeping a pet dog, De Walsche not only distanced himself from the Afro-Arab and Congolese cultures (as described above, these two cultural groups thought of dogs as dirty animals and carriers of misfortune), but also demonstrated to his contemporaries that his dog was more valuable to him and had a strong positive psychological effect than any of his non-white human companions. The dog was more important to him as a living being than non-Europeans. His Miss was not merely a welcome distraction, but also a symbol of his white identity in relation to white culture and white background. She was a visual link to Western European culture and the habit of keeping dogs as companions that were to be treated well and looked after by servants. In contrast, indigenous Africans only tended to keep animals that worked, could be eaten, such as "cows, goats, sheep, sometimes a grey donkey, [shepherd] dogs, chicken, doves, ducks"; or that could be used by indigenous magicians "to make prophecies by reading the chicken's intestines"⁹⁹.

ence on people from a cultural as well as a social history perspective is still sparse. For more information on the history of domesticated dog breeds and the history of dogs in South Africa, see Sittert and Swart, *Canis Africanis*; "Canis Familiaris: A Dog History of Southern Africa", *South African Historical Journal* 48 (2008).

95 French: [...] m'est très fidèle, il me connaît comme s'il n'avait jamais eu d'autre maître que moi. Ibid., Sig. 56.4/13.44.43.

96 Ibid., Sig. 56.4/13.45.29.

97 French: [...] il est très fidèle et me procure beaucoup de distractions. Ibid., Sig. 56.4/13.46.12.

98 French: [...] me fait cadeau de 4 jeunes chiens, 2 tout à fait noirs, 1 noir avec extrémités des pattes blanc et 1 couleur havane. Ibid., Sig. 56.4/13.52.01.

99 German: Als Haustierte finden wir vertreten: Rinder, Ziegen, Schafe, selterner den grauen Esel, Hunde, Hühner, Tauben, Enten. [...] prophezeit aus dessen Gedärmen die glaubhaftesten Sachen. Fonck, *Deutsch-Ost-Afrika*, 547.

The same attitude towards pet dogs existed in GEA. When Frieda von Bülow travelled to central Africa to spend a further nine months in the German colony, she adopted a dog there, despite not being able to predict how long she would stay in Africa this time around.¹⁰⁰ It had taken her approximately six weeks to travel from Berlin to Tanga, the most northern port of GEA, in pursuit of her brother's bequests. Her brother, Lieutenant Albrecht von Bülow of the KS, died during the Arab uprising while he was helping a comrade escape from harm. Unfortunately, the rescue attempt ended with him being shot eight times instead.¹⁰¹ Before his death in the Kilimanjaro region, Albrecht had spent all his savings and earnings investing in a chalk mine on the island of Pemba as well as into a palm tree plantation just outside Tanga. With the aim of taking the inheritance for herself and her sister, Frieda took up lodgings in a Tangalese hotel; soon after, a dog was added to the guest list. Her terrier's name was August and he would accompany her to every venue and event, regardless of whether she stayed in the hotel, went for a walk, went hunting, or attended social gatherings.¹⁰²

Frieda was not the only German colonial in Tanga to own a dog. Indeed, due to the German colonialist fashion of owning pet dogs, a family of small terriers spread rapidly within Tanga. According to Frieda's reports, these terrier dogs were kept only by Germans (at the time, there were 43 men and seven women) and other Europeans. Due to local circumstances, in particular the typical vermin infestations in east-African port cities, terriers were used to catch rats. This was the case with von St. Paul's German shepherd dog Fritz, who was kept as a guard dog against panthers in particular. As it turned out, Fritz was killed by a black panther one night and carried away from the von St. Paul estate.¹⁰³

As she mentioned in her published and widely read diary, Magdalene von Prince even went to the trouble of bringing her own dog all the way from Germany to GEA. She referred to her dog Schnapfel as her "loyal, four-legged friend from the *Heimat* which my father allowed me to take with me [to Africa] with a heavy heart"¹⁰⁴. She also described how she and her husband Tom kept him on a leash because he was used to hunting, and they did not want to lose him during their trek from the coast to their future estate and plantation in the Usambara region. Further references to Schnapfel described him becoming accustomed to the African sun, dealing with dangerous ants, stealing a leg of veal from the kitchen, chasing rats, or being kept safe from the dog-eating Wassangus, a Bantu tribe from the southern parts of GEA.

100 See Frieda Freiin von Bülow, "Allerhand Alltägliches Aus Deutsch-Ostafrika", *Die Frau* 2 (1894/1895).

101 See Prager, *Der Araber-Aufstand in Ost-Afrika*, 98.

102 At the time Albrecht von Bülow was Head of the Station Moschi. See Bülow, "Allerhand Alltägliches aus Deutsch-Ostafrika", 97; Fonck, *Deutsch-Ost-Afrika*, 37.

103 Bülow, "Allerhand Alltägliches Aus Deutsch-Ostafrika", 94.

104 German: [...] Schnapfel, meinem treuen, vierbeinigen Heimatsgenossen, den mir mein Vater schweren Herzens mitgegeben hatte. Prince, *Eine deutsche Frau*, 8. For additional references to Schnapfel see also pages 9, 31, 33, 38, 47, 88, 128, 163, 188.

Magdalene described her worries about the Wassangu, who were known for eating dog meat and who lived in Iringa just like Magdalene and Tom. To avoid them from being tempted by Schnapfel, she started keeping him on a leash. Keeping Schnapfel safe was of utmost importance for the von Princes. Magdalene did not trust the assurances of Merere, the tribal chief of the Wassangus. “Merere claims that he and his people did not eat dogs anymore, but his father loved eating them, and since the latter only died in 1893, I doubt Mereres’ civilisation to already be so far developed that seeing Schnapfel every day would not cause him to relapse to his pre-civilisational habits.”¹⁰⁵ Obviously, for Magdalene, rejecting dog meat was not merely a sign of Western civilisation, but also of Africans turning into ‘civilised’ people.

During her trek to Iringa, Magdalene adopted a second dog with only three legs. She named him *Pombe* (after the central-African sorghum beer). Whenever Magdalene wrote about her two dogs, she did so as if she were talking about two small naughty boys causing comical situations; for example, both dogs playfully attacked and chased a male member of the Mafiti tribe off the plantation. In another episode, she used a rather more ironic narrative style whilst writing about the dogs and an escapade in the market square.¹⁰⁶ Various other events concerning Schnapfel are dotted throughout her book. For example, when Schnapfel was bitten in the neck by a wild dog, it was not a veterinarian but the medical physician, Dr Drewes, who treated and ultimately healed him.¹⁰⁷ Magdalene was aware that her dog was not equal to the four boys she would give birth to in GEA, but she did see him as an essential part of her white persona in Africa. Schnapfel was a daily visual link and reminder of her German identity and the *Heimat*.

Identities almost always are partly shaped by the people and animals we consider to be our friends. It is generally easier to bond with people in our immediate vicinity when they share the same social background, gender, education, and career choices. Speaking the same language, in both literal and interpretative terms, is important too. In the colonial context, the racial and socio-political ideas of the late nineteenth century were also an immediate influence on whether or not whites and non-whites were allowed to be friends.

More specifically, it is necessary to note the rules of conduct issued by respective colonial authorities in Europe that prohibited their employees from intermingling with indigenous people in the private spheres. Whether or not these official rules were actually necessary remains to be examined, because the number of indigenous African and white European friendships in the sources is less than a handful.¹⁰⁸ All

105 German: Merere behauptet, er und seine Leute äßen Hunde nicht mehr, aber sein Vater hat sie noch sehr geliebt, und da derselbe erst 1893 gestorben ist, halte ich Mereres Zivilisation noch nicht für so wurzelecht, als dass ich sie durch den täglichen Anblick Schnapfels ins Wanken bringen möchte. *Ibid.*, 88.

106 *Ibid.*, 128.

107 *Ibid.*, 188.

108 During my archive trips, I came across letters by Afro-Arab traders written in Arabic to Belgian or German colonial civil and military officials. These letters always referred

the same, it is perhaps not surprising that very close friendships between the coloniser and the colonised are not mentioned in any of the sources. Good friendships existed, like the kind described in the accounts of Albert Sillye and Mohammed ben Moussa, but I have not come across truly close and intimate interracial friendships between white colonisers and indigenous Africans in the sources. It is obvious that the white colonisers did not wish to interact with their non-white colonised subjects more than was necessary within their private spheres.

Friendly relationships between master and boy servant could be very intimate, yet the sources do not inform the reader of any intimacy beyond sharing the same private space within a home (or a tent when travelling). In these cases, intimacy was based on the fact that master and boy shared the same space and daily schedule. Wherever the master went, the boy followed and ensured that his employer was well cared for; as a result, a personal bond which was created within the white master's private sphere. Despite language barriers, these boys knew about the very intimate details that governed their masters' lives, such as what they ate, how they slept, their tempers, good and bad habits, digestive systems, and with whom they consorted. Boy servants were witnesses to the fact that white people were just as vulnerable as non-whites and that they tended to yearn for the same basic needs. Master and boy were not friends, since they did not interact with each other as equals in terms of social status, but still the shared intimacy was only possible within a framework of mutual trust and a certain kind of friendly relationship.

A striking example of this sort of friendliness can be seen in the case concerning Magdalene von Prince. She adopted three African girls to raise on the family plantation. Even though Magdalene knew that these girls were not her daughters, she could not help but become increasingly attached to them. This was a similar situation to that of master and boy. She was neither the mother nor the employer. She fed, clothed, and educated the girls, but yet they would never be equals due to their differing races. Nonetheless, Magdalene decided to raise them in as motherly a way as was possible within German-colonial cultural norms. Her choice to do so shows how difficult it could be to maintain the necessary professional and socio-cultural distance with individuals who were part of the private sphere. Compared to Bossaert, who was deeply affected emotionally by his boy's death, Magdalene bent the rules as much as the norms would allow her to do so without losing the respect of her peers. In this respect, like the colonials who befriended Afro-Arabs, she showed a certain amount of individual agency without risking her social standing either internally or externally.

Whilst colonials shaped their identities by objecting to or welcoming friendships with indigenous Africans and Afro-Arabs, the choice to have a pet dog was never unintentional. In fact, transporting a dog from Europe to Africa or adopting

to business and territorial matters. For several examples, see Rom Léon. "Archives Léon Rom". Edited by Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale. Tervuren.

one in the colony was in itself a highly European, and therefore white, statement.¹⁰⁹ As I have mentioned before, sub-Saharan Africans did not keep dogs and most of the Muslim groups thought of dogs as filth-ridden animals that brought illnesses, meaning they were symbolically linked to poor people and the lower classes. For Europeans, keeping a dog like a small terrier or a larger setter was linked to the upper classes, hunting, and wealth. Even though noble hunting dogs were baptised and had their own servants in charge of them, these carnivores were still considered to be working animals.¹¹⁰ However, some dogs were kept merely as pets. To name the most renowned example, the British royals are known to have kept King Charles spaniels (named after King Charles II of England, 1630–1685) or corgies in their various castles for many generations. Owning a pet dog was also a marker of individuality within society because the dog's race, its position in the owner's family, and even its name could say a lot about the owner. The ownership of pedigree dogs did not fulfil an agrarian function (like shepherd dogs); rather, they symbolised wealth, class privilege, and maybe even a sense of regality. Therefore, European colonisers who owned dogs within an African society that was usually indifferent to or dismissive of pet dogs was a statement in both cultural and racial terms. After all, these dogs often led better lives than their human indigenous contemporaries under Belgian and German colonial rule.

3.4 Conclusion

White colonisers chose both their human and non-human friends and companions in accordance to a credo which saw them as members of the dominant social group, one capable of changing rules in an African setting according to European idea(l)s without any regard for local traditions. Being white, and thus 'superior', meant that white customs were implemented that would influence interpersonal bonding of any sort. Being white also meant that local norms were at times discarded or ignored for the sake of implementing, occasionally with some ignorance, white ideas of a better life. One example for improving one's life was having a pet, whose presence alone could be seen as an insult by some members of the various African or Afro-Arabic cultures. Furthermore, the different shades of friendships and friendly relations were more than just coincidences. Often, they were statements which influenced colonial identities in racial ways that were most likely unplanned but were still capable of having an effect. Who these colonisers chose to surround themselves with in their

109 In colonised Hong Kong, the British rulers went as far as to change local food culture in order to protect dogs from being eaten by Chinese. Shuk-Wah Poon, "Dogs and British Colonialism: The Contested Ban on Eating Dogs in Colonial Hong Kong", *Journal on Imperial and Commonwealth History* 42, no. 2 (2013).

110 To find out more on the slow development of the social importance of working and pet dogs from medieval times until the nineteenth century, I recommend reading Constance Claassen's chapter in Classen, *The Deepest Sense*, 93–123.

private spheres provided bystanders with an immediate understanding of who they dealt with and which life choices the white colonisers in question had taken to present their European identities to the outside world. These life choices could be, for instance, to build a red brick house, wear a white uniform, or own a pet dog. Even so, friendly bonds between different individuals were a two-way street.

Despite the frequent assumption that colonialism came only from above, it was in fact a shared experience between the coloniser and colonised and should be approached and studied as such. Looking at the sources, it has become very clear, that this project can be more appropriately situated in and defined as a middle ground between African and European history. This kind of positioning has also been posited by Paul Gilroy, who claimed that national histories with imperial involvements are neither singular nor “stable and peaceful as [they were] ethnically undifferentiated”¹¹¹. In other words, black history (like that which has emerged in Great Britain) is a part of Belgian and German national history, even if to different degrees. Moreover, the agents and their experiences as presented in this doctoral project allow its research to reflect on an impression of unavoidable in-betweenness relating to race and identity. Race, gender, and social class are thus as inseparable as Europeans and Africans in this chapter (and the following ones).

All these aspects have been interwoven in the previous chapter: it is for this reason that I agree with Burton’s judgement that “approaches to colonialism that insist on a binary axis between colonizer and colonized” should be examined more closely, since “they do not do justice to the complexity of colonial relations *in situ*”¹¹². Seeing everything in a Manichean binary of black or white, civilised or uncivilised, and any other possible either/or scenario would not do justice to imperial history and its agents. The following account by Captain H. Fonck about his experiences with his African fellow soldiers and his attitudes towards them demonstrates this clearly:

Once you have settled in, and when you have learnt the language, you realise that everything that happens amongst the indigenous African soldiers also occurs here [in Germany] amongst soldiers. Humans are really all the same, both in relation to their strengths and weaknesses. Next to the average soldier, there are also extraordinary and hard working ones with whom it is a joy to work together. Equally, there are also those incorrigible scallywags who always behave badly and harm the company’s discipline and reputation.¹¹³

111 Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 7.

112 Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire*, 22.

113 German: Man findet überhaupt, wenn man sich eingelebt hat, die Sprache kennt und beobachtet, daß sich im großen Ganzen bei unseren schwarzen Mannschaften drüben alles wiederholt, was man hier [in Deutschland] im Soldatenleben kennen gelernt hat. Die Menschen sind eigentlich genau dieselben, in guten Eigenschaften und Schwächen. Neben dem größeren Teil der Durchschnittssoldaten gibt es ganz hervorragend tüchtige Leute, mit denen zu arbeiten eine Freude ist. Ebenso hat jede Kompagnie einige unverbesserliche Schlingel und minderwertige Elemente aufzuweisen, die sich dauerns

A few pages later, the author concludes with the statement that it is important to see the “human as such”¹¹⁴ in the indigenous African person, not just the Other. It is enlightening to see how written documents by colonial actors from over a century ago can still tell us something new about their views on contemporary issues and how their footprints might have influenced political, cultural, and economic developments that led to the world we live in today. After all, globalisation has created manifold pasts and histories with “scrambled categories in which people lived”¹¹⁵ and it still does so in the post-colonial era.

schlecht führen, sich betrinken und durch ihr Verhalten dem Ansehen der Truppe und der Disziplin schaden. Fonck, *Deutsch-Ost-Afrika*, 69.

114 German: Menschen an sich. *Ibid.*, 71.

115 Stoler, *Mixed-Bloods' in Colonial Southeast Asia*, 45.

4. Masculine Africa

Each of these people, whom we meet along the road and across the world, is in a way twofold; each one consists of two beings whom it is often difficult to separate, a fact that we do not always realise. One of these beings is a person like the rest of us: he has his joys and sorrows, his good and bad days; he is glad of his successes, does not like to be hungry and does not like it when he is cold; he feels pain as suffering and misery, and good fortune as satisfying and fulfilling. The other being, who overlaps and is interwoven with the first, is a person as bearer of racial features, and as bearer of culture, beliefs and convictions. Neither of these beings appears in a pure, isolated state – they coexist, having a reciprocal effect on each other.¹

Having discussed the colonial friendships that could either nourish or prevent friendly relations between different races or genders, I will now elaborate on the importance of masculinity in colonial Africa. As in the earlier British case, the Belgian and German colonial administrations were full of imperial candidates who were often “restless and/or ambitious lower-class or otherwise disadvantaged males who believed that venturing into non-European societies might increase their opportunities or at least lessen their constraints”². Due to this development, a masculine atmosphere and a related set of behaviours were two dominant features amongst the European communities in the CFS and GEA. For the most part, both sexes seemed to have been interested in maintaining a clear division between gender roles. Unlike the contemporary modernising trends within Europe that enforced a change in favour of awarding women, especially single women, more responsibilities and liberties in the job market, the colonial world was still more traditional. The appearance of the New Woman, of course, had directly influenced European men and led to the creation of the New Man. But not every man or woman wanted to be in line with their times. The juxtaposition of new and traditional gender roles and their influence on the colonisers is not to be underestimated. In a time of constant societal change within Europe, the colonies were transformed into a place where the acquisition of manliness was possible by means of traditional gender roles as well as supplying old-fashioned individuals with the opportunity for social mobility.

Naturally, there were modernisers like Frieda von Bülow or Albert Sillye. The latter was not only the first Belgian colonial to take his wife, Gabrielle, with him to the CFS, but he also had her accompany him on his treks through the Congolese jungles, ride along on log boats, wear trousers, hunt game, meet indigenous peoples, help him with his administrative work, and many other things which would have been considered unladylike and too avant-garde in Europe. Nonetheless, as this chapter will show, despite the mutual influences of diverging gender roles, the CFS and GEA were almost entirely colonised by men. White women were a rare sight during the first decade or so. Consequently, employment, duties, and behavioural codes were

1 Kapuscinski, *The Other*, 14.

2 Colley, “Going Native, Telling Tales: Captivity, Collaborators and Empire”, 184.

strongly influenced by what the white male colonisers themselves considered to be manly; even the women who were there usually adhered to the more traditional definitions of gender roles.

As a result of humanitarian, political, commercial, and missionary idea(l)s, the late-nineteenth-century scramble for Africa created thousands of new employment opportunities for members of all social classes. However, these changes were a mono-gendered affair. Whilst the older motto of *noblesse oblige* was one of Europe's leading maxims of the early nineteenth century, the second half of this century saw the maxim's adaptation to the colonial situation, which changed the notion into the so-called *white man's burden* to civilise other peoples, particularly Africans. It does not surprise that "commerce and Christianity were considered the methods which would achieve the desired development in Africa and the slogan was 'Civilise and Christianise.'"³ A mixture of poor working and living conditions within industrialised Europe, romantic and adventurous ideas about colonial life (often generated by published travelogues and fiction novels),⁴ and the alleged promise of escaping social disparities led many young and middle-aged adults (usually between 20 and 35 years of age) to take up work in colonies such as the CFS or GEA.⁵ These men and women often hoped to break free from the social constraints they endured in their respective home countries. These constraints did not merely refer to financial restrictions, but also to the wish to leave behind either flexible or inflexible social norms – for example, changing gender roles or class-related employment opportunities – and to lead a freer life abroad. Humanitarian and altruistic motivations also played an important motivational role for some colonisers.

So far, research on colonials has concentrated on the analysis of certain groups, like male and female missionaries,⁶ military officers (with a special focus on

3 Axelson, *Culture Confrontation in the Lower Congo*, 205.

4 A selection of the most famous and influential travelogues written at the time in either English, French, or German that the chosen agents might have read were: Coquilhat, *Sur le haut Congo*; Frobenius, *Im Schatten des Kongostaates*; Pogge, *Im Reiche des Muata Jamwo*, 3; Stanley, *Mein Leben – Band I*, 1; *Mein Leben – Band II*, 2; Wissmann, *Unter deutscher Flagge quer durch Afrika*; *Meine zweite Durchquerung Aequatorial-Afrikas vom Congo zum Zambesi während der Jahre 1886–1887*; David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa Including a Sketch of Sixteen Years' Residence in the Interior of Africa* (London: John Murray, 1857).

5 Please check section on maps for a map on Africa in 1898.

6 Some examples of works on missionaries in Africa: Nancy Rose Hunt, "Single Ladies on the Congo: Protestant Missionary Tensions and Voices", *Women's Studies International Forum* 13:4 (1990); Richard Price, *Making Empire: Colonial Encounters and the Creation of Imperial Rule in Nineteenth-Century Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Gertrude Mianda, ed. *Colonialism, Education and Gender Relations in the Belgian Congo: The Évolué Case*, *Women in African Colonial Histories* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002); Price, *Making Empire*.

generals),⁷ troops,⁸ indigenous tribes,⁹ famous travellers and explorers,¹⁰ politicians or nobles,¹¹ and selected farmers or owners of plantations.¹² In this chapter, I will investigate men who worked in some of the aforementioned job sectors, but I will not pay any particular attention to their jobs as such. Instead, the chapter will focus on manliness in an imperial context at a time of changing ideas about gender. In examining how masculinity was defined in the sources, I also elaborate on its links to class, race, and femininity. This chapter illustrates masculinity by examining life in mono-gender communities and highlighting the importance of honour and loyalty amongst male groups. It will conclude with the ever-recurring topic of illnesses and how men dealt with them in colonial Africa. Overall, it will show that manly behaviours and associated gender roles were a vital part of not only a male colonial identity but also of being a representative of the white man.

4.1 Mono-Gender Central Africa

In 1894, a young Belgian FP officer wrote in a letter to his parents: “*Vive le Congo*, there is nothing better! We have the liberty, independence, and life is full of never ending horizons. Here you are free and not merely a slave of society [...]. Here you are everything! Warrior, diplomat, merchant!! Why not?”¹³ This sentiment is typical of the time in question and it seems to show that many men enjoyed being at liberty to do things and grasp at opportunities that were unavailable to them back in Europe or simply forbidden from a legal or social perspective. The Belgian colonial Léon Rom, for instance, decided to take on a life as diplomat, warlord, ivory tradesman, hunter, harem master, and high official instead of remaining in Brussels and continuing his existence as a bookkeeper. Rom was a member of the very first batch of Belgian officers who took on employment in the CFS. Men like him, who had nothing to lose or gain in Europe, could (at least this was the contemporary impression) achieve almost anything in the new colony. Moreover, these men could fulfil

7 See Jürgen Zimmerer, *Deutsche Herrschaft über Afrikaner: Staatlicher Machtanspruch und Wirklichkeit im Kolonialen Namibia*, 3 ed. (Münster: Lit, 2004).

8 See Gilliaert, *La Force Publique*, XXVII. Bühner, *Die Kaiserliche Schutztruppe für Deutsch-Ostafrika*, 70.

9 See Likaka, *Naming Colonialism*.

10 See Tracey Reimann-Dawe, “Time, Identity and Colonialism in German Travel Writing on Africa, 1848–1914”, in *German Colonialism and National Identity*, ed. Michael Perraudin and Jürgen Zimmerer, Routledge Studies in Modern European History (New York: Routledge, 2011), 21–32. They wrote about famous German explorers such as Heinrich Barth, Gustav Nachtigal, and Leo Frobenius. See also footnote 4 about the published travelogues that enjoyed a large readership in Europe and the USA.

11 See Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*.

12 See Parpart and Rostgaard, *The Practical Imperialist*.

13 Ruth Slade, *King Leopold's Congo: Aspects of the Development of Race Relations in the Congo Independent State* (London Greenwood Publishing Group, 1962), 116.

certain ambitions or dreams in the colony. There was a hint of fortune hunting in the air. Apart from enabling social advancement, colonial service seemed exotic and unusual and therefore came with a promise of fighting boredom, going places, and experiencing the extraordinary.

When men like Rom, a former colonial officer of the FP and future employee of the CdK, first signed up for service in the CFS, they were part of a new male generation that, perhaps because of the enduring lack of major military conflicts within central and Western Europe, wanted to discover foreign lands, prove their manliness, and possibly turn their backs on the growing strength of feminist movements in Western European societies.¹⁴ An increasing number of jobs, like those of office clerks, switchboard operators, and secretaries, were steadily feminised. This development of the 1880s and 1890s had increased male status anxiety amongst European middle class and, to a certain extent, the lower class.¹⁵ The rise of the New Woman often led to hostility towards women's rights and the intent to suppress gender insecurity. Men feared that women would not only take away their jobs, but also their previously unchallenged place at the top of the social pecking order.

In due time, a New Man was also created as a result of a societal shift that occurred in late nineteenth-century Europe. This shift in attitudes was linked to those male employees who suddenly saw themselves confronted professionally with new and, above all, numerous female competition.¹⁶ Formerly male jobs became gender neutral or even entirely female, the most famous examples being the office secretary and telephone switchboard workers. The German Empire in particular had undergone dramatic changes. From the 1870s onwards, for the first time in German history, it became more common and socially acceptable for young and unmarried women, in particular from East Prussian and Silesian regions, to leave their parents' homes and take on employment as *Dienstmädchen* (housemaids) in the bigger cities.¹⁷ These young women usually came from agrarian homes or from families

14 Léon Rom signed up for his first term in the CFS on 12.02.1886. See M. Coosemans, "Rom. Léon-Auguste-Théophile", in *Biographie Coloniale Belge*, ed. F. Dellicour (Brüssel 1950), 168–69.

15 For more details on how feminist employment movements influenced male anxiety within imperial Britain, see Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*. For lack of published research on this theme in the CFS and GEA, John Tosh's works are currently the most adequate and closely linked.

16 Compare Jordan Goodman and Katrina Honeyman, "Women's Work, Gender Conflict, and Labour Markets in Europe, 1500–1900", in *Gender & History in Western Europe*, ed. Robert Shoemaker and Mary Vincent, Arnold Readers in History Series (London: Arnold, 1998), 353–76.

17 Social and gender historians analysed the effect of self-sufficient unmarried house staff in the German Empire and their influences on the masculinity debate. For further reading, see Ruth Goebel, "Dienstbotenzeitungen. Die ‚Dienstbotenfrage‘ Und Erzählungen Für Dienstmädchen in Deutschen Dienstbotenzeitungen Zwischen 1898 Und 1932", in *Europäische Hochschulschriften. Reihe Xix. Volkskunde/Ethnologie* (Frankfurt am Main: 1994); Gerhard A. Ritter and Jürgen Kocka, *Deutsche Sozialgeschichte. Dokumente und*

with backgrounds in skilled manual work. Unlike before, when single women who travelled to cities were often associated with the so-called 'oldest profession in the world', times had changed. Unmarried women, just like young single men, now had the freedom to leave their parental homes and work in the cities without risking their good reputation or being subject to public slander. In fact, contemporary employers found female employees to be more compliant and less troublesome than their male counterparts, and as a result an increasing number of women were hired for jobs that required them to be young and unmarried. Compared to single men, who would apparently get drunk on a regular basis, come to work hung over, and who were more prone to be insubordinate and loud, single women simply caused less trouble and cost less money. It would appear that they never had hangovers, were seldom late for work, and received lower salaries for the same job. What else was there to say from an economic and employer's point of view?

By contrast, colonial life at this very early stage in central Africa still offered a mono-gender and homosocial society in which white men were surrounded by other white men: white women were rarely to be found. In addition, since this book focuses on the early decades of Belgian and German colonialism, it is clear that the vast majority of colonials, and therefore the sources, had to endure and survive harsh living conditions that made it more difficult for women to live there. It should also be pointed out that the sources' authors seem to have been physically fit and daring men who did not fear or mind bodily pain and hardship. Such were the first white men with international legal recognition to colonise the sub-Saharan territories. Most of the jobs linked to this objective included reconnoitring unmapped areas, trekking through untamed nature, defending European interests with armed force against indigenous interests whenever necessary, and making do with very basic living conditions like sleeping in tents and eating outside.

Neither colony had sufficient infrastructure to guarantee safe travel, let alone to offer civilised and hygienic living conditions for European women. This rather superficial demand for adequate living standards by the colonisers was, of course, contrary to that of indigenous African women, who were used to living in tropical and 'underdeveloped' circumstances because they did not know anything else. Partly due to the harsh living situation, single white women in the CFS or GEA were only accepted as nuns or nurses and needed to be accompanied by at least one other white (single) woman. Furthermore, these women were initially only allowed to work in the more developed coastal towns. Despite growing feminist movements within Europe, a significant step back in time was taken in colonial Africa, one which allowed for a more traditional and gender-rolled society in which women took care of the home and men went out into the world to keep the family safe. Magdalene von

Skizzen. 1870-1914, vol. 2 (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1982); Karin Walser, *Dienstmädchen. Frauenarbeit und Weiblichkeitsbilder um 1900* (Frankfurt am Main: extrabuch-Verlag, 1986).

Prince poignantly summed up these gender roles in the foreword of her colonial diary: “The man founds the house, the woman keeps it!”¹⁸

Unfortunately, we do not know why certain men quit their jobs to pursue a colonial career. Léon Rom, for instance, resigned from his job as a bookkeeper after only one-and-a-half years to become an *Agent d'administration de 3^e classe*. His reasons for doing so are not expressed in any of his personal documents or in the *Bibliographie Coloniale Belge* (BCB). For most of his career, Rom preferred working for the state to being employed by the private sector. His *curriculum vitae* suggests that he was forced to leave his earlier military career in Belgium and take on work as a bookkeeper instead. He saw the founding of the CFS as a means to returning to the public sector, albeit in a slightly different way, by going to Africa. Rom left Belgium only three days after signing his employment contract. He departed from his homeland so rapidly that, even if he changed his mind about pursuing a colonial career, there could be no retreat from the decision. His choice to work in the CFS thus seems to have been of a spontaneous nature. The Atlantic passage took him from Rotterdam straight to Matadi.¹⁹ Depending on the weather, the passage from either Belgium or the Netherlands along the European and African Atlantic coasts all the way down to Matadi took between four to six weeks. Most ships left from Antwerp and travelled via Lisbon to West-African port cities. These voyages led men like Rom, step by step, from white Belgium via so-called tanned Portugal to black Africa. In their own way, the weeks spent on board these ships enabled the passengers to come into gradual contact with increasingly foreign cultures, religions, and, above all, a darkening of skin colours.

What we know about Rom's private life is that he had a harem in the Congo and that he never married a European woman or fathered any legal heirs. In fact, paintings by him show African women or local villages.²⁰ One of the oddities that the published and unpublished egodocuments on the sub-Saharan continent have in common is the “explorers' failure to acknowledge the presence and role of African women in [the various colonial] operations”²¹. Accordingly, even the slightest mention of an African woman immediately catches the reader's attention.²² Apart from the obvious invisibility of the colonised woman, intimate relationships between

18 German: Der Mann gründet das Haus, die Frau hält es! Prince, *Eine deutsche Frau*, VIII.

19 Coosemans, “Rom. Léon-Auguste-Théophile”, 822.

20 See following pages for examples of his paintings.

21 Fabian, *Out of Our Minds*, 32.

22 This circumstance represents the invisibility of female subalterns all over the imperial world. In many cases, these women were not seen as a cultural or political threat, but instead ended up in intimate relationships with white men. These relationships were frowned upon publicly but nonetheless often ignored as long so there were no wedding or plans for integration into white society. For a good study of the long-term effects of the invisible aboriginal woman and the white man, see Fiona Paisley, “Race Hysteria, Darwin 1938”, in *Bodies in Contact. Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History*, ed. Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 234–52.



Figure 2:
Design for a one penny
stamp for the CFS.²³

white men and subaltern women somewhat emasculated the indigenous man, for the latter could no longer protect his female contemporaries from the foreigner.²⁴ When women were mentioned in any of the sources, it was usually in their function as a tribal chief's wife while fulfilling her duties as a hostess. Another example in this category, but with a different angle to it, is where a woman acts as the head of the village in the absence of her husband:

Gori, the wife of Mtemi, received us kindly; she entertained us and our people with powerful pombe beer pots, and after she had received the two Dotis promised to her husband, she allowed us to continue on our way.²⁵

All things considered, however, the two above examples were absolute exceptions to the usual references to African women. In Rom's case, this might simply be because other colonisers did not draw paintings or, if they did, they no longer exist or I did not have access to them. Even in sketches that were occasionally integral to letters, the illustrations of black women were either very basic or in a caricatured form. This can be seen in the following three sketches taken from Albert Sillye's letters to his fiancée Gabrielle Deman (see fig. 2–4).

23 Sketch taken from a letter by Albert Sillye to Gabrielle Deman, dated 14.08.1900. Sillye, "Archives Albert Sillye". HA.01.024. (DMN: 2012.03.29 11.13.35).

24 Hyun Sook Kim, "History and Memory: The "Comfort Women" Controversy", *ibid.*, 363–82.

25 German: Gori, die Frau des Mtemi, empfing uns freundlich; sie bewirthete uns und unsere Leute mit mächtigen Pombe-Biertöpfen, und nachdem sie die zwei ihrem Eheherren versprochenen Dotis empfangen hatte, erlaubte sie uns, unsern Weg fortzusetzen. August Schynse, *Mit Stanley und Emin Pascha durch Deutsch Ost-Afrika. Reise-Tagebuch Von P. August Schynse*, ed. Karl Hespers, Schriften der Görres-Gesellschaft zur Pflege der Wissenschaft im katholischen Deutschland (Köln: J. P. Bachem, 1890), 17.



Figure 3: African domestic dispute in a comical setting.²⁶



Figure 4:
African women at a market
place.²⁷

26 Sketch taken from a letter by Albert Sillye to Gabrielle Deman, dated 09.10.1900. *ibid.* HA.01.024. (DMN: 2012.03.29 11.04.93).
 27 Sketch taken from a letter by Albert Sillye to Gabrielle Deman, dated 10.06.1900. *ibid.* HA.01.024. (DMN: 2012.03.29 11.10.52).

As mentioned above, Rom left us clues about what was important to him in his paintings. The MRAC possesses four of these, which had been framed previously and hung in his private home in Ixelles. One shows an African village scene, the other a factory with a trade house, and the final two are of African women. Of the two landscape paintings, one is dated 1918; on the back of the painting, it says that it shows a factory and trade station in the southern Kasai region. Considering the time frame, it was either painted when Rom was a trade agent or years after he had worked at or travelled through that spot. The other painting gives us no clues on when and where it was created. It seems to be a drawing of a village rather than of a trade station because the huts are small and round-shaped (and thus unlike the Westerner's rectangular huts) and there is an indigenous African man sitting on the floor in front of the huts, seemingly doing something with his hands. All the portrayed images influenced Rom's intimate world one way or another.

Even though it is unclear what led Rom to paint these motifs, their existence sends a message.²⁸ He was obviously so struck by the beauty of the scenes and the people he portrayed that he made them the centre of his and his peers' attention by eternalising them. He did not, of course, earn a living as an artist; thus, it can be safely assumed that the images he chose were important to him personally. Admittedly, one of the paintings of a young woman in Isambo is merely a copy of the painting of another artist called Hardy. However, the fourth image depicts a young female African in the nude, dressed only with a white turban-like headdress and a long beaded necklace. There is nothing vulgar or pornographic about her nudity. Quite the opposite: her beautiful youth and her laughing face attract the viewer. Who was this woman? Was she a member of Rom's harem? If so, was she his favourite? Or did he meet her long after his military career when he was employed as a trade agent by the CdK? These are questions that currently cannot be answered accurately due to the lack of evidence. Yet, it is evident that she had a certain effect on the painter.

28 For the analysis of graphical sources such as paintings and photographs, I intend to apply Diethart Kerbs' method of "12 Schritte der Quellenkritik an Bildern", and Erwin Panofsky's 'Herangehensweise der Bildbeschreibung'. See Diethart Kerbs' "12 Steps of Critical Assessment of Graphical Sources" to analyse a picture/photograph by describing its material, origin, uniqueness, originality, evolutionary history, age, description, content, localisation, intended message at its creation, and decoding of the chosen angle. Diethart Kerbs, *Revolution Und Fotografie. Berlin 1918/19* (Berlin: Nischen, 1989), 241–44. Panofsky's approach consists of three parts: Firstly, you conduct a pre-iconic description (i. e. the picture is to be described by ignoring any possible prior background knowledge of it). The next step is the iconographic analysis, wherein the researcher searches for possible anecdotes, comparisons, and allegories within the picture/photograph. Thirdly comes the iconographical interpretation, which tries to locate the creator's initial message. Erwin Panofsky, *Studien zur Ikonologie. Humanistische Themen in der Kunst der Renaissance* (Cologne: DuMont, 1980), 41.



Figure 5:
A factory and trade station in the southern Kasai region, 1918.²⁹



Figure 6:
No title, year unknown.³⁰

As mentioned above, one of the women portrayed is merely a motif copied from another artist. But who was the other woman? She might have been his favourite amongst his harem women, who were generally also referred to as *ndumba* in Swahili, which literally means unattached woman. However, in a colonial context, the term *ndumba* became a synonym for European men's temporary female indigenous companions. Usually, they were a white man's partner only for the duration of his colonial term, if indeed for that long. Particularly during the 1880s and 1890s, white colonial men tended to look for black female companionship due to the lack of white women. The lack of long-term commitment to an *ndumba* was also appealing to some white men. *Ndumbas* followed traditional gender roles: they cooked for their man, washed his clothes, grew food, they kept the house (or tent) clean, and followed their man on his treks. The colonial authorities did not at first realise that interracial relationships were forming. This ignorance was followed by looking the other way; ultimately, however, when claims by colonial offices and societies in Europe were made about their men increasingly adopting an African lifestyle and co-habiting with indigenous women, the Belgian and German authorities were forced to act.

29 Léon Rom, *Factorerie Au Kasai*, 1918. Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale.

30 *No Title*, year unknown. Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale.



Figure 7:
Young woman from Isambo in the
Kasai region – original is by the
artist Hardy, year unknown.³¹



Figure 8:
Without title, 1917.³²

31 *Young Woman from Isambo in the Kasai Region – Original Is by the Artist Hardy, year unknown.* Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale.
32 *No Title, 1917.* Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale.

In the same vein, when white colonisers wrote about black women, they did so without naming them. In fact, in the absolute majority of cases, any indigenous actors mentioned in the sources were almost never given a name. There are even distinctions between when the terms 'negro', 'black', or a name are used. I discovered this pattern in the Belgian, German, and Swedish sources. They all applied the same categorisation to those three terms. Whenever the term '*negro*' was used, it was with a negative connotation (i. e. either when an indigenous African committed a mistake or when (s)he acted in a manner that was considered utterly uncivilised and barbaric by Europeans). The term 'black' was applied when neutrality or a slightly more positive attitude towards the person in question was expressed. Finally, those indigenous people who were referred to by name were those who won the white person's respect by either being a formidable opponent or leader (Afro-Arabs like Bushiri in GEA or Tippu Tip in the CFS), someone close to the coloniser like a boy servant (D. Bossaerts and his boy Zaki), or an adopted daughter (e. g. M. von Prince).³³

Colonies in general, and settler colonies in particular, were initially imagined as a bellicose space for men. Men were to conquer virgin territory; the male virtues of adventurousness and bravery were supported and promoted, and the financial capacity of men was needed for imperial success, since white (single) women were still not allowed to own private fortunes. In contrast to modern European societies, a colonial man could still be 'a man' in the colonies and thus promised the recovery of male power and superiority. This latent belief proved to be disadvantageous from a national perspective. Not only did settler colonies not require an archaic or atavistic society, but public opinion had also come to the conclusion that colonisers were not as strong and virile after all, since they were susceptible to the ways of the Other.³⁴ What these men needed, it was suggested, were white wives who would safeguard European cultures and the white race abroad. In the German case, for example, it was the women who were to protect the "*Neu-Deutschland*" (new Germany).³⁵ Contemporary colonial magazines marketed the idea that women were irreplaceable

33 See Bossaerts, D., "Notes sur la décès de son boy Zaki". Edited by Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, 1904–1906; Prince, *Eine deutsche Frau*.

34 Men were seen as the advance guard; when the terrain was secured, the women could follow. This was important for the sake of settling, but also to put an end to uncontrolled aggressive manly behaviourisms, which occurred if not controlled by both the state and familial structures. Women were also seen to have a calming effect on the men by lessening their cultural brutalisation. See Aldrich, "Colonial Man"; Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*. In particular with reference to GSWA, it can be argued that if masculine societies there had been less aggressive and racist, it might not have come to genocidal circumstances like in the war against the Herero tribe in GSWA. For more information on the war and its possible link to the Third Reich, see Jürgen Zimmerer, *Völkermord in Deutsch-Süd-Westafrika. Der Kolonialkrieg (1904–1908) in Namibia und seine Folgen*, 2 ed. (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2003); *Deutsche Herrschaft über Afrikaner*. Nonetheless, the argument can also go in another direction by accepting that European women were often just as racist and thereby supported the men's views.

35 Kundrus, "Weiblicher Kulturimperialismus", 220.

assets for all sorts of racial, psychosocial, economic, medical, cultural, and national reasons: to put it simply, “without a German woman there is no German culture”³⁶. This idea of the German woman as the conveyor of her culture has its roots in the idealised role of the bourgeois mother, who was considered to be “the protector of hearth and home, the representative of German piety and steadfastness”³⁷.

Thus, from a metropolitan point of view on dealings in the colonial periphery, German women were seen as the cure to the problem of German males ‘going native.’ Schools were founded to prepare German women for a life in the colonies. It was hoped that German women would prevent German males cohabiting with indigenous African women. Even light-skinned women of Boer descent were to be avoided. Nonetheless, the men on the spot might have had very different opinions on this point or might not have cared about it at all.

This debate was not conducted as fiercely in Belgium as it was in Germany, but it remained an unwritten cultural law that white men were not supposed to have intimate and/or marital relationships with non-white women. However, for most of its first two-and-a-half decades of existence, the CFS was a private enterprise rather than a national one; during that time, no official laws were passed concerning the cohabitation of different races. This particular legal situation was a grey zone of unwritten laws; as long as no claims were raised by peers and there were no obvious mixed-race offspring in need of Belgian or German citizenship or schooling in Europe, matters were ignored. When comparing the CFS and GEA from this particular point of view, it can be assumed that, due to the different methods of colonising, the total number of white men having intimate relationships with indigenous women was larger in the CFS. This observation is based on the sources as well as the fact that, in the early years, colonisers in GEA were continuously on the move while trekking through the colony. In contrast, the CFS’ stations were founded early and at least one European was always sent to move in, take over operations, and protect and maintain the station.

The new Belgian and German sub-Saharan territories were governed by white men; while peace reigned, their wishes or orders were carried out by Afro-Arabs and indigenous Africans. White male society in this setting was homosocial in both private and official terms. Especially during most of the first two decades of colonisation, once European men left coastal cities like Matadi (CFS) or Dar es Salaam

36 German: Ohne deutsche Frau keine deutsche Kultur. Ludwig Külz, “Zur Frauenfrage in den deutschen Kolonien”, *Koloniale Monatsblätter* 1913, 62 f. For further debates and data on this issue see Dietrich, *Weißer Weiblichkeiten*; Drummond, “Durch Liebe stark, deutsch bis ins Mark: Weiblicher Kulturimperialismus und der deutsche Frauenverein”; Kundrus, “Weiblicher Kulturimperialismus”. Dietrich, *Weißer Weiblichkeiten*; Drummond, “Durch Liebe stark, deutsch bis ins Mark: Weiblicher Kulturimperialismus und der deutsche Frauenverein”; Kundrus, “Weiblicher Kulturimperialismus”.

37 Askey, *Good Girls, Good Germans*, 21. Askey also states that the interpretation of the maternal role as the bearer of culture dates back to Rousseau and Pestalozzi’s writings in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries respectively.

(GEA), there were no more white but only local women to be encountered. Yet, from a European military point of view, the custom held by most indigenous warrior tribes of taking their wives with them on military treks through the colonial territories was a novelty.³⁸ It was the custom that married African soldiers were accompanied by their spouses and often even by their offspring. This familial atmosphere in military camps was not limited to peacetime. The wives of Askari, Zulu, and Swahili soldiers, to name just three ethnicities, would accompany their men everywhere except for patrol or on the battlefield itself. Their female duties comprised of seeing to their husband's needs, repairing and washing clothes, carrying goods and luggage during treks, gathering food and water when camping, and cooking for their families.

Due to the immense increase of numbers participating in military caravans and troop movements, the transportation of troops, whether by land or by sea, could take twice to three times longer when women and children were brought along. When this occurred, armies not only contained more people, but also carried more luggage. In particular, the German KS would often complain about this African peculiarity. Hugold von Behr was a German officer in the Wissmann Troups during the Arabic uprising in charge of the recruitment of Zulu and Sudanese soldiers in Egypt for service in GEA. In his memoirs, he recounts his experiences travelling with these soldiers, and he compared a Sudanese soldier's luggage to that of a European lady in terms of size and the amount of bags and trunks. The only difference was that the Sudanese carried useless things with them:

And what is ultimately in these packages and suitcases? Worthless rags and rubbish, which for Europeans do not have the slightest value. I wish to explain [...] that the Sudanese [...] values empty bottles and cans as worthy items that appear worthy of taking when moving houses. According to our German terms of wit and agility of a squad, however, this is a great inconvenience [...]. [This fact is because] many soldiers are married, so they are permitted to have household belongings.³⁹

The practical advantage of soldiers' wives accompanying the military caravans was that they could collect food (fruits and nuts) and do their husbands' laundry. The most welcome influence from a coloniser's point of view, though, was that the indi-

38 The wives of African soldiers in GEA were often former slaves whom the soldiers had ransomed from slave traders. Owning slaves though was absolutely forbidden amongst the KS and generally in GEA. See Fonck, *Deutsch-Ost-Afrika*, 11–13.

39 German: Und was ist schließlich in diesen Paketen und Koffern? Werthlose Lumpen und Plunder, welche in den Augen der Europäer nicht nicht den gerichsten Werth haben. Ich will zur Erläuterung [...] hinzufügen, daß [...] leere Flaschen und Conservenbüchsen für die Sudanesen noch zu den begehrenswerthen Gegenständen gehören, welche beim Wohnungswechsel des Mitnehmers werth erscheinen. Nach unseren deutschen Begriffen von Schlagfertigkeit und Beweglichkeit einer Truppe ist dies allerdings ein großer Übelstand [...]. [Dieser Umstand hängt damit zusammen,] daß ein großer Theil der Soldaten verheirathet ist, füglich also auch Hab und Gut besitzen kann. Behr, *Kriegsbilder aus dem Araberaufstand in Deutsch-Ostafrika*, 152–53.

genous women's presence had a positive effect on their husbands' emotional states by taking care of them and calming them down after long marches or tiresome battles. Heinrich Fonck, a captain in the KS, and von Behr wrote about similar observations in their respective 'African' memoirs.⁴⁰ Von Behr commented on Zulu culture, saying that the men were bloodthirsty and enjoyed destroying things in battle. However:

in their domestic life [the Zulus] are lazy and work-shy, so here too the care of the household and the nutrition of the family rest solely on the shoulders of the wife or several women. The married man also participates less in robbery and pillaging [of conquered villages], but leaves it instead to the young unmarried men, whose highest aspiration is to acquire enough money to be able to afford a woman [by paying her dowry].⁴¹

The women were thus in charge of their men's wellbeing and morality. The mere presence of wives in military camps avoided unnecessary women troubles and the men were better behaved due to their presence, a matter which cannot be underestimated when fighting, killing, pillaging, and besieging others.⁴² One exception was the Massai, a tribe which sometimes fought as mercenaries for the Germans; they did not bring their wives with them on military campaigns. They were known to be fierce warriors who, despite their disdain for guns, understood how to defeat troops with less modern weapons.⁴³ Yet, a feature that could be applied to all tribal cultures was that unmarried central-African men were not considered real men until they had managed to amass a large dowry to marry a woman. As in certain European

40 Heinrich Fonck was an infantry lieutenant in Germany and changed to the KS in 1894. By 1904, he was made captain and, in 1906, member of the German Foreign Parliament, the body in charge of GEA. He took part in the MMR and numerous other smaller battles and expeditions. Fonck wrote books about his ten years in GEA, about the KS, and the colony's economy and game. See Fonck, *Deutsch-Ost-Afrika; Unter Afrikanischem Großwild* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1924); *Deutsch-Ost-Afrika; N.N.*, "Fonck, Heinrich", in *Deutsches Koloniallexikon*, ed. Heinrich Schnee (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1920).

41 German: In ihrem häuslichen Leben sind [die Zulus] träge und arbeitscheu, sodaß auch hier die Sorge für den Haushalt und die Ernährung der Familie allein auf den Schultern der Frau oder mehreren Weibern ruht. Der verheiratete Mann beteiligt sich auch nur selten an den Raub- und Kriegszügen, sondern überläßt dies den jungen unverheiratheten Männern, deren höchstes Streben darin besteht, sich so viel zu erwerben, um eine Frau kaufen zu können; [...]. Behr, *Kriegsbilder Aus Dem Araberaufstand in Deutsch-Ostafrika*, 94.

42 The cultural notion of the woman being more moral and therefore possessing a calming effect on the more dangerous man was also a welcomed and common cultural construct in Europe at the time. For an analysis on British masculinity in this context, see Clinton Machann, "Men of Blood: Violence, Manliness and Criminal Justice in Victorian England", *Journal of Men's Studies* 15, no. 2 (2007).

43 According to the Catholic missionary P. Schynse, the Massai were feared and respected soldiers amongst indigenous Africans. Almost any tribe could buy their fighting skills; as payment, they would receive cattle. See Schynse, *Reise-Tagebuch Von P. August Schynse*, 21–22.

spheres, the Askaris and several other African warrior tribes thought that a man was not a true man until he was capable of providing for his own family: creating a dowry was the first step to achieving that goal.

Colonising sub-Saharan Africa was a male endeavour, for it was white men who first entered the new territories: with them came a conviction that was linked to their European heritage. As can still be experienced today amongst second and third generations of German migrants in Latin America, European colonisers in Africa at the end of the nineteenth century were totally convinced of their superiority to the indigenous peoples whose territories they occupied. This feeling or conviction of superiority was derived from technological advancement, being Christian, and, above all, white. White skin had an identity-shaping influence, one which did not loosen its grip on European male colonisers despite the immense geographical distance between them and Europe. In fact, it usually strengthened the notion because, unlike in nineteenth-century Europe, which was almost entirely racially homogenous, white superiority was a lived reality in Africa. Equally, unlike in Europe, where these men were of many different nationalities, in Africa they were all part of the same white group: "We [the Europeans] are all in the same sack, English, French and Germans [etc.]"⁴⁴ Independent of their social classes, Belgian, German, and Swedish men defined themselves as being automatically superior to the colonised Other and strengthened their idea of being virile by penetrating virgin lands that needed conquering in order to be released from barbarism and Muslim influence. Von Behr described this in his memoirs as follows:

This expansion of Arab influence, which slowly but surely descended from the north and the east, would have undoubtedly flooded the whole continent before not too long, if the Caucasian race would not have appeared in recent decades [and] fought [against it] in the great struggle of interests, which were happening there at the frontiers of civilisation. [And thus we] have saved the unspoilt Negro tribes from the devastating plague of Arabic [i. e. Muslim] culture.⁴⁵

European colonials strove to achieve all this within an initially mono-gendered community in which the only women were the wives of their indigenous soldiers or the women of local villages and towns. In terms of social and racial pecking orders, a white woman stood far above the black man and even more so above the black woman. As a result, African women were not fully recognised as a female presence by white colonials; despite their female sex, the European man did not feel the same

44 Ibid., XXV.

45 German: Diese Ausdehnung des arabischen Einflusses, welche von Norden und Osten langsam, aber stetig vor sich ging, hätte unzweifelhaft den ganzen Continent in nicht allzulanger Zeit überschwemmt, wenn nicht die kaukasische Rasse in den letzten Jahrzehnten mit eingetreten wäre in den großen Interessenkampf, welcher sich hier an den Grenzen der Civilisation abspielte und die noch unberührten Negerstämme vor der verheerenden Seuche des Araberthums bewahrt hätte. Behr, *Kriegsbilder aus dem Araberaufstand in Deutsch-Ostafrika*, 3.

social obligation towards them as towards white Christian women. Being white and living an adventurous lifestyle with all the hardships it demanded was considered manly. Moving within a purely male community allowed these men to prove their personal worth amongst their male peers by applying male standards: being honourable, loyal, and enduring illnesses and pain, as will be shown in the following section.

4.2 How Colonising Was a Matter of Honour, Loyalty, and Civilising

As shown above, the possibility of white colonisers 'going native' was to be avoided; however, if the indigenous colonised learned German or French and 'went civilised', it was more than welcomed. One example of this latter point was brought to public attention by the Catholic priest and missionary P. August Schynse, who travelled through both the CFS and GEA as a member of the order of the White Fathers. After his theology studies and ordination in Germany in 1880, he joined the White Fathers and travelled to the Congo in 1885. Three years later, his duties directed him to Tabora, but in 1889 he fled to Bukumbi, where he joined the caravan of H. M. Stanley and Emin Pasha for safe passage to the East-African coast. The following excerpt from his travelogue tells us of his adventures and the impressions he formed on the road from Kitingu to the Bubu River. During the trip, a caravan crossed their path that came from the coast and was heading towards Unui:

The people marched in an orderly fashion. But what was that? A tall boy put his hand to his head and said, "Good morning", more [of the others] did the same, then came a group of women, they all greeted and said in a military fashion, "good morning". "You, where did you learn that?" I asked one. "In Bagamoyo." "Are you German?" "We are all *mtaki* (German)" and to emphasise this fact he let out a loud "Yes." A little later, another drummer, these are people of Urambo, all greeted us with "good morning" in a military fashion, men and children, but especially the women. We asked a leader for an explanation. "We are German", he said, "we have fought with the Germans in Bagamoyo and rebuilt it more beautiful than it was [before the Arabic uprising]. Now everything is German, all that remains to be done is to merely cut off their heads; the Arabs of Bagamoyo are broken (*Marabu wa Bagamoyo kaput*).⁴⁶

46 German: Die Leute marschierten gut geschlossen. Aber was ist denn das? Ein langer Bengel legt die Hand an die Schläfe und sagt „Guten Morjen“, dann Andere ebenfalls, dann kommt eine Schaar von Weibern, die alle, militairisch grüßend, „guten Morgen“ sagen. „Kerl, wo hast du das gelernt?“ frug ich einen. „In Bagamoyo.“ „Bist du denn Deutscher?“ „Alles *mtaki* (Deutsche)“ und zur Bekräftigung ließ er ein kräftiges „Ja“ erschallen. Etwas nachher ein anderer Tambour, es sind Leute von Urambo, die alle, militairisch grüßend, „guten Morjen“ sagen, Männer und Kinder, aber ganz besonders die Weiber. Wir halten einen Führer an und fragen um Aufschluß. „Wir sind Deutsche“, sagte er, „wir haben mit den Deutschen in Bagamoyo gefochten und Bagamoyo schöner wieder aufgebaut, als es war. Jetzt ist alles deutsch, den Arabern hat man bloß noch

We can see from this extract that, as well as indigenous soldiers' wives having calming effects on their fighting husbands and the camp atmosphere, it was considered a nice bonus if they learned some German through the women's presence in the camps. Both colonies had committed themselves to 'civilising' their African colonies, improving the local infrastructure and economy, abolishing the slave trade, and generally modernising this area of the globe. Whilst official employees of both colonies learned local African languages (mainly versions of the Bantu languages in the CFS and Swahili in GEA), the Belgians taught their subalterns to speak French. Apart from the official duty of 'civilising the uncivilised,' the men-on-the-spot discovered how important unofficial demands were amongst a male-dominated colonial community. European men of the late nineteenth century were still influenced by feudalistic ideas of manliness, even when they were not nobles. The state and patriarchal leaders were the constructors and bearers of a manly code that was to be followed.⁴⁷ And yet, this code was not a unitary "ideal of masculinity"⁴⁸; rather, it set the terms of how to behave and act correctly within a network of obligations. Such a network usually consisted of the emperor, parents, brothers, comrades, etc. Consequently, conducting oneself in an honourable way so far from home and being loyal to fellow Europeans, i. e. white people, was of extreme importance in gaining and maintaining manly respect.

Behaving honourably was not only important amongst the white community, but it was also seen as a way in which the colonisers could protect their reputation and portray the image of the superior human amongst the colonised. This notion was part of the bigger idea, as Bart Luttikhuis argues, that "Europeanness was [...] a privilege that needed protecting"⁴⁹. To their regret, colonisers soon realised that their initial god-like reputation amongst the greater part of the colonised was not immune to criticism. In the long-term, being white in itself did not suffice to maintain the respect of the indigenous Other. As long as the white coloniser was seen as superior due to his advanced technology and impressive weaponry, the African subalterns kept their peace and did not revolt against the new foreign masters; but it was impossible to keep this illusion up forever. White adventurers and fortune hunters without moral values, European soldiers with obvious character flaws, colonisers with a weakness for alcohol or other drugs: all of these groups harmed

die Köpfe abzuschneiden; die Araber von Bagamoyo sind kaput (Marabu wa Bagamoyo kaput).“ Schynse, *Reise-Tagebuch Von P. August Schynse*, 51.

- 47 The link between patriarchy, domestic leadership at home, and nation-building were essential for the definition of masculinity in nineteenth-century Europe and at times still are today. See Ulrike Strasser and Heidi Tinsman, "It's a Man's World? World History Meets the History of Masculinity, in Latin American Studies, for Instance", *Projet Muse* 21, no. 1 (2010).
- 48 Raewyn Connell, "The Big Picture: Masculinities in Recent World History", *Theory & Society – Special Issue: Masculinities* 22, no. 5 (1993): 604.
- 49 Bart Luttikhuis, "Beyond Race: Constructions of 'Europeanness' in Late-Colonial Legal Practice in the Dutch East Indies", *European Review of History* 20, no. 4 (2013): 542.

the coloniser's good reputation. The surface was scratched and counter movements amongst indigenous rebels slowly developed. Therefore, to prevent a loss of reputation amongst the ruled and avoid problems in matters of governance, it was advisable for colonisers to perpetuate the image of the honourable white man and act in accordance with it.⁵⁰ Whilst some white male colonisers undoubtedly believed in doing the honourable thing, others probably merely kept up appearances for pragmatic reasons. Agreeing with Hannah Arendt's analysis of a New Man in the shape of a fortune hunter, Simon Swift concluded that these men were products of the loss of a stable and traditional society in Europe. "They were men who had lost a defined and meaningful position in their own society, and for whom imperialism opened up new possibilities of adventure and fortune."⁵¹

Another general term used by contemporaries to describe themselves instead of white or European was Christian.⁵² By referring to their group in religious terms, colonisers presupposed that Christians were also automatically superior and more civilised than non-Christians and were therefore entitled to educate less developed societies. Reading the diary of Edvard Vilhelm Sjöblom, a Swedish Baptist missionary in the CFS, it becomes clear that he saw himself as a father figure to his colonial charges⁵³ – especially when reading his entries about the mission boys or when he described giving classes on Christianity and Jesus during the first Christmas spent on his own – i. e. as the only white man – in the CFS. He started by summarising the day's events and mentioning an assistant who repeatedly scolded the indigenous boys (servants) for being too loud:

24th [Dec.] Mr Bett went to Lolanga by canoe. [He] had a talk with the boys at the station. Their play had developed into a fight and it was with the greatest difficulty [that] I could tell them apart. [...] They are warlike by nature and their games always take the form of combat. [I need] to look for another occupation for them. [...] When I sat down [for] dinner, I remembered that it was Christmas Eve. Both dishes and table settings were the same as during the day. My thoughts went home to previous Christmases in Sweden. I collected the boys around me and tried to explain to them how Swedish children celebrate this festival. During the night, there was incredible lightning, which came so close that we could count them and there were also thunder blasts so strong that they shook the cabins. It was as if I heard God's voice speaking and the strong lightning flash in the

50 For personal experiences on this matter see Fonck, *Deutsch-Ost-Afrika*, 46–49.

51 Simon Swift, *Hannah Arendt* (London, New York: Routledge, 2008), 106.

52 See Schynse, *Reise-Tagebuch von P. August Schynse*, XXVI.

53 See Sjöblom, *I Palmernas Skugga*. Since the CFS was unofficially a *domaine privée* of Leopold II, the early Christian missions in the colony were not Belgian. Instead, they were American, Scandinavian, or British. Very few of them actually spoke French or Flemish and they learnt the local tribal languages to evangelise the Congolese men and women more effectively. See Stenström, *The Brussels Archives*, 27. See also Appendix VII for photographs of Ebonne and E. V. Sjöblom.

otherwise dark night reminded me of the star which the shepherds of Bethlehem must have seen when the Prince of Peace was born.⁵⁴

In a worried tone, Sjöblom continued lamenting about the indigenous people's lack of understanding on what it meant not to be a baptised Christian and not to know how important Jesus' birth was for humanity. He was unhappy about their ignorance because, instead of humbly greeting the day, they prepared for a battle with loud music, wild dances, and battle cries. Sjöblom wrote:

25 Sunday – Christmas Day. Early in the morning, after the thunder and the profuse rain flow ceased, I heard music accompanied by wild battle dances. Poor people, if it was not for me, they would know nothing of Christmas. [...] Except for a few people at the station [nobody] knows anything about the Saviour's arrival, and the few who know about it need to be reminded in order that lunch will resemble a feast. At one p.m. during my sermon, I naturally took to the subject of the birth of Jesus. God seemed to speak to their hearts. I took some time to read God's word. God was close by. To mark the occasion, I ordered the best chicken to be served. I took the meal on my own, something that I had never done before at any Christmas meal, and I hope that I will not have to experience this again in the future. I am expecting a [religious] brother from the north [Sweden] to come and help me at work, with whom I then hope to spend future Christmases.⁵⁵

54 Swedish: 24. [Dec.] Mr. Bett fortsatte med kanot till Lolanga. hade ett palaver med gossarne vid stationen. Deras lek hade tagit form af ett slagsmål och det var med största möda jag kunde skilja dem åt. [...] Krigiska, som de af naturen äro, vilja alltid deras lekar taga formen af strid. Vill söka gifva dem en annan användning. [...] Då jag satt mig ned till kvällsmåltid, erinrade jag mig att det var julafton. Både rätter och dukning voro sig lika som öfriga dagar. Minnet fördes hemåt till många julaftnar, tillbringade i hem och fosterland. Samlade gossarna omkring mig och sökte förklara för dem hurusom barnen fira denna högtid i Sverige. Under natten hade vi ett häftigt rägn. Blixtarne kommo så tätt som vi kunde räkna dem och åskans knallar, lika många, voro ibland så starka, att huset formligen skakades. Det var som om jag hörde Guds röst tala och de starka blixtarne i den eljest mörka natten påminde mig om det tsken, som herdarne sågo i Betlehemsnejden, då fridsfursten föddes. Hade litet sömn den natten. Sjöblom, *I Palmernas Skugga*, 57.

55 Swedish: 25 söndag och mer – juldagen. Tidigt på morgonen, då åskans dunder tystnat och rägnet ymniga flöden upphört, hörde jag förkunna om vilda danser eller ock bebåda strid. Arma folk, de ej haft tidsräkningen klar för mig, skulle knappast något påmint mig om juletid. [...] Utom några få vid stationen vet folket intet om frälsarens ankomst, och de få, som veta därom, behöfva påminnas, i stället för att deras beredelser skulle påminna oss om högtiden. På f.m. tog jag naturligtvis till ämne, då jag predikade, Jesu födelse. Gud syntes tala till deras hjärtan. E.m. tillbragte jag med att läsa Guds ord. Gud var nära. Dagen till ära fick den bästa kyckling jag hade komma på mitt bord. Ensam satt jag för att spisa, något som jag ej förr gjost vid någon julhögtid, och hoppas framdeles icke behöfva göra det, ty jag väntar att någon broder från norden vill komma mig till hjälp i arbetet, med hvilken jag hoppas få tillbringa min julhögtid. *Ibid.*, 58.

A recurrent theme throughout Sjöblom's diary was about him taking on the roles of a benevolent father, a fair teacher, and a superior employer. The father figure, however, is ambiguous, because it combines both equality and difference seemingly based on othering the colonised African. As Hall describes it, "Families were places of love, affection and belonging, but they were also sites of authority, regulation and discipline [...]"⁵⁶. Accordingly, colonial rendezvous, no matter if between state officials and agitators, farmers and (forced) labourers, or missionaries and their parish members or pupils, were always subjected to power relations operating along the lines of race, class, ethnicity, gender, and even sexuality. As in every other society, the coloniser on-site assigned places to every participant. Every member of a colonial community received their part just like in a play: only the director or father figure could promote you to a different role. Figures like Sjöblom could therefore be both the nurturing father figure and the demanding superior who one did not want to upset.

Albert Gustafson, a further Swedish colonial who lived and worked in the CFS for several years, has left us with a description of his first Christmas celebrations in Africa. In contrast to Sjöblom, who came to the colony in the hope of bringing Christian civilisation to the Congo from 1892 onwards, Albert Gustafson had worked on and off in the CFS as a steam boat mechanic between 1899 and 1906. As opposed to Sjöblom's solitary first Christmas eve in the colony, Gustafson was not alone and described his Congolese experience as follows:

On Christmas evenings [us Scandinavians] used to spend the time together and we turned a coffee shrub into a Christmas tree! Its ornaments consisted mostly of empty but well-cleaned glass bottles! Negroes were also permitted to put up their paper lanterns with the slogans "Happy Christmas!" Their lanterns looked nice up on the porch. [Some negroes] wanted a shot [of alcohol], it was [usually] forbidden, but it was Christmas!⁵⁷

Gustafson's social background is not entirely clear, but he was presumably born into the lower-middle class. This interpretation is based on his literacy and the fact that he had been a fully trained steamboat mechanic for some time before applying for employment at the colonial office in Brussels. Currently, however, no further details are available on either his exact date of birth or when and where he died. What is known is that he worked in the CFS for almost six years and that he was still alive in 1959, when he responded to a letter from Dr Marcel Luwel, director of the MRAC. Luwel contacted dozens of former Swedish colonials of the CFS throughout the 1950s in the hope of finding them alive and retrieving their testimonies about their

56 Hall, "William Knibb and the Constitution of the New Black Subject", 321.

57 Swedish: Om julafnarna brukade vi skandinaver vara tillsammans och gjorde då iordning en avhuggen kaffebuske som fick tjänstgöra som julträd! Prydnaden på detta bastad det mesta av tombuteljer som vara väl tända! Negrerna komma då också upp till oss med sina papperslyktor med devisen "Happy Christmas!" De som bura lyktorna komma gärna upp på verandan och ville ha en snaps, det var visserligen förbjudet, men, det var ju Jul. Albert Gustafson, "Congo – Léopoldville 1899–1906", in *Scandinaves au Congo* (Tervuren: Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, 1959).

time in Leopold II's colonial service. The testimonies by Gustafson and Sjöblom are different, yet similar. Both are egodocuments in their own right, but one is a letter in remembrance of the Congo and the other is a diary. Both describe experiences gathered in central Africa but one was written about 50 years later whilst the other was jotted down contemporaneously to the events described and (most likely) edited before its publication in 1907.⁵⁸

Gustafson's letter is unpublished, ten pages long, written in Swedish, and dated 28 February 1959. It was sent from Jönköping in Sweden, which is why I presume that this was his town of residence and maybe also his birth- and deathplace. Gustafson's handwriting is very neat.⁵⁹ Although his writing style seems somewhat simple, it is not uneducated, which would fit the previously stated assumption about his social-class affiliation. Gustafson described memories which were important to him, but he does not at any point criticise anything related to the Belgian colony. Knowing the Belgian colonial system to have been harsh and often more than unjust, one wonders whether Gustafson either never witnessed any major maltreatments of the colonised or whether he simply did not care much about them in general. Of course, it might also be that he did not want to remember the less polished sides of colonialism at a time when most central-African countries were preparing for national independence and decolonisation was a much discussed topic in the international media. Usually, when historical events like decolonisation and independence processes happen as a result of liberation movements, the power holders in the old systems prefer to direct public attention to the more positive and nostalgic narratives of colonialism. Unfortunately, the glossing over of negative incidents sometimes also occurs in private memoirs that were produced long after the events in question happened. Therefore, Gustafson might have adjusted his memories to comply with the political atmosphere of the late 1950s.

Despite the strong lack of societal peer control in the two colonies and certain liberties that accompanied this deficiency of control, honour, and loyalty within the colonial community had turned into a core behavioural codex whilst abroad. Initially, none of the colonials had relatives or friends from home in Africa and new bonds had to be made to survive physically and prevent social isolation, which could lead to emotional stress and a variety of psychological issues. In order not to alienate possible new connections within the white community, a certain amount of reliability and comradeship needed to be presented and proven. So, apart from being white, which was equivalent or even inherent to being superior and holding a position of leadership, it was also important for the colonisers to prove their communal worth

58 Sjöblom, *I Palmernas Skugga*.

59 Most of it is easy to read; however, I discovered that Swedish spelling underwent changes between Gustafson's school education and the present day, which is why some parts of the letter did not make any sense to me at first. One example is that he spelled the word *också* (which means *also*) as *åkså*. Furthermore, he abbreviated the word *och* (which means *and*) with the letter *ö* – which can mean *island*. Nevertheless, I hope I have managed to translate his letter properly.

to their peers by adhering to manly attributes like honour, duty, and loyalty. These were essential to laying new social foundations within the new white colonial communities in the CFS and GEA.

In relation to the above-mentioned importance of honourable, dutiful, and loyal behaviour, one particular difference can be found between Belgian colonisers in the CFS and German colonials in GEA. Europeans in the CFS did not tend to pay much attention to the Belgian king. They fulfilled their duties as their employers expected them to but not in honour or in the name of the king. Albert Sillye, for example, drew funny sketches of his king instead of praising him. In some of his letters, he also ridiculed King Leopold's big nose and beard.⁶⁰ Other Belgian colonisers like De Walsche did not mention Belgium's honour or its king in any of his letters to relatives, friends, or former and current work colleagues in Europe. When De Walsche mentioned his homeland, it was either because he had met a former colleague or a student of his from Belgium in the colony. On occasion, the person he met in the CFS was also from his hometown Antwerp. The same phenomenon held true for Léon Rom, Edgard Cerckel, Liévin Van de Velde, and many more Belgium colonials.

By contrast, German colonials, regardless of whether they were military, navy, or civil officers, repeatedly mentioned their national leaders and their homeland. The two most important and most often mentioned Germans were Emperor Wilhelm II and Otto von Bismarck. Even more paramount than Wilhelm and Bismarck was the *Kaiserreich*, which was referred to on several occasions in the colonisers' private writings. They did so in various styles and at different stages of their imperial lives, but always with the intention of colonising and civilising in the name and to the credit of their praiseworthy monarch, proud nation, young empire, and industrial power. The impression is that whatever German men did in East Africa, they did it for their emperor and their nation. Even when soldiers, both Europeans and Africans, of the KS died in battle, they did so for the empire. The way in which the fallen soldiers were honoured is exemplified by Tom von Prince's quote: "We shed no tears for the late heroes: they died for the Emperor and Empire and are now with the "great host" of the mighty Lord."⁶¹ Another such moment of praising the *Kaiser* was after battles between the German KS and Afro-Arab incumbents:

after [...] the successful return of the troops to the city of Bagamoyo, which had been threatened and endangered, the inhabitants of the town, plus additional thousands of indigenous refugees who had fled from nearby villages in the hope of leaving behind their [former Afro-Arab chieftains], gathered together and welcomed the victorious soldiers enthusiastically; when the fighters gave a loud hurrah for the German Emperor, it was echoed loudly by the crowd.⁶²

60 See page 124 for a photograph of the discussed sketch.

61 German: Keine Träne weinen wir den Helden nach: sie starben für Kaiser und Reich und stehen jetzt bei der „großen Armee“ des Herrn der Heerscharen. Prince, *Gegen Araber und Wahehe*, Vorrede.

62 German: Als [...] die Sieger in das hart bedroht gewesene Bagamoyo einmarschirten, hatten sich die Bewohner der Stadt, vermehrt durch viel tausende Flpüchtige, die Schutz

In the first example, von Prince wrote that no distinction (at least in death) was made between races so long as the dead soldiers had fallen for Germany in a battle against Afro-Arab troops. The second account by Prager portrays a scene of unity between indigenous civilians and soldiers of both races behind the German emperor. Of course, both examples need contextualisation. Von Prince's general attitude towards the indigenous tribes in GEA was open-hearted and interested. He spoke Swahili, survived innumerable battles against Afro-Arabs together with Askari and Zulu soldiers, and was given the nickname *Sakkarani* as a sign of respect by his African subalterns, which means "the one who does not know fear"⁶³. Prince also stated in his memoirs that "it was an inexhaustible pleasure to [himself], a perennial source of interest to discover the peculiarities of [the Zulus], to put oneself in their position, and to encourage their development in terms of education, which would make the KS proud"⁶⁴. We can take from this that von Prince had managed to gain respect amongst both his white peers and his subalterns by being a fair and hard-working colonial, who was, above all, always ready to fight for his homeland. Due to his seemingly very popular persona, he was welcomed with open arms wherever he went in GEA. He did not make a distinction between races in death so long as all participants were on his side.

As a naval captain, Prager had less contact with Africans. However, he was not ignorant, although he often remarked on the superiority of white men, who were, in his view, more civilised, disciplined, and intelligent than indigenous men. Prager described African men as lazy, often dirty and smelly, and very loud. Thus, his accounts of the events in Bagamoyo are to be viewed as coming from a perspective informed by white superiority and not, as in von Prince's case, from a certain degree of mutual appreciation.

Equal to honour as a pillar of masculinity was the wish to free the unknowing Africans from tyranny in the shape of the slave trade, since it was the honourable thing to do. The civilising mission was the basis not only for political battles within Europe (as presented in chapter two), but also a steadily recurring mental and moral reminder of why the colonisers had come to central Africa in the first place. At least, this was the case with those Europeans who believed that specific ideals were part of what it meant to be a just and superior man. Manliness was also measured by means of higher ideals: helping those who were in need of support was one of them.

darin gesucht, versammelt und begrüßten die Zurückkehrenden aufs Freudigste; das Hoch auf den deutschen Kaiser, von den Kämpfern ausgebracht, fand einen mächtigen Wiederhall. Prager, *Der Araber-Aufstand in Ost-Afrika*, 78.

63 German: der keine Furcht kennt. Prince, *Eine Deutsche Frau*, 14. In fact, when the von Prince's built their plantation in GEA they named it Sakkarani.

64 German: Es war mir ein unerschöpfliches Vergnügen, eine immerwährende Quelle des Interesses, die Eigenarten [der Zulus] zu ergründen, mich in sie hineinzuleben und ihre Entwicklung zu fördern im Sinne der Erziehung, die der Schutztruppe zum Stolze ge- reichen würde. Prince, *Gegen Araber Und Wahehe*, 18.

The wish to play the part of the saviour for egotistic reasons, however, should not be ignored either.

Of course, the degree to which people held and enacted certain ideals and high moral standards varied between individuals. As shown above, attitudes towards homelands in connection to colonising differed between the CFS and GEA. Some men thought it their duty to colonise and elevate the indigenous peoples in the name of their respective homelands, while others simply did not. Certain values were considered important attributes for being seen as manly by other male peers: female peer pressure did not arrive in the colonies until the late 1890s and early 1900s. Bringing the so-called light of Western civilisation to the allegedly backward African continent was marketed as a noble goal in Europe, but not just there. Many colonisers even strove to accomplish this feat themselves. Yet despite the occasionally humane and laudable intentions, enlightenment was not intended to make the colonised equal to the coloniser. In addition, civilisation was implemented via very manly and physical means like fighting armed battles, building immobile structures, or exploring unmapped territories. Physical strength and force went hand in hand with these goals.⁶⁵ The subsequent extracts will paint a clearer picture of interpretations of what the term 'civilised' meant in this context by first debating the issue of what was civil and, secondly, by discussing the implementation of modern civilisation in Africa.

One aspect of modern Western civilisation was connected to a sense of beauty and aesthetics, but measuring them was, and still is, difficult. After all, it is a matter of taste; since this is subjective, there is no global unit of measurement. Yet, the connection between beauty and civilisation is often automatic. Many of the egodocuments inform the reader about what the author perceived to be beautiful, strange, or ugly and backward. If something was considered to be modern, beautiful, aesthetic and artistic, this usually meant that it was also civilised. Such a particular ideological circumstance raises the question about how significant the influence of a contemporary European understanding of modernity was on the colonisers: did this modern idea of beauty change in Africa? Or did pre-conceived notions of what it meant to be civilised solidify during the white men's stay on the sub-Saharan continent? Were white perceptions of indigenous societies and cultures racist or neutral? Did these notions regarding the interconnectedness of beauty and modernity influence the perception of African beauty or were they limited to nature and completely overlook humans? The dichotomy between culture and nature was, according to Fanon and Jan-Mohamed, the basis for the dehumanised African. The dark-skinned colonised person was, in this view, part of Africa's nature and thus did not have any culture:

65 Especially the link between the science of enlightenment and the female body created a connection between the body (race) and socially inscribed categories of difference that combined civility and morality with white skin. See chapter 1 of Jennifer L. Morgan, "Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder": Male Travelers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology", in *Laboring Women. Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

nature itself can be alluring, exotic, and beautiful, but it cannot be sophisticated. White colonials, if we follow Fanon's argumentation, used zoological terminology to describe colonised peoples for exactly this reason.⁶⁶ It was therefore, as I argued above, impossible to apply the same inherent connection between beauty and modern civilisation to the colonised Other in Africa.

The following example of the German colonial Robert Streeck (1882–1957) will portray his sensations of beauty and civilisation within a colonial African context. Streeck participated in a German-East-African military expedition from 1905 to 1906 during another Afro-Arab uprising.⁶⁷ His nineteen-page diary is long, colloquial but factual. The diary itself does not provide any information on his biography but data from the DTA⁶⁸ in Emmendingen states that he was born into a farming family. His father did not allow him to continue to high school (it was too expensive), so Robert entered military school instead. His career took him from the military via the navy to central Africa. Due to a tropical illness, Robert returned to Germany, where he left military service and was instead employed as a warden in a penitentiary in Neckargemünde. Following bravery shown in WWI, he later received the *Eisernes Kreuz* (Iron Cross); however, this renowned medal did not help his career in the long run: as a member of Germany's Social Democratic Party he refused to join the NSDAP when the Nazis gained power in Germany. As a result, he was barred from any form of professional promotion. After fleeing from Stettin to western Pomerania in the post-WWII era, he was finally reunited with his children in Düsseldorf in 1953, where he was to pass away only four years later.

Streeck documented his military expedition in GEA. His narrative commences with a precise description of the trip's itinerary, which was followed by records on Africa as such with its countries, people, flora and fauna, and landscapes. His accounts on these topics supply the reader with a clear image of the African territories Streeck traversed and the people he met. What is missing, though, are detailed descriptions of his emotions during his African travels. Nonetheless, the descriptions of his travel route from Hamburg to GEA were very detailed and unlike any other sources describing travels to central Africa. His troop went first by train and then by ship from the German North Sea via Berlin, various towns in Austria and Italy, passing Greek harbours on to Egypt, the cities of Aden, Mombasa, and Zanzibar, finally arriving in Dar es Salaam after many weeks of travel. Streeck's portrayals on the voyage from Northern Europe to sub-Saharan Africa take up a large part – about

66 French: Le colon, quand il veut bien décrire et trouver le mot juste, se réfère constamment au bestiaire. Translation: When describing [the colonised] the colonial master will refer to terminology otherwise used in relation to the animal kingdom. Fanon, *Les Damnés De La Terre*, 35.

67 Robert Streeck, "Tagebuch Ostafrika 1905/06", (Emmendingen: Deutsches Tagebuch Archiv, 1906), 1176.

68 The DTA is located in southern Germany in Emmendingen. It is the only archive in Germany that specialises on the collection and preservation of private diaries and correspondence; i. e., it is dedicated entirely to the collecting of egodocuments.

a third – of his entire expedition diary. He mentioned various details that do not seem particularly important, like the interior design of train cabins, that someone handed out cigars, or that the air smelled of braised cabbage at one of the regular lunch breaks in the small East-German town of Rimmelsburg. In fact, Streeck had the tendency to get lost in peculiar details, like when he wrote that “Three sailors missed the train in Vienna because they spent too much time flirting with girls”⁶⁹. This probably got those three sailors into trouble, but it does not seem particularly important as a comment on the course of the trip or as an event outside the ordinary.

Despite these slightly boring observations, Streeck’s comments became more vivid after his first encounters with North-African people in Port Said. He described how for the first time in his life he saw veiled Islamic women and he also recounted the sounds made by the female Muslim mourners that could be heard throughout this “very dirty city”⁷⁰. Dirty cities and dirty people were a common observation amongst European colonials who came to Africa, especially those travelling there for the first time. Dirt is therefore not an unusual topic in egodocuments by first-time colonials. Generally, dirt always symbolised the unaesthetic, backwardness, and a lack of civility.⁷¹ Dirt as such was not considered to be a white attribute. Instead, clean-cut city structures with proper buildings made of bricks and stones were held to be modern, civilised, and clean, as we can see in the following section.

When De Walsche travelled to Leopoldville in 1893, approximately eight years after the city’s foundation, he described how it had developed and become more appealing to the European eye:

[Leopoldville is] a beautiful station which is a lot larger and far more European than Luvituku. The buildings are almost all made of wooden boards, only the hall in which we take our meals is made of bricks. That latest construction [...] is built of bricks and wood and, like all other buildings’ roofs, this [construction’s] roof is made of straw. The construction is very beautiful and intelligently built. Currently, a brick house is being built for Mr Costermans, the District Commissioner, and it will be the only [building] with a tiled roof. Everything, the bricks, the tiles [and] buildings are made by indigenous workers and they learnt their skills from [European] officers. Every day my admiration for the development[s] in the Congo increases.⁷²

69 German: In Wien verpaßten noch 3 Matrosen durch zu langes schwatzen von Liebesschwüren den Zug. Streeck, “Tagebuch Ostafrika 1905/06”, 2.

70 Ibid., 3.

71 An example for Wilhelmine history linked to dirt and cleanliness happened in Hamburg after Germany’s unification. Hamburg refused to adopt health orders from Berlin and as a result had to pay dearly for their stubbornness during the cholera epidemic from 1830 to 1910. See Richard J. Evans, *Death in Hamburg: Society and Politics in the Cholera Years, 1830–1910* (London: Penguin Books, 2005).

72 French: Léo est une jolie station beaucoup plus grande et plus européenne que Luvituku. Les constructions y sont presque toutes en planches, la Salle où nous mangeons est jusqu’à présent la seule construction en briques. Cette dernière construction, [...] est faite en briques et en bois et couverte comme toutes les autres avec des herbes. Elle est

Here too, it is obvious that a town, or city-to-be, was considered more beautiful and worth living in when it looked European (i. e. white). The above excerpt related to a very typical description and evaluation of what was considered the architecture of a civilised town at the time. Moreover, beauty and modernity in this context were intrinsically connected to European identity. The known tended to be considered beautiful and worth having while the unfamiliar was not. It also nicely depicts the automatic, if not unconscious, link between beauty and civilisation.

Nonetheless, the building of structures with the aim of creating and ensuring modern living standards in Africa was a learning process for both the Europeans and for the colonised. Wilhelm Langheld, a major in the Wissmann troop who participated in the Emin Pascha caravan to Lake Victoria, had spent a total of 20 years in Africa as a soldier, an expedition leader, and a founder of Germany's military and trade stations in GEA. The next excerpt informs us about the difficulties he encountered when attempting to erect a few European-style buildings in the town of Bukoba. This was the first time that he, his European comrades, and the African soldiers had to construct a Western-style building in the colony.

Of course, the construction of the station was not as easy as told here; it required a great deal of work. Much had to be learned first. Some ceilings caved in and some walls collapsed, but after about three quarters of a year, I had the pleasure to see my station with a weatherproof construction at the outermost point of German East Africa. [...] Everybody had to cooperate [...]. First, they had [...] been grumpy [about the work], but [later on] they understood the necessity [of the building] and worked diligently. [...] There was little time for leisure, because all the work had to be heavily supervised in order to ensure that it was carried out properly. My Europeans supported me in every way and introduced the indigenous workers to carry out tasks that until then had been Greek to them. [...] Kühne was especially eager to master the new building skill [...]. He did not spare himself which resulted in his hands developing deep open wounds, and he walked around with large bandages [...].⁷³

très jolie et très intelligemment construite. Pour le moment on construit en brique une maison, pour Mr. Costermans, le commissaire de district, seulement elle sera couverte en tuiles. Tout, briques, tuiles construction est fait par des indigènes et tout leur a été appris par les officiers. De jour en jour, j'admi plus l'œuvre du Congo. Taken from a letter dated 24.07.1893. De Walsche, *Unpublished Private Correspondence with Family Members*, Sig. 56.4/13.47.49.

- 73 German: So leicht wie das hier erzählt wird, war natürlich der Bau der Station nicht, sondern er erforderte ein großes Maß von Arbeit. Vieles mußte erst gelernt werden. Manche Decke fiel uns ein, und manche Mauer stürzte zusammen, aber nach etwa dreiviertel Jahren hatte ich die Freude, meine Station als sturmfreie Befestigung am äußersten Punkte Deutsch-Ostafrikas zu sehen. [...] Alles mußte mitarbeiten [...]. Zuerst hatten sie [...] gemurrt, aber [nachdem sie] die Notwendigkeit [des Gebäudes einsahen] arbeiteten [sie] fleißig mit. [...] Zur Muße war wenig Zeit, denn alle Arbeit mußte stark beaufsichtigt werden, damit sie ordentlich ausgeführt wurde. Meine Europäer unterstützten mich in jeder Weise und leiteten die Leuten an, Arbeiten auszuführen, die ihnen bis dahin böhmische Dörfer gewesen waren. [...] Kühne gab sich besondere Mühe

Challenges concerned not only the construction of weatherproof buildings, but also the employment of indigenous workers. Apart from dealing with recurrent failures like collapsing rooftops and incorrectly made bricks, both physical and mental endurance proved to be the key to success as much as, and this was vital, the ambition to prove to the African men that Europeans were superior to them, even when confronted with disappointments. Nonetheless, nothing could be gained without mutual assistance, be it forced or not, and both sides were aware of this. Thus, arrangements were made accordingly.

4.3 Pain? What Pain? Manly Illnesses

The promise of health and prosperity accompanied a large amount of the literature published for potential colonisers for Belgium and Germany's imperial endeavours. The literature suggested that, by migrating to the colonies, you could attain both "health and wealth"⁷⁴. However, in reality, neither health nor wealth were a given. By the time Belgium and Germany had acquired their colonies, the immediate link between a common man settling in a colony and becoming a well-to-do farmer no longer existed. This was partly because both the CFS and GEA were unsuitable for creating large-scale settler colonies and partly because the agricultural sector, or land ownership in general, did not guarantee automatic riches in the way it had done in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Since the early nineteenth century the (ab) use of slavery to increase one's agricultural and economic gains was illegal. Equally, due to the ever-faster development of global trading markets and the decrease in the price of transporting goods around the world, the profit margin for agricultural goods had sunk significantly. Former agricultural luxury goods like chocolate, sugar, and coffee had turned into common consumer goods by the late nineteenth century. Other natural resources like red rubber, wood, and various types of precious metals and stones had become the most profitable sources of income.

This meant that 'health and wealth' needed to be achieved through hard, often back-breaking, physical work – just like in Europe – but on top of that sub-Saharan Africa also offered an abundance of tropical diseases and illnesses. The climate not only differed from a European climate: It was the exact opposite. The climates of the CFS and GEA were tropical, humid, hot, and did not offer four distinct seasons like in Europe but instead a wet and a dry season. Rainfall was better described as torrents and they often came suddenly without warning. Apart from foreigners suf-

zu mauern [...].Er schonte sich dabei so wenig, daß seine Hände meist aufgeschlagen waren, und er mit großen [...] Verbänden herumliefe [...]. Wilhelm Langheld, *Zwanzig Jahre in deutschen Kolonien* (Berlin: Marine- und Kolonial-Verlag, 1909), 89–90.

74 Andrew Wear, "The Prospective Colonist and Strange Environments: Advice on Health and Prosperity", in *Cultivating the Colonies. Colonial States and Their Environmental Legacies*, ed. Niels Brimnes, et al., Global and Comparative Studies Series (Ahtens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2011), 19.

fering from the climate change due to lack of physical and mental adaption or previous comparable experiences, the men also had to adjust to the immense numbers of mosquitoes which transmitted fatal diseases. De Walsche compares the weather in the CFS to Belgium's climate and its effects on colonisers in the following terms:

I have not yet spoken of the weather, which must nevertheless greatly interest you all. Since my arrival day, it has rained 4 times, it is true that each time it was only rain showers [but] compared to here the Belgian ones are nothing. Apart from these torrential rains, there is always bright sunshine, which is beautiful, yet from 10am to 4pm, the temperature always lies within 32° to 36° in the shade. Or 45° to 50° in the sun. It's terribly hot, but surprisingly, the newcomers handle the temperatures better than those Europeans who have been in Congo for over a year. The reason is that fevers or other illnesses of the Congo have not yet had the time to weaken the newcomer.⁷⁵

As we can see in De Walsche's last comment on the infected colonial veterans, in lieu of a beautiful empty landscape that could be turned into prosperous agricultural land, colonial recruits found an environment that was disease-ridden, rarely pleasant, and not very beautiful when seen through European eyes. A belief of British colonisers that circulated at the beginning of the nineteenth century differentiated between temperate and tropical climates. While the former was a white climate, the latter was considered a 'black' one. In accordance with this belief, only territories with temperate climates were to become white settlement areas; those with tropical climates were to be colonised for economic goals, but not for creating European settlements. Instead of simply recognising the scientific fact that there were different climate zones on our planet, climates were racialised. Such rationality explains the statement that "as long as the British remained British in character and constitution, they would remain racially superior to Indians, and thus their rule was legitimized"⁷⁶. A direct link was created between racism and climate, between white superiority and the white man's burden to colonise, cultivate, and civilise the hot 'black' climates of tropical regions around the globe.

White Colonisers often saw the combination of hot tropical climates with health, manliness, and race as the main reason for indigenous soldiers falling ill. Count von

75 French: Je n'ai pas encore parlé du temps ce qui doit pourtant fortement vous intéresser tous. Depuis le jour de mon débarquement, il a plu 4 fois, il est vrai, que chaque fois, c'était des averses après des-quelles les plus fortes de celles qui tombent en Belgique sont rien. A part ces pluies torrentielles, toujours un beau soleil, trop beau même, jusqu'à présent de 10h. du matin à 4h. du soir, le thermomètre n'a jamais accusé moins de 32 à 36 degrés centigrades à l'ombre. Soit 45 à 50 au soleil. Il fait terriblement chaud, mais chose étonnante, les nouveaux arrivés supportent mieux cette température, que les européens qui sont au Congo depuis un an. La chose s'explique, parce que la fièvre ou autre maladie du pays n'a encore eu le temps d'affaiblir le nouvel arrivant. Letter to his sister Aimé, dated 04.05.1893. De Walsche, Louis. "Unpublished Private Correspondence with Family Members". Sig. 56.4/13.44.29.

76 Wear, "The Prospective Colonist and Strange Environments", 36.

Schweinitz, a German soldier in the KS, described a post-battle march where he had to leave behind many of his soldiers due to illness.

Many Askaris – Somalians – have fallen seriously ill due to the climate and the battle-related strenuous efforts, so that I was forced to leave them behind. My stately group of Askaris has shrunk so distinctively that I was forced to employ Swahili men as new Askaris.⁷⁷

In an earlier report, von Schweinitz and other German colonisers complained about the lack of manliness amongst the Swahili men and how Somalians were better-trained soldiers endowed with greater physical endurance. The above citation confirms this opinion and it is also one of many where the effects of a humid tropical climate are portrayed as being inherently connected with an indigenous man's health. Following the above sequence, von Schweinitz continued to report about his health and that of his comrade Lieutenant Meyer after the same battle. Both were injured during battles against the Afro-Arab slaver Sultan Sikke in Tabora: Meyer was shot in the foot and von Schweinitz in the chest. In less than ten written lines, von Schweinitz depicts the gravity of his physical trauma and how the morphine offered no relief for the pain caused by his gunshot wound.

Lieutenant Meyer's and my own medical condition have since [the battle] improved so much that nothing stood in the way of continuing with our trek. Nonetheless, our health has suffered a great blow. When I walk slowly, I do not feel any major pains, but when I get excited about something or when the physical efforts are too high, I feel my wound again. For this reason and to avoid the bullet from sinking lower within in my chest, I let myself be carried.⁷⁸

77 German: Viele Askari – Somali – sind infolge des Klimas und der Anstengungen, welche der kriegerische Zustand mit sich bracht, so krank geworden, daß ich sie habe zurücklassen müssen. Meine stattliche Askarischar war so zusammengeschmolzen, daß ich habe Suaheli-Askari einstellen müssen. Schweinitz, Hans Hermann Graf von. Bericht [an die Ausführungskommission] des Grafen Schweinitz. Lager zwischen Tabora und Ujui, 1 Stunde nördlich von Tabora, am 28. August 1892, in: Antisklavereibewegung. Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde, Berlin, 1892, 7.

78 German: Herrn Leutnant Meyers Zustand sowie meiner haben sich inzwischen so gebessert, daß gesundheitlich unserem Abmarsch nichts mehr im Wege stand. Unser Befinden im Allgemeinen hat aber doch einen schweren Stoß bekommen. Wenn mir ein langsames Gehen auch keine Beschwerden bereitet so wird mir doch bei Aufregungen und Anstrengungen meine Verwundung schnell ins Gedächtnis gerufen. Aus diesem Grunde und um zu vermeiden, daß die sich noch in der Brust befindliche Kugel senkt, lasse ich mich meist tragen. [...]. Schweinitz, Hans Hermann Graf von. Bericht [an die Ausführungskommission] des Grafen Schweinitz. Lager zwischen Tabora und Ujui, 1 Stunde nördlich von Tabora, am 28. August 1892, in: Antisklavereibewegung. Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde, Berlin, 1892, 7–8.

Apart from topics related to the management and behaviour of household staff, encounters with all sorts of animals, hunting, and arranging dinners with fellow colonials, the most frequently mentioned subject and focused on by all colonisers was anything and everything health related. They would refer to general health, illnesses encountered either personally or by a colleague, or any other kind of injuries. These topics occupied a vast number of pages in all varieties of egodocuments. The authors informed the reader of toothaches, fevers, fatigue, and extreme diarrhoea and how these health issues were the most common tropical maladies with which colonials were confronted.

Further health-related side effects were the dental problems that tended to be caused by longer periods of malnutrition. The fevers were the direct results of mosquito bites and diarrhoea from drinking dirty water. The latter was the most lethal medical condition. This could be caused by dirty or rotten food, dirty water, and even insect bites. Due to the acute lack of scientific and medical knowledge, many of these health issues were explained merely in relation to the tropical climate and the fact that it was a 'black' climate which harmed white people. For example, in comparison to German South West Africa, which was considered to have a strengthening effect on a man's personal development, GEA's tropical climate "would weaken the German character, and [...] new settlers should therefore be routinely brought from the fatherland to safeguard the colonists' moral virtue"⁷⁹.

In addition to health issues, a man's mental state also required consideration. None of the sources seem to suggest that a general differentiation between the tropical sub-Saharan climate and the more temperate Southern African one could be useful or justified from a scientific point of view. Instead, the two climate zones were racialised and Europeans who colonised the tropical territories were put under more scrutiny than their colleagues in the south. It was assumed that white men in tropical areas were more prone to both physical and moral pollution simply because they worked and lived in non-white areas.

Yet, the great majority of all Western deaths in central Africa was not, as is commonly assumed, caused by malaria, attacks by large wildcats, or dying on the battlefield whilst fighting off malicious indigenous rebels. Instead, most fatalities came from a non-violent source: suffering from a rather unspectacular illness like dysentery. For this reason, it was the healing of illnesses and, above all, avoiding them in the first place that were crucial to colonials. This can be inferred from the large amount of space that the topics of health and medication take up in the sources.

The following excerpt gives a detailed description of a medical kit which every German colonial soldier received before leaving Dar es Salaam to join a caravan into the hinterlands.

79 Karen Oslund, "Getting Our Hands Dirty", in *Cultivating the Colonies. Colonial States and Their Environmental Legacies*, ed. Niels Brimnes, et al., Global and Comparative Studies Series No. 12 (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2011), 11.

Everyone receives a small collection of important medicines and bandage materials from the military hospital in Dar es Salaam. Parts of the former group are quinine, sublimate, calomel, [and] iodoform. Furthermore, the fact that one takes along a small medical guidebook on tropical diseases, which informs the lay person briefly of everything important, is self-explanatory, since one often finds himself in a solitary situation without the possibility of contacting a medical doctor.⁸⁰

Taking into account that self-medication was a common necessity in the tropics for white soldiers, it is surprising that accounts of both medication and self-medication appear only on rare occasions. This latter observation shows parallels with Johannes Fabian's work on European explorers who travelled through central Africa before it was officially split up into parts at the Berlin Conference. Fabian argued that self-medication was an everyday occurrence due to the constant lack of qualified medical staff. Like the sources, his work also suggests that self-medication was an inherent part of daily life, just as much so as eating and drinking were. The nearly daily repetition of self-medication made it such an ordinary occurrence for the colonisers that they did not even consider it an odd thing to do. Often, self-medication and self-treatment were the only available medical treatments in the colony's hinterlands, for which German men were supplied with booklets on tropical diseases and how to treat yourself if necessary. Moreover, even though there must have been numerous indigenous treatments for fevers, cuts, diarrhoea, infections, and other more common injuries, the sources do not inform the reader about them. This leads me to conclude that the colonisers either did not trust local medical treatments or they did not have the means to communicate with their African contemporaries in a way that made their symptoms clear.

Apart from the usual and harmless kinds of medicines, opiates like laudanum or quinine were common medicines against fevers. Opiates were therefore deemed normal out of necessity.⁸¹ A need for opiates sprang from a lack of other available medicine. Every caravan or troop would usually try to have a sufficient stock of quinine and laudanum. The refusal to take either was often seen as a first sign of death, because the first thing an ill white coloniser would do, it seems, was to refuse further medication to either save the pills for other sick comrades, to end the suffering caused by the medicine's side effects (usually nausea and vomiting), or due to lack of consciousness. This can be seen in the case of Baron Fischer.

In his diary, Helmsman Blatt wrote a detailed account about the illness of his superior and colleague Baron Fischer, who fell seriously ill during a trek in GEA

80 German: Vom Lazaret Daressalam erhält ferner jeder eine kleine Zusammenstellung von wichtigen Medikamenten und Verbandsmitteln mit. Zu nennen sind von ersteren Chihin, Sublimat, Calomel, Jodoform. Die Mitnahme eines kleinen ärztlichen Ratgebers für Tropenkrankheiten, welcher Alles für den Laien Wissenswerte kurz und klar enthält, empfiehlt sich von selbst, da man häufig auf sich allein angewiesen und ärztliche Hilfe zu erlangen unmöglich ist. Fonck, *Deutsch-Ost-Afrika*, 59.

81 For further details on the habitual use of drugs in the sub-Saharan colonial context, see: Fabian, *Out of Our Minds*.

for the German Antislavery Commission. The Baron was supposed to lead a trek to Usuri, where he was then to construct a trade post, build houses, vegetable gardens, and small- to medium-sized boats to facilitate future tours through the region. However, he became feverous with malaria, which apparently even caused the loss of sight in one of his eyes. Blatt described the almost daily physical deterioration of his superior from 12 May to 2 July. The baron suffered for over six weeks before he died. According to Blatt, the Baron did not complain once and refused to take further medication. At first, this was because the quinine caused major side effects and once the Baron believed that recovery was not to be expected, he downright refused to swallow any more quinine pills. Below is an excerpt of some of Blatt's entries concerning the development of Baron Fischer's illness' development.

12.5. [...] Baron and Zschäsch [have] fever [...] 15.5. [...] Baron is almost blind in his right eye. [...] 22.5. Celebrated Sunday. Baron bedridden throughout the day due to malaria. [...] 29.5. Celebrated Sunday. Baron survives on milk only, lies all day. Eye is better. – 30.5. [...] Baron is without food all day. [...] 14.6. Visited the Baron, he is very run-down, first by fever and secondly, he eats almost nothing. Fried bananas and milk almost his only food. [...] 16–17.6. [...] Baron still the same, with the exception of 2–3 hours of being awake, he refuses to take quinine against his fever. [...] 20.6. Baron vomits a lot. [...] 22–27.6. Baron very run-down, he told me that in the last 4 days he has eaten only compote and has drunk red wine. Still refuses taking quinine because of the associated tinnitus. He no longer stands up. 29.6. [...] Baron was unconscious for two hours today. 30.6. Baron unconscious for 3 hours at night, tried all available stimulants. [...] Sent messengers to the French mission in Bukumbi. Upon arrival of the Lord Superior the Baron had a clear head. The Lord Superior advised to take quinine, which the Baron determinedly refused. [...] Mr Superior knows no other medicine that he could apply except quinine; the Lord Superior advised quinine injections, but it cannot be done due to the lack of a syringe. [...] Baron's diet consists of milk and tea; Baron does not drink the egg and meat extract prepared as a beverage. Medical assistance is not to be had, since the whole lake has neither a doctor nor a hospital assistant. [...] 1.7. 8am departure of the Lord Superior; the result of his observation is this: "The Baron will die if he takes no quinine." [...] 2.7. 4 am breathing is like a death rattle [...] 5 am pulse is slower [...] 5 am 21 minutes the last breath escaped. [...] 2.7. After 20 soldiers gave the honorary fusillade, the corpse of Baron Fischer was buried according to European custom.⁸²

82 German: 12.5. [...] Herr Baron und Zschäsch Fieber [...] 15.5. [...]. Herr Baron ist auf dem rechten Auge fast blind. [...] 22.5. Feierten Sonntag. Herr Baron wegen Malaria den ganzen Tag gelegen. [...] 29.5. Feierten Sonntag. Herr Baron lebt nur von Milch, liegt den ganzen Tag. Auge wird besser. – 30.5. [...] Herr Baron liegt ohne Speise den ganzen Tag. [...] 14.6. Besuchte den Herrn Baron, derselbe ist sehr heruntergekommen, erstens vom Fieber und zweitens isst er fast garnichts. Gebratene Bananen und Milch bilden fast seine ganze Nahrung. [...] 16–17.6. [...] Herr Baron immer das Gleiche, liegt mit Ausnahme von 2–3 Stunden immer, er will kein *Chinin gegen sein Fieber nehmen*. [...] 20.6. Herr Baron viel Erbrechen. [...] 22.–27.6. Herr Baron Fischer sehr heruntergekommen, wie er erzählt, hat er seit 4 Tagen nur etwas Kompott gegessen und Rotwein getrunken. Gegen Chinin veweigert er sich entschieden wegen des damit verbundenen Ohrensauens. Er steht gar nicht mehr auf. 29.6. [...] Herr Baron war heute zwei Stunden besin-

This example clearly shows that medical treatments were performed by lay people who often only had little medical booklets as reference points. Even the slightly better trained Christian missionaries often did not possess more medical knowledge than the regular colonisers.

Another recurring topic in the sources is that of boredom and routine. It seems that both were major problems in colonial circles; in some cases, it even led to insomnia and even to the so-called mental illness *Tropenkoller*.⁸³ A possible English translation for *Tropenkoller* could be tropical frenzy: this was a behavioural, maybe even neurological, state that occurred in tropical countries and mainly affected Europeans or Americans. It might best be described as a state of excessive violence and brutality exercised by otherwise peaceful people. Its causes originated from being exposed to long periods of heat, emotional and psychological solitude, and what we would nowadays refer to culture shock. Isolation and alien environments were more demanding of some colonials' mental and physical energy than expected; due to Belgium and Germany's lack of experience in imperial matters, this kind of medical difficulty had apparently not been foreseen. In order to prevent *Tropenkoller* or other mental illnesses, different measures were taken, one of which was to establish and implement strict calendars and time schedules. These organisational schedules helped colonials keep their wits about them, given that "clock and calendar were [felt as] the umbilical cord to civilization"⁸⁴. Colonisers were supposed to always get up, eat their meals, and go to bed at the same times every day. Chores like bathing, writing letters or reports, reading, and any other regular activities were to be accomplished according to a set weekly schedule.

nungslos. 30.6. Herr Baron nachts besinnungslos 3 Stunden lang, benutzte alle mir zur Verfügung stehenden Reizmittel. [...] sandte zur französischen Mission nach Bukumbi. Bei der Ankunft des Herrn Superior war der Herr Baron bei klarer Besinnung. Der Herr Superior riet zu Chinin, welches der Herr Baron bestimmt verweigerte. [...] Herr Superior weiß auch keine Medizin, welche man anwenden könnte außer Chinin; der Herr Superior riet zu Chinin-Einspritzungen, kann sie aber wegen Mangel an einer Spritze nicht ausführen. [...] Seine Nahrung besteht aus Milch und Thee; Eier und Fleischextrakt als Getränk zubereitet will der Herr Baron auch nicht nehmen. Ärztliche Hilfe ist nicht zu haben, da am ganzen See weder Doktor noch Lazarettgehilfe ist. [...] 1.7. 8 Uhr morgens Aufbruch des Herrn Superior; das Resultat seiner Beobachtung ist folgendes: „Der Herr Baron wird sterben, wenn er kein Chinin nimmt.“ [...] 2.7. 4 Uhr morgens war das Atmen einem Röcheln gleich [...] 5 Uhr Puls wird langsamer schlagen [...] 5 Uhr 21 Minuten war der letzte Atem entflohen. [...] 2.7. Nachdem 20 Soldaten Ehrensalven gegeben, wurde die Leiche des Herrn Baron Fischer nach europäischer Sitte beerdigt. Blatt, N.N., Tagebuch des Steuermann Blatt, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde, Antisklaverei, Lt. Meyer, Sig. R8023–824.

83 See M. Alsberg, "Die Sanierung Der Tropenländer", *Geographische Zeitschrift* 19, no. 5 (1913); Stephan Besser, *Tropenkoller: The Interdiscursive Poetics of a German Colonial Syndrome Framing and Imagining Disease in Cultural History*, ed. George S. Rousseau (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

84 Fabian, *Out of Our Minds*, 56.

Hunger and thirst might not be illnesses as such, but they could weaken bodies and make them more vulnerable to disease. More often than not, ongoing hunger during a military campaign or a caravan would last for days on end, a recurring situation that took its toll on white colonisers and black soldiers alike. The accounts of suffering hunger in Africa are numerous. Sometimes, the need for nourishment would make colonials careless. During a military trek in GEA from Songea to Kilossa, von Prince, Professor Ansoerge, and their indigenous soldiers were running out of food. All that was left were beans and even these were running out. The landscape was green and luscious but not plentiful in terms of edibles; even game was rare. Thus, food rations were limited to a bare minimum and hunting became a priority. Unfortunately, von Prince got lost whilst tracking down chickens on a minor hunting spree and almost did not find his way back to his group. On another occasion, he shot his first elephant, a joyful moment; regrettably, most of the elephant carcass had to be left behind uneaten because even after hacking it into pieces there were not enough porters and soldiers to carry the meat. Thus, despite the lack of food, they were forced to leave behind fresh elephant meat to rot in the sun. Nonetheless, the caravan members were well fed for a few days. Several more days passed and Ansoerge killed a female antelope. However, due to his hunger and thirst, Ansoerge did not pay proper attention to what he was doing and ended up drinking her diseased milk. As a result, he vomited profusely and was even weaker than before.

Ultimately, the entire troop ran out of food completely. The last days before reaching Kilossa were the worst, as von Prince described in his diary:

The last morning had broken. Today there was nothing left [to eat], nothing at all, neither for white nor for black. Just walk. We had to march for a long time before we saw another human being. But the hunger hurt. Every hour we gave the order to rest: 'Pumsika!' (to repose). It became 3pm, then 4pm. A marching order was not to be kept up anymore.⁸⁵

Finally, they reached their destination, after having been painfully weakened by days or weeks of malnutrition. Most of the sources tell stories of excruciating hunger and deathly thirst, but the authors did not complain because that would have been unmanly and weak. They accepted the pain and endured it until there were fresh food and drink.

Amongst the typical tropical fevers, the blackwater fever – a form of malaria – was another common illness in central Africa. The symptoms consisted of vomiting until the stomach was emptied of food as well as bile, urinating dark, almost black, blood (hence the name), and sweating (also cold sweat) continuously. During the late nineteenth century, the only known cure for malaria and any illness related to it

85 German: Der letzte Morgen graute. Heute gab es nichts, rein gar nichts, weder für Weiß, noch für Schwarz. Also los! Wir mußten eben so lange marschieren, bis wir einen Menschen erreichten. Aber der Hunger tat weh. Alle Stunden hieß es: „Pumsika!“ (Ausruhen). So wurde es 3 Uhr nachmittags, 4 Uhr. Von Marschordnung war keine Rede mehr. Prince, *Gegen Araber und Wahehe*, 278–79.

was through the administration of quinine. Blackwater fevers could erupt for various reasons; as is always the case, bodies that were already weakened by physical exertions and general fatigue were more likely to fall ill than strong and healthy ones. Von Prince was one of many infected with blackwater fever; since his accounts are the most detailed, I have chosen to use his memories as an example of this illness' etiopathology. He explained how he fell ill during a trek (again); as a result, his comrades made a donkeycarry him. Soon after, the poor creature's neck was yellow from all the bile that Tom had vomited onto it and with his vomiting came a rise in body temperature to over 41°C. Upon arrival in Kilossa, he was immediately admitted to the local sick bay but none of his white comrades knew what to do. Von Prince simply took large amounts of quinine pills in the hope that they would have a curative effect:

I swallowed quinine [pills] in enormous quantities. Large doses of this agent were common then. And if you did not have a doctor, you medicated yourself according to the motto: The more the better! Lined up on my trunk beside my cot were about 20 grams of quinine [...]. Repeatedly a limp hand would appear [...] from under the mosquito net and get such a pill that was then swallowed. When it came out again, which was usually the case, a new pill was to follow immediately. If it remained [in the stomach] another followed soon afterwards. Undoubtedly, the method was incorrect. Even quinine can be swallowed too much. But my theory was realistic: Those [patients] who were unspeakably weak and lonely, lying there in the Kitanda and yet possess the spirit to swallow such amounts of quinine, came through; whilst those subjects, that could not develop this energy did not. – Maybe the old method was applicable only for the old *Afrikaner* [European colonials in Africa]; for besides energy they had not much to live off and for.⁸⁶

Eventually, after ten days of fever, delirium, vomiting, and no proper food, it appears that an indigenous medicine combined with an alcoholic cocktail finally cured Tom. *Schenzidawa* was a local medicine tea from a tree root called *Schenzi*. Father Oberle, a German missionary from the nearby Catholic mission, came and brewed it for Tom. This tea, in combination with an alcoholic cocktail which Oberle and Tom's companion Mr Grawert drank in the evenings, seemed to have calmed the patient's stomach and kidneys. The next day Tom started recovering. Nonetheless, he com-

86 German: Chinin schluckte ich in enormen Mengen. Große Dosen dieses Mittels waren damals üblich. Und wenn man keinen Arzt hatte, handelte man nach dem Grundsatz: Viel hilft viel! So lagen denn aufgereiht auf meinem Feldkoffer neben meinem Feldbett etwa 20 Gramm Chinin [...]. Und allerorts griff die [...] Hand unterm Moskitonetz ein wenig vor und holte eine solche Pille, die heruntergeschluckt wurde. Kam sie wieder heraus, was meist der Fall war, so wurde [...] noch eine nachgeschickt. Blieb sie, so folgte sehr bald wieder eine neue Pille hinterher. Zweifellos war die Methode nicht richtig. Selbst Chinin kann man zuviel schlucken. Aber eins hatte meine Theorie für sich: Wer unsäglich schlaff, einsam in der Kitanda daliegt und die Willenskraft besitzt, derartig Chinin zu schlucken, der kommt doch durch; während jener unterliegt, der diese Energie nicht entwickeln kann. – Vielleicht war die alte Methode gerade für die alten Afrikaner nötig; denn außer Energie hatten sie nicht viel zum Leben. Ibid., 281–82.

mented again about how important a strong will to survive was and that only those men who were willing to fight and do whatever it took to live and survive would prosper in the colonies. Another gruesome, yet impressive, account of survival is that by Rochus Schmidt. During a military campaign against local plunderers, Schmidt was shot in the left lung. His companion, Dr Hentschel, tried to get some medical help, first from a nearby village and then from a caravan that was passing through the same territory. Ultimately, Hentschel, who had also suffered a gunshot wound, was carried towards the East-African coast, from where he arranged for a rescue unit to search and rescue Schmidt. In the meantime, the latter did his best to survive somewhere in GEA whilst running out of supplies:

I was suffering a great thirst and I did not know of a better way to drench it but to take off the boot of my injured leg and to drink my very own blood, which had accumulated inside the footwear. But I even had to give up on this liquid, which at the time was a delicacy, because my gun shot wound had stopped bleeding.⁸⁷

However, despite all the dangers, spartan living standards, and difficulties during the long, tiresome, and lonely treks from one part of the colony to another, colonial life offered liberty and independence' which could be very fulfilling. De Walsche stated just as much on his arrival in Leopoldville:

I'm not bored, always living like this in a tent is tiring and yet I believe that [even] if I had not had the bad luck of being abandoned by my men, instead of breathing a sigh of satisfaction [when] seeing from far away the blue gold star flag [official CFS flag], I would have breathed a sigh of regret, because you cannot, dear brothers and sisters, imagine the charm of living a bohemian lifestyle as this, not knowing where I will house the next day, what fun there is to making your own breakfast stew followed by no troubles, no problems, no worries.⁸⁸

So, despite all the hardships, the unforeseeable demands, and the illnesses or injuries of various sorts, colonial life was still a very specific kind of lifestyle that was preferred and sought after by freedom-loving and independent white men. Painful

87 German: Ich erduldetete die Qualen eines entsetzlichen Durstes und wußte denselben nicht anders zu löschen als dadurch, daß ich mir den Stiefel von dem verwundeten Bein herunterzog und aus diesem das vom Beinschuß angesammelte Blut trank. Selbst dieses Getränk, das mir damals sehr gut schmeckte, mußte ich bald entbehren; die Wunde hörte auf zu bluten. Schmidt, *Deutschlands Kolonien*, 33–34.

88 French: Je n'en suis pas f[à]cher, toujours vivre comme ça sous la tente est fatigant et pourtant, je crois que, si je n'avais pas eu la malechance d'être abandonné par mes hommes, au lieu de pousser un soupir de satisfaction en apercevant de loin le drapeau bleu étoile d'or, j'aurai poussé un soupir de regret, car vous ne pouvez, chers frères et sœurs, vous imaginez quel charme il y a à vivre ainsi en bohème, ne sachant la vielle où on logera le lendemain, quel plaisir il y a à pristou[i]ller soi-même son petit-fricot et puis pas de tracas, pas d'ennuis, pas de soucis. Taken from a letter dated 24.07.1893. De Walsche, *Unpublished Private Correspondence with Family Members*, Sig. 56.4/15.47.44.

fevers, excruciating hunger and thirst, attacks by lions, panthers, and other wild animals, and gunshot wounds or spear cuts did not suffice to deter these male colonials from living in tropical Africa. Indeed, these dangers and discomforts were apparently considered a lesser evil to a life without freedom or adventures. Endurance and the will to live were essential character traits for survival in Africa. Only those men who displayed both physical and mental strength were considered manly enough for the job. Survival of the fittest was definitely one way of seeing life in the colonies.

4.4 Conclusion

At the outset of Belgian and German imperial activities, the actual deed of colonising on-site was accomplished by European men; their colonial society was accordingly homosocial for at least the first decade. Early colonials were mainly men with military and naval backgrounds. Due to their physical and, above all, cultural remoteness from modern Europe, these men often underwent a certain degree of brutalisation and an unnoticed or involuntary tendency to acculturating to the cultures of their colonised subjects. Once some time had been spent in the colonies, cultural and ethical values were adjusted to local necessities and selected according to their utility for survival. These choices also portrayed the development of colonial identities, for they shed light on the preferences of individuals and thus on their respective characters.

Amongst the most common personal values were racist ones; however, it should be mentioned again that some of these were openly so while others were based on the strong belief that the indigenous Other was in dire need of Western Christian help. Indigenous African people were denied the same human status as white people. Instead, they were repeatedly objectified, which made it easier for colonisers to fail to subject them to moral values that were otherwise applied to Europeans. This is similar to white British settlers in Australia, where, as Bill Schwarz summarised, the “imposition of civilization and its laws demanded acts which were uncivilized and illegal, a paradox which was justified by the barbarism of the wild native”⁸⁹. A mono-gender colonial society combined with racist attitudes, both the more malignant intentional version as well as the patronisingly benevolent one, led to a dehumanising attitude towards the African colonised. Civilising the Other, even when well meant, was often executed in inhumane ways. For the white male coloniser, however, it was just another tool for presenting their manliness to their equals.

The aforementioned racist attitudes were then enhanced with masculine traits such as applying survival skills during military and trade treks through the tropical forests or whilst hunting game. Far away from the New Woman and the female takeover of so-called male jobs in Western Europe, white European men (re-)discovered or enhanced their masculinity in the Belgo-German colonies by living lives of a

89 Bill Schwarz, *Memories of Empire. The White Man's World*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 121.

farmer, hunter, soldier, and even harem owner without being scolded by their female counterparts, relatives, modern, or bourgeois societies at large. Life in the CFS and GEA was, at first, an entirely mono-gendered masculine affair. Peer control too was conducted by men on men and it was based on and executed in accordance with manly values and attributes. The downside to this particular type of independence from the female voice was often loneliness and a lack of both familiar and familial comfort. Of course, experiencing comfort is not just a matter of female companionship: yet, amongst men who were used to being cooked for and taken care of by women, it was a novel situation.

Furthermore, matters of honour and comradeship amongst European men were essential for physical and, more importantly, social survival. Only those indigenous soldiers and companions who had proven their worth (in battle or otherwise) received recognition or friendship even. The white coloniser was open to changing his mind and rewarded his colonial Other with appreciation, but only if the latter had earned it. Furthermore, the will to survive illnesses was essential and to stand one's ground was considered the manly thing to do. Colonising was a masculine business: a white woman meddling with colonial affairs in a still subdeveloped colony was extremely rare. It was probably also considered inadvisable, because colonies like the CFS and GEA, whose status as colonial territories was so new, needed colonisers that were willing to get their hands dirty.

In addition to the lack of female companionship, it was necessary to prove one's worth in the new community. In contrast to their respective homelands, where most of the authors grew up as members of a stable community, they needed to find and found new connections in the colonies. In a mono-gender and highly heterosexual environment, this entailed performing one's duties in accordance to manly virtues like honour and loyalty as expected by their male peers, but it also included the ability to function despite illness and physical pains. Complaining about uncomfortable living standards or bodily pains were considered unmanly and therefore an undesirable character trait amongst male colonisers.⁹⁰ An equally disagreeable characteristic was unreliability. These men needed to be able to trust and rely on each other. Another development of the nineteenth century was that white manliness had become inherently linked with heterosexuality. Only the heterosexual man could be considered manly, for homoerotic preferences were denied their manliness and instead symbolically linked with beastliness and female or effeminate behaviour.⁹¹

90 An insightful publication that combines the topic of pain with gender studies is Dorothy Ko, "Footbinding and Anti-Footbinding in China. The Subject of Pain in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries", in *In Discipline and the Other Body. Correction, Corporeality, Colonialism*, ed. Anupama Rao and Steven R. Pierce (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

91 For more information on how, throughout the nineteenth century, homosexuality was constructed as a social type and excluded from the masculinity of the dominant heterosexual classes, see Connell, "The Big Picture: Masculinities in Recent World History".

Ultimately, manliness amongst European colonisers was linked to values from 'home', even if some of them had started to become outdated there. On top of being considered a strong and reliable man by their European peers, these colonisers were also required to maintain their white superiority towards the African colonised. Despite sharing close spaces with indigenous soldiers and staff, 'losing face' was not an option; whenever necessary, brutal force was applied to keep the subalterns in their allocated space. Manly behaviour was therefore also considered necessary to actively maintain the white man's superior status vis-à-vis with African non-whites. Strength was to be shown and kept up at all times, even whilst suffering. White manliness was thus maintained to the outside world by showing stoical behaviour, both physical and mental strength, and white superiority based on the notion of being the member of a more civilised culture and therefore authorised to teach and command the African subaltern.

5. The White Bibi

Every nation, every era, nourishes an ideal image of a grown woman to which it wants to raise its daughters. This image changes over time, but it is always linked to nationalistic influences. Poets draw it, and our ideas are mirrored in our writings on how to educate our young women.¹

Having discussed the masculine side of white Africa, I will move on to its feminine side. Whilst white male colonisers were often referred to as *m'Bwana*, their white female counterparts were called *Bibis*. The term *Bibi* is Swahili for the highest-ranking female person within a central-African family, household, or larger community like a village or a town. Daughters who were born to Afro-Arab sultans were also referred to as *Bibis*. This was usually because she was the eldest and/or in charge of a larger group or in any other comparable situation of power. After colonising sub-Saharan Africa, the term *Bibi* was almost simultaneously adapted to refer to every white woman. After all, white women in the CFS and GEA were scarce at the time; the few that lived in the colonies were always in a position of power. Over time, the term *Bibi* became synonymous with a white woman.

The following pages explore the lives of white female colonisers, most of whom were married to colonial officials or to Christian missionaries. The chapter's first case study, however, will be that of a single woman who dared to pursue her own goals in a colonial setting which will be followed by a group analysis of Belgian, German, and Swedish wives. Within this chapter, I will discuss, on the one hand, the lives of white women in central Africa and how they (i) perceived their indigenous subalterns, (ii) lived their own whiteness, and (iii) saw their own gender role within colonial Africa. On the other hand, in the last subchapter I will present the emergence of the New Woman and the counter image of the 'Old Woman'. Linked to their whiteness was the idea of cultural superiority derived from modern European living standards, but this picture of modernity did not necessarily correspond with developments within Europe at the same time. It appears that the white women here discussed differed greatly within their own colonial societies; some were progressive, but most were less so.

The extremely low number of white women in the two colonies was not surprising. Another unsurprising fact was that employment for white women was limited, because usually indigenous women were employed in the colonial female job sector. Accordingly, one can find references to African women who worked as household

1 German: Jede Nation, jede Zeit, hegt ein Idealbild der Frau, zu dem sie die Mädchen erziehen will. Dies Bild wandelt sich, aber es trägt doch bleibende nationale Züge. Dichter zeichnen es, und in den Schriften über Frauenbildung spiegelt es sich wieder. S. Waetzoldt, "Nationale Züge Der Frauenbildung", *Centralblatt für die Gesamte Unterrichts-Verwaltung in Preußen* 11, no. 20 (1895). As cited from Askey, *Good Girls, Good Germans*.

helpers, cooks, and farmhands.² Within many African tribes, it was common for the women to do the farming and household work while the men, from the Massai tribe for instance, would go on day- or week-long treks in order to gather meat by raiding other herder tribes. The men would hunt or, as was the case with Askaris and Zulus, be hired as soldiers: their wives travelled with them and were in charge of organising and preparing food, doing the laundry, and rearing the children. Unfortunately, there are no published or unpublished works by indigenous women from central Africa during the period covered in this book that could give a voice to the experiences of the female subaltern in a white household. This gap in indigenous women's recollections is due to the lack of Western education for colonised women and the resulting illiteracy.³ Consequently, the focus lies on sources by white women in this chapter. The same was true for memoirs by indigenous men (see chapter four), with the small exception of a few letters in Arabic written by Afro-Arab traders.⁴

Unlike local indigenous women, who were tightly integrated into their clans (regardless of whether these were of matriarchal or patriarchal structures) and had predetermined duties, the white women were unlikely to have any official employment upon their arrival in the colonies. Initially, Christian nuns were the only employed women, but even they were rarely found in sub-Saharan Africa. Their aversion to central Africa was based on the preference to perform missionary or charitable work in Southern Asian or Latin American colonies, since these were already more developed in terms of existing missionary stations, schools, basic infrastructure, and the fact that other male missionaries already lived in those hemispheres.

While the sub-Saharan territories were still greatly untouched by European and North American influences, the former Spanish colonies in Latin America and the British, Dutch, and French colonies in Asia had already been subjected to a certain degree of Western influence and development. These modernising developments, however elementary they were in some cases, did not yet exist at all in the CFS or GEA. The only exceptions were coastal cities like Matadi and Dar es Salaam, where trade stations and European houses were already part of the cities' landscapes. Due to this lack of modern development, unmarried European women who wished to join the colonial services on their own account as either nuns or nurses preferred to do so in more developed and previously Europeanised colonies. As was to be expected under these circumstances, the establishment of non-missionary nurse stations for single women developed at a sluggish pace.

2 So far, my Belgian sources only mention male cooks, but the German and Swedish accounts also refer to female cooks or kitchen help in their writings.

3 The identical situation also applies to published sources by female authors from the former British and French colonies Kenya and Algeria. See Patricia M.E. Lorcin, *Historizing Colonial Nostalgia. European Women's Narratives of Algeria and Kenya 1900-Present* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

4 During my research for my master thesis I came across letters in Arabic written by Afro-Arab traders in the Congo Free State and linked to Léon Rom. The letters are archived at the MRAC.

Unlike white single women, white married women found it easier to gain a foothold in the CFS and GEA. They accompanied their husbands to wherever their men were sent to by their employers or they settled together in areas their husbands had chosen within central Africa. Colonial wives usually came months or even years after their husbands' migration to the new territories. Upon arrival in the respective colony, these women were immediately welcomed by their husband's established social ties. In comparison to single unordained women, these wives had a comparably easy start to colonial life, for they simply entered a pre-established infrastructure. However, the upcoming case study of Freiin Friederike von Bülow was quite different and rather unusual for a Wilhelmine woman.

5.1 Single Ladies

In the past, there was a scholarly tendency to categorise colonial women according to their professional and social status.⁵ I will continue this approach whilst also focussing on the marital status of the sources to simplify the comparison as well as to highlight the differences. As presented above, the employment opportunities for white single women in both colonies were limited to two sectors only: missionary and medical work. Even within these two job sectors, opportunities were scarce. The third option was to be a coloniser's wife and help him with his various daily chores.

The dearth of job opportunities for European women was due to a combined lack of suitable employers and a shortfall of females seeking an African colonial career. The women's colonial societies that recruited German women to work in GEA were not founded until the late 1890s, which resulted in almost two decades of colonising with virtually no white female participation whatsoever. In terms of white female employment in the CFS, the situation there did not differ to that of GEA. Another aspect which both colonies had in common was their respective authorities' initial lack of attention to the question of female employment. Neither of the two authorities was against it but, during the initial years of colonising, job opportunities for white women were not encouraged or implemented. Jobs for female Europeans simply were not a priority. The necessary duties for entering and developing the colonies did not include typical female skills, but rather physical strength, endurance, and experience with wielding firearms or navigating steam boats. So-called manly jobs were deemed necessary and prioritised to successfully colonise the new territories. The creation of jobs for women was therefore not high on the list of either colony's political agenda. Masculine societal norms tended to influence the perception of which kind of personnel was necessary for successfully penetrating foreign territory.

The minute number of single white women in central Africa also means that sources on or by them are limited and that the data base is small. I present the following case study on Frieda von Bülow. The study and presentation of her case is

5 See *ibid.*, 5–7; Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

important for two principal reasons: Firstly, Frieda von Bülow's diary is the only published book by an unmarried German woman who lived and worked in GEA. This situation is directly linked to the circumstance that GEA was not a settler colony and initially did not attract married male colonisers to come with their wives. In contrast, the number of female diaries and travelogues from GSWA is remarkable. The second reason is that Frieda was a female pioneer, not merely because she was one of the first German lay women to enter German colonial service, but also because she spearheaded the creation of colonial jobs for German women.⁶

Frieda was a remarkable woman for her time because her personality combined both conservative-traditionalist and modern feminist sides in one and the same individual. On the one hand, she was a typical nationalist product of her time: she idolised Bismarck, was a contemporary racist, and believed in the superiority of the German Empire. By 'contemporary racist', I mean that she was an adherent of so-called scientific racism; ever since Germany's entry into the scramble for Africa, many of its scientists "embraced empire building and endorsed scientific racism. German scientists [and through them public awareness] would continue to play a seminal role in advancing discourses on race that impacted the African diaspora"⁷. Frieda was also a representative of Western ideas on white superiority and the notion of conquering foreign lands to implement a European culture based on Christian values. Imperial women like Frieda, who were products of the late nineteenth century, also reproduced in their writings the Western and masculine claim to conquer other territories. They thereby proclaimed a right to occupy foreign areas and force other peoples to take on a white culture.⁸

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- 6 Friederike Sophie Luise von Bülow was born in Berlin (1857) and died in Jena (1909). Her father Hugo von Bülow was *Legationsrat* at the German embassy in Smyrna (today: Izmir, Turkey), where he raised his five children according to an understanding of a natural societal and world order which put the white noble at the top of human hierarchy. After his death in 1869, Frieda's mother Clotilde (née von Münchhausen) took her five children back to Germany. Frieda preferred to spend time at her grandmother and uncle von Münchhausen's nearby estate Ingersheim instead of at the Pietist church parish of the *Herrnhuter Brüdergemeinde* in Neudietendorf, Thuringia, which her widowed mother chose as the new family home. For more information on the von Bülow family see N.N., "Bülow, Frieda Frein Von", in *Deutsches Kolonial-Lexikon*, ed. Heinrich Schnee (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1920); Katharina von Hammerstein, "Frieda Von Bülow", <http://www.fembio.org/biographie.php/frau/biographie/frieda-von-buelow/>.
 - 7 Jeanette Eileen Jones, "On the Brain of the Negro: Race, Abolitionism, and Friedrich Tiedemann's Scientific Discourse on the African Diaspora", in *German and the Black Diaspora. Points of Contact, 1250-1914*, ed. Mischa Honeck, Martin Klimke, and Anne Kuhlmann (New York: Berghahn, 2013), 149.
 - 8 See Anette Dietrich, "Konstruktionen Weißer Weiblichkeit. Emanzipationsdiskurse Im Kontext Des Kolonialismus", in *Koloniale und postkoloniale Konstruktionen von Afrika und Menschen afrikanischer Herkunft in der deutschen Alltagskultur*, ed. Marianne Bechhaus-Gerst and Sunna Gieseke (Königswinter: Peter Lang, 2006).

Frieda was, as can be traced through her diary, an extremely daring and unusual woman who was not afraid of overstepping the social boundaries by choosing to ignore or reshape gender roles. Therefore, she should be viewed as a spearhead for German feminist movements, who expanded female employment possibilities for single women in GEA; moreover, as a writer, she was the mother and creator of the *Kolonialroman* (the colonial novel genre).⁹ She wrote about imperial romantic liaisons and German men hunting game, fighting indigenous rebels, or even committing adultery in the colonies, thereby ignoring the conventions of the so-called *Mädchenliteratur* (literature for girls and young women), a genre typical of late nineteenth-century Prussian public standards.¹⁰ Contemporary industrialised Western Europe nationalised their citizens wherever possible and gendered literature was part of this process. Schoolboys were, for example, trained in school to study abstract topics, the natural sciences, and Latin, whilst their female contemporaries read literature that polished their beauty both within and without like poems and historical sagas, and studied how to be loving mothers. In this respect, Frieda's new genre definitely did not fit the patriarchal narrative on what was appropriate for a schoolgirl or young woman to read.

At a time when books like the collected works of Goethe, Shakespeare, or Descartes were presented in middle-class parlours as public status symbols, Frieda's works were deemed unsuitable for display. The situation was similar in the Belgian case, for the industrialisation processes in both Belgium and Germany created an ever-growing bourgeoisie that rose to political and cultural power, thereby also influencing educational reforms and ideas on gender roles. Jennifer Drake Askey makes a convincing case in her book *Good Girls, Good Germans* on how literature for the education of girls was booming from economic, political, and cultural points of views towards the end of the nineteenth century. Yet, one can safely assume that the male patriarchy considered Frieda's colonial novellas to be far too feminist and not ladylike enough for young women.¹¹

Who was this woman who simultaneously believed in a superior white race, the German race in particular, yet travelled to GEA to fulfil her own feminist goals

9 She became known as the first author of colonial novellas in German. Her most famous works were Bülow, *Reiseskizzen und Tagebuchblätter aus Deutsch-Ostafrika; Am anderen Ende der Welt* (Berlin 1890); *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Novellen* (Berlin: Fontane, 1891); *Tropenkoller. Episode aus dem Kolonialleben* (Berlin 1896).

10 See Askey, *Good Girls, Good Germans*.

11 Apart from the gendered aspect of whether or not Frieda's books were acceptable, I wish to refer to Mary Louise Pratt's opinions on colonial literature written by white people. She sees colonial literature of the time as a place of mistakes and insecurities that lacks in tolerance, modesty, and open-mindedness towards the colonial subaltern. Furthermore, according to Lucina Yeo, the difference between colonial and post-colonial approaches to literature is that the latter tries to include and analyse non-Western cultures as neutrally as possible. See Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992); Yeo, "Die Rehabilitation Subsahara-Afrikas in der deutschen Literatur nach 1960".

by setting up the first hospital wards and constructing a type of modern nunnery? Despite her societal status as an unmarried woman, Frieda was economically independent and pursued her own career. As a young woman, she left Germany and migrated to England with her grandmother and favourite sister Margarete. In 1881, they relocated to Berlin where, and this was extraordinary for the 1880s, both sisters were apprenticed to become schoolteachers; afterwards, they taught at a school for the daughters of the upper social strata. From then on, Frieda surrounded herself with both politically active feminists like Helene Lange and groups of patriotic socialites who supported philanthropic activities. Even the German Empress Auguste Viktoria complimented Frieda for her work and training in patient care at the Augusta Hospital in Berlin.

What is best described as a life of self-determination and self-affirmation was also one of numerous losses: her favourite sister Margarete died in 1884 during an attempt to save a child from drowning, Frieda's mother passed away in 1891, her brother Kuno committed suicide in 1893 after an unlucky love affair, and her other brother Albrecht was killed just one year earlier in the Kilimanjaro area in GEA during a battle against Afro-Arab rebels. Albrecht bequeathed Frieda and her last remaining sibling, Sophie, a limestone quarry and a palm plantation close to Tanga. Margarete's death, however, seems to have had the greatest impact on Frieda's emotional state by leaving a void, for it was not until after this tragedy that Frieda became increasingly active in feminist and colonial movements. Margarete's premature demise also seems to have enabled Frieda to become more daring and more liberated from public opinion, which pushed her to start on her colonial and literary career.

Frieda's colonial aspirations commenced in 1885 after she met the famous supporter of the German colonial project Carl Peters; they joined forces with the sisters Eva and Martha von Pfeil in order to found the *Protestant Mission Society for German East Africa* (EMDO) in 1886.¹² Later, but this time without Peters' active support, Frieda also founded the *German National Women's League for Medical Care in the Colonies* (DFKK).¹³ Together with the only other female management board member Martha von Pfeil, Frieda convinced the 18 male board members of the EMDO to focus on creating healthcare infrastructure run by lay people in GEA instead of paying more attention on missionary work. Frieda invested immense amounts of energy and time into ensuring that 'her' African hospitals would offer better-educated unmarried German women respectable employment in GEA. Her goal was to support the colonial cause and combine it with jobs for independent women of the middle and upper classes rather than ordained women. She obviously needed both the financial and the practical support of the Protestant Church, yet her pragmatism did not interfere with her ambition to create colonial jobs for laywomen. Frieda had the necessary medical training to be a nurse, but preferred to act as the executive organiser of hospitals and an innovator in terms of introducing modern healthcare

12 German: Evangelische Missionsgesellschaft für Deutsch-Ostafrika.

13 German: Deutsch-nationaler Frauenbund zur Krankenpflege in den Kolonien.

and hygiene standards to GEA. Originally the hospitals there were meant for white patients only, but, ultimately, they very frequently helped Afro-Arabs, Indians, and indigenous Africans as well.

Frieda and her colleague Bertha Wilke, a professional nurse, were in GEA for the EMDO from May 1887 to April 1888. They arrived in Zanzibar after one month of travelling, where, according to Frieda's diary, they were welcomed amicably by a mixed European and mainly male society consisting of adventurers, colonial officials, trade agents, missionaries, and soldiers. Carl Peters, Frieda's unofficial significant other, was there too; they shared the view that colonialism was important for Germany to become a global player. Even though they ended their intimate relationship in December 1887, their ongoing friendship would be the downfall of Frieda's colonial career in the long run.¹⁴ The EMDO board members criticised Frieda not only for excessively high expenditure in Africa, choosing the wrong locations, and her journalistic activities, but also for having unreasonably intimate contacts with leading colonial men in GEA. Independent agency as a female manager, public appearances in front of the press without clearing the content of the speeches beforehand with the board, a very active social life, and, above all, engaging in a love affair(s) as an unmarried woman did not fit the idealised picture of the competent and chaste nurse which the EMDO preferred to propagate in public. Frieda was therefore deposed from her responsibilities in absentia and then forced to return to Freiburg in 1888 after a pit stop in Bombay to cure her malaria.

After her return to Germany, Frieda's attempts to regain employment within the EMDO were unsuccessful. Nonetheless, she returned to GEA once more in May 1893 to accept her brother Albrecht's inheritance and stayed there for eleven months. Her aim was to be the first white single woman to lead a plantation in Africa. Frieda hoped to shape her inherited African properties into something comparable to a German agricultural estate. Eventually, her ambitions came to naught, despite the successful management of the estates. She failed because she was unmarried and as

14 Despite being the motivator and indirect founder of the German colonies, Carl Peters fell from grace with the German Foreign Ministry, the Reichstag, and the German press due to increasingly independent political agency and unnecessary brutality against Africans (his African nickname was *the man with bloodied hands*). Ultimately, he was expelled from colonial service because of the alleged Kilimandjaro-Affair, where he killed an African man for sleeping with his African mistress. Russell A. Berman, "Colonial Literature and the Emancipation of Women", in *Enlightenment or Empire. Colonial Discourse in German Culture*, ed. Russell A. Berman (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1998). Frieda's novella *Im Lande der Verheißung* suggests that she never stopped holding him in high regard. Years later, the Nazis re-issued the book but added the subtitle *Ein deutscher Kolonialroman um Carl Peters* (A German Colonial Novel about Carl Peters) as part of their propaganda to regain former German colonies. They also produced the movie *Carl Peters* in 1941, with Hans Albers as Carl Peters. See N.N., "Peters, Carl", in *Deutsches Kolonial-Lexikon*, ed. Heinrich Schnee (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1920). See also Barbara Ann Shumannfang, "Envisioning Empire: Jewishness, Blackness and Gender in German Colonial Discourse from Frieda Von Bülow to the Nazi Kolonie Und Heimat" (Duke, 1998).

such, she did not receive the government's support: "The German Foreign Ministry informed Frieda von Bülow that even though the East-African territories were under German protection, they could not guarantee safety for neither private ownership nor that of individual persons. [...] for the time being smaller private estates there were not appreciated."¹⁵ As a counter example I would like to refer to the von Prince's plantation Sakkarani in the west Usambara region, with which the German government had no issues at all. In truth, the official reason for not supporting Frieda was her reputation as an overly independent woman, a particular circumstance that did not sit well with some politicians in Berlin. It is probable that the only reason her actions were ignored and not interfered with was her well-known family name. Frieda gave up. She had won feminist-oriented battles on other fronts, but she could not win this one. So she returned to Germany for good and focused on her career as a writer. Her colonial novellas were not only the first to offer a female perspective on colonial life in a German colony, but were also very successful.

Despite the setbacks, both personal and professional, Frieda von Bülow saw herself as a propagandist for expansionism in Germany. Her autobiographical works were directed at female patriots. Surprisingly, she managed to combine contemporary feminism and a love of Africa with backwards racism. This merging of different ideas and interests shows her as an individual who picked her favourite bits from both modern and traditional values depending on what suited her best personally, politically, and professionally. She was an individual divided and yet united by contradictory values, which explains the mix of educational data on GEA's landscapes and peoples and her own personal experiences in her writings.¹⁶ Frieda's diary and her colonial novels supply the reader with the impression that she was a highly educated woman who, perhaps because of her expansive knowledge of diverse areas of life and education, saw herself confronted with an internal debate between her traditionalist values and her highly developed feminist beliefs.

In an article which Frieda wrote about her memories from GEA for a woman's magazine, she painted a picturesque image of a colonial Africa that consisted of the ruins of Portuguese castles, palm trees, exotic foods, and idyllic villages. She depicted indigenous Africans as peaceful and obedient people who willingly offered German colonisers fresh milk, coconuts, and flowers. She did acknowledge, though in a very soft way, that the Germans who took soil samples to test the agrarian qualities of specific areas caused Africans to expect future eviction from their lands. By doing so, Frieda acknowledged that German access to African territories came with a degree of misappropriation for the colonised.

15 German: Obwohl damals das [ostafrikanische] Land ja längst unter dem Schutze des Reiches stand, ließ das Auswärtige Amt Frieda v. Bülow erklären, daß es den Schutz von Privateigentum nicht übernehmen könne, daß vor allem für den Schutz einer einzelnen Persönlichkeit keine Garantie geleistet würde. [...] man *wünschte* vorläufig nicht kleineren Privatbesitz dort. Sophie Hochstetter, *Frieda Freiin von Bülow* (Dresden: N.N., 1910), 169.

16 See Bülow, "Allerhand Alltägliches aus Deutsch-Ostafrika".

Nonetheless, her articles focussed on the exotic and the foreign. She highlighted these facets by describing Afro-Arabic sultans, their courts and ships, and the exclusive lifestyle of white colonisers. She further emphasised how, as a woman, she never left the house without her revolver (her brother asked her to always be prepared for possible dangers such as assaults and robberies) and how she enjoyed her rather unusual status amongst white colonial society and the non-white communities. Yet, she tended to trivialise dangers by referring to experiences with audacious rats, disturbing dogs, or vicious little ants. According to her, lions only ate Africans; the one time she looked danger in the eye was during a hippo hunt.¹⁷

Her diary reads like a description of a predominantly peaceful GEA, a place where Germans could be Germans despite the long distance to the *Heimat*: they ate German food, drank German beer, celebrated German anniversaries, and wore German fashions. When she described indigenous groups, she generally organised them into three groups: Arabs (who were fine, semi-civilised individuals and the former rulers of East Africa); indigenous Africans (they were obedient workers, if a little lazy), and Indian merchants (detested for their materialistic and deceitful manners). It is apparent that she did not give any of the three mentioned groups German attributes, such as efficiency, trustworthiness, superiority, the ability to live modern lifestyles, or noble and civilised manners. I thus assume that she did not see non-whites as worthy or capable of white attributes. Moreover, this otherwise active feminist also did not grant her Arabic and African female contemporaries the same share of rights and emancipation that she did to European women. Frieda considered them to be alluringly erotic but denied them any share of those strengths which Frieda claimed as her own: independence, intelligence, and fierce loyalty to a nation. Yet, Frieda's attributes were not necessarily typical for a late nineteenth-century woman. In fact, they proclaimed a self-reliability which, despite contemporary feminist movements, did not quite fit the general social picture of the bourgeois or upper-class European woman.

Ironically, the late nineteenth-century conviction in the European's superiority over other races due to their whiteness and alleged higher civilisation allowed Frieda to act and live independently of male control, which was highly unusual within the German Empire. However, as a white woman in Africa, she did not once hesitate to actively profit from racist ideologies.¹⁸ There, she was almost at the top of the cultural and social pecking order, standing between the superior but benevolent colonial master and the inferior but willing colonised Other. Regardless of her aim to emancipate European women and fight for more gender equality in Germany, she abused her whiteness in a racist regime to strengthen her own position and exercise power over colonised non-whites. In Europe, she was still considered a member of the weaker sex, but in Africa Frieda profited from belonging to the superior white

17 See *ibid.*; Hammerstein, "Frieda von Bülow".

18 For more information of the glorification of Carl Peters and the discourse between white German women and racism, see also Marcia Klotz, "White Women and the Dark Continent: Gender and Sexuality in German Colonial Discourse from the Sentimental Novel to the Fascist Film" (Stanford University, 1995).

club and could thus wield strength over the colonised.¹⁹ The in previous chapters mentioned *Mindele* Club and its inherent benefits for white men also applied to Frieda and other European women, even if it was directed at white men.

While the borders of social classes and mobility were fluctuating and adjusting to modern developments in Europe, racial categorisations linked to social hierarchies and the strengthening of white identity enabled female colonisers like Frieda to be active agents of colonialism, critics of nobility, and feminist racists.²⁰ Frieda lived a twisted identity that used the status automatically granted to her by her skin colour in Africa in order to increase her independence and promote female emancipation. She obviously wanted to lessen the restrictions her cultural gender caused within Europe; yet, at the same time, she did not hesitate to live according to another set of restrictions whilst in GEA. On the one hand, she was a modern feminist; on the other, she was a conservative white racist. The new European middle classes created an ideal vision of the perfect bourgeois woman that was equally discriminatory and privileged. Frieda, even though she was a member of rural nobility and therefore the lower upper class, was still affected by this *zeitgeist* and did not pose an exception. Just like other white women in the colonies, Frieda too profited from modern changes concerning gender issues but was not prepared or expected to treat the colonial subaltern as an equal.²¹ Therefore, white women in the colonies should also be regarded as imperial perpetrators or, at least, as silent supporters of the system. After all, migrating to the colonies was based on individual decisions and freedom of choice.

Frieda was not a typical specimen for a German woman of her time *per se*, but she did function as an inspiring role model for some other Germans to take an active part in German-African colonialism. Single, non-ordained European women in the

19 For further readings on women increasing their socio-cultural power outside of Europe, see Frances Gouda, *Dutch Culture Overseas: Colonial Practice in the Netherlands Indies, 1900–1942* (Jakarta: Equinox Publishers, 2008); “Primitivity, Animism and Psychoanalysis: European Visions of the Native ‘Soul’ in the Dutch East Indies, 1900–1949”, in *The Transnational Unconscious: Essays in the History of Psychoanalysis and Transnationalism*, ed. Joy Damousi and Mariano Ben Plotkin (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009).

20 Apart from Frieda von Bülow’s favourite topic (colonialism), she also dedicated several works to critically analyse the modern nobility’s problems with contemporary developments (see *Die Frauenrechtlerin Gertrud Bäumer 1909* in her obituary about Bülow in the magazine *Die Frau*). Frieda’s other pet topic was the social standing and psychological state of women (see *Einsame Frauen* (1897), *Die stilisierte Frau* (1902), *Frauentreue* (1910) and several essays). Her dealings with influential writers such as Lou Andreas-Salomé, Hermann Bahr, Richard Beer-Hofmann, and Hugo von Hofmannsthal played a part in her literary development. Frieda also met great figures of the feminist movement, such as Ika Freudenberg, Sophie Goudstikker, and Anita Augspurg. For more details on Frieda’s biography see Hochstetter, *Frieda Freiin von Bülow*.

21 See Isabell Lorey, “Der weiße Körper als feministischer Fetisch. Konsequenzen aus der Ausblendung des deutschen Kolonialismus”, in *Weiß – Weißsein – Whiteness. Kritische Studien zu Gender und Rassismus/Critical Studies on Gender and Racism*, ed. Gabriele Dietze, et al. (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2006).

CFS and in GEA were very rare at the time for diverse reasons. One was that reliable employment offers for single women in Europe were usually linked to households or hospitals. The colonies were so young that neither job sector existed there in the late nineteenth century. Another reason was linked to the lack of employers and a cultural sense of impropriety that forbade an unwed white woman to travel to Africa on her own without at least one other woman (a colleague or chaperone) accompanying her. The only way for European women who did not wear the veil to travel to a colony was to be married and accompanied by their husbands. In some cases, sisters were allowed to follow their brothers for a new life in a colony. European society did not yet approve of respectable unmarried women travelling by themselves in the search for employment abroad.

One factor that could be applied to both the married and the unmarried white colonial women alike was the part they played in the contemporary emancipation process. Colonialism was seen as a means to both liberate oneself from the homeland and pursue personal career choices or to experience foreign cultures and lands within the reach of a colonial husband's protecting arms. Women like Frieda and Bertha supported the German claim to territorial expansion and the *mission civilisatrice*, but their participation in GEA was not seen as a part of the various women's clubs that promoted German women migrating to German colonies in Africa.²² Organisations like the FDKG promoted an image of a perfect colonial woman that portrayed her as a wife, a mother, and the bearer of German culture abroad. The German authorities did not trust men on their own to uphold German culture and morality in the colonies, so, from the 1890s onwards, they tried to export as many German women to Africa as possible. Their duty was to uphold German values, traditions, and morals, to raise German children accordingly, and to prevent German men from cohabiting with or even marrying local non-white or racially mixed women. The ideal German woman was the representative of bourgeois values, based on how the middle class saw itself as the arbiter of respectability and virtue. Yet, because she had neither economic nor political power, the middle-class woman occupied a public position without actually leaving the private sphere.²³

In contrast, Frieda and Bertha did not marry, did not have children, were not ordained by a Christian order, and were not sent to Africa by an organisation; however, they also did not openly support any feminist groups. It is true, as the German feminist Minna Cauer often lamented, that women did not have any real say in the establishment and organisation of Germany's colonies.²⁴ Yet, they were given the

22 See section 1.3 for more information on the German women's associations that supported the colonial idea and promoted the migration of German women to Africa.

23 Askey accurately describes the link between girls' education in the late nineteenth century and cultural reproduction and the nationalistic politisation of the bourgeois female, who was "the protector of the hearth and home, the representative of German piety and steadfastness". Askey, *Good Girls, Good Germans*, 21.

24 For more biographical data on Minna Cauer, the feminist social democrat and founder of several women's organisations in Germany, see Dietrich, "Konstruktionen Weißer

very important task of upholding German traditions and values. On the one hand, German feminists of the late nineteenth century hoped that the creation of colonies would facilitate the progress of feminist emancipation, but, on the other, the reality was that the colonies became a bearer of traditional gender roles. A similar situation applied to Belgian-Congolese developments too. The CFS and GEA were therefore a mixture between emancipatory hopes and half-baked traditionalism. I will show in the following section that some of the colonial wives were also quite modern for their times, despite their traditional social position as wives and mothers.

5.2 The Colonial Wife

Married European women were more common in the colonial scene than their unwed contemporaries. They were not an everyday appearance in the first dozen years after the CFS and GEA were founded; however, from the late 1890s onwards, a few wives started accompanying their husbands to their African workplaces. In the four following cases, all the white women involved accompanied their husbands after they had either previously served at least one term in the CFS or in GEA or had travelled south a few months earlier before their wives joined them. Questions that arose in this context were how European middle- and upper-class women would relate to their African experiences in their private writings. Moreover, I am also interested in whether there are traceable patterns in those female egodocuments regarding the reception of ideas about racial issues and their role in identity formation. In addition, I also searched for evidence (or the lack thereof) of these women's portrayals of whiteness in a cultural and an emotional sense and I aim to show that their whiteness either hindered or encouraged interaction with local indigenous peoples. A German example of a colonial wife is Magdalene von Prince (née von Massow).²⁵ For the Belgian side, I discuss the two wives: Gabrielle Sillye (née De-man) and Berthe Cabra (née Gheude).²⁶ Finally, Ebonne Sjöblom will be used to discuss the part of a Swedish missionary's wife.²⁷

Weiblichkeit. Emanzipationsdiskurse im Kontext des Kolonialismus"; N.N., "Minna Cauer, 1841–1922", Deutsches Historisches Museum, <https://www.dhm.de/lemo/biografie/minna-cauer>.

- 25 Magdalene von Prince followed her husband Tom to GEA with the aim of settling permanently in the West-Usambaran region. See Prince, *Eine deutsche Frau*.
- 26 Berthe Cabra went to the CFS for one term with her husband Alphonse. See Berthe Cabra, "Inventaire des archives de Alphonse Cabra, 1862–1932", ed. C. Liben (Tervuren: Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, 1977). Gabrielle Sillye accompanied her husband Albert to the CFS for one term. See Gabrielle Sillye, "Archives Albert Sillye", ed. Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale (Tervuren 1904). See Appendix VIII for photographs of Berthe and Alphonse Cabra.
- 27 Ebonne followed her spouse some months after he had laid first bases for his new mission. See Jossen-Tusch, *Skandinaver I Congo*.

The documents on and by Magdalene, Gabrielle, Berthe, and Ebonne show that these ladies were more open to interacting with indigenous populations than most male sources indicated. This was probably because they did not travel to central Africa for career reasons but instead accompanied their spouses. Outright boredom, which could be caused by a lack of employment or access to official duties, might have been another reason for the increased interaction between white women and indigenous Africans. These women did not occupy significant positions and colonial communities were not sophisticated enough to offer white women activities comparable to those available back in Europe. It was not just white women who were scarce in early colonial central Africa; activities for white women were also lacking. In Europe, the same women could have gone to social clubs, attended gatherings and meetings with various purposes, and met with family, relatives, and friends to spend their free time with. Newish African colonies, however, did not yet offer any of these distractions. The obvious lack of social and family networks also meant that their overall circle of friends was very limited. Boredom and a lack of social connections were therefore unavoidable.

Any of the four ladies mentioned above could easily have stayed in their respective hometowns. So why did not they? Equally, once they had settled in a colony, which experiences with indigenous (wo)men were most memorable to them? Leaving your home – no matter whether your town, country, or continent – always means making new acquaintances. Just like their husbands, these women experienced a dual discrepancy between, firstly, colonial reality versus prior expectations and, secondly, between the social and cultural orders of their home countries and the colonial facts of existence.

Egodocuments by German colonial wives are virtually absent in the German East African context: only one exists. In contrast, there are a handful of printed memoirs by former German female settlers in GSWA that have survived to today.²⁸ This geographical imbalance is most likely due to the fact that GSWA was a settler colony to begin with while GEA was not. In contrast to GSWA, which was filled with lush fields and good grazing grounds for animals, GEA had to be pacified, opened up, and developed before proper settling commenced. Magdalene von Prince's case is representative for the small number of Germans who settled in GEA's interior. Settling did not commence until the turn of the century and even then the numbers

28 The female memoirs published by Germans who lived in GSWA were Clara Brockmann, *Briefe eines deutschen Mädchens aus Südwest* (Berlin E.S. Mittler und Sohn, 1912); Adelheid 'Ada' Cramer, *Weiß oder schwarz. Lehr- und Leidensjahre eines Farmers in Südwest im Lichte des Rassenhasses* (Berlin 1913); Margarethe von Eckenbrecher, *Was Afrika mir gab und nahm* (Berlin: E.S. Mittler und Sohn, 1908); Helene von Falkenhausen, *Ansiedler-Schicksale: Elf Jahre in Deutsch-Südwestafrika 1893–1904* (Berlin: Reimer, 1904); Else Sonnenberg, *Wie es am Waterberg zugeht: Ein Originalbericht von 1904 zur Geschichte des Hereroaufstandes in Deutsch-Südwestafrika*, 2 ed. (Wendeburg: Uwe Krebs, 2004); Lydia Höpker, *Um Scholle und Leben. Schicksale einer deutschen Farmerin in Südwest-Afrika* (Minden: Wilhelm Köhler, 1910).

were low. Since female colonials were usually settler's wives, it was logical that fewer German wives lived in GEA than in GSWA; accordingly, more egodocuments were produced in Namibia.

As the wife of a former KS officer who was renowned for his bravery as a soldier, his loyalty to Germany, and his success as military leader, Magdalene accompanied Tom to Africa shortly after their wedding in Germany. Together, they travelled to West Usambara in GEA, where they built their own plantation stone by stone. They named the plantation *Sakkarani* after Tom's nickname amongst the African soldiers. Magdalene clarified in her diary that she was a true nationalist, loyal to the Kaiser, and that she believed in the cultural superiority of the white Christian European. In that respect, she was similar to Frieda: a classic socio-cultural product of her time. However, in her own way Magdalene also defied gender expectations by learning to shoot, going on safaris with her husband, sleeping in tents, capturing noteworthy images with her camera, engaging with African subalterns, and defending their plantation against intruders whilst living on her own for many weeks or months at a time whilst her spouse was tracking down Afro-Arab rebels or fulfilling other duties in the name of the KS.

As a white woman amongst predominantly African colonised, Magdalene took a rather pragmatic approach to life in the colony. She sought to find the most efficient combination of European and African customs to simplify life on-site. She explicitly acknowledged that her plantation depended on indigenous labour forces and thus forbade corporal punishment while generally opposing slavery.

And [are the colonised] beaten? I can say with a clear conscience that the white man with the stick exists only in the imagination of those Europeans who are absolutely unfamiliar with the local circumstances. Beatings are only allowed when a major insolence against white people has occurred: then, however, a swift blow, in my view, is essential and of the highest effect. Otherwise, however, one is too dependent on the workers to provoke them with beatings, and in the long run the co-operation is much better without the tiresome spanking. The African, who is and remains like a child, is in need of strictness; he has little understanding of mild and indulgent goodness and always interprets it as a sign of weakness. But even so he is entitled to fair treatment, which always works best on him.²⁹

29 German: Und wird geschlagen? Ich kann es mit gutem Gewissen aussprechen, der weiße Mann mit der Knute existiert nur in der Phantasie des mit den Verhältnissen absolut nicht vertrauter Europäer. Geschlagen darf nur bei grober Frechheit gegen den Weißen werden: dann ist ein schneller Schlag allerdings meiner Ansicht nach unentbehrlich und von bester Wirkung. Sonst aber ist man von den Arbeitern viel zu abhängig, um sie durch Schläge zu reizen, und man kommt auf die Dauer ohne das leidige Prügeln viel, viel besser aus. Streng muß der Afrikaner, der ein Kind ist und bleibt, behandelt werden, für Milde und nachsichtige Güte hat er wenig Verständnis und deutet sie stets als Schwäche. Aber auf gleichmäßige gerechte Behandlung hat er Anspruch, und sie wirkt stets am besten auf ihn! Magdalene von Prince, "Vom Schreibtisch und aus dem Atelier. Wie unsere Plantage in Deutschostafrika entstand", *Velhagen & Klasings Monatshefte*, no. 21 (1906).

However, Magdalene also reluctantly agreed to accept three African girls given to her as presents by different local chiefs, as it would have been most impolite to refuse them. In that particular situation, she decided to adhere to local customs and accept human gifts, despite disagreeing with the practice. In spite of her ability to adopt and adapt European and African customs when necessary, the general lack of white women troubled her. Accordingly, it does not come as a surprise that she had her diaries published to convince more German women to migrate to GEA.

Since white women were a rare sight for indigenous Africans, Magdalene and her colleagues were often feared by Africans. Magdalene, for example, was proclaimed to be a witch who was not to be angered. Thus, despite the exchange of local knowledge (Magdalene took Swahili lessons, learnt to cook African dishes, and adjusted to various customs), her persona was recognised as foreign, fearful, and powerful. Whilst she herself never regretted her migration to Africa, she also never gave up her whiteness. Indeed, regardless of GEA's tropical climate, Magdalene accentuated her white self by continuing to wear Western clothes such as blouses and skirts (including underskirts!) and even her three adopted girls were dressed like white household staff. In fact, Magdalene only spoke in German to them and the girls learnt to house-keep according to German practices. In short, Magdalene, the wife of a renowned German officer and being the first white woman living in the Usambara region, was pragmatic enough to accept local African customs if they alleviated life in situ, but she never refrained from highlighting her white German background by means of fashion, language, hair, and lifestyle. She advertised her identity to the public as that of a civilised and privileged Christian white woman who did not fear being the only example of her genus for miles on end. She left a mark as an individual who combined contemporary social and political changes with traditions, but she also displayed certain behavioural traits linked to unfounded prejudices.

An unexpected occurrence concerning the Belgian-Congolese case was the discovery of the diaries of a female colonial – diaries that burst with photos and accounts of everyday colonial life in the CFS. Gabrielle (Gabiye or Petit Bichon as she was lovingly called by her husband)³⁰ was most certainly not part of standard female Belgian society in 1904. A quiet life in a bourgeois setting in Brussels evidently was not to her liking. Instead, she shared her husband Albert's interest in Africa, proving it by actively exploring sub-Saharan cultures and peoples. Her journals travelled the same routes as she did, for they are just as weather-beaten as she seems to have been on occasion. Gabrielle commenced writing her diaries on the day of her departure from Antwerp and did not end until her return to Europe. Apart from the diaries there were also letters she had sent to her aunt and uncle in Belgium. Those letters were erroneously catalogued as belonging to Albert Sillye and stored with his belongings instead of in her archival boxes at the MRAC. The diaries' pages contain

30 Albert commences nearly every letter to Gabrielle with the words: "Ma chère Gabiye" (my beloved Gabiye). See Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, Tervuren, Archives Albert Sillye, HA.01.024.

sepia-coloured photos of both colonisers and colonised and dried specimens of mosquitoes, flower petals, and plant leaves.³¹

Gabrielle's daily routine consisted of a variety of pastimes like photography, learning one or more of the local dialects, and challenging her cooking skills by experimenting with Congolese recipes. Her diaries also inform us about how she was sometimes even permitted to accompany Albert to remote places and stations in the CFS. At other times, though, she had to remain at base camp or in Stanleyville on her own whilst her husband travelled for several weeks on end. Gabrielle's writings offer the accounts of a young newly-wed who explored, travelled, and photographed the Congo both together and apart from her husband. Reading her journals in combination with her husband's letters supplies the reader with a vast number of other colonials' names.³² Some of the names they mention in their writings were those of imperial social pillars, like Commanders Engh, Siffer, and Thies of the Belgian-Congolese colonial society. Gabrielle's reports depict her as a woman who was simultaneously a long-term tourist, explorer, a crosser of cultural borders and, last but not least, a devoted wife.

For currently unidentifiable reasons, accounts about the crossing from Europe to Africa are very rare. Fortunately, Gabrielle wrote about her crossing to Africa in letters to her aunt and uncle. She described the ship with its daily routines on board and other passengers, as well as the cities she and Albert passed or visited during the crossing. She described hotels, city architecture, and how she was prohibited from venturing into specific parts of African harbour cities, like in Tenerife, Senegal, or Dakar, because, according to her spouse Albert, certain areas were dangerous for white women. More often than not, he made her stay on the ship while he did his official errands on land. By the time Gabrielle arrived in Matadi, she had seen a great many different skin colours, peoples, religious groups, dress styles, and cultures and heard dozens of different languages and related dialects.

Gabrielle did not hesitate to use the opportunities which a colonial life could offer Europeans. She not only enriched herself materially, but also crossed cultural frontiers and reinvented herself in many different ways. Nevertheless, she did mention in one of her letters that her parents were unhappy about her choice of husband and her decision to accompany him to the CFS. In her first letter to her aunt and uncle, she wrote:

I have been thinking about you and how I left, and I confess that I have caused discontent. Father and Mother wanted me [to stay] a little [longer], before abandoning them so suddenly and for such a long time! It made me sad. You know I really love them, but Albert is my husband, is he not? That is how life is, in spite of everything we think of [our

31 Please see Appendix III for examples of her collection.

32 One matter which could not be clarified is whether or not they had had any offspring. If the answer is positive, the possibility of meeting up with their descendants could be a most informative experience.

matrimony] first, [it takes] the first place. And this [continent] is his joy, you know very well that Africa is [exactly that to him].³³

This is the only time in Gabrielle's collection of letters where she stands up for her decision to go to Africa. She also defended her husband's passion for central Africa, his work there, and her duty as an obedient and loving wife to follow him wherever his employment took him. In this moment, she was both a female pioneer who wanted to explore Africa and a dutiful wife succumbing to what society expected of her as a wedded woman.

Nevertheless, when they got engaged, Albert had exclaimed that he could not wait for his colonial term to finally end so that he could return to Europe and marry here. "Dear Gabije, this time it is true that I will see you again soon. I embrace you tenderly!"³⁴ or "We [Eng and I] will arrive in Europe in August 1903. I swear it!"³⁵ However, something had occurred after their marriage. It is probable that, after his return to Belgium, Albert did not manage to readjust to European circumstances and instead missed colonial life in Africa. He yearned for the CFS so much that he would risk leaving his *chère Gabije* back in Europe, for which reason she decided to accompany him there. It is also possible that Gabrielle was the driving force behind it all. Perhaps she too wanted to experience an adventure. She may have asked or made her husband sign up for another term of colonial service so that she could also explore Africa. A third option is that Albert was willing to give up his colonial career for Gabrielle, only to find out that she also wanted to travel to the CFS. No matter what the ultimate decisive factor or reason was, it is clear that Gabrielle wanted to leave Belgium and see the CFS (perhaps thus gaining an understanding of her husband's love for the Congo).

Nineteenth-century gender roles underwent developments that influenced colonial life. It is for this reason that I chose the above sources to portray how, unlike most wives who accompanied their men to the colonies, the standard Belgian colonial was different to Albert. The common Belgian colonial was like Léon Rom (see chapter 4), who had military training, was French-speaking, in his mid-twenties, experienced sub-Saharan Africa as a space characterised by traditional gender roles, and the opportunity to experience the ultimate manly lifestyle. Rom's profile matched

33 French: J'ai beaucoup pensé à vous sous, que j'avais laissée là-bas et je vous avouerais que souvent j'ai eu peur, que sont à-fait incontinent. Père et Mère m'en veulent un peu, de les avoir abandonnés si brusquement et pour aussi longtemps! et cela me faisait de la peine. Vous savez que je les aime vraiment, mais Albert n'est-il pas mon mari!? Et la vie est faite ainsi, que malgré tout on pense à lui d'abord, en premier lieu. Et c'est sa joie, l'Afrique vous le savez très bien n'est-ce pas. Sillye, "Archives Albert Sillye". (DMN : 2012.03.29 13.41.03).

34 French: Chère Gabije, cette fois-ci c'est bien vrai que je vais te revoir bientôt! Je t'embrasse bien bien tendrement! Sillye, "Archives Albert Sillye". HA.01.024; 59.40.89 (DMN: 2012.03.29 11.54.28).

35 French: Nous arriverons en août en Europe 'en fait mon grand serment! Ibid.HA.01.024; 54.40.95 (DMN: 2012.03.29 11.56.48).

the image of a traditional coloniser of the late nineteenth century who lived a life in the CFS suited to that of a masculine noble-born Belgian. Rom lived out his colonial life as a soldier, unchallenged aggressor, big game hunter, traveller, amasser of small fortunes, and eternal bachelor. While Rom was a representative of the Old Man, Gabrielle seemed to represent modernity: she was a New Woman. She accompanied her husband to tropical central Africa, lived in the jungle with him, and she was (supposedly) the first Western woman to traverse the CFS. Her photographs show her in trousers or draped in a large cloth, about to take a native-style shower.³⁶ Her written and visual sources do not portray a scandalous feminist, but they do show a Western woman who was not afraid to lead a more modern lifestyle and try out new, foreign things. Gabrielle satisfied her lust for adventure by making compromises between old and new gender roles.

As mentioned above, Gabrielle described her first encounters with Africans when travelling along the Atlantic coastline. One aspect which all her anecdotes have in common, regardless of where on the African continent she found herself, was her complaints about how dirty and unhygienic local Africans were. According to her, none of the African colonised understood the basic (white) concept of cleanliness. This was a biased assessment though, because cleanliness was an epithet used to criticise things that were not dirty; for example, 'dirt' roads. It refers to unpaved African village/town roads; although they were kept in good order, they were not paved like in Europe, which meant that many white people considered them to be dirty and consequently savage. According to Gabrielle, her first experience of dirtiness occurred during her stay in Tenerife, where the staff of a luxury hotel did not grasp the meaning of cleanliness:

The [Grand Hotel] is good, but let us not forget that we are in Africa! [...] And the black [employees] are not very clean! The other day I asked for a fork. The boy took a dirty plate, a dirty fork, and wiped them with a dirty towel before bringing them back to me. This morning the same thing with a knife, only this time he did not use the towel, he used his fingers!³⁷

Cleanliness and applying European hygiene routines were not just vital for the sake of being clean. They provided Europeans with the means to control colonisers and colonised alike. Body hygiene and a general state of cleanliness were markers of Western civilisation and of lived whiteness. The ever-recurring topic of clean clothes, groomed hairstyles, body hygiene, and requests to relatives in Europe to send soap and perfumes highlights the utmost importance which cleanliness and

36 See Appendix II for photographs of her in different settings and clothes.

37 French: L'hotel est bien, car n'oublions pas que nous sommes en Afrique! [...] Puis les noirs ne sont pas trop propres! L'autre jour je demande une fourchette, le boy va prendre, sur une assiette sale, une sale fourchette, passe simplement la sale serviette dessus et me l'apporte. Ce matin la même chose avec un couteau, seulement cette fois ci au lieu d'employer la serviette il a employé ses doigts! Sillye, "Archives Albert Sillye". (DMN: 2012.03.29 13.41.12).

modern hygiene played in white people's lives. Just being white was not enough. The transfer of Western European fashion to Africa by wearing clean and ironed light-coloured blouses, aprons, dresses, and uniforms became a symbol for modernity and a civilised lifestyle and culture. White or beige clothes as well as a general spruceness were a way of distinguishing between the savage and the civilised.

Apart from criticising a lack of cleanliness amongst service staff to portray the gap of civilisation between herself and Africans, Gabrielle also described and gave her opinion about African women and their dress sense. It became apparent that she shared a wider interest in the appearance of African women, whom she considered contemporaries but not equals:

Women [in Dakar] carry their babies on their backs in a big shawl which is wound around their bodies. They cut their hair and place a bunch of small pearls and strings in it. Indigenous [women] wear many charms, beads, etc. Their sandals, the clothes and fabrics that they clothe their bodies with are either colourful or plain white. Their heads and hands are covered in cloths. Around the head one to two colourful shawls are worn as a turban.³⁸

Gabrielle's letters expressed a level of exhilaration that did not lose its intensity over the course of the journey. Only after many months of living in and travelling through the CFS, at times without her husband (but always accompanied by at least one white colonial male), did her diary entries take on the dreary tone of routine. They became monotonous. In her daily entries she described these days either with the simple word "*divers*" (miscellaneous) – meaning that some things occurred but nothing special enough to be mentioned in detail in her diary – or with the terms "*journée ordinaire*" (ordinary day) or "*journée habituelle*" (regular day).³⁹ Gabrielle described a normal day as follows:

March 21

Ordinary day.

This is what an ordinary day usually looks like: I get up at around 7am. Followed by a morning wash – lunch – going to the local market – giving instructions [to my staff] of daily chores like washing laundry and preparing lunch – feeding chickens, dogs, ducks etc. – general cleaning – miscellaneous – sewing – preparation of canning – personal wash – lunch at around half past twelve – general inspection – bathing the dog – washing – mending – taking photos – chasing butterflies – various [other duties] – setting the

38 French: Les femmes portent leurs bébés derrière le dos, dans un pagne qu'elle enroulant autour d'elles. Elles coupent leurs cheveux et s'attachent à la place un tas de petite bousse de ficelles. Les indigènes portent en général beaucoup de grigris, perles etc. ils ont des sandales en cuire et s'enroulent dans des pagnes et étoffes à couleurs criardes ou blanches. Ils portent tout sur la tête, ou *sur* la main. Autour de la tête un ou deux mouchoirs de couleurs arrangés en turban. Ibid. (DMN: 2012.03.29 13.41.29).

39 Ibid.HA. 63.71.4 (DMN: 2012.03.30 10.33.47); HA. 63.71.4 (DMN: 2012.03.30 10.33.58); HA. 63.71.4 (DMN: 2012.03.30 10.34.20). See Appendix III for images of these particular entries.

menu and giving directions for supper – preparation of appetiser – refreshing for supper – dinner from 7 to 8 – feeding the dogs and sending them to sleep – chatting – listening to music – playing games – beading – sunset between 9:30 to 10.⁴⁰

Besides her social position as Albert's wife, Gabrielle did not have any official standing or employment within the colonial society like teaching or nursing. All the same, she assisted her husband with his paperwork. Hence, she did not merely take care of their common household, which at first was nothing more than a simple jungle tent, but also wrote and copied reports for him and often prepared Albert's official correspondence. In fact, she already began doing this during their maritime transit from Antwerp to Matadi: "I always help Albert with his [work] – copying letters, reports –."⁴¹ Whether or not she was allowed to do these tasks remains unclear, but, as the daughter of a Belgian editor, she not only grew up surrounded by a literary world but was also accustomed to the style and formatting which official documents required. It was no doubt useful that prior to the trip she had helped out in her father's office, a common practice in family-owned firms, before marrying Albert on 2 March 1904.⁴² Considering how early she started writing official reports for her spouse, she most likely did not need tutoring on the matter. Gabrielle was a modern woman who could adjust her writing in accordance with her needs.

Like Gabrielle, Edvard Vilhelm Sjöblom's wife Ebonne was a colonial wife who worked with and for her husband in Africa.⁴³ Ebonne did not leave any personal handwritten documents (at least as far as I could find), but she left historical footprints by taking photographs at her husband's mission station, which was generally an unusual hobby for a woman of her time. Ebonne's pictures are comparable to today's journalistic photos, and they were used to document missionary life in the Congo in Harald Jenssen-Tusch's innovative book *Skandinaver i Congo*. This con-

40 French: 21 Mars; Journée ordinaire; Ici, voici en général le journal de la journée: Lever – vers 7h. Toilette – déjeuner – marché avec les indigènes – Voici le linge à laver. ... et direction du diner – Nourriture des poules, chiens, canards etc – Nettoyage général; Divers – couture – Préparation de l'appétitif – Toilette – Diner – vers midi ½ – Inspection général – Bain du chien – beniture(?) – raccomodage – photo – chasse aux papillons – divers – Menu et direction du souper – Préparation de l'appétitif – divers Toilette et bain – Souper – vers 7h 20 – Nourriture des chiens – leur coucher – Causerie – musique – jeux – enfilage de perles – Coucher vers 9h ½-10 heures; *ibid.* HA. 63.71.4 (DMN: 2012.03.30 10.34.20).

41 French: J'aide souvent Albert pour ses écritures – copie de lettres, de rapports –. Sillye, "Archives Albert Sillye". HA. 63.71.14 (DMN: 2012.03.30 11.29.26).

42 MRAC, Tervuren, Archives Albert Sillye, HA.01.024; 59.40.33 (DMN: 2012.03.29 11.36.20).

43 Curiously, I discovered that the Swedish historian Sigbert Axelson mentions another married Baptist missionary couple who worked in the Congo at the same time as Ebonne and Edvard Vilhelm Sjöblom; however, he has named this other couple as Emma and Vilhelm Sjöholm. Currently, it is unclear whether there was indeed a second missionary couple from Sweden with similar names or if Axelson accidentally changed the names.

temporary book by a Danish author presented the reader with Scandinavians who worked in the CFS.⁴⁴ Jenssen-Tusch dedicated an entire chapter to the Sjöbloms by using Edvard's accounts and Ebonne's photographs. Her pictures are testaments to their life in the Congo and several of them were of indigenous African boys whom they had adopted or even bought in order to raise them as Christians. However, they do not only show beautiful scenery and harmonious moments in the mission station. Ebonne went further than that and had the courage to make pictures of less beautiful motifs like hand-less colonised people or the victims of village burnings and pillaging conducted by both European and Afro-Arabs perpetrators.⁴⁵

Ebonne's Christian convictions did not go as far as treating the Sjöbloms' African charges as equals, but she did not lie idle either. As a modern white woman, Ebonne applied her photographic skills to make a statement against the brutality directed at indigenous subalterns by European colonisers in the CFS. In her position as a missionary's wife, she was commonly expected to be devout and obliging. She was a representative of an ideology that combined domesticity with colonialism, which Jean and John Comaroff have highlighted in a British nineteenth-century context.⁴⁶ The Comaroffs argued that the export of an idealised image of Western domesticity and family life to the colonies legitimised missionary activities that enforced the implementation of Western culture abroad. Domesticity had become the core ideal of a bourgeois way of life, thereby highlighting the white way of life as modern and worthy of protection. This differentiation between a white and a non-white way of life strengthened the othering process and bolstered the Christian missionaries' experience of whiteness. Ebonne's photographic talents do not conceal the fact that she was a married woman with the concomitant duties. So, while some of her photographs show atrocities, others show her in a prim white dress in front of her tropical home.

However, apart from being a wife, she too did not have an official position that could have granted her a public audience with Western authorities for her complaints about the dark sides of Leopold II's colonising style. Despite her low official standing as the wife of a Swedish missionary, she applied the materials at hand and played with the norms of public engagement as far as she could within the gendered rules that applied to a white woman. In the colony, she was second only to the white male, but other rules applied back in Europe. Like her husband, Ebonne advocated for more humane colonising and labour conditions in the CFS. As a woman, she could not travel freely back and forth in Europe like her husband Edvard did. He

44 This book portrays over nine hundred Scandinavians, most of them even portrayed with matching photographs, with differing jobs and duties in the CFS from 1878 onwards. The majority of the discussed colonisers were employed as seamen, yet this literary work also informs us about missionaries, colonial officers, and tradesmen. See Jenssen-Tusch, *Skandinaver I Congo*.

45 For further information and Ebonne Sjöblom's photographs, see *ibid.*, 319–40.

46 See Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, "Hausgemachte Hegemonie", in *Jenseits des Eurozentrismus. Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften*, ed. Sebastian Conrad and Shalini Randeria (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2002).



Lille lemlæstet
Dreng
fra Ikoko.
Fotograferet af
Mission. Whitehead
fra Lukoléla.
(Fot. tilh.
Fru E. Sjöblom.)

Figure 9:
Photograph of Ebonne Sjöblom.

held anti-slavery and anti-forced labour talks in Great Britain and parts of Scandinavia. Contemporary European society did not want to hear about the gruesome working conditions of indigenous peoples in the CFS from a woman. Undeterred by this gendered restriction, she assisted her husband in their joint campaign, taking and collecting photographs which were later used not only in Jenssen-Tusch's work, but also in a few other printed works from anti-slavery organisations. Of course, her name was not always mentioned as that of the photographer or collector. But thanks to Jenssen-Tusch's book, I was able to create a small collection of pictures that she had access to.⁴⁷ Together with her husband, Ebonne used photographs as a weapon in the struggle to fight inhumane work conditions in the CFS.

Last but not least, I present the fourth case of a colonial wife, that of Berthe Cabra. At first glance, she was a regular Belgian middle-class woman accompanying her spouse, Alphonse Cabra, to the CFS. The latter was remembered by his peers to have had an inquisitive mind and he left behind thousands of comments on the lifestyle of the indigenous peoples, with whom he was on good terms and knew how to win their trust and use their skills for life in the jungle.⁴⁸ Apart from this, the eye-catching passages in Alphonse Cabra's reports are those relating to the future

47 Jenssen-Tusch, *Skandinaver I Congo*, 486.

48 Alphonse Cabra, "Inventaire Des Archives De Alphonse Cabra, 1862-1932", ed. C. Liben (Tervuren: Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, 1977).

of the colony, including the adaptation of white people in the CFS. One of his most consistent and discussed ideas was that the integration of Europeans in the Congo would be possible only if the white woman accompanied her husband.⁴⁹ His wife shared the same belief and therefore joined him on two of his four terms in the CFS. Print media reported about her as one of the first European women to venture into the Congo.⁵⁰ Berthe was born in 1864 and married Alphonse, then an officer in the Belgian army, in 1903. She almost immediately accompanied her husband to Africa for the first time. The trip lasted seven months and she returned seemingly delighted by all the African experiences she had gathered. Berthe stated that she only had good memories from her nomadic life sleeping in tents.⁵¹

After Leopold II entrusted a new mission to Alphonse in 1905, the king, despite royal misgivings, allowed Berthe to accompany her husband on this important expedition. The voyage was an inspection of the eastern province of the CFS. The Cabras sailed to Naples on 16 April 1905 and then continued to Mombasa via Zanzibar. From Mombasa, they took the train to Port Florence (today known as Kisumu) and crossed Lake Victoria. On 9 June, the caravan moved off towards Lake Albert (known as Lake Mobutu between 1941 and 1997), where they descended to Lake Tanganyika. The Cabras then continued by boat and train, arriving in Boma in October 1906. This journey from the eastern to the western coast of Africa took them 18 months to accomplish. Berthe later returned on her own to Belgium with materials and scientific collections amassed during this extraordinary trip. Once back in Belgium, she gave numerous interviews to curious journalists, who longed for reports by the first white woman to cross the African continent. She said that the caravan started at 6am every day and that it was common to encounter elephants, jackals, and leopards along the way. Berthe also explained the ravages of sleeping sickness; like Magdalene von Prince in the German case, Berthe encouraged wives to accompany their husbands to the Congo to support them. Her husband continued his successful military career, became a general, and died in 1932. Even though Berthe never returned to Africa, she was awarded the medal of the *l'Ordre de Léopold, de la Couronne et de l'Etoile du Congo* before her death in January 1947.⁵²

49 For a more detailed overview on biographical data on Alphonse Cabra's life stations, see *ibid.*, articles.

50 See following selection of articles which stated that Mme B. Cabra was the first European woman to cross the CFS: N.N., "Le retour du Commandant Cabra", *Journal de Bruxelles* (Decembre 1906). "Aus ‚Wildem‘ Lande", *Königlich privilegirte Berlinische Zeitung von Staats- und Gelehrtenachen Vossische Zeitung* 09.01.1907; "Entrevue du petit bleu avec Mme Cabra sur sa traversée de l'Afrique", *Petit Bleu* (15.11.1906).

51 See "La femme blanche au Congo. Le voyage de Mme Cabra", *Le congo. Moniteur Colonial* (16.03.1907).

52 For Berthe Cabra's egodocuments in the MRAC archive, see Cabra, "Inventaire des archives de Alphonse Cabra, 1862–1932". For more general information see N.N., "Gheude, Berthe (1864–1947), Épouse Cabra", in *Dictionnaire des femmes belges. XIXe et XXe siècles*, ed. Éliane Gubin, et al. (Brussels: Édition Racine, 2006).

“Many Europeans linked gender relations in their own societies to colonial projects through the widespread notion that civilizations could be ranked in terms of advancement by how women were treated within them.”⁵³ Keeping this in mind, the egodocuments of the four ladies presented here might be some of the most unusual and rare testimonies on female colonial life in the CFS and GEA in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They were not only more advanced in terms of technology and education than Congolese women, but they were also more daring and thus maybe more feminist than their European female peers. Having said this, one should keep in mind the ambiguity of this statement when considering how much more privileged they were than their central-African female contemporaries. Gabrielle, Berthe, Ebonne, and Magdalene were the first white laywomen to have ventured into Tanzania and the Congo as members of colonial projects.⁵⁴

5.3 New Woman vs Old Woman

What is there to say about gender roles in a late nineteenth-century colonial context? How strong was their gradual adjustment to contemporary times at the turn of the century and how did it influence colonial projects (if at all)? In both the CFS and GEA, conservative ideas clashed with feminist movements. It was difficult to ignore contemporary developments in the homelands that revolved around the emancipation of social classes and gender roles. The combination of broadening the education of the masses with the French Revolution and its slogan of *égalité, fraternité, liberté* did not only affect the battle between social classes. It also intruded upon feminist ideas and racial issues. As stated before, the widescale weakening of the nobility and the strengthening of the bourgeoisie required a new form of subalternity. The

53 Wildenthal, “Race, Gender, and Citizenship in the German Colonial Empire”, 279.

54 Berthe Cabra was married to Alphonse Cabra (1862–1932), *lieutenant général* of the FP. He volunteered in the Engineer Regiment from 1878 to 1880 and studied at the Ecole Militaire with a scholarship; he became a lieutenant in 1887. He joined the Military School as deputy of staff in 1890; in 1894, he became *adjutant général*. As a member of the Delporte-Gillis Mission, Cabra joined Captain Delporte and made astronomical, geographical, and magnetic observations of the Congo River. Delporte died in May 1891 after crossing the river to the Falls. In 1893, Delporte’s mission was continued by R. P. Dumont, senior geologist, but he too died on 11 June 1893. The mission was gradually extended to also include ethnography. In 1896, the CFS asked the Ministry of War to designate an officer to continue Delporte’s mission: Captain Cabra accepted and was seconded to the Military Cartographic Institute. However, even before his departure, Cabra was warned by the Secretary General at the Department of Foreign Affairs that his services would be required later for border demarcations between CFS and Portuguese possessions. Cabra left Europe on 23 June 1896 in Lisbon and arrived in the Congo 13 July 1896. Before leaving Boma, he inaugurated the first half of the railway Congo in Matadi-Tumba (22 July 1896). On 4 September, he left Boma for his first expedition (1896–1897).

distinction between blue-blooded and non-noble born was fading, as were the lines between the sexes and their gendered socio-cultural roles. Christian white women, be they single or married, who did not stay at home no longer immediately caused a public scandal. Women's work, once limited to the family home, was now allowed to enter the public sphere.

Generally speaking, the private home was a woman's domain; the outside world was left for men to experience and dominate. Opening up a public workspace for women was therefore a revolutionary development in itself. I refer to the Christian dimension because the tradition of keeping women indoors went back centuries and was heavily engrained in white European Christian societies. Even medieval intellectuals and revolutionaries like Martin Luther praised, and thereby publicly acknowledged, this culture, stating that "women ought to stay at home; the way they were created indicates this, for they have broad hips and a wide fundament to sit upon"⁵⁵. By the mid-1800s, however, European identities were reconfiguring according to new agendas. Novel reconfigurations travelled all the way down south into colonial Africa. The transnational nature of colonisers' lives (they often claimed more than merely one national or regional affiliation) meant they were necessarily affected by developments in gender-related topics. This multiplicity was also extremely visible in their writings.

Towards the late nineteenth century, the New Woman had strongly advanced in Europe and not without effect: formerly male-dominated job sectors were slowly but steadily being infiltrated by young, unmarried women. These single women were usually literate, ready to leave their parental homes, and, just like many young unmarried men, dreamt of social advancement and a life away from (rural) poverty. Depending on whether these young individuals had a metropolitan or an agricultural background, they received different types of employment in the big metropolies like Berlin and Brussels. Due to their rural upbringing, usually on farms or as members of handicraft families, country girls tended to gain employment as household or kitchen staff or as nannies for babies and pre-school children, since these jobs were usually more physically demanding than they were intellectually. Even so, despite the high degree of demanding physical work, these young women preferred to work in a clean city house with a neat uniform than continue labouring in smelly animal stalls or the dingy craft rooms of Europe's rural areas.⁵⁶

Amongst the rural working classes, it was considered a step up the social ladder and towards the upper working and middle classes when a land labourer became a city worker. These women were either desperate or ambitious enough to improve

55 Martin Luther, *Table Talk*, ed. Theodore G. Tappert, trans. Theodore G. Tappert, vol. 54, Luther's Works (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 8.

56 See Goebel, "Dienstbotenzeitungen. Die ‚Dienstbotenfrage‘ und Erzählungen für Dienstmädchen in deutschen Dienstbotenzeitungen zwischen 1898 und 1932"; Uta Ottmüller, "Die Dienstbotenfrage. Zur Sozialgeschichte der doppelten Ausnutzung von Dienstmädchen im deutschen Kaiserreich", in *Zur Sozialgeschichte der Frau* (Münster: 1978); Walser, *Dienstmädchen*.

their life circumstances and took the appropriate measures to reach this goal. Often, recruitment procedures were organised by specialised agencies in the cities that established contact between employer and future employee. These agencies had two methods of finding new employees for city households: they would either send out representatives to smaller towns and villages to attract new applicants or the agencies would advertise their services in newspapers. The unmarried rural woman profited directly from both industrialisation and the steady growth of the bourgeoisie in Europe, because the latter's new and expanding households created jobs for members of the rural working class.

In the meantime, the middle-class housewife had become a status symbol for bourgeois men. The husbands' goal was to give their wives an existence comparable to those of noble women; i. e. the modern bourgeois man did not merely support the family but his wife did not have to contribute by financial or labour means to the household anymore either. Nineteenth-century bourgeois wives and daughters did not occupy a place in public life like their husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers did. In addition to these changes in middle-class family structures, the opinion spread that "leisure [was] part of the respectable woman's role"⁵⁷ because women now had more free time on their hands than in previous generations. They often spent it reading female-friendly literature. Despite their lack of public influence, these women, in combination with their educational and cultural knowledge, were representatives of their families' social and economic standing, thereby contradicting the public vs. private sphere debate on how women were forbidden from any public duties.⁵⁸ An ideal middle-class wife of the late nineteenth century did not have to work for her husband but instead headed her household and delegated the daily chores to her household staff. As a result, new jobs were created for non-familial women who would take on the housewife's household duties.

Due to their familiarity with city life, urban female workers had a slight advantage compared to their rural contemporaries. They were a step ahead in three ways. Firstly, they had local connections that facilitated the job search. Secondly, city women tended to have had easier access to school education; as a result, they were better schooled in reading, writing, and basic mathematics than their provincial counterparts. Thirdly, some of these (mostly young) women had already climbed the career ladder by applying for office and sales jobs rather than employment in the household. While rural applicants entered the growing servant labour market caused by the empowered middle-class, urban single women were increasingly employed by metropolitan service sectors linked to the private industry and commerce. Examples were desk jobs as office secretaries, assistants of various sorts in offices, telephone operators, and presentable sales women in fashion, household, or

57 Askey, *Good Girls, Good Germans*, 44.

58 The upbringing of middle- and upper-class girls and women had become a major market force in the nineteenth century and a lot of time and money was spent by the patriarchy and its gender ideology on an 'adequate' education of the female representative of every family. See *ibid.*

textile shops for the middle and upper classes. In contrast to previous decades and centuries, writing skills for women were no longer limited to the upper classes, select family homes, or Christian nunneries.⁵⁹

One crucial aspect which applied to both rural and urban single female workers was that they were no longer frowned upon by society for leaving their parental homes in search of jobs. Equally, at a time of empowerment for the common people, the wish to better one's social and financial status was no longer subject to objections, even if it meant granting this opportunity to young unmarried women. Such changes were major developments in societal attitudes towards female financial independence; it was through these developments that female emancipation arose. Of course, this modern development only applied until a woman married. After that, her earnings and financial independence would fall to the husband. But, until then, at least for a few years, young women could experience a sense of independence which previous generations had not had the luxury of encountering. As expected, social attitudes towards women who remained unmarried were still critical, unless they were employed in big households and had independent earnings.

Another way in which urban women earned wages independently was as a seamstress, because it did not matter whether they were married or not. In fact, most of them were. Metropolitan seamstresses (and to a certain extent ironers) usually worked from home, representing an early version of today's self-employed mom. Due to the introduction of compulsory school education for children in Belgium and Germany, married women stayed home longer than at the beginning of the nineteenth century, since their children did not enter the labour market until much later. This caused two major financial repercussions: child labour was no longer possible until the child reached at least twelve years of age and parents had to support their offspring for some years after that. Therefore, mothers sought employment as seamstresses in either the fashion industry or private households. The advantage was that these working women could earn money while staying at home. Finally, compulsory school attendance for girls also led to a change in the male-dominated teaching sector. The teaching profession was also slowly infiltrated by women, who later taught at all-girls schools in the cities.

All of these female employment opportunities were nineteenth-century developments, and together they shaped what was later referred to as the New Woman. But what about the Old Woman? Where do these two phenomena fit into the colonial context in connection with the (re-)shaping of identities? I define an Old Woman as a white female European who believed in and lived according to traditional gen-

59 Several European women from the upper strata had already been reading and writing for centuries; however, despite their abilities, men and society in general believed that it was inappropriate for women to publicly display their writing skills. This idea was due to the notion that writing was brainwork and therefore not fit for a woman. The only exceptions were letters and cooking recipes because these were seen as an integral part of household duties. See Constance Claasen's sub-chapter on women and texts in Claasen, *The Deepest Sense*, 81–85.

der roles, like staying at home, being unemployed by choice, following her husband anywhere for the sake of his career, or remaining at home to raise the children and generally take care of the family and household. According to the sources, there was a distinction between married and unmarried European women who travelled to the colonies. Broadly speaking, women like Frieda von Bülow and Bertha Wilke were New Women while the other four wives presented in this chapter who followed their husbands were Old Women. However, distinctions need to go deeper than that.

At times individuals who were traditionalists took on modern behaviours without noticing it. In other situations, behaviours were dependent on changed surroundings and living standards. Frieda was undoubtedly a feminist, but she was also a member of the landed gentry, an avid supporter of Bismarck and Wilhelm II, and an advocate of white superiority. I have the impression that she did not even recognise her strong-willed behaviour and independent decisions as improper for a woman of her time. Frieda saw it as her birthright to have her own mind and to use it authoritatively when necessary. In fact, her lower noble status did grant her a certain leeway. After all, we are all aware of historical women who did not behave according to social norms but whose behaviour was condoned due to their social and financial status. Despite her conservative loyalty to the *Kaiserreich* and its colonial project, she repeatedly behaved as an independent woman who did not care about commonly accepted socio-cultural gender roles. The discrepancies between her written beliefs and her actions are evidence either for an identity split between traditions and modernity or for an evolving identity symbolic of the time.

Bertha Wilke, Frieda's nurse assistant, was also unmarried, but not as highborn and assertive as her employer. Bertha did not leave behind a published diary and we only know about her through Frieda's documents. The image of Bertha which Frieda constructed for the reader showed the German nurse as a strong-willed woman, despite her sometimes slightly provincial views. Bertha accompanied Frieda everywhere; it seems she was a most talented nurse, with an eye for the necessary and the ability to treat patients well. The sources suggest that she was not the kind to complain much but rather the type of stoic woman whose main objective in life is to do her job well and live according to priorities like conscientiousness, reliability, and modesty. Accordingly, she matched the image of the perfectly chaste and patriotic German imperial nurse who lived for her patient's wellbeing first and foremost.

Bertha might have been the type of nurse the EMDO had wanted Frieda to be. On the outside, Frieda had the perfect appearance of a well-educated German lady; yet, it was Bertha who lived a proper life according to contemporary Protestant standards. Both women were patriotic imperialists and not too fond of non-white people (with differences in scale between Arabs, Indians, and Africans). Together they explored foreign countries, sometimes entirely without male company, as was the case during the trip from Berlin to Dar es Salaam. Once they arrived on-site in Dar es Salaam, they took it upon themselves to lay the groundwork for German nurse stations in GEA. They were two very similar, yet different, personalities.

The aforementioned reference to a modern nunnery requires explanation. Historically speaking, one of the only ways for an unwed woman to maintain herself without being subject to public criticism was by entering a Christian monastery and taking the veil. Once ordained, she would take over certain responsibilities that varied from rural work, housework, reading and writing, cooking, cheese making, teaching, and many others. She was, within certain rules of course, a self-maintained woman. The notion of a modern nunnery suited the two nurses Frieda and Bertha perfectly. They were financially independent and they applied their knowledge and abilities for the good of others. Just like nuns, they enjoyed a special standing and recognition amongst lay and Protestant society, without which they would never have received the EMDO's financial support in the first place. The main difference was that, instead of doing a good deed in the name of God, Frieda and Bertha did it in the name of Emperor Wilhelm II and Chancellor von Bismarck. Frieda and Bertha were two German single ladies with colonial ambitions and the skills to see them through. Just a few decades earlier, German society would not have allowed them to be nurses in an African colony, working for their own wages without male company. Frieda and Bertha profited directly from socio-cultural attitude changes towards self-sufficient female employees who attempted to be their own woman; I therefore consider them to be representatives of the New Woman.

In contrast to Frieda and Bertha, the four colonial wives (Magdalene, Gabrielle, Berthe, and Ebonne) could more easily be categorised as representatives of the Old Woman group. Once married, their life circumstances depended greatly on their respective husband's career choices and socially gendered conventions. However, by marrying and accompanying men who were white colonisers in Africa, they also showed a certain degree of open-mindedness and even a lust for the exotic. It is undeniable that these four individuals bent the rules of what was considered respectable for white women, although they did so without breaking them. They achieved this in a safe manner, for they were accompanied by men who were officially and morally responsible for their wives. European society did not criticise their adventures, but rather followed them closely with great interest and public acceptance. In particular, the acceptance amongst both the male and female public was a major difference to the experience of the New Woman. Berthe, for instance, gave interviews and wrote articles about her travels in the CFS. Her memoirs were published in journals and newspapers next to the recollections of male colonisers and also sometimes in women's magazines.⁶⁰ Berthe was not criticised publicly for being adventurous, wearing trousers, and trekking through the African jungle with her husband.

A pioneer and good wife at the same time, Berthe travelled to the CFS twice, following her husband on both occasions. During these expeditions, she lived sparsely and slept in tents, something she enjoyed. There are photographs of her wear-

60 See N.N., "La Femme Blanche Au Congo. Le Voyage De Mme Cabra"; "Silhouette Féminine. Madame Cabra", *Revue Nationale* (1907).

ing trousers or riding a mule in a prim white dress. I would describe Berthe as daring but not independent. She attached her own desires to those of her husband; one could accuse her of using his career to realise her own dreams. Unlike Frieda, Berthe either did not dare or did not think it appropriate to seek fulfilment on her own account. Berthe obviously did think it fit to fight for her own wishes without the approval of a man, be it her husband's, the king's, or that of any other male member of Belgian society. In the current literature, she is hailed as a feminist, a trailblazing and extraordinary woman who proved that she did not fear colonial life by traversing central Africa from east to west. But the mere existence of a person like Frieda, who founded two colonial societies to supply white women with colonial jobs, lets wives like Berthe appear in a less glorious spotlight. Both Frieda and Berthe knew how to apply societal conventions in order to fulfil their own wishes, but the former did this as an unmarried woman at a time when single women were not yet supposed to be so independent and self-sufficient.

Therefore, I conclude that Berthe and the other married women are representatives of the Old Woman. White women in colonies were a novelty to Belgium and Germany, but not on a more international scale. White women in the CFS and GEA were a rare sight around 1900, but they were not impossible. I do not intend to deny that these wives were extraordinary women; however, compared to Frieda and Bertha, the spousal quartette did not create new conventions. Rather, they merely bent the rules within the limits of social acceptance. Apart from being someone's wife, none of the four had an official duty or standing within colonial society and neither created or founded something like Frieda did. It almost seems that they preferred to be in Africa than Europe, since female emancipation was spreading continuously up north whilst in the colonies a wife's priority was to support her husband and his duty in civilising the uncivilised. It was not coincidental that the more conservative women in Germany founded colonial schools to raise the perfect colonial wife and bearer of German culture abroad instead of at home. Not only in Germany but also in other parts of Europe, the process of nationalising brought about a connection between the female citizen, reproduction, and the representation and protection of a nation's culture.⁶¹ Just as the land was seen to be female, so were women attributed the role of marker or bearer of culture. This notion was not limited to Germany. In fact, it was generally supported in both Europe and in the USA.⁶² The female body, which was usually situated in the private sphere of a home, had entered the public sphere by being politicised for nationalist purposes.

Both Berthe and Magdalene stated in their egodocuments that it was their duty to support their husbands in Africa, and Gabrielle too acted as the obedient wife and her husband's office assistant. Of course, it is to be expected that spouses seek to support each other. Yet, one can also argue that single women without spousal obligations were at liberty to act in accordance to their own desires and not be dis-

61 See Lorey, "Weiß – Weißsein – Whiteness".

62 For more, see Scully, *Race and Ethnicity in Women's and Gender History in Global Perspective*.

tracted by their private connections. Thus, a New Woman was one who, in theory (by writing articles or assisting in the production and distribution of feminist pamphlets) and in practice (by taking on previously male jobs or founding organisations with the goal of liberating women), acted upon the aim to emancipate their fellow women. In contrast, the Old Woman was a representative of her *zeitgeist* who was aware of emancipatory developments but preferred not to participate in contemporary movements; instead, she played by the rules to fulfil her wishes. One last but vital distinction between the two models was that the New Woman earned her own salary whilst her counterpart did not. The former was self-sufficient by choice while the latter was not. This singular fact influenced the women's self-reflections and thereby their identities. The New Woman was prone to feel more powerful than her conservative female companion, even if independence could sometimes be a lonely and scary affair due to the lack of male companionship.

No matter if they were a New or Old Woman, in all cases it is clear that their lives did not and still do not fit into one "national framework or national historiography [because] they cannot capture their multiple experiences"⁶³. Instead, their lives were transnational products which brought forward identities rebuilt by the intertwining of modern European feminist ideas and older gendered conventions. These women had consciously decided to relocate to sub-Saharan Africa and leave behind familiar homelands. Female nationalist colonisers, true to two regions and one race, were the new active imperialists of modern society. They actively crossed cultural boundaries to free themselves, but chose not to dismiss those limitations based on a gendered hierarchy and racial difference. These women refrained from giving up their white womanhood and the privileges that came with it, preferring instead to enjoy this status. After all, being a member of the *Mwesi* club meant that their social position was higher within the colonial hierarchy than that of any non-white person.

5.4 Conclusion

White female colonisers in sub-Saharan colonies did not play the leading roles in Belgian and German colonial history because of their low numbers in the CFS and GEA; however, they did leave an imprint. White women stood out due to their scarcity. All of the aforementioned women told their lives through different means: published and unpublished diaries, photographs, and articles published in women's magazines or colonial newspapers. However, by sharing their experiences with others, they did not just tell a story. Living a colonial life affected their identities. By

63 Cecilia Morgan, "'That Will Allow Me to Be My Own Woman': Margaret Anglin, Modernity and Transnational Stages, 1890s-1940s", in *Transnational Lives. Biographies of Global Modernity, 1700-Present*, ed. Desley Deacon, Penny Russell, and Angela Woolacott (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 145.

providing information about themselves to the public, they delivered the reader and viewer with a fashioned version of their constructed self.⁶⁴

Independent of their emancipatory beliefs, both the modern and the more traditional colonial women contributed to the general occidental gathering of knowledge, even if only at the margins. Their African experiences, their on-site contributions, and their reports on colonialism left behind traces on the reception of life in the CFS and GEA. Being highly influenced by male-dominated colonial discourse on the Other in terms of racial and gender aspects, these women's reports often resembled those of the men, but, because of their marginal position in history, they only received the same attention from scholars more recently. In fact, scholars like Edward Said hardly discussed female colonisers at all. Said also negated the presence of a strong Orientalist current in Belgium, Germany, and Sweden during most of the nineteenth century because he connects it to the possession of colonies in the Middle East or North Africa. What Said overlooked in this situation is that Orientalism was based on the construction of prejudices and stereotypes. Therefore, I agree with Annette Dietrich, who argues in her work *Weißer Weiblichkeiten* that the creation of prejudices and stereotypes does not have to be linked to territorial possession.⁶⁵ It is sufficient for the Other to simply be oriental, non-white, and therefore different.

In the general narration, European women seem to have been entirely inactive in the process of colonising the African and Asian territories. But this is simply untrue, as the sources and many others prove. Certainly, European women did not have the last say in the production of oriental(ist) knowledge and most of the time their reflections depended on the cultural assertions of their male contemporaries. Nonetheless, female voices should not be overlooked or underestimated, especially since the image of the modern and civilised white woman was applied by white colonisers as a subject of pride and a marker of their own highly developed civilisation. The educated and enlightened white Christian woman was seen as the beacon of modernity in a late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century imperial setting. African women were measured against white women, which led to a path of failure: the difference in technological development made this comparison an unfair one. Furthermore, foreign traditions like polygamy, the image of the oppressed Muslim woman, or the burning of widows in India helped not only to justify the white man's aim to liberate and educate the underdeveloped Other, but it also helped even the most supportive white colonial women to feel superior to their non-white female contemporaries. Western fantasies of liberation were therefore linked to exercising dominance over the Other and proclaiming white superiority.

In comparing single ladies to colonial wives, I conclude that the former attempted to make a feminist mark as leaders in faraway Africa whilst the latter were

64 For further background information on biographical research in a colonial and feminine context, see Janet Hoskins, *Biographical Objects. How Things Tell the Stories of People's Lives* (Oxon: Routledge, 1998).

65 See Annette Dietrich's discussion on the interplay of Orientalism and gender history in a German-African imperial context in Dietrich, *Weißer Weiblichkeiten*.

companions to their men who would (probably) have gone to Africa anyway. The presented case studies show individuals who all wrote for a certain audience; they most likely targeted their chosen group(s) by moulding their experiences into specific shapes. Frieda von Bülow wanted to attract young, single, independent, and patriotic women who would participate in the colonial project by leaving their safe homes and risking illness and discomfort in the German colonies. In order to also attract bourgeois women, Frieda often mentioned her partner Bertha. Meanwhile Margarete von Prince, Berthe Cabra, and Gabrielle Sillye stated in their (published) works that they enjoyed colonial life and could recommend it to other wives – but wives only! In contrast to women like Frieda and Bertha, the three wives did not encourage women to travel to the south on their own. Finally, Ebonne Sjöblom did not supply us with her written voice, but she gave a very clear view on colonial life by taking photographs that showed (her) colonial reality. By not shying away from the harsh realities and brutalities in the CFS, she made sure that the viewers understood that colonial life was not only about the *mission civilisatrice*, but also about white men committing inhumane acts on often powerless non-white subalterns.

These women's lives were filled with conflicts over questions of identity, the mix of old and new, and how these circumstances ultimately led to highlighting discrepancies between personal freedom and social responsibility. The life stories of these women both constructed and deconstructed stereotypes about gender roles and colonial identities. They were white people in Africa but Africans in Europe. They tried to be European in the colonies by not only travelling there personally, but also by introducing their home cultures to the sub-Saharan territories. However, despite their belief in white superiority and being the indigenous man's cultural saviour, they could not prevent African realities taking their toll on their identities. All of the women discussed here took something back with them to Europe, be it language skills, new sub-Saharan cooking recipes, photographs of themselves dressed as central-African women, or personal ties with indigenous individuals. Yet, at the end of the day, it is undebatable that the various degrees of emancipation which they experienced or brought to life in the CFS or GEA were established on the backs of the colonised. White culture and life was practised without exception in the colonies and everything non-white was bleached to make it more cultivated.

6. Edible Identity

“Man, it has been said is a dining animal. Creatures of the inferior races eat and drink; man only dines. It has also been said that he is a cooking animal; but some races eat food without cooking it.”¹

Food history, in particular colonial food history, is a developing field that shapes, analyses, and discusses categories for the study of food by looking at cookbooks (domestic and professional), memoirs, diaries, household management guidebooks, and travelogues. Studying the historical influence of food in terms of social, economic, political and cultural developments is often linked to specific localities and to selected eras as much as to the environmental aspect of food availability or scarcity. Currently, the field of food history is made up of basic research carried out by the anthropologists, and historians of nature and economics who were the first to create this academic field. Anthropologists and nature historians have been particularly interested in African indigenous cooking cultures, while economic historians have directed their focus on the economic value of, for example, the sugar trade in the sixteenth century and its influence on the development of modern capitalism.²

During the last two decades the focus on anthropological, economic and natural history has shifted to an emphasis on the “meanings of cultures of eating and drinking in specific times and places, the rise of gastronomy, the histories of specific foods and cooking practices”³. With this shift came the real expansion of food history studies.⁴ In particular, the number of colonial and global historians researching both food and drinking history has increased recently.⁵ This development should not come as a surprise, since European expansion into the Americas and India from

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- 1 Isabella Beeton, *The Book of Household Management* (London: S.O. Beeton Publishing, 1861).
 - 2 See Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power. The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1985).
 - 3 Diane Kirkby, Tanja Luckins, and Barbara Sanitch, “Introduction: Of Turtles, Dining and the Importance of History in Food, Food in History”, in *Dining on Turtles. Food Feasts and Drinking in History*, ed. Diane Kirby and Tanja Luckins (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 3.
 - 4 It mainly commenced with a group of French food historians led by Jean-Louis Flandrin from the *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales*. They were followed by Oxford-based historian Theodore Zeldin and former diplomat Alan Davidson who together founded the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery. Some influential food history books from the 1980s are Steven Kaplan, *Provisioning Paris: Merchants and Millers in the Grain and Flour Trade During the Eighteenth Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984); Stephen Mennell, *All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1985); Michael Symons, *One Continuous Picnic* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1983).
 - 5 See Jeffrey M. Pilcher, *Food in World History*, ed. Peter N. Stearns, *Themes in World History* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006).

the fifteenth century onwards was inspired by the desire to facilitate access to expensive spices like nutmeg and cinnamon. Some historians even claim that European hegemony and imperialism were a direct result of the longing of European royal and noble courts for exotic spices.⁶

Currently accepted academic ideas and works on colonial cuisine focus on colonial recipes and food culture and how these were practised in clubs, hotels, restaurants, military stations, and the private households of distant colonies. The available research offers insights into colonial food cuisines that developed over decades, and centuries. Cecilia Leong-Salobiro, for example, points out in her book that a distinctive colonial cuisine developed in India, Malaysia, and Singapore as a result of collaboration and negotiation between British colonisers and South East Asian colonised.⁷ Indigenous servants prepared both local and European dishes for British expatriates. Ultimately, this fusion of intercultural cooking skills created new meals and altered existing versions of local dishes. Some South East Asian meals were made less spicy so that they were more agreeable to European taste buds. Leong-Salobir argues that the interplay of food cultures helped shape an altogether new culture and a novel sense of identity within numerous parts of colonial societies. Donna Gabaccia and Jeffrey Pilcher, too, have highlighted the important role of food as a marker of ethnic identity within international communities.⁸

Another aspect of food history that colonial historians have analysed is the importation of peripheral colonial cuisines to the metropole. A remarkable example here would be the so-called *rijsttafel* (rice table), which is still to be had in contemporary the Netherlands.⁹ This dish was the result of Dutch women introducing European dining culture to the Dutch Indies, and Indonesian recipes gradually acculturating to it.¹⁰ The *rijsttafel* was thus derived from Indonesia and adapted by Dutch colonials, who later introduced it to the Netherlands after their colonial careers had

6 Ibid. Pilcher makes this claim in chapter three. Diane Kirby et al. make a similar claim by stating that the European expansion to the Americas was inspired by food. Kirby, Luckins, and Sanitch, "Dining on Turtles".

7 See Cecilia Leong-Salobir, *Food Culture in Colonial Asia. A Taste of Empire* (London: Routledge, 2011).

8 See Donna Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Foods and the Making of Americans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Jeffrey M. Pilcher, *Que Viva Los Tamales! Food and the Making of Mexican Identity* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998).

9 The *rijsttafel* consisted of a large rice dish that was enriched by up to 40 small additional dishes consisting of meat, vegetables or condiments. A large number of indigenous servants was needed for this meal because the dishes were all served virtually simultaneously, placing them around the big rice dish in the centre of the table. Another well-known Indonesian dish that was and still is popular in the Netherlands, and the Western world in general, is a rice dish called *nasi goreng*. See Kiple, *A Movable Feast*, chapter 20.

10 See Samuela Etossi, "Indonesian and Moroccan Eating Cultures at the Dutch Table: A Culinary History of Adaptation and Authenticity (1950–2000)" (Leiden University, 2000); Fadly Rahman, "Rijsttafel: The History of Indonesian Foodways"; *Rijsttafel: Bu-*

ended. To this very day, every standard Dutch supermarket is stocked with Indonesian herbs, spices, and condiments. Similar postcolonial phenomena can be found in other former imperial powers: couscous with mutton in France, chicken tikka in the United Kingdom, or *galinha à Xanti* (chicken marinated in herbs and spices) in Portugal. During a research trip in Belgium, I discovered that the Congolese dish *Moambe* is one of the common family dishes of Belgian households.¹¹ The exception to the rule here is the German case. Due to the short duration of Germany's imperial experience, there was insufficient time for Tanzanian or Namibian food cultures to be integrated into German cooking. In this respect, German food culture is one of the very few, or even the only one, that has not been influenced by its colonial past. This may be due to a lack of African migrants to the metropole that could have influenced the German cuisine.

In contrast to Leong-Saliro's focus on cultural history, the anthropologist James C. McCann takes a different approach in his book *Stirring the Pot*. He describes the various fields that African food history can include and informs us about the long-lasting effects of the European transatlantic sea trade on central African eating habits arguing that food was not only imported from the Americas to Europe, but also from the Americas to Africa.¹² From the sixteenth century onwards, European kitchens became increasingly accustomed to the use of cocoa, sugar, and coffee (to name just a few imported goods); over time, these former luxury goods from the Caribbean and Asian plantations turned into daily commodities.¹³ A similar development occurred in Africa. European trade ships enriched African cuisines by introducing different varieties of cereals, and vegetables (e.g., rice grains, red chillies, and manioc), thereby changing West African and sub-Saharan food cultures. The colonial sea trade affected local cuisines on both sides of the Atlantic and eating itself became an act of colonialism.

Unlike most existing research, this chapter will take into account the biological or the economic factors of food history without focusing on either: this is, because retracing trade routes and their economic worth is not part of this project. Instead, I argue that food and personal identity became intertwined both politically and racially during the era of nationalism in the nineteenth century. The idea that food

daya Kuliner Di Indonesia Masa Kolonial 1870–1942 (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2011).

- 11 The Moambe (aka mwambe) dish is based on a sauce of pericarp, peanuts, and hot peppers. Moambe chicken, with rice and bananas as side dishes, is considered a national dish in the Congo.
- 12 See James C. McCann, *Stirring the Pot: A History of African Cuisine* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2009).
- 13 Sidney W. Mintz' study of the cultural, agricultural, and economic history of sugar highlights the effects that the increase of sugar production had on almost all cuisines of the world from the sixteenth century. As a case study, Mintz analysed how sugar went from being a luxury item in the 1650s to supplying nearly one fifth of the calories in the British diet by 1900. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*.

is an intrinsic part of any person's identity and culture seems obvious. However, studying the meaning of food as a cultural symbol "allow[s] the historian to uncover hidden levels of meaning in social relationships and arrive at new understandings of the human experience"¹⁴. In this respect, the national dishes and cuisines of the nineteenth century became (sometimes accidentally, but usually intentionally) inherent components of national identity. The process of nationalising food was followed by the creation of a semiotic link between, for example, Belgian cuisine, a racial identity, and, ultimately a notion of racial superiority. Dishes like the Belgian *moules et frites* (mussels with French fries) or the Ghent *waterzooi à la poularde* (vegetable soup with chicken), which were previously thought of as a commoner's meal, were suddenly politicised and transformed into national dishes.¹⁵ The further a European individual travelled, the more s/he longed for an edible piece of home.¹⁶ Whilst nationalising dishes became a common trend in Europe, there seems to have been only one nation to do the same in nineteenth-century Africa: Ethiopia.¹⁷

14 John C. Super, "Food and History", *Journal of Social History* 36, no. 1 (2002): 165.

15 See Peter Scholliers, *Food Culture in Belgium*, ed. Ken Albala, Food Culture around the World (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2009).

16 Diana Wylie shows in *Starving on a Full Stomach* how in South Africa the food policies of the apartheid regime era communicated political aims to promote and prolong white supremacy by creating a specific version of cultural racism. This cultural racism linked white knowledge of African foods with the opinion that the African colonised were themselves to blame if they suffered hunger. According to official and unofficial 'white' opinion, Africans were deemed incapable of feeding themselves properly. South African public authorities treated African hunger as evidence of general cultural incompetence and a lack of survival skills. Wylie claims that to understand cultural racism in colonial South Africa it is necessary to see the underlying belief that social suffering was a direct result of failure. The fact that indigenous South Africans were poor was because they did not deserve to be rich due to a lack of intelligence and being lazy. The ever-growing South-African mining sector and its need for mobile workers caused a lack of male farmers, farmhands, and hunters in the rural areas. This led to a decline in local harvests which caused a decrease of food variety. The state tried to amend the food supply gap by selling cheap fibre- and watered down spud-/potatoe-based foods to the mine and factory workers. However, due to the lack of carbohydrates and minerals in these foods, the workers were left with filling but unnourishing meals in their stomachs. Ultimately, this South-African situation was the direct result of attempting to uphold white supremacy by protecting the economic interests of white business men and their white middle management employees. See Diana Wylie, *Starving on a Full Stomach: Hunger and the Triumph of Cultural Racism in Modern South Africa* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001).

17 McCann's Ethiopian case study of Queen Taytu Betul's court cuisine from the 1890s onwards shows how dishes from all corners of her husband King Menelik II's kingdom were united under one royal roof for specific political reasons. Firstly, the aim was to create a bond between the kingdom's lords by including certain dishes from every region at the royal court. Second, Queen Taytu Betul saw the strategic and political value of nationalising specific dishes to create a culturally sumptuous link for the diverse tribal

In the following sections I analyse this aspect by first introducing the reader to the indigenous food cultures of the CFS and GEA. Secondly, I will explain the lengths to which the colonisers went to experience their own European dining cultures in foreign Africa. Thirdly, I elaborate on the personal experiences and opinions of the colonial agents in moments of homesickness and their longing for supposedly more cultivated and civilised foods and dining, thereby linking them to their wish for a white culture and identity in Africa. Just as Sarah Black used cookbooks to analyse the food cultures of white settler communities in Australia from the late nineteenth century onwards, I apply colonial ego documents to identify the importance of food culture for individuals in faraway lands.¹⁸ The aim is to gain insights into elements of cultural and political identity and the function of social groups and communities within a ‘white’ setting.

6.1 Sub-Saharan Foods

Food’s prominent position in everyday life makes it an essential tool for creating a better understanding of the fears, values, and preoccupations that link local cultural attitudes to edibles. Food creates bonds between people and peoples and it often lies at the centre of cultural rituals, traditions, and celebrations. Depending on the geographical location, edible vegetables, fruits, and animals also provide a certain understanding of the natural environment. Many cultures developed deities or rituals of worship in accordance with the nature surrounding them.

These links to food can be seen in current traditions like, among other things, Christians eating fish on Fridays or Judaism and Islam prohibiting the consumption of pork. Nowadays, the act of performing particular eating practices has shifted to making ideological or political claims through specific food preferences like vegetarianism and veganism. Food and how it is consumed can be helpful in distinguishing between ideological groups and individuals as much as members of certain religions and social class affiliation. These circumstances transform food from being a mere necessity for survival into a marker of religious, national, class, or ideological culture. Food is therefore also a marker of identity.

Food and identity today are linked to each other as much as they were at the turn of the twentieth century (and long before then too). Experimenting with and tasting new foods and spices has a long history. Apart from merely discovering new dishes, the exploration of exotic cuisines also told the explorer about how a foreign

members of her husband’s kingdom. Food cultures are similar to language families in their social functions: they can be connecting links between similar, yet different, societies, locations, and ethnicities. See chapter four of McCann, *Stirring the Pot*.

18 Sarah Black, “Community Cookbooks, Women and the ‘Building of the Civil Society’ in Australia, 1900–38”, in *Dining on Turtles. Food Feasts and Drinking in History*, ed. Diane Kirkby and Tanja Luckins (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 154–70.

culture affects his/her own identity. Food is a “marker of cultural identity”¹⁹, and food preparation and the creativity connected to it lie at the heart of most cultural expressions of ourselves as individuals. Food was something consumed through different processes of cooking and creating or maintaining a cuisine. Food was more than just nutrition. It was (and is) a measure of supplying people with a cuisine that consisted of communally, shared values which linked kin, neighbours, and friends to each other. Identity was therefore also expressed by both means of taste and a cuisine that demands a precise order and a combination of select dishes.

It is easy to define what food is, but how is cuisine to be defined and how is it to be applied to the African colonial context? Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson defines the term ‘cuisine’ as a “formal and symbolic ordering of culinary practice”²⁰, and McCann adds to this classification by stipulating that it needs “one or more starchy staples, a set of spice combinations, complementary tastes, particular textures, iconic rituals, and a locally intelligible repertoire of meats, vegetables, and starchy textures”²¹. A local cuisine helps distinguish between different cultures as much as fashion, music, and dance, but specific cuisines also assist in bringing diverse cultures together. As Pilcher states, eating together, thereby sharing food and drink, creates bonds between people and a feeling of group identity.²² Similar cooking traditions can even help people(s) communicate across borders by providing a common ground to tread upon, just as was the case in Queen Taytu Betul’s royal court in Ethiopia. Having common eating and drinking habits can therefore help create and define ethnic identity. In short, food and cuisines help characterise our identity, often unintentionally so, and, even in cases where nations or groups do not have their own characteristic cuisine.

McCann’s point about starchy staples is important for the central-African case, because in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa a meal was only considered a meal if it could provide the sensation of utter fullness. The sensation of a full stomach is most easily caused by glutinous foods like porridges made of yam, maize, or other grains like rice and sorghum. Before the transatlantic slave trade, there was barely a handful of different grain types on the entire African continent. The European traders not only transported African slaves to the Americas, but also brought back spices, new kinds of grains and spuds like potatoes to Africa. Even before European colonial intervention, the banana – both the sweet kind and the cooking banana – had travelled from tropical Asia to Africa. The banana provides ten times more the caloric output than either local or American yams and requires far less cleared land. In the long term these new ingredients changed central-African, and in particular, sub-Saharan cuisines for centuries to come. In a late nineteenth-century context, the habit of providing a starchy staple food as a main dish stood in stark contrast with

19 McCann, *Stirring the Pot*, 2.

20 Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, *Accounting for Taste: The Triumph of French Cuisine* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1994), 3.

21 McCann, *Stirring the Pot*, 5.

22 See chapter 1 of Pilcher, *Food in World History*.

the European bourgeois ideal of having at least three smaller dishes. The African custom was thus considered primitive.

The effects of European colonialism on Africa were not as unbalanced and one-sided as has been often presumed. Historians have tended to centre their research on the influence of exotic foods from the peripheries on the metropolises or on the adaptation of European meals in former colonies, like French-style baguettes in Cambodia or Italian pasta in Libya. Less attention has been paid to the influence of cultivatable foods from the Americas that travelled to Africa as early as the sixteenth century. Upon introduction, these new crops spread from the African west to the east coast. Above all, the chilli pepper and South American manioc altered the face of African cooking. From the sixteenth century onwards, large segments of central Africa altered its cuisine to one that relied heavily on chilli peppers (chilli powder increases food durability in hot climates); yams, maize or grains also became key parts of every common dish. Many of the sources corroborate this whenever they comment on the eating practices of indigenous Africans and the predominance of manioc and sorghum. Count Oscar Baumann often commented on the eating habits of indigenous colonised he encountered during his treks through GEA: he summarised that “the natives live off manioc and bananas [...]”²³. African cuisine was an intra-African product and not, as the food scholar Linda Civiello claims, purely the result of nineteenth- and twentieth-century European domination.²⁴

Typical African dishes therefore consisted of a stomach-filling base made of grains or potatoes.²⁵ Cooking bananas too were an elementary part of African cooking. A meal's base was then usually enriched with different kinds of stew. These stews commonly consisted of a spicy tomato- or tamarind-based sauce mixed with vegetables and, depending on availability and spending power, meat or fish.²⁶ Coastal peoples added fish or sea fruits to their stews while tribes from the interior territories preferred fresh game. Unlike typical cooking habits within the continent, maritime ingredients were less dependent on social and financial status than meat. For Africans from the interior, the availability of both white and red meat depended heavily on three factors: (i) the season, (ii) a tribe's hunting skills, and (iii) a person's social or financial status within a community. The possession of large herds that could feed an entire community was mostly limited to the Massai tribes. Indigenous

23 German: Die Eingeborenen nähren sich von Maniok und Bananen [...]. Baumann, Oscar, “Die Expeditionen des Antisklaverei-Komitees. Ein Bericht des Dr. O. Baumann, Mwanza, 8. November 1892, in: Antisklavereibewegung. Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde, Berlin.

24 See Linda Civiello, *Cuisine and Culture: A History of Food and People* (New York: John Wiley, 2003), 218.

25 The main type of spuds that was introduced to central Africa were potatoes, however, not limited to them. For this reason, this chapter mainly refers to potatoes and not to spuds in general.

26 See Fran Osseo-Asare, *Food Culture in Sub-Saharan Africa*, ed. Ken Albala, *Food Culture around the World* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005).

Africans from the areas that would later be known as the CFS and GEA depended more on hunting big game and owning a handful of goats or a few chickens. Therefore, identical to Europe, the access to meat often depended on the person's social status or purchasing power.²⁷ Once white colonisers entered central Africa with their modern guns and money, it was easy for them to take the upper hand in the pursuit of meat. Neither birthright nor education granted European access to meat; rather it was modern inventions that paved the way.

Historically, class distinctions are often linked to food. In some agrarian societies, simply having enough to eat was and is a symbol of wealth. In numerous cultures, obesity signified wealth, whilst in modern Western societies it is correlated with lower-class status. Nonetheless, towards the end of the nineteenth century, the survival rate and wealth of indigenous central-African families depended greatly on the size of the individual household. A pre-colonial lifestyle meant that the larger the household or family, the higher their wealth and thus their survival rate. This reality, however, would be altered by colonialism. A general truism was that white European societies associated cuisine, dining and drinking culture with class, whereas indigenous sub-Saharan societies associated food with fertility and wealth. This fact of African life brings us to Jack Goody's claim that food and sexual intercourse are closely entwined because they both "define [...] important aspects of the socio-cultural system, marriage and eating"²⁸. Wealth and fertility were inseparable in pre-colonial and pre-industrial African societies.

While the availability of certain foods depended heavily on a person's status, *pombe* – the most common type of African beer – was available to everybody. It is made of either bananas or sorghum and it was most often drunk just after the harvest in order to celebrate the end of hard days of labour. Of course, it was also offered at specific celebrations like weddings and birthdays. Its fermentation process can take between three to five days; once it is brewed, it lasts only for a few days. Due to a lack of storage facilities (both in terms of space, cooling facilities, and adequate storage containers), *pombe* needed to be consumed within a few days of being brewed; otherwise, it would become undrinkable. Traditionally, *pombe* was served in jugs made of wicker that were waterproof on the inside.²⁹ Several people would drink from the same container. Ever since modern techniques have made it possible to bottle *pombe*, the old tradition of sitting around the same wicker jug with individual straws has almost entirely vanished. Depending on locality, alcoholic brews varied

27 The Belgian statistician Edouard Ducpétiaux documented as early as 1855 the per capita consumption of meat in Belgium and its direct link to social class, financial power, and its position as a marker of affluence. See Danielle De Vooght, *The King Invites. Performing Power at a Courtly Dining Table* (Brussels: P.I.E. Peter Lang S.A 2012).

28 Jack Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine and Class. A Study in Comparative Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 192.

29 See Prince, *Gegen Araber und Wahehe*, 194.

from banana beer in rainforest areas to sweet palm wine from woodland areas to millet beer from the savannah and Ethiopian honey wine.³⁰

In a sub-Saharan context, brewing beer and producing other alcoholic drinks was gendered. Traditionally it was the women who produced and sold fermented drinks. It was, and partly still is, one of the few female tasks that provided women – above all single women or widows – with an independent income. Due to the increasing numbers of white colonisers, in particular European men, in the colonies and the temporary dislocation of indigenous men in large numbers to specific zones, brewing *pombe* became a regular source of income for unmarried women, meaning that it ceased to be primarily a ceremonial. The women who brewed and sold *pombe* in the coastal towns were also described in the following terms:

female *pombe* vendors who due to their age group could no longer hope for an increase in grace and charm and therefore engaged in selling palm tree wine and negro beer and they opened a type of entertainment venue or pub.³¹

It cannot be said that only widows took to brewing and selling *pombe* or palm wine. As the above testimony shows, unmarried women who were unattractive or had reached a certain age, and consequently had no hopes of being married any time soon, also worked as *pombe* vendors.

In fact, the link between brewing *pombe* and women was so strong amongst central African indigenous societies that even a constant lack of the drink would not convince men to brew it. They considered it to be a female task and thus an unworthy job for a man, as the following account by Tom von Prince demonstrates. He recounted a situation during a German military campaign against Afro-Arab rebels and described the troop's camp situation which was generally good but lacking in meat and certain drinks:

[Our soldiers] were well looked after, especially since they did not need to eat meat as much as [us Germans] do. Only the lack of *pombe* was initially irritating to them, but I could not convince them to brew it because for them it was a woman's job and I soon ceased my attempts to convince [them]. For the two of [us Germans] this was a shame because *pombe* was still better than nothing.³²

30 For a summary of which foods were generally eaten by colonisers in GEA see Schmidt, *Deutschlands Kolonien*, 88–94.

31 German: Die Pombeverkäuferinnen sind Weiblichkeiten, die sich in einem Alter, in welchem Zuwachs an Liebreiz nicht mehr zu erwarten ist, auf die Palmwein- oder Negerbier-Bereitung werfen und eine Art Animierkneipe aufmachen. Fonck, *Deutsch-Ost-Afrika*, 67.

32 German: Die Leute hatten es leidlich gut, da sie nicht so der Fleischnahrung bedurften wie unser einer. Nur der Mangel an Pombe störte sie anfangs sehr; zur Herstellung konnte ich sie jedoch nicht bewegen, da ihnen die Arbeit als Weiberarbeit zuwider war, und ich gab bald meine Vorstellungen auf. Das war uns beiden aber sehr unangenehm, denn Pombe ist immer besser als nichts. Prince, *Gegen Araber und Wahehe*, 165.

Even if none of the European colonisers preferred the local African brews to their Belgian, German or Swedish beers, *pombe* was still considered better than no beer at all. In the long run, modernisation would have an unfortunate side effect on *pombe*-related drinking culture due to the introduction of bottled beers to sub-Saharan Africa. The wicker basket was no more. Thanks to its popularity, it is also not surprising that a modernised and western-style beer brewing industry was one of the first to be established by Africans; it quickly gained a strong foothold in Africa. As a result, indigenous women were stripped of their additional income when bottled beer replaced the more nutritious and fresh home brewed *pombes*.³³

The sources mention *pombe* repeatedly. The aforementioned Lt Meyer of the German Antislavery Commission described drinking *pombe* on several occasions. He also wrote in one of his diary entries how, together with his caravan, he once travelled through a region where every village was brewing *pombe*; accordingly, everyone offered it to him and his caravan. Nearly everyone involved was drunk too.

5. [Sept.]. [...] The villagers had just brewed *pombe*. The chief is tipsy, the women too, [they] dance and sing something for us. [...] 5. [Sept.] [...] Now is also the annual season of *pombe* drinking (brewed from Mtama). We were brought *pombe* at almost every tembe (large hut), and not infrequently were the bearers in a more or less intoxicated state.³⁴

Another account by Meyer not only connects gender with food history, but also informs the reader about an incident involving *pombe*, its female brewers, and his expedition members. While being stationed close to the town of Muanza in GEA with orders to construct a new station, Lieutenant Meyer forbade all of his people to travel to the large Muanza station. The reason was that the English trader Mr Stokes had previously left behind all of his expedition's womenfolk in Muanza before continuing on to Uganda. These women's main occupation and means for earning a living was to brew *pombe*. As one can imagine, the combination of *pombe*-brewing single women and single men working long hours on building sites was likely to end with trouble:

These women, whose main occupation is the brewing of *pombe*, were often visited by my own men as well as the station's Askaris, and 8 days ago the imperial Sudanese and my own men caused a brawl.³⁵

33 See chapters 3 and 8 in Pilcher, *Food in World History*.

34 German: 4.9. [...] Im Dorfe gerade Pombe gebraut. Häuptling angeheitert, Weiber ebenfalls angeheitert, tanzen und singen uns was vor. [...] 5.9. [...] Jetzt ist auch die Zeit des Pombe-Trinkens (aus Mtama gebraut). Fast bei jeder Tembe wird uns Pombe gebracht, und nicht selten sind die Ueberbringer in mehr oder weniger berauschem Zustand. Meyer, N.N., Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde, Antisklaverei, Lt. Meyer, Sig. R8023-824.

35 German: Diese Weiber, deren Hauptbeschäftigung das Brauen von Pombe ist, wurden von meinen Leuten und den Stationsaskaris viel besucht und da ist es am Sonntag vor 8 Tagen zu einer Prügelei zwischen den kaiserlichen Sudanesen und einiger meiner Leute

Whilst hunting big game was a male-dominated field and the brewing of alcoholic drinks a female one, many other agricultural duties were practised by both sexes. These included hunting small game, herding, milking cattle, trapping small animals, and tending to other kinds of livestock. But before agriculture and cattle keeping was possible, sub-Saharan people needed to overcome other natural hurdles. Erosion and clearing soil facilitated the spread of the anopheles mosquito, which carries malaria; the tse tse fly also made pastoralism a highly strenuous affair in large parts of the equatorial area. It was perhaps these ecological difficulties and the often unreliable food supply that allowed people and tribes to bond more quickly. After all, migration connected different ethnic groups with each other and promoted co-operation between farmers and herders, “while agricultural labour gave status within the family to women and even slaves”³⁶. In the long term, the cultivation of bananas in the Congolese territories caused an overall increase in population, which revolutionised the Congo by enabling kingdoms to rise from the fourteenth century onwards. Simultaneously, the arrival of Arab and Indian traders on the East African coast introduced the sub-Saharan regions to Middle Eastern spices and wheat. With them came curry, Indian chapatti bread recipes and even Chinese porcelain. These imported goods would change the region’s food culture forever.

By the time Belgium and Germany took control of their new colonies, the local indigenous food cultures had previously undergone external influences from the Chinese, Middle Eastern, Portuguese, and American cultural spheres. These changes included new food types, spices, and containers, but also new religions that influenced both eating and drinking habits. Equally, by the time the two European countries entered Africa, European food cultures had just recently been subject to major changes as well. As a direct result of industrialisation and modern developments, like the implementation of railroads, steamships, and canning facilities, European food cultures had changed. New means of transport supplied Europe with exotic fruits, vegetables, and meat from other countries and continents. Simultaneously, technology took its toll on the preparation of food by offering means for pre-cooking and then canning it in large quantities. The transportation of food was facilitated by these new inventions and cooking was steadily relocated from family hearths to factories, restaurants or small local food joints. The trend of eating out had started and it was becoming less and less limited to the wealthier classes.

In Europe, industrialisation and urbanisation together caused the consumer’s physical removal from the food source itself. From the mid- and late nineteenth century onwards, slaughterhouses, butcheries, bakeries, and many other sectors of the food-producing industry increasingly adopted mass production, due to which consumers lost direct access to the food source; as a result, they had to find a new way of “determining the wholesomeness of what they ate”³⁷. This fact is important,

gekommen. [Entry from 24th October.] Meyer, N.N., Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde, Antisklaverei, Lt. Meyer, Sig. R8023–824.

36 Pilcher, *Food in World History*, 28.

37 *Ibid.*, 51.

because colonisers who had acquainted themselves with modern nutritional developments prior to their terms abroad were confronted with two very divergent situations once they migrated to Africa. On the one hand, these white colonials profited from the availability and durability of canned foods and the comparative ease and speed with which foods could be transported across continents.³⁸ On the other hand, the colonials seemingly stepped back in time on arrival in the colonies because contemporary Europeans had to return to primarily eating local produce and food that was cooked at home was dependent on seasonal supply possibilities. Linked to the more modern food production developments was also a change in gender roles, since women in Europe traded the family hearth and home production for employment opportunities in factories. Therefore, the culinary experience on-site in the CFS and GEA gave the impression of regressing in time and ignoring technological advances. It probably does not come as a surprise that it did not take long before the colonisers branded African cuisine as primitive, backward and less sophisticated than its European counterpart.

Upon arrival in Africa the European colonisers were forced to acquaint themselves not only with the local cuisine but also with a lack of modern equipment and the existence of more traditional gender roles. Whilst the new phenomenon of mass production was increasingly affecting European consumer habits, the CFS and GEA both lacked the basic infrastructure for transporting goods, let alone cooling facilities. The humid and hot climate marred any chance of keeping food fresh even for several hours. This lack of modern storage facilities for foods and drinks raises a question about what the newly arrived colonisers ate in sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, how did their whiteness influence their perception of African cuisines? The goal to civilise the uncivilised was extended to non-Western foods as well. African cuisine was thought of as being less nutritious and its preparation less hygienic than modern European diets. In the grander scale of things, westernising African cuisines was not a priority of the *mission civilisatrice*. Even though the civilising mission was based on an ideology of superior European scientific knowledge, African food was seen less as a matter of genetic backwardness and more as an explanation for an environmental and cultural form of underdevelopment. Compared to European dining culture, with its many courses and different types of glasses, cutlery, and linens, the obvious simplicity of the African cuisine seemed straightforward and lacking in sophistication. In short, African food culture was deemed less civilised than the European version.

In order to assess the colonisers' evaluation of African diets, we need to know what the indigenous locals ate in the CFS and GEA before the arrival of their 'new' masters.³⁹ When the CFS and GEA were occupied by Europeans, eating a portion of

38 From the 1880s onwards canned foods consisted mainly of meats, sardines, and sausages but also a few vegetables. See Scholliers, *Food Culture in Belgium*.

39 Kenneth F. Kiple argues that cooking or preparing warm dishes came about by accident. He claims that the domestication of fire and the discovery of cooked foods were incidental occurrences that changed human culture(s) forever. The cooking process not only

porridge a day with stew or barbecued meat or fish was part of the common diet for a nineteenth-century central African. The most typical grains to cook in the sub-Saharan territories were sorghum and the pearl millet. Several of the sources reported about the vast number of sorghum fields they saw during their treks throughout the colony. For example, Dr Oscar Baumann, a member of the German Antislavery Committee, described the landscapes he passed through in one of his reports to his employer, dated 21 July 1892. Baumann wrote:

After Masukuma [we] arrived on June 12 at the inhabited areas of Ututwa. This landscape, just like the subsequent district called Tuzu to the southwest, is surrounded by soft hills, through which, depending on the season, waters flow. Seemingly without end one passes through sorghum fields of the reddish variety; [...].⁴⁰

The repeated references make it became obvious that the cultivation and consumption of sorghum was a common and professionalised task to the indigenous colonised even a century ago.

To sum up, towards the end of the nineteenth century, a typical diet in central Africa consisted of at least one filling dish a day. This meal was high in carbohydrates and usually accompanied by a spicy stew. Central-African cuisine at the time cannot be described as highly elegant or diversified. In terms of drink, the most commonly drunk beverages were coffee, *pombe*, other alcoholic drinks, and at times kola-nut drinks. An old African belief said that kola nuts imparted courage on the consumer. In fact, the German colonial army even went as far as to order over thirty tonnes of kola nuts after it had conducted experiments on the courage-inducing effects of kola nut juice.⁴¹ Generally, drinks and food were prepared on a daily basis due to a lack of efficient storage and cooling facilities. Only red chillies had a preservation effect on foods, which is why chillies became a common ingredient in African stews after their introduction from America.

The European coloniser, however, came from a more modernised food culture that had been subject to technological advances like mass production and the canning of foods. Yet, in order to increase colonial control over the colonised, the white colonisers quickly grew accustomed to local eating habits for two main reasons:

made previously indigestible or poisonous foods edible; in the long-run it even caused a reduction of human tooth size, since humans “no longer needed large teeth for tearing at raw meat or chewing through tough fibrous plants”. Kiple, *A Movable Feast*, 11.

40 German: [Wir] gelangten am 12. Juni nach der von Masukuma bewohnten Landschaft Ututwa. Diese, sowie der sich südwestlich anschließende Distrikt Tuzu ist von leichten Bodenschwellungen durchzogen, zwischen welche periodische, meist Wassertümpel führende Gewässer verlaufen. Man durchzieht ununterbrochen Sorghumfelder der rötlichen Varietät; [...], Baumann, Oscar, “Die Expeditionen des Antisklaverei-Komitees. Ein Bericht des Dr. O. Baumann, in: Antisklavereibewegung, Mwanza, 12. Juli 1892; Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde, Berlin, 1892.

41 See Edmund Abaka, “Kola Nut”, in *The Cambridge World History of Food*, ed. Kenneth F. Kiple and Kriemhild Coneè Ornelas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

firstly, to know what to eat when European foods were unavailable and, secondly, to create an artificial dependency. Feeding the colonised with canned foods or with big game killed by European guns could produce strong ties of dependency. This connection between food and the enforcement of white supremacy therefore existed long before white South African authorities (mis)used food as a measure for creating dependence.⁴² White missionaries and colonial authorities, for example, had adapted to handing out food for free to place indigenous Congolese and Tanzanians servants in debt to their European employers.⁴³ In that respect, white power was directly connected to food.

White supremacy – or the notion of it – was more closely linked to dining culture and eating in style rather than filling the stomach. This link between food and race might also explain the general lack of public interest within Europe for sub-Saharan African cuisines. Expeditionary sources did report about African foods and agriculture, but usually only as means to discuss either the fertility of specific geographical areas or the beauty of the landscape. The more general interest in African food culture tended to focus on exotic hunting events that involved shooting hippopotami, gazelles, lions, elephants, and so forth. While European colonisers in Asia often reported home on Asian cuisines, the African sources rarely, if at all, inform the reader about African food and drinking cultures. This is because African foods were deemed to be lacking and underdeveloped. As a result, African cooking was not worth reporting.

6.2 Proud European Dining Culture vs. Natural African Cuisine

By combining cultural whiteness and its influence on colonial identity-shaping processes with food studies, I expect to gain a deeper insight into colonial raci(al)ism. This particular combination provides me with a heightened personal insight than research on national policy or labour and economic history could ever have afforded me. In this context, food hierarchy is a reoccurring phenomenon which the Europeans brought with them to colonial Africa at the end of the nineteenth century. As mentioned above, the types of food consumed in central Africa often depended on availability as well as on skin colour; specific types of food served as a convenient symbol of class membership. Intertwined with the notion of white superiority was the idea (or tradition) that certain foods were only available to select members of specific social classes. Thus, in a colonial context, European food culture was a marker of both race and social class.

Food in its diverse forms and shapes occupies a prominent role in almost all of the sources. Reading the ego documents clarifies how important eating was to the colonisers, in terms of their identity and their sense of cultural roots. The European colonisers showed a need to both internally and externally distinguish themselves

42 Wylie, *Starving on a Full Stomach*.

43 See chapter eight of Pilcher, *Food in World History*.

from the indigenous colonised by the means of eating culture. The obvious external differences between African and European cuisines did not suffice. The colonisers' cultural racism – or racialism – was based on a white pride that ascribed cultural features to the African race to explain differences in wealth and power.⁴⁴ This approach was welcomed by European colonisers who felt pride in what they believed to be white achievements and white virtues.⁴⁵

Furthermore, this method of staying true to a chosen group identity was realised via a distinguished and sophisticated food culture. This belief in belonging to a more developed group identity was repeatedly linked to the Christian religion, the *mission civilisatrice*, and to the related habits or traditions that came with them. These traditions included eating fish on Fridays, fasting for Lent, or celebrating important religious holiday feasts like Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. Common religious and national foods symbolically functioned as pillars of group membership. "On the one hand, food, like religion, [...] is a particularly potent index of group identity because we incorporate it into our bodies. On the other hand, food, again like religion, addresses private needs; as William James observed with reference to the failure of science to address the 'interest of the individual in his private personal destiny,' religion has the capacity to affect one's sense of security at the most basic and individual level, and food shares that ultimately reassuring power."⁴⁶ At a time when Western cultures and even some nation-states were still closely related to the Roman-Catholic or the Protestant Churches, national identity and religion in relation to food culture could be one and the same thing.

Besides the direct link between national and religious identity and food, the latter was also linked to social class. In a colonial setting, this link was predominantly a racial one. In nineteenth-century Europe, the idealised romantic image of the so-called natural or savage man had changed to that of the underprivileged and underdeveloped man. While consumers at the beginning of the nineteenth century preferred meals from the home hearth, those of the late nineteenth century had become accustomed to mass produced meats, cookies, sauces, condiments, canned foods, bottled drinks, etc. In colonial Africa, industrialised foods were more than just a convenience. They turned into yet another symbol of modern white superiority and only this society's 'members' could profit from those foods. As a result, white colonials preferred these 'modern' foods to the seasonal indigenous foods readily

44 The difference between racism and racialism is that the former excludes other people on the basis of their external physical features whilst the latter focuses on cultural differences that can have an effect on someone's exterior. A common example is religious dress, which often also indicates towards a specific lived culture. See Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Racisms", in *Anatomy of Racisms*, ed. David Theo Goldberg (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1990); A. Dirk Moses, "Race and Indigeneity in Contemporary Australia", in *Racism in the World: Historical Perspectives on Cultural Transfer*, ed. Manfred Berg and Simon Wendt (New York, NY: Berghahn Books, 2011).

45 See chapter 1 of Wylie, *Starving on a Full Stomach*.

46 *Ibid.*, 38.

accessible in Africa. After all, being privileged also meant having access to foods that the majority of people did not.

Luxury goods and their possession have always been an inherent signifier of civilisation. Moreover, it was the upper classes and their pursuit of luxury goods that are and have often been considered markers of a modern and more developed civilisation.⁴⁷ Gazing back at European endeavours to gather spices from abroad since the Middle Ages, is surprising that these foreign cuisines were no longer admired as much by the beginning of the twentieth century. Exotic spices and commodities were esteemed worthy only so long as they could be integrated into European cooking traditions. These exotic ingredients were considered luxuries and symbols of civilisation, once they had been Europeanised in European kitchens by European cooks. Nonetheless, fine dining and elaborate cuisines consisting of expensive ingredients were essential pillars of modern European culture and civilisation due to the upper classes awarding them with so much attention and their willingness to pay exorbitant prices for these goods. Food, after all, often also functioned as a symbol of social status. The (supposed) lack of luxury foods and dining culture in both the CFS' and GEA's indigenous cuisines was proof enough for the colonisers that food and civilisation did not go hand in hand with sub-Saharan Africa.

Another aspect related to the idea of what a civilised culture is supposed to look like is the issue of the five senses. This connection between something being regarded as civilised and gender or race probably relates back to medieval times where "men were generally associated with the mind and soul and women with the body and senses"⁴⁸. A similar link was made where white people were associated with mind and soul and non-whites with the body and the senses. After all, the modern (wo)man was enlightened, civilised, and technologically advanced; i. e., (s)he was associated with products of the mind rather than with those of natural, physical or emotional origins. Since antiquity, the so-called lower senses (touch, smell, and taste) were at first linked to the supposedly weaker sex – women – but gradually these associations altered. In time, women were increasingly exchanged for non-nobles and later the lower classes. Ultimately, the white lower classes gave way to non-whites of any *couleur*. The latter came to be seen as a lower species and was therefore associated with the lower senses.⁴⁹

During the nineteenth century, the sense of sight became more valued in European culture than the sense of touch. In fact, the latter was increasingly attributed

47 Wylie demonstrates this in chapter one by presenting select examples in a South African and Rhodesian context of how former colonial officers and white presidents considered some African cultures as less civilised because they, for example, did not have operas or did not have a wine culture. See *ibid.*, 21–38.

48 Classen, *The Deepest Sense*, 73. See also Osselaer, *The Pious Sex*.

49 See Martina Tißberger, "Die Psyche der Macht, der Rassismus der Psychologie und die Psychologie des Rassismus", in *Weiß – Weißsein – Whiteness. Kritische Studien zu Gender und Rassismus/Critical Studies on Gender and Racism*, ed. Martina Tißberger, et al. (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2006).

to an uncivilised and unrefined mode of perception. Sight was linked to literacy and analytical capacities while the sense of feeling was related to illiteracy, emotions, and irrational behaviour. Nineteenth-century historical writing even went as far as to create a sensory scale of races which proclaimed that “the ‘civilized’ European ‘eye-man,’ who focused on the visual world, was positioned at the top and the African ‘skin-man,’ who used touch as his primary sensory modality, at the bottom”⁵⁰. Generally, it can be stated that nineteenth-century imperialism and colonialism were driven by racism which, in turn, drove contemporary scientists to discover physical reasons to assist in accounting for the supposedly more inferior non-white peoples in the world who were colonised by Europeans.⁵¹

Linked to the ranking of the senses and European dining culture is the expectation that after centuries of royal and noble kitchens creating luxurious dishes, sophisticated European eaters had developed a taste for dishes that were not only exquisite in taste, but also attractive to the eye. The evaluation of late nineteenth-century meals for the middle and upper classes was increasingly linked to the cook’s presentation and decoration skills. The consumer’s approval therefore depended not only on taste but also on the meal’s presentation; the beautiful presentation of a dish could influence the consumer prior to taking the first bite. I claim that the lack of sophisticated presentation skills in indigenous central African cooking traditions was simply another cause – or excuse – for European colonisers to seek the consumption of ‘white’ food in the CFS and GEA. Prepared dishes not only had to taste good but also look good to appeal to the coloniser’s sense of belonging to a more developed civilisation than his/her colonial subject.

Dining culture maintained its social function even in the humid and tropical CFS. As elaborated on in the previous chapter, Gabrielle Sillye had accompanied her husband Albert to the colony; in her eight diaries, she wrote about her Congolese experiences. Most of her diary entries were very short and resemble lists of bullet points. However, whenever social gatherings were connected to either food or the provisioning of food, Gabrielle became more detailed. Compared to many other memories, writing about social and food-related events definitely took a priority amongst the topics Gabrielle deemed worth remembering in more detail. To achieve an insight into how important food-related events and topics were I counted how often she mentioned the following words:

- *manger* (to eat) – mentioned 20 times,
- *repas* (meal) – mentioned 68 times,
- *diner* (to have lunch or dinner) – mentioned 59 times,
- *souper* (to have dinner) – mentioned 50 times.

50 The theory of the sensory scale of senses was founded by natural historian Lorenz Oken. Cited from Classen, *The Deepest Sense*, xii.

51 See Kiple, *A Movable Feast*, 225.



Figure 10:
Menu Card by Gabrielle Sillye,
Stanleyville, 1907.

Compared to other topics mentioned in her diaries, food was the most prominent and went hand in hand with naming other white colonisers with whom she and her husband socialised. Another favourite topic was the experiences made ‘in the field’ whenever she met indigenous (wo)men who taught her new things and skills about Congolese culture and lifestyles.

The following image is exemplary for the different menu cards Gabrielle prepared when she and Albert invited their friends and colleagues for dinner parties of four to a dozen guests at their home in Stanleyville.⁵² Whenever the Sillye couple was in Stanleyville, they would host friends and colleagues for meals. At the time when this menu card was designed, Gabrielle and Albert were awaiting the official permission and the exact date for their return journey to Belgium. According to her diary, a boy had arrived just that day, 28 March 1907, to hand over both. Of course, Gabrielle did not always design menu cards and the couple did not always have access to a large variety of European ingredients, but they did on this occasion because it was a sort of farewell dinner before the Sillye couple returned to their homeland.⁵³ This par-

52 After the Belgian Congo’s independence from Belgium in 1960, Stanleyville has been called Kisangani.

53 The practice of designing menu cards was typical for European nobility; the rising middle classes of the time adopted this tradition to provide their guests with information

ticular dinner party took place at their house in Stanleyville with four guests: Father Roelent, Mr Van Aecker, Commander Colin and Mr Dohet.⁵⁴ Gabrielle designed, drew and typed out a proper menu for every guest, informing them of the evening's delights, which in this case consisted of:

- *Hors d'oeuvre* (mixed starters)
- *Potage bisque d'écrevisse* (crab soup)
- *Poisson aux aubergines* (fish with eggplant)
- *Côtelettes et épinards* (ribs with spinach)
- *Poulet rôti et petits pois* (baked chicken with green peas)
- *Flan aux fruits* (fruit cake)⁵⁵

Displaying a knowledge of table culture was as important to Gabrielle as it was to her male counterparts. Despite the frequent correlation between hosting guests and wives or women in general and the fact that I described Gabrielle as a member of the 'Old Women' group in the previous chapter, I do not reduce the importance, consumption and decoration of food as displayed in her diaries and letters to her gender. Instead, I argue that this need to live a European-style life in the CFS was directly linked to her whiteness and to the preservation of white culture.

Despite the wish to preserve the own 'superior' white status and elevated dining culture, Gabrielle and Albert Sillye, like most other Belgian, German, and Swedish colonials, were curious about indigenous cultures too. Other than food, one of the most popular topics that colonials wrote about were their African experiences. Gabrielle, for instance, recorded every event and experience she had in connection to trying out local food and drink, learning how to prepare local dishes, or simply travelling like the colonised in log boats and seeing exotic animals. One of her accounts tells of her trek through the colony together with her husband. They were travelling by log boat and stayed the night in Kisenge where she tried *malafu* (palm wine) for the first time and compared its taste to that of French cider.⁵⁶ It seems that she always made an entry in her diary every time she tried out a new dish or drink. Yet, compared to the delight expressed whenever she had access to European food and drinks, the excitement about local delicacies manifests itself in a more demure manner. For example, a mere week after she tasted the *malafu* her trek ended in Kasongo

and to seem more regal. These sources are valuable for historians who wish to analyse dining cultures and habits. See De Vooght, *The King Invites*; Fabio Parasecoli, "Food, Identity and Diversity", in *Culinary Cultures of Europe: Identity, Diversity and Dialogue*, ed. Darra Goldstein and Kathrin Merkle (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2005).

54 Diary No. 13, Sillye, Gabrielle. "Archives Albert Sillye". Edited by Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale. Tervuren, 1904, Sig. DMN: 2012.03.30 11.29.43.

55 Sillye, Gabrielle. "Archives Albert Sillye". Edited by Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale. Tervuren, 1904, Sig. 6371.115.34.

56 French: On loge à Kisenge. Je bois du vin de Palme ("Malafu" ressemble un peu au cidre). Diary No. 1, dated 20.10.1904, Sillye, Gabrielle. "Archives Albert Sillye". Edited by Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale. Tervuren, 1904, Sig. DMN: 2012.03.30 10.16.10.

where a delivery had arrived for her with fresh milk, fresh butter, white cheese, and vegetables. She almost cannot contain her excitement about the arrival of European dairy products.⁵⁷ The colonisers' ability to often choose their foods, however, was the "prerogative of a small prosperous group"⁵⁸, since most people in the colonies and elsewhere ate anything they could get their hands on.

One of the few non-European dishes, which seems to have enjoyed at least some degree of acceptance amongst white colonisers was a recipe that Indian traders and migrants had imported to central Africa: curry with rice. Even though curry was at first disliked by many Europeans, it won acceptance and appreciation in the long term. Sometimes, though, as the below sequence shows, this recognition came reluctantly:

At midday, when the camp was pitched [after the morning trek], everyone was ravenous. I had to have the dining table ready within ten minutes. My life [as a cook] was truly horrible until one day everything changed. It happened on a day when I served the less popular rice with curry to the men. Everyone except for [General] Wissmann refused to even touch the dish. Afterwards I felt horrible. I loved rice and curry and served it again the following day. The uproar was tremendous. But since Wissmann enjoyed the meal too I served it again for a third consecutive day. After three consecutive days everyone had calmed down [...] and ate [the curry with rice].⁵⁹

As is often the case, repetition and necessity can change dislike into acceptance, which can then develop into enjoyment. The same occurred with curry dishes in GEA. It should not come as a surprise that in former colonial powers like the United Kingdom it even turned into an imported 'national' dish. Nonetheless, curry and rice could be easily prepared during treks and the ingredients – curry spices, rice and meat – were relatively cheap, easy to acquire prior to departure as well as en route, and easy to transport.

57 French: = Lait frais – beurre frais – fromage blanc – Legumes etc. = C'est tout-à fait la plaine. Diary No. 1, dated 29.10.01904, Sillye, Gabrielle. "Archives Albert Sillye". Edited by Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale. Tervuren, 1904, Sig. DMN: 2012.03.30 10.16.38. Magdalene von Prince also mentioned in her diary how happy she was whenever she had cow milk so that she could produce butter, cheese and yoghurt. See Prince, *Eine Deutsche Frau*, 40; "Vom Schreibtisch und aus dem Atelier".

58 De Vooght, *The King Invites*, 25.

59 German: Um 12 Uhr mittags [...], wenn Lager aufgeschlafen wurde, hatten alle einen Bärenhunger. Innerhalb von 10 Minuten drängte alles an einen langen Tisch, den ich schnell fertig gedeckt haben mußte [...]. Ich führte ein wahrhaft schlechtes Leben [als Koch] bis zu einem gewissen Zeitpunkt. Dieser kam, als ich damals den wenigsten genehmen Reis und Curry auf die Tafel brachte. In schweigender Wut ließen alle bis auf Wissmann die Schüssel ganz ungerührt ziehen. Nachher ging's mir schlecht. Ich liebte aber Reis und Curry und gab es gleich wieder. Das Geschrei war schrecklich! Da aber Wissmann es auch gern aß, gab ich's auch den nächsten Tag wieder. Dreimal hintereinander macht den Wildesten zahm. [...] Wehmütig langte jeder zu. Prince, *Gegen Araber und Wahehe*, 43.

In addition to demonstrating group membership through food and drink, there was also a more practical side to the demand for canned foods. As mentioned before, canned and bottled foods and drinks were symbols of the European's technological advancement in comparison to the central-African indigenous person. But, there was a very practical side to canned produce that is in no way related to cultures of *haute cuisine* and luxurious ingredients. Apart from providing Europeans with drinks and foods from the homeland, canned foods and bottled drinks were easy to transport and kept food edible and drinks drinkable for weeks, months or even years. Unfortunately, European edibles often took many months to arrive in the colonies' hinterlands. Colonisers like De Walsche and his colleagues were not at all content with the absence of delivered goods, especially the lack of wine, sugar, and coffee.

The only thing missing was the wine. It has been more than 4 months, since the station has been replenished with wine, sugar, or coffee. I would offer what remains of my wine, but what good will 2 or 3 litres do for 8 young people all between 20 to 30 years of age?⁶⁰

As several entries within the sources prove, these goods were the preferred types of nutrition while trekking through the CFS or GEA, especially when the colonials fell ill or had been caravanning for a very long time. In cases such as the latter, tokens of the *Heimat* in the shape of food were more sought after than at any other time. Take, for instance, the case of Sergeant (*Unteroffizier*) Studier and Captain (*Kapitän zur See*) Spring, two members of the German Antislavery Commission. They literally bumped into each other in the vicinity of Makata:

Sergeant Studier, [who was coming] from Condua, and [our caravan] crossed each others paths about 16 kilometres east of Makata. He had about ten carriers with him and he looked awful [due to being exhausted]. Reacting to his pleas I gave him several cans of meat, two bottles of wine and one bottle of cognac.⁶¹

Scenes like this happened repeatedly within both colonies. Asking a colleague for food was not out of the ordinary. But in this particular case you have a more or less healthy man in his twenties with sufficient ammunition to shoot an animal as well as porters to carry the kill in a region of GEA filled with game. Despite all this, Studier

60 French: Une seule chose qui faisait défaut c'était le vin. Il y a plus de 4 mois, que la station n'a plus été ravitaillée en vin, ni en sucre, ni en café. J'ai offert ce qui me restait de vin, mais qu'est-ce que 2 ou 3 litres, pour 8 jeunes gens, ayant tous de 20 à 30 ans. Letter to his siblings, dated 24.07.1893. De Walsche, Louis. "Unpublished Private Correspondence with Family Members". Sig. 56.4/13.47.12.

61 German: Der Unteroffizier Studier ist mir ca 16 Kilometer östlich von Makata von Candua [aus] mit ca 10 Trägern kommend ziemlich elend aussehend begegnet, derselbe erhielt von mir auf sein Bitten von meinem Proviant einige Dosen Fleisch, zwei Flaschen Wein und 1 Flasche Cognac. Spring, Albert, Berichte des Kapitän Spring an die Ausführungskommission der deutschen Antisklavereibewegung zu Coblenz, Condua d. 26. Februar 1892, Station Kilossa, in: Antisklavereibewegung. Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde, Berlin.

still preferred to have access to familiar goods from home that would soothe his soul and maybe also restore happiness. In respect to the preference of white colonisers for European food even in the presence of large amounts of game to hunt, it should be mentioned that:

[...] colonial mythology [often] neglects the long train of native porters who provided travellers with canned meat and biscuits, bottles of beer, wine, and Vichy water, and other staples of European civilization. [...] The desire for familiar food notwithstanding, Europeans also enjoyed shooting big game and frequently debated the gastronomic merits of zebra, hippopotamus, and crocodile.⁶²

As is to be expected, accounts of hunting big game are numerous in the sources. At times, these accounts function as a display of manliness or of social class. At other times, they are accounts of life-or-death situations when food was scarce and a failure to hunt would mean starvation. The excitement and joy linked to hunting game at first provides the reader with the impression that eating the fresh meat of an exotic animal was considered a luxury. Yet, devouring canned foods and drinking bottled alcoholic drinks was often preferred, for these goods had become 'white' goods while only living off fresh produce belonged to the 'non-white' other. The difference between fresh and canned food was that the latter was a symbol of a national cuisine that in turn would be used to 'other' oneself from the African Other. The "alimentary nationalism"⁶³ of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which relabelled popular local dishes like haggis and whiskey into national recipes, had developed further into an alimentary racism by the end of the nineteenth century.

Further examples of the need to celebrate and demonstrate the superiority of European dining culture to that of African food cultures included German festivals in Dar es Salaam, drinking beers produced in Belgian or German breweries, enjoying French wine, champagne, brandy, or cognac, and eating *Dosenwurst* (canned sausage) or canned fish. Often, industrialised goods from Europe were referred to as treasures and were treated as such.⁶⁴ Heinrich Fonck, a German captain of the KS, stated in one of his memoirs that it was relatively easy to acquire foods similar to the *Heimat* such as meat, rice, potatoes, and vegetables as long as you were either on the eastern coast or in the bigger colonial stations in the interior. However, he recommended taking along tinned foods and bottled alcoholic drinks for expeditions.

Necessary [to pack] are: coffee, tea, cocoa, butter, vegetables, flour, tins with meat, fish and fruits, fruit jams, and dried fruits. [...] In terms of drinks everyone also takes what

62 Pilcher, *Food in World History*, 75.

63 Patricia Hill, Diane Kirkby, and Alex Tyrell, "Feasting on National Identity: Whisky, Haggis and the Celebration of Scottishness in the Nineteenth Century", in *Dining on Turtles. Food Feasts and Drinking in History*, ed. Diane Kirkby and Tanja Luckins (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 46.

64 Tom von Prince, for example, described the delivery of wine, sausage and bread as treasures. Prince, *Gegen Araber und Wahehe*, 28.

they prefer. Popular drinks are semi bottles of sparkling wines, and red wine for illnesses, white win, cognac, rum, several fruit juices. Lemon juice is consumed a lot, as well as bottled beer. However, Southern Germans should be aware of the fact that the quality of the beers over there is not yet at its best.⁶⁵

The biggest exception to the studied neglect towards African foods was in relation to Afro-Arab hospitality and cuisines. As presented in the chapter on interracial friendships, Muslim cultural influences on GEA's coastline were praised rather than criticised. In contrast to the 'natural' African, the oriental Muslim African could read and write, believed in one God, and produced luxurious goods like embroidered silks or decorated tableware. The following account is by the German captain Max Prager who, prior to coming to GEA, was stationed in the South Sea for nearly a decade. There he had trained indigenous men to become sailors and he was looking forward to the change of scenery that a posting at the East African coast would offer. After weeks of sailing from Plymouth via the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and past Somalia, Prager finally arrived in Dar es Salaam on 20 July 1889. A few days later, accompanied by other German colonials and his crew, he described their reception at the court of the sultan of Zanzibar during the month of Ramadan.

The Sultan's entourage, which consisted of noble Arabs dressed in their traditional dress made of exquisite and expensive drapes, had taken their seats behind and opposite of the Sultan. In accordance with their Oriental traditions, servants brought us sweets and sherbet both of which I tried some bites to not offend [the host]. Shortly after the Sultan signalled to the servants to take away the sweets from us and to replace them with golden cups filled with mocha coffee. Once the cups were emptied (truthfully the amount was that of a single sip) the servants instantly reclaimed the sumptuous cups and spoons, which were made of pure gold and decorated with beautiful Oriental ornaments. The Sultan's *majordomo* then went to every one of our group and sprinkled our handkerchiefs with a drop of expensive rose oil and once this was over the Sultan signalled that the reception was to come to an end.⁶⁶

65 German: Nötig sind: Kaffee, Tee, Kakao, Butter, Gemüse, Mehl, Fleisch-, Fisch- und Fruchtkonserven, Fruchtmarmeladen und getrocknete Früchte. [...] An Getränken versorgt jeder sich ebenfalls mit dem, was ihm a meisten zusagt. Sekt in halben Flaschen, Rotwein für Krankheitsfälle, Weißwein, Kognak, Rum, viele Fruchtsäfte sind beliebt. Zitronensaft wird viel verbraucht, auch Flaschenbier wird von Manchem geschätzt. Für Süddeutsche sei bemerkt, daß die Bierverhältnisse drüben noch nicht auf der Höhe der Zeit stehen. Fonck, *Deutsch-Ost-Afrika*, 61–62.

66 German: Im Hintergrund sowohl, wie an der gegenüberliegenden Seite, hatte das Gefolge des Sultans, aus vornehmen Arabern in ihrer reichen malerischen Tracht bestehend, Platz gefunden. Entsprechend der orientalischen Sitte, wurde sodann von der Dienerschaft Süßigkeiten und Scherbet herungereicht, und die Höflichkeit erfordert, daß man wenigstens etwas davon genießt. Kurze Zeit darauf räumten dann die Diener auf einen Wink des Ober-Eunuchen Tabletten und Gläser geschwinde weg und als dies geschehen, wurde jedem Gaste eine kleine goldene Tasse mit schwarzem Mokkaffee präsentiert. Als diese geleert war (es ist eigentlich nur ein guter Schluck da drin enthalten), nah-

Despite not caring for the sweets, Prager did enjoy, or at least appreciate, the attention he was given by the sultan of Zanzibar and the cultural framework within which the sultan welcomed him and his crew. Of course, riches and wealth often leave an impression on others, but Prager did not seem to be impressed by the wealth he saw. Instead he welcomed the sophisticated surroundings, people, and artefacts present at the reception to welcome the foreign guests. The otherwise common disregard for 'black African' culture was not present in the account of this scene and the same phenomenon can be seen in all of the sources, as can their comparably higher regard for the oriental Afro-Arab culture.

6.3 Eating as if at Home

White colonials in central Africa (and probably elsewhere) literally ate and drank their respective home countries by internalising their homelands in selected dishes and drinks. Since a singular internalisation was insufficient, due to the physical activity of digestion, the process required constant repetition. Just like humans have to keep eating food to stay energised, some colonials had to constantly reaffirm their whiteness. Far from home, traditionally common foods turned into exquisite and luxurious recipes. A vast amount of energy, time, and money was invested in retrieving these very specific resources from Europe to (still) feel white. The efforts to ensure the provision of European foods and dining culture in Africa were not linked to hunger or occasional homesickness, but instead to racial identity, and the ever recurring need to assert this as much as possible to the public in large. Ultimately, racial identity had become edible.

As products of the nineteenth century, many Europeans had first-hand experience of the influence of heavy industrialisation on modern societies, waves of people migrating to other continents, and the creation of new nations. All of these transformations affected cuisines across Europe. In some cases, new food habits were developed – like eating canned meats and vegetables – and in other cases food recipes travelled with the migrants to foreign settlements. In relation to the nationalisation process, local or regional food recipes were suddenly referred to as national dishes. Alimentary nationalism had been created.⁶⁷ In the medieval and early modern past, Europe did not transform any of its foods into national dishes, but this is hardly surprising since there were no nations to speak of yet. This changed radically in the

men die Diener die werthvollen Schalen sofort wieder ab. Tassen und Löffel, aus reinem Golde hergestellt, sind mit kunstvoller orientalischer Arbeit geschmückt. Sodann geht der Ober-Eunuque mit einem Fläschchen echten Rosenöls zu jedem und benetzt mit einem Tropfen dieses theuren Parfüms das bereit gehaltene Taschentuch, und sobald diese Arbeit von dem dicken schwarzen Majordomus beendet war, erhob sich der Sultan als Zeichen, daß die Audienz beendet sei. Prager, *Der Araber-Aufstand in Ost-Afrika*, 74–75.

67 See Hill, Kirkby, and Tyrell, "Feasting on National Identity".

nineteenth century. Nationalism coupled with industrialisation changed how food and its consumption were approached by their consumers. In the wake of the birth of nationalism, European peoples and their governments invested a lot of time and energy to setting themselves apart from other Europeans by paying more attention to the differences between the various nations and their cultures. Even though Europeans shared access to more or less the same ingredients, the manner of preparing food became an important distinguishing feature in the so-called national dishes.⁶⁸ Dishes that were previously thought of as typical but not particularly special suddenly received new appreciation for being traditional, national and part of either someone's personal or group identity.

Imperialism enabled these so-called national dishes to travel with their representatives all over the world as new-found markers of identity. One example is of Scottish colonisers in colonial India or in Australia, who started honouring their famous fellow Scotsman Robert Burns by eating or drinking things he mentioned in his works like haggis and whiskey.⁶⁹ Publically practicing a national culture far away from home even triggered the “emergence of a distinctively colonial pattern of Scottish feasting in [British colonies]”⁷⁰. In the long run, nationals of different countries received nicknames based on national dishes: the French were being referred to as ‘frogs’, the English became ‘limeys’, and the Germans turned into ‘krauts’. In a very nationalistic way, you were, what you ate, and “references to diet could be used as pejorative statements of nationality”⁷¹.

When abroad, colonials often invented or enforced their national traditions by giving previously common foods and drinks an overly important place in their imperial societies. As Annette Hope notes in reference to Scottish communities abroad, food helped proclaim or reinforce national identity for expats.⁷² The consumption of specific national foods was not only linked to a political statement about one's origins. It was also a reminder of home and of a *Heimat*. In this context, I refer to Daniel Rouven Steinbach and Herrmann Bausinger's interpretation of how the term *Heimat* is to be understood. Originally, *Heimat* was seen as a “conservative concept of society, revolving around the sedentariness and security of rural life”⁷³. Due to industrialisation and urbanisation, the term's initial understanding was adapted to contemporary developments which changed its meaning slightly. *Heimat* was now a location that could vary considerably in size: it could be as small as a tiny room. It presented the observer or inhabitant with the feeling of being in a “mentally sooth-

68 See Kiple, *A Movable Feast*, 215.

69 National dishes are often the result of or connected to invented traditions as argued by Hugh Trevor-Roper in the Scottish case. Hugh Trevor-Roper, “The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland”, in *Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

70 Hill, Kirkby, and Tyrell, “Feasting on National Identity”, 51.

71 *Ibid.*, 48.

72 Quoted in *ibid.*, 57.

73 Steinbach, “Carved out of Nature”, 48.

ing environment” and a “place of compensation, where amends were made for the failures and uncertainties of one’s own life”⁷⁴. But the term could also stand for a large natural area like a park or a forest. It all depended on a person’s emotional or political need to create a place of belonging. In the nineteenth century, the *Heimat* had become a product of nationalist movements and helped in the creation of an overall national identity without discarding one’s previous identity. The German word *Heimat* is adaptable to almost every citizen of any nation who left his or her home country in order to pursue a new life abroad. Apart from adapting to contemporary conditions, the term also had a gendered aspect, for it was usually linked to an idea of home and therefore “domesticity, gentility, and comfort”⁷⁵.

The colonial societies in the CFS and GEA were far from being homogenous: they consisted of civil and military staff, missionaries, traders, and a few settlers. These societies could be described as diverse and fragile constructions based on “imagined communities”⁷⁶. The majority of these colonials were Belgian or German, however, both colonial communities were very international with people from all over Europe and a few from the USA. These colonisers’ main commonalities were their whiteness and Christian cultures. Furthermore, social differences gave way to more meritocratic standards whilst abroad; the spirit of a shared commonality was far more important than birthright. The previously established and practised social rules that applied to life at home had to be reconfigured for and by the colonial societies in Africa. Therefore, not only was it necessary to adjust previous class hierarchies, but it was also a necessity to construct a white identity that could be opposed to the large African population. Applying racist instruments was for that reason more than just an instrument to oppress African peoples: “it also served to create an atmosphere of solidarity among the colonials.”⁷⁷

Amongst other things, white solidarity focused on protecting European values by using food recipes as yet another tool to strengthen white supremacy in the colonies. By categorising and treating subaltern African cuisine as inferior, colonisers could draw a line of separation between ‘white’ and ‘non-white’ cooking. This line was also intended to separate the public from the private sphere. However, since they were two sides of the same coin, this was rather futile. Naturally, when colonials invited their colleagues and/or friends to a dinner party, none of the servants were white. At the same time the food that was served had been whitened. This reminds us of the Dutch-Indonesian *rijsttafel*. Moreover, in reference to dinner tables, I wish

74 Hermann Bausinger, “Auf dem Weg zu einem neuen, aktiven Heimatverständnis. Begriffsgeschichte als Problemgeschichte”, in *Heimat Heute*, ed. Hans-Georg Wehling (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1984), 15–16.

75 Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, 36. See also Renate Bridenthal, Krista O’Donnell, and Nancy Reagin, *The Heimat Abroad. The Boundaries of Germanness* (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 2005); Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire*.

76 See Ann Laura Stoler, “Rethinking Colonial Categories: European Communities and the Boundaries of Rule”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31, no. 1 (1989): 136–37.

77 Steinbach, “Carved out of Nature”, 52.



Figure 11:
Lefèvre and Hugo Magnus
Kjellgren in Sili, CFS.

to present an event which Tom von Prince described in his memoirs. During one of Tom's first expeditions in GEA, he was a member of the famous General Wissmann's military trek to the Kilimanjaro region. On the *Kaiser's* birthday in 1891, the troop organised a parade to honour the German monarch, which was then followed by a day of games and a meal slightly more elaborate than usual. As was the case throughout the entire trip, Wissmann insisted on a particular rule for every white member of the officers' mess even when in the middle of nature:

Wissmann's principle was that all members of the officers' mess were to take their meals seated at a table, and as a result everybody was in a better and more jovial mood than would have been possible otherwise [in the African wilderness].⁷⁸

Since, at the time at least, all white members of the troop were also members of the officers' mess, Wissmann's principle basically meant that all white soldiers were to sit at a table while all non-white members of the cohort could sit anywhere else. This meant that they would sit on the ground, on stones, or on other natural 'chairs'. Wissmann could not have created a more obvious physical segregation between the different racial groups of soldiers. What is more, he could not have made a clearer statement on the importance of white dining culture. His principle had an effect too:

78 German: Wissmanns Grundsatz, daß alles von der Offiziersmesse an einem Tische speisen mußte, machte jeden Teilnehmer der Expedition lebhafter, als sonst möglich gewesen wäre. Prince, *Gegen Araber und Wahehe*, 44.

all of the white soldiers felt more at ease and more like their European *Heimat*-bound selves than if they had sat on the ground on the emperor's birthday. Consciously or not, adhering to the traditional rules of any European dining culture while in Africa caused a sensation of familiarity and homeliness. These two experiences were then combined with white supremacy in terms of space, emotions, distance, and superiority through the exclusion of others.

Another example of white colonial men adhering to the rule that they had to sit at a table with proper plates, cutlery, glasses and even a table cloth can be seen in the following photograph of a Swede and Belgian colonial in the CFS.⁷⁹ These two men, named Lefèvre and Hugo Magnus Kjellgren, were colleagues and this particular picture was taken in Sili, where Kjellgren was in charge of the colonial trade and military station. Sili was in the northern territories of the CFS and today is close to the borders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic. The two colonisers' desire to present themselves as cultured individuals who, despite their distance from Europe, were still practising a refined dining culture is obvious. I discovered this particular picture amongst the documents of several other Swedish colonisers within the MRAC's folder *Scandinaves au Congo*. It is part of Kjellgren's collection and consists of numerous letters and a dozen photographs which he sent to the MRAC in 1959.

Fernand Braudel demanded as early as in 1961 that the field of food history should be broadened; instead of focusing on food history's economic aspect, historians should elaborate more on the cultural and material importance of foods and cuisines. This was to be done in particular by directing the researcher's gaze to food habits of the masses, not a small number of privileged people.⁸⁰ In terms of numbers, the white colonisers were a miniscule group in the CFS and GEA. In terms of their practised dining culture in Africa, these men and women represented the standard bourgeois citizen from Europe. In line with this shared background came the traditional role of the woman being in charge of home and hearth while the man pursued his career. Food was therefore not only socially differentiated in terms of race, class, occupation, and income, but also in terms of gender and age.⁸¹ Generally, it is surely true that patriarchal societies usually assigned women the duty of everyday feeding. Those men who did cook prepared high status dishes like large cuts of roast meat, elaborate haute cuisine, or ritual food for the gods. These men tended to be talented cooks. Furthermore, men generally demanded and received larger portions and left the less-prized foods to the women and children. Even so, no matter how devalued women's work may be considered within any society, their common daily tasks of cooking for the entire family or community, conveys a form

79 "Archives Scandinaves au Congo". Edited by Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale. Ter-
vuren, Sig. DMN: 2012-03-26 13.27.31.

80 See Fernand Braudel, "Histoire De La Vie Matérielle: Bulletin No. 2", *Annales: Economies
Sociétés Civilisations* XVI (1961).

81 See Black, "Community Cookbooks".

of power within the family.⁸² In extreme cases of hunger or starvation it did occur, however, that a parent would offer her/his child to a coloniser in exchange for food during a military trek. Children were often seen as means to an end. As the following excerpt by Lt. Meyer shows, they were regarded as trade goods:

Some of the senior Africans wanted to sell their children to us; one mother even offered her little girl to us in exchange for donkey meat; ultimately she vanished and left the girl behind [with us].⁸³

Such scenes often led to even more disdain from the colonisers towards the colonised. Only in some cases did the Europeans acknowledge that one child was often sacrificed by the mother to save the rest of the family.

This particular form of indirect gendered power was readily apparent in colonial Africa once a woman entered a previously mono-gender male group. Since in both the CFS and GEA white female colonisers were scarce during the 1880s and 1890s those who did travel all the way to Africa had an immense influence on their white male contemporaries; especially in the domestic sphere. Due to their scarcity, white women also left quite an impression on indigenous Africans. As discussed in the previous chapter, these women were usually colonial wives who at some point decided to join their husbands in sub-Saharan Africa. Their distracting or atmosphere-changing effect on the white male coloniser in general can therefore not be linked to flirtatious or sexual interventions. On the contrary, these women arrived in Africa with boxes filled to the brim of homeland memorabilia. In their contemporary roles as the bearers of Belgian, German, or Swedish cultures they were also treated as beacons of modernity linked to the distant *Heimat*. In this function they were, just like in Europe, in charge of the household. The difference now was that they were expected to uphold Europeaness – or whiteness – in Africa by creating an artificial white life in the colonies.

As an example of this phenomenon of implementing white culture, I present the case of Magdalene von Prince, who had accompanied her husband Tom to GEA in 1896. Once she arrived in the colony, her joint travels with Tom continued to Iringa, where they were to have their first new home. One day after their arrival, Magdalene spent the entire day with unpacking and invited her husband's companions Lieutenant Stadlbauer and Dr Reinhard for dinner in the evening. The two men were exuberant about finally being able to celebrate 'proper' dining culture again.

82 See Pilcher, *Food in World History*, 4.

83 German: Ältere wollten ihre Kinder für ein Stück Rindfleisch an uns verkaufen, ja eine Mutter bat uns sogar ihr kleines Mädchen für einen [...] Lastesel an und ließ uns dasselbe schließlich zurück indem sie sich heimlich davon machte. Meyer, An die Ausführungs-Commission der Deutschen Antisklaverei Vereins in Coblenz, Katoto am Speke-Golf, 13. April 1892, in: Antisklavereibewegung. Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde, Berlin, Sig. 8.2.93.

The following day was occupied with unpacking and decorating; especially the new living room looked quite nice with its decorations consisting of antlers, spears, curtains and fur covers. When our guests arrived to take place at the dining table they were positively surprised by how ‘European’ everything was. They expressed this experience as a long missed blessing: to finally sit at a table again with a proper tablecloth and enjoy a meal with a complete set of glasses, servers and silver cutlery.⁸⁴

The above sequence is only one of many such accounts. It describes very well how strong the longing for a European – white – dining culture was in Africa amongst the colonisers and how appreciative the men were of finally having participated in a proper home-cooked dinner party again. This overt display of European culture was only possible because a white woman had taken charge and organised it. She was the hostess in the most typical bourgeois manner possible and her white male dinner guests thanked her profusely for this precious enjoyment, even if it only lasted a single evening. Some might argue that this party of four enjoyed the evening so abundantly because the angst over never returning to Germany had increased the longing for their homeland. Or maybe it was just the nice company that the dinner party group enjoyed. However, as I argue, it could have been the fact that in a supposedly untamed culture and nature, these four individuals had managed to celebrate an evening of ‘white’ dishes at a table set and decorated according to ‘white’ dining standards which made this evening of displaying one’s own cultural advancement so special. The von Prince’s second and proper home – the Sakkarani plantation – had a lobby that partly consisted of the same furnishings as the first home. It looked as follows:

At first glance, the interior design of the Sakkarani plantation house looks like a typical German home. Only minor details, like the leopard skins on the wooden benches in the back or the antlers above the door on the left, hint at these rooms’ geographic location. In the back on the right side there are visible parts of the dining room which show how white this home’s dining culture was. Nonetheless, the wish to identify oneself through food did not only apply to white colonisers in Africa, but also vice versa. The international cross-cultural exchange of foods caused the emergence of general trends. Probably the most basic of these trends was the application of conservative food and drink habits as well as the wish of the colonisers to remain close to their traditional sources of nourishment.

84 German: Am anderen Tage ging’s ans Auspacken und Einrichten; besonders das Wohnzimmer sah recht nett aus mit seinen Dekorationen an Gehörnen, Speeren, Gardinen und Felldecken. Als wir die Herren bei uns zu Tische sahen, waren sie freudig, alles so „europäisch“ zu finden. Sie empfanden es als eine lang entbehrte Wohltat, endlich wieder einmal an einem Tisch, mit wirklichem Tischzeug, mit vollständiger Gläser- und Serviergarnitur und Silberzeug speisen zu können. Prince, *Eine deutsche Frau*, 53.



Figure 12: Family von Prince's living room at their Sakkarani Plantation.⁸⁵

Ultimately, colonised Africans also became accustomed to eating European foods. After their traditional meal of porridge and stew, indigenous Africans consumed canned ham and tea as snacks.⁸⁶ As was also to be expected, there were instances when colonisers appreciated the local indigenous cuisines. This could take the form of General Wissmann's preference for rice with Indian curry or Magdalene von Prince's delight when she tried grilled chicken flavoured with East African spices for the first time, which led her to consider to "never instruct the cook in the German way of preparing dishes"⁸⁷. This praise, however, might have derived from her initial excitement at finally arriving in GEA with her husband. As soon as Magdalene arrived at where she and Tom were to settle, she made her farm staff plant vegetable and fruit seeds from Germany. Her joy when potatoes, apples, pears, peaches, cherries, and plums (to name just a few examples) finally grew was enormous. Instead of trusting the local produce Magdalene – and here too she was no exception – had ordered, bought, transported, planted, fertilised, and harvested the 'white' produce. None of these vegetables and fruits had existed in Tanzania prior to German colonialism.⁸⁸

Food and topics related to it such as dining culture and which foods were cultivated for consumption be used for racist tropes as much as skin colour, degree

85 Ibid., 224.

86 See Pilcher, *Food in World History*.

87 German: [...] ich will dem Koch unsere [deutsche] Kochkunst lieber nicht beibringen. Prince, *Eine deutsche Frau*, 9.

88 "Vom Schreibtisch und aus dem Atelier", 4, 9.

of education, or lifestyle. Wylie discovered “that apartheid had nutritional roots as well as [nutritional] consequences”; thereby linking colonial policy with cultural racism and enabling white supremacy to enter the private homes of non-white South Africans.⁸⁹ Racism at the turn of the twentieth century was justified by scientific findings. According to contemporary opinions, different races differed greatly in development and even in intelligence. White supremacy was explained through biology. This notion changed slightly in Western societies throughout the twentieth century, particularly after WWII, from biological racism to cultural racism. The theory of biological superiority lost its respectability due to Nazism and because it did not explain the reality of poor white people in post-WWII colonies such as South Africa.⁹⁰ Distinguishing racial differences based on differing cultures became more respectable than making racist assumptions through non-white physiques.

Yet, it is undeniable that the European conviction that made scientific progress a marker of racial superiority was the popular source of post-WWII cultural racism. With reference to modern Britain, Paul Gilroy claims that cultural racism is just as dangerous as biological racism because throughout the twentieth century it enabled a white paternalistic view that makes modern black poverty a question of culture rather than a result of political and economic policies. Gilroy also argued that “racism rests on the ability to contain blacks in the present, to repress and to deny the past”⁹¹. More generally, white failure was declared to be the result of ignorance and vice while black failure was the result of inherent cultural defects.

Returning to the colonial realities of the CFS and GEA, many white colonisers felt proud of Europe’s achievements and the wealth and civilised cultures it generated. Meanwhile African pre-colonial knowledge was ignored and deemed useless for modern societies. Moreover, white paternalism was declared to be more important than black knowledge. In particular, the latter attitude was extremely dominant at the end of the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth. It is undeniable that white colonisers learned from indigenous subalterns how to navigate local rivers, hunt game, and find directions in order to survive in the colonies. The Europeans were also willing to ask for help and maintain allegiances with Afro-Arab traders and African tribal chiefs in the early years of the colonisation of the CFS and GEA. But as soon as the required survival and tactical knowledge had been acquired, political allegiances made, and local wars won, the white coloniser (ab)used his/her new-found expertise to bend it in accordance with his/her culture and white supremacy. Racialism was not an invention of Europe’s post-WWII era; rather, it

89 Wylie, *Starving on a Full Stomach*, xii.

90 I refer to Dubow’s research on the difference between biological and cultural racism in South Africa because studies on this topic have not yet been conducted in a colonial Central African context. See Saul Dubow, *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

91 Paul Gilroy, *There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 12.

was a creation of the late nineteenth century, and it had been practised at the dinner tables of Belgian and German colonies.

6.4 Conclusion

Social habits centring on food have changed and are still developing. National cuisines have steadily adapted to an increase in international dishes and ingredients. In many cases, local specialties have lost their primary role as a 'main' dish and individual tastes have outrun group tastes. As a typical middle-class European of the late nineteenth century one was bound to eating specific dishes and consuming select drinks as a marker of a social class. Nineteenth-century middle- and upper-class citizens were expected to consume in accordance with a rigid dining culture which left less room for personal tastes and convictions than is the case today. The elevated European dining culture at the turn of the twentieth century was composed of at least three dishes: a soup to start, followed by a meat or fish dish, and topped off with a sweet dish. On Sundays or for celebratory reasons, several more dishes were added to the menu, like *hors-d'œuvres* before dinner, a cold dish like liver *paté* between the soup and the main dish, and a cheese platter that followed the sweet dessert. In accordance with the meals came a strict succession of alcoholic drinks: you would begin with a glass of sparkling wine or another type of refreshing *aperitif*, continue to white wine (sometimes followed by red wine), and end the evening with a *digestif* like port wine, tokaji or brandy.

Nowadays, being part of the upper classes is no longer automatically linked to adhering to a fixed eating culture. Instead, it is possible to be a bourgeois citizen and be a vegetarian, a vegan, or a meat lover. Food and dining culture can be used to celebrate social class, but it is no longer a requirement. Therefore, a like or dislike of a specific national or local cuisine is no longer necessary for a group's racial or class identity. That is not to say that people today no longer express their identity through food. It is rather that the liberty to choose specific foods, drinks, and cuisines has increased. Today in the Western world, consumers have more freedom to choose their food allegiance than ever before. Of course, there are still specific ingredients or dishes that are linked to and representative of social class; for example, eating beluga caviar accompanied by a glass of champagne. Luxury goods still play an important role in the public display of financial and social class status; however, unlike colonial Africa, these goods currently lack a racial undertone.

What has remained unchanged since colonial times is the notion that a culture's level of sophistication is directly linked to the superiority of a people or, in this case, an entire race. Linked to this idea of racial supremacy is also the conviction that the "eye eats as well"⁹², meaning that how a dish is displayed by the creator is also relevant to a culture's degree of advancement and superiority. It indicates that a culture

92 German: *Das Auge isst mit*. This is a German proverb. Literally translated, it means: the eye eats as well. It means that the presentation of a dish is just as important as its taste.

can only then be considered truly cultivated when it has the time, ability, and means to decorate and organise a dish. In that respect, sight is more valued than touch, as discussed in section 6.2. The lack of culinary presentation skills served as a further 'white' judgement on the absence of a cultured lifestyle amongst the 'non-white' peoples. This did not only refer to the food on the plate. Menu cards, like those provided by Gabrielle Sillye, were also part of the presentation skills. Additional representative details of a sophisticated and civilised dining culture included dining table decorations, table cloths, linen napkins, proper china (if possible by a famous china manufacturer like Wedgwood, Hoechster Porzellan Manufactur, or Royal Limoges), sterling silver cutlery, and, if possible, sterling silver chandeliers.

The nineteenth-century industrialisation of Europe and North America created new means of producing, packaging and transporting food; as a side effect, new eating habits developed in the Western world. Related to this modernisation of eating and drinking habits came the conviction that Europeans were more intelligent and more civilised than their colonised others due to this advance in food technology. The aim of many in Europe is to eat as much fresh, organic food from local farmers as possible. The Europeans of the 1850s onwards had very different ideas about what to eat. Canned foods were symbols of modernity, industrialisation, urbanisation, and advanced technology. In particular, the increased urbanisation in numerous European cities had caused an exodus from all sorts of landscapes. This was enabled, in part, by the industrialisation of food-producing processes; in turn more and more consumers lost direct contact to farming and farm animals. Previous household lifestyles often included animals: a chicken coop in the yard or garden, a goat or cow for milk, a horse for transport, a guard dog, etc. Lifestyles were more rural, even in cities. Canned foods were synonymous with developed modernised society and colonial Africa could not supply the same or even a slightly similar version.

This chapter aims to show how the preparation and consumption of food affected the shaping of identity. While the 'breaking of bread' is usually understood as a metaphor for a group of people coming together in a peaceful way, the sources often tell a different story. Instead of food being used as a diplomatic tool the sources present a narrative of selected acceptance that was not based kinship, meritocracy, or proximity.⁹³ Instead, the tale here is one of selection and othering. It is a narrative of inclusion or exclusion depending on race. Food was used not merely for filling your stomach but also to show who you were, what you represented, and who you deemed fit to enter your circle of equals.

93 Parasecoli makes the case that meals united and divided people in his analysis of European eating culture and its direct links to identity and diversity. De Vooght extended this argument by applying it to the Belgian royal court of the nineteenth century. See De Vooght, *The King Invites*; Parasecoli, "Food, Identity and Diversity".

7. Results

Whoever has power takes over the noun – and the norm – while the less powerful get an adjective.¹

This book is more than just a history from below. It is a history from in-between, a type of history that requires the exploration of various personal aspects to distinguish the cultural dimensions of inner, as much as outer, whiteness. Racism might be a “protean beast”² that changes its shape depending on the situation so that the elite seem to have a natural right to dominance. But there is more behind racist attitudes than merely the protection of one’s political and social power. The roots often lie deeper, far deeper. Welcoming the Other and foreign cultures in general whilst avoiding arrogance or angst requires first and foremost a strong personal cultural identity. It requires forceful roots. Roots that do not allow for doubt because exploring unknown territories demands not only a change in location but also a break with your own culture and cultural roots. The act of leaving your group behind whilst keeping your personal self when abroad demands a “distinct identity [and] a sense of its strength, value and maturity”³. If you do not know who you are, the Other and his or her ways have the power to frighten and confuse you. Such confusion can lead to frightened isolation from the Other. Furthermore, imperial identities tended to be formed within the ‘empire’ – one did not go without the other.⁴ After all, these colonisers found themselves interacting in racially heterogeneous spaces within multi-ethnic colonies; as a result, these men and women often formed hybrid identities. European identities were created and based on the demarcation of the colonial Other. The British, for example, defined their nation in “reaction to the Other beyond their shores”⁵. For eighteenth-century Britons, French Catholics were considered the Others; it was colonialism that changed the ‘othered’ target group to non-European peoples.

Fear of the unknown might be an all too human trait. Decisive is how a person handles new acquaintances. Over the course of human history there are three constantly recurring reactions upon meeting the Other: (i) one starts a war, (ii) one

1 Gloria Steinem, “In Defense of the ‘Chick-Flick’”, http://www.alternet.org/story/56219/gloria_steinem_%3A_in_defense_of_the_'chick-flick'. As cited in Sheryl Sandberg, *Lean In. Women, Work, and the Will to Lead* (New York: The Random House Group, 2013), 141.

2 Wylie, *Starving on a Full Stomach*, 15.

3 Kapuscinski, *The Other*, 87–88.

4 Malte Rolf eloquently analyses the biographical turn and the use of imperial biographies as an analytical category. Rolf makes a case for the strong interconnectedness between identity-shaping processes that were unique to the imperial world and colonial careers. See Martin Rolf, “Einführung: Imperiale Biographien. Lebenswege imperialer Akteure in Groß- und Kolonialreichen (1850–1918)”, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, no. 40 (2014).

5 Linda Colley, *Britons. Forging the Nation 1707–1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 6.

builds high fences and walls to keep out the others to protect your own, or (iii) one commences a dialogue. Our experience as humans has shown that, upon meeting a stranger, we tend to initially react with a sense of restraint or mistrust towards the Other, which then either dissolves or results in open hostility. It is hardly a coincidence that the old Greeks called non-Greeks *barbaros*,⁶ that the Romans built kilometres of the so-called *limes* stone walls right through Western Europe, and that the Chinese referred to foreigners from across the sea as *yang-kwei*, meaning sea monsters. Even today when a half-Asian like myself walks through downtown Tokyo, Japanese people openly refer to me as either a *gaijin* (outside person/foreigner) or a *hāfu* (mixed race). In Japanese society (although not only there), both of these terms still come with a negative narrative and connotation.⁷

A similar regard to members of other ethnicities also existed in the nineteenth-century East-African coastal areas, where non-Muslim migrants had to compete with the local Muslim population for work and income. In fact, the refusal to convert and even the exclusion of African converts by the Afro-Arab population “from existing social and religious structures were connected with claims to cultural superiority: while the coastal populations regarded themselves as the harbinger of civilization, as *waungwana* (free, civilized people), they saw outsiders, in particular those from the East-African hinterlands, as *washenzi* (savages), devoid of cultural and religious roots”⁸.

Despite modern advances in both the social and technological spheres, humans remain humans, and even an open and welcoming person often cannot refrain from categorising a new acquaintance into three initial groups: skin colour, nationality, and religion. Of these three, unfortunately, skin colour is usually the most prominent and therefore takes first place when judging and allocating someone to a specific group. Whilst religion and nationality are (increasingly) less linked to certain races, skin colour is an undeniable biological, racial, and, for some people, cultural marker. Participating in a multicultural society therefore demands a mature sense of one’s own identity, because every identity relies on the Other; the ability to establish who we are is performed by defining our selves in relationship to the Other. Every identity is also a mirror picture of the Other. One’s own identity, in particular one’s own exterior skin colour, cannot be seen properly before going abroad. Therefore, since the authors of the sources used and analysed for this book were all white, these historical actors had to relocate to a non-white part of the globe first to discover and/

6 In ancient Greece, *barbaros* were people who spoke unintelligibly because they spoke a different language; it was for this reason that the Greeks did not trust them and kept them at arm’s length.

7 Only recently, in April 2015, the new Miss Universe Japan, who is half Afro-American and half Japanese but who grew up in Japan and identifies as such, was subject to both public and private slander for not being a true representative of Japan, as she is considered racially impure by some. Martin Fackler, “Biracial Beauty Queen Challenges Japan’s Self-Image”, *New York Times*, 30.05. 2015.

8 Loimeier, *Muslim Societies in Africa*, 235–36.

or enforce their own whiteness. Being white is only challenged when confronted by a non-white opposite. But being a white European was not an “empty category, defined only in opposition to other races; rather, it was filled with flexible physical, cultural, and political significance”⁹.

As I know from personal experience, whiteness is a contemporary issue as much as a colonial one. Luckily, as an adult, I know my heritage and cultural identity, and I have only twice in my life been the target of very open racism. Within Western Europe and the USA, I never felt the need to question my mixed heritage; however, during sojourns to both South Korea and Japan, my Eurasian background was often met with reserve and I was eyed suspiciously. These moments and interactions with East Asians made me think about what my exterior represents to others and how I am to handle this reception. Such moments of careful yet respectful distrust clarified to me that, outside of Western spheres where I was considered white in the broadest sense and also treated as such (including the social advantages attached to being considered white), I was neither white nor Asian in East Asia; thus, due to the Other’s inability to fit me into a box, I was met with (polite) suspicion and reserve. Ironically, ever since the end of the Cold War and an increase in migrants to Western Europe from former Soviet territories, I am now often approached by Russian-speakers or Eastern Europeans who think that I am from Kazakhstan (or thereabouts) because my exterior fits that of a Central-Asian woman.

Returning to late nineteenth-century Europe and retracing our steps and applying thoughts about otherness and white identity to that period leads us to three further aspects: nationalism, narcissism, and cultural racism.¹⁰ The founding of nation-states created national pride based on national achievements and notions of group membership and culture. In particular, the younger nations of the nineteenth century took pride in their newly-founded countries and often felt the need to demonstrate this to the outside world. Yet, their pride was fragile and vulnerable to extensive critique or questioning (especially when queries were linked to heritage and legitimacy). Nonetheless, after entering into contact with the technologically less developed colonised Other, the combination of the new white nationalist pride and narcissism revolving around the belief in possessing a more developed civilisation spurred conflicts amongst different cultures and civilisations.

In this research project, the contemporary white arrogance of the late nineteenth century towards the Other often involved contempt. The result of filtering matters “through a lens of whiteness”¹¹ was a narcissism fixated on membership of some

9 Anderson, *The Cultivation of Whiteness*, 3.

10 History is also a temporal field where new identities are not only constructed, but also contested, and revised. In particular *collective* cultural identities have the might to influence future generations. The study of cultures at a certain point in time gives answers to contemporary societies. For an exemplary study on the German case, see Russell A. Berman, *Cultural Studies of Modern Germany. History, Representation, and Nationhood* (London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993).

11 Anderson, *The Cultivation of Whiteness*, 1.

sort of a chosen and superior race. This sense of superiority was then masked by a rhetoric proclaiming the *mission civilisatrice* in and for Africa. Bringing Christian salvation was often part of this rhetoric; unfortunately, even the most well-intentioned Christian missionary was not immune to feeling culturally superior to the indigenous African.¹² After all, before Belgian and German colonial activities in sub-Saharan Africa commenced, the indigenous peoples did not long for Christian salvation or cultural uplifting. These aims were, from beginning to end, European goals based on white notions of white superiority and white narcissism in relation to both cultural elevation and Christian mission.

Comparable to the alleged binary of white and non-white is that of masculinity and femininity. Both fields of analysis require the exploration of one of the oldest “binary categorisations of mankind. It is a distinction between two poles that have mainly been thought of as stable and unchangeable”¹³. In reality there is no true stability to the different skin colours or genders except for biological ones. By creating a gender ideology and distinguishing between gender roles in the nineteenth century, a very bourgeois socio-cultural understanding of gender was the result. The field of gender studies, however, distinguishes between the constructed gender and the biological sex; just like with gender, there is also no stability within ideas of race and, specifically relevant here, whiteness. Both gender and race are dependent on contemporary developments; due to their instability, they need to always be assessed and reassessed within their specific socio-historical settings. As we have seen in this book, I did not assess whiteness as a homogenous notion, but rather as a grouping of diverse degrees of whiteness that depend on individual perspectives in relation to friendships, gender roles, and dining cultures.

With regards to friendships between coloniser and colonised or coloniser and business partner, this research has shown a variety of reasons to befriend or alienate the Other. Creating friendly relations with Afro-Arabs was, of course, to a great extent due to their membership of the local economic and cultural elite. Yet, the fact that they were Muslims (and therefore believed in some of the same texts as Christians), literate, and lived in buildings and not in huts, offered the European coloniser a sense of cultural similarity whilst abroad, thereby creating a sense of safety and familiarity. This Muslim Other was less alien to the colonisers. Also helpful in this regard, were the facts that some of the Afro-Arab traders were slightly fairer skinned than the indigenous central Africans and that the Muslim traders wore clothes that covered the entire body instead of only their respective private parts. Overall, on the exterior, there were far more similarities between the Christian white person and the Muslim Afro-Arab than there could be between the former and an indigenous dark-skinned individual. In practice, however, these similarities did not always matter.

Considering that social class was replaced with race in colonial Africa, friendships between colonisers and colonised were often subject to artificially constructed

12 See Stenström, *The Brussels Archives*, 27.

13 Osselaer, *The Pious Sex*, 12.

barriers that needed to be overcome with active deeds. Once these barriers were surmounted, the coloniser could find him- or herself in a friendship – or at least a friendly relationship – with a non-white person. Before that happened, however, the colonised were expected to prove their qualities to be considered worthy enough for an interracial friendship. As discussed in chapter 3, interracial friendships tended to occur, for example, after an Askari soldier saved a German soldier's life or when an Afro-Arab trader had welcomed a Belgian officer repeatedly to his home. The reasons for these friendships varied.¹⁴ Ultimately, befriending the African Other could “conceal a plain love of the exotic, the different, even though the exploration of the other is in some sense an exploration of self, cultural and individual, through an investigation of alternative possibilities, the functional equivalents in human living; in another way. Of course, it can also be a flight from the realities into which one was born and raised”¹⁵.

In contrast to the commonalities that had nurturing effects on interpersonal relationships, the introduction and ownership of pet dogs by white colonisers did not. Instead of creating a potential common ground between coloniser and colonised, these furry creatures managed to divide groups of people in relation to their social and political standing (i. e. race). It appears from the sources that indigenous central Africans kept shepherd dogs but not lap dogs. Dogs were considered working animals in an agricultural sense. Afro-Arabs referred to canines as unclean creatures that no straight-thinking person would want to have in their private rooms. Some colonisers, however, kept pet dogs as a status symbol (e. g. the photographs of Gabrielle Sillye with her Jack Russell terrier) while others nurtured them as companions (like Louis De Walsche and his Pomeranian called Miss) or used them as reminders of the homeland (as in the case of the von Prince spouses and their dog Schnapfel from Germany). No matter what the reason for owning a non-working dog, such ownership nearly almost always caused further spacial, racial, social, and cultural separation between white and non-white people.

Interracial friendships in the colonies were usually between two or more men: varying, yet similar, notions of manliness tended to lie at the heart of those friendships and indeed every other interpersonal setting. On the one hand, the minute number of women in the CFS and GEA is evidently why there is a lack of female sources to be found on the topics of friendship and masculinities. On the other hand, there are many white male voices telling us about their views on and experiences with non-white men. Interracial friendships between comrades in the KS and FP were common, especially after week- or month-long military treks and battles

14 Rather different, but not always contrary to this project's findings, Inga Clendinnen has made a case in her work on Australia's early colonial history that interracial friendships could be one-sided with the indigenous agent mistaking the European coloniser for a friend whilst the latter, for instance, saw the colonised Other more as an interpreter than as a friend. See Inga Clendinnen, *Dancing with Strangers: Europeans and Australians at First Contact* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

15 Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine and Class*, 5.

fought against a common (usually colonised) foe. Such relationships could also occur when white colonisers and explorers found themselves to be the last white man standing in a group of African soldiers and porters. Spending an extended period of time together, suffering the same shortcomings, or sharing experiences in the field led to bonds between men who, under different circumstances, would never have become friends or engage in friendly relations with each other. Regardless of race, aspects of masculinities tended to be headlined in all interactions amongst these men. It was important to appear and act like a man and be acknowledged as such by one's peers in a community that was as mono-gendered as those in sub-Saharan colonial Africa.

Manliness, lived masculinities, and whiteness were not always consciously lived in the colonies; however, the Belgian, German, and Swedish egodocuments paint an image of these authors' imperial lives which defines how important it was to, on the one hand, act and appear manly while, on the other, not just look white but behave white too. Physical strength, being a good shot, and being capable of commanding dozens or hundreds of indigenous men were all manly traits and duties. Doing the honourable thing in difficult situations, maintaining an air of stoicism in burdensome or life-threatening circumstances, and to later joke about them in memoirs or letters were all considered to be proper masculine behaviour that was limited to and expected of white Christian colonisers. Maintaining and enhancing manliness was not limited to white peers, but was also deemed essential for safeguarding white authority over the non-white colonised. Methods of fulfilling these manly goals varied, but the three main types of action were to apply physical force and corporal punishment against the colonised peoples, to lead by example according to contemporary European white standards, or, in some rare cases, to adapt to local African values. In fact, individuals like Léon Rom, who 'went native' by keeping a harem and used human skulls as flowerbed decorations, seem to have been exceptions, but they definitely existed. Based on his life choices, Rom was sometimes described in the writings of co-colonisers as living the male dream.¹⁶ Despite the existing cases of acclimatisation to local habits and traditions, there was still a desire to dress like a white European, live in a brick building like a white European, and eat like a white European. Africanisation, it seems, only went as far as was comfortable, desirable, or profitable to the white coloniser.

Compared to the male contemporaries, the European women in the CFS and GEA did not have to prove their femininity; however, they were aware of their roles as bearers of culture and helping the imperial cause by either working for it as nurses (like Frieda v. Bülow and her colleague Berta) or by assisting their husbands with their jobs. In relation to both the single colonial women and their married contemporaries (and despite modernising movements in Europe), the few white women in the colonies were profiting from claims on equality that would have been debated

16 For accounts on this see Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*.

more strongly in the metropolitan centres.¹⁷ Due to their distance from the metropolises and the lack of both human capital and societal peer control, it was easier for women to be more emancipated and behave more liberally with less gender-cultural limits in Africa.

In retrospect, female emancipation through colonial service should not come as a surprise. Imperialism not only offered a path for patriarchal masculinity, but also allowed some white women to escape their gendered marginalisation in Europe by entering a more public sphere in the colonies. This was at least partially possible because in Africa skin colour was placed lower than gender in terms of rank within the existing social order and power structures. The irony of the situation might have been that some – usually unmarried – European men went to the colonies to live lives that were more in accordance with rather old-fashioned and traditional gender roles whilst the women found more liberties in the CFS and GEA. This simultaneous contradiction could happen because husbands who were accompanied to the colonies by their wives obviously did not care for the more old-fashioned gender roles. Instead, the married men enjoyed sharing their African experiences with their spouses. The wives themselves were modern and daring enough to agree to come to Africa with their other halves, sometimes spending nights in tents, wearing trousers and men's clothes, and generally dealing with the less sophisticated and very spartan living standards that were to be had in the colonies. Due to the harshness of colonial life, these women often engaged with traditional male activities and fashions without ridding themselves of their femininity.¹⁸

At first glance this dichotomy between old-fashioned (usually male) colonials and more modern European colonisers seems counterproductive, but I would suggest that both groups were necessary for the imperial project. The mono-gender societies were essential for laying the infrastructural and political roots for occupation; once this was achieved, it was important, necessary even, to introduce the so-called female bearers of European culture into the playing field. Even though the CFS and GEA were not primarily settler colonies, sending European women there was important for creating, maintaining, or even restoring European culture in Africa. Ironically, at least in the initial phases of colonising, it was the more emancipated women who were interested in expatriating to sub-Saharan Africa instead of the more traditionally-minded ones, who were expected to found families, be housewives, and rear the European offspring.

17 Berman makes an excellent case in regards to how colonial literature written by women was often used as an indirect path to the spread of ideas on the emancipation of Western women in Europe. See Berman, "Colonial Literature".

18 See following article on the construction of a German femininity in the harsh realities of colonial life and how the Nazis later used these images to display the role model of the modern, hardworking German woman. Willeke Sandler, "Deutsche Heimat in Afrika: Colonial Revisionism and the Construction of Germanness through Photography", *Journal of Women's History* 25, no. 1 (2013).

Female whiteness in the sub-Saharan territories was a rare mix of emancipation and old values. The latter in particular refers to a specific culture that was closely linked, and partly dependent on, a set of values selected by a patriarchal elite. This dichotomy became very visible in the struggles of (upper-class) women like Frieda von Bülow, whose maverick actions were tolerated and supported so long as they supported the greater national good and did not shine a negative light on her homeland's imperial endeavours. But the moment when her services were no longer needed or deemed unfit for financial and political effort, her non-ladylike behaviour and social connections (especially her romantic liaison with Carl Peters) were turned against her in order to end her colonial career. Her nursing project lost its funding and she was forced to return to Berlin. Even her later attempts to manage her late brother's estate in GEA were not supported by the German government but instead, they made her life in the colony more difficult because she was a woman. Had she been a man, her attempts to save Albrecht von Bülow's estate would most definitely have been more successful. Because of her gender, her requests for more protection by the KS were denied and she was told again that it was better to return to the *Kaiserreich* and cease her imperial ambitions. Despite being white and living a white life as much as possible, Frieda was dependent on financial and political backing from the homeland; there, unlike in GEA, her whiteness did not help her achieve her goals. Whilst she was a member of the elite in the colony, she did not have a say in patriarchal Germany.

Compared to Frieda, her married white female contemporaries in the CFS and GEA wrote about other kinds of experiences. This is to be expected, given how their starting points differed so strongly from hers. As colonial wives, they did not work for anyone and were free from the need to find sponsors for their travels and sojourns in Africa. Instead, they lived off their husbands' salaries and were offered housing, servants, and a certain amount of food rations by the state. The colonial realities of these imperial wives were very different compared to those encountered by single female colonisers; yet, all of these women strenuously maintained their whiteness whilst in Africa. Berthe Cabra, Magdalene von Prince, Gabrielle Sillye, and Ebonne Sjöblom all took great care to live in red brick houses with European furniture and interior designs. More extravagantly, these female colonials did not significantly change their contemporary fashion styles, despite the tropical and humid climate of central Africa. The only concession they made was when they wore safari trousers instead of the usual long skirt with underskirts during treks.¹⁹

19 A slightly related example of German women not changing their fashion while in Africa is that of German South West Africa (today: Namibia). There the German female fashion sense went as far as to forcibly influence the clothing of the women of the Herero tribe. Before German colonialism, the Herero women wore barely any clothes at all, however, after entering German services their nowadays traditional clothing became Germanised. This means that they commenced wearing dresses with floor length skirts and various underskirts.

Like the gender-based responsibilities in Europe, these wives were in charge of the households; but they also helped their spouses with job-related issues. Gabrielle, for example, helped her husband to write official letters or draft protocols. Ebonne not only took photographs for and of her husband Edvard in the CFS, but also helped him with the mission and the mission school. Magdalene helped oversee the building of the family plantation and managed the household and plantation staff. Berthe accompanied her husband and managed the household. The Belgian, German, and Swedish wives went to great lengths to maintain their individual and societal whiteness whilst in Africa. Living in the colonies came with trade-offs, but the need or wish to live like in Europe was not a pragmatic choice that made their everyday lives easier. In reality, the contrary was the case. Instead of choosing the easy way in terms of housing, fashion, and food, they chose to live white lifestyles by wearing underskirts, keeping contemporary hairdos, cooking European meals whenever the necessary ingredients were available, and having pet dogs. Their identities in the colonies were not only racially white but also intentionally and decisively culturally white.

Food, food preparation, and dining culture were a very significant part of living a white life. Simply eating German canned sausage, consuming Swedish salted fish, or drinking beer from Belgium alone did not make it a white affair. That would be too easy. How food was prepared, served, and ultimately eaten and celebrated was important and were a crucial factor. After all, food and food habits are the last vestiges that people shed when they find themselves in a diasporic situation. Furthermore, due to the mostly steady access to foods and drinks, the white colonisers did not merely eat for the sake of survival. The constant availability of European foods was not guaranteed, yet food as such was, and still is, a way to live one's identity as well as to be used as a public display of one's own social group. What and how we eat is part of our identity as much as employment choice, fashion, and the books we choose to read in our free time or the music we like. In a colonial setting, however, a strict adherence to European lifestyles was often rather difficult to fulfil; but ultimately, this circumstance did not deter the colonisers from living a white food and dining culture in the midst of central Africa. Quite the opposite was true, for they ate at tables with silver cutlery, table cloths, and real glasses as often as possible. Just think of General Wissmann's order to his troops to always bring an entire dining table with them during military treks so that the white officers could eat at a table somewhere in the Tanzanian landscape far away from other towns or villages. A European officer would probably never have come up with such an idea within modern Europe. But in faraway Africa it seems to have been an utmost necessity to keep up a white dining culture, even if it meant carrying a wooden dining table through fields, forests, and over hills. White food was a status symbol, a creator, an enforcer, and a marker of colonial identity.

Speaking of the sources, it is important to remember that the voices of the ego-documents are primarily those of the colonisers. Indigenous African opinions are only available through the senses of a white person and never directly from the colo-

nised him- or herself. Even the available photographs of the African colonised can hardly be described as spontaneous snapshots; they were staged pictures. What we know is what the Belgian, German, and Swedish colonisers believed about their colonial experiences and how they chose to communicate their thoughts to themselves or to their selected audiences. Despite the lack of primary sources by the indigenous colonised, the European sources provide us with proof of personal experiences that can be linked to Mary Louise Pratt's 'contact zone'.²⁰

A certain degree of transculturation between the coloniser and the colonised was therefore unavoidable; yet, unlike in other imperial histories, the German case did not allow enough time for its colonised to adopt German traditions into their own cultures. Germany "never had the experience of the empire striking back" because their imperial time was cut short by other European powers and the Versailles Treaty after WWI. Accordingly, Germany was never confronted with the issue of giving way to twentieth-century post-WWII decolonisation processes. In the Belgian case, several more decades would have to pass before the Congolese *évoluées* were seen in and noticed for their European clothes, their European university degrees and professions.²¹ Nonetheless, despite asymmetrical relations of power, the colonial complex reality was never one of "simple colonial dominance and submission"²².

Due to this cultural, political, and historical complexity, European imperialism has been extinguished in name only. The turn from the nineteenth to the twentieth century was an important period of change that still influences us today. This is especially because a large part of today's understanding of races and racial discrimination date back to the imperial period of the previous two centuries. The colonisation of other continents as we know it started in the fifteenth century, but professional racial standardisation did not take over and influence colonial governments and directives until the late nineteenth century. Even though racial differences within imperial settings and communities were, always visible, of course, they did not become paramount until the second half of the nineteenth century. During the previous centuries, contacts with foreign local elites were sought after by Europeans, even including, in some cases, interracial marriages, but this liberal interracial approach changed over time. Moreover, when it was Belgium's and Germany's turn to join

20 Mary Louise Pratt defines the contact zone as a "space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict". Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 6.

21 *Évoluées* were indigenous Congolese men and women who were selected by Belgian colonial authorities to receive higher education thereby granting them access to European education systems. In the long term they were 'Europeanised' to participate in the governing of the Belgian Congo. It comes without saying that the term itself is deeply racist. See Mianda, *Colonialism, Education and Gender Relations in the Belgian Congo*, 144–63; Reybrouck, *Kongo*.

22 Warwick Anderson, "Making Global Health History: The Postcolonial Worldliness of Biomedicine", *Social History of Medicine* (2015): 2.

the imperial game, modern travel possibilities and advanced military technologies had facilitated penetrating Africa on an unprecedented scale. Adventurers like Livingstone, Stanley, and Peters had already done the initial hard work by collecting anthropological and geographical data; thus, all that Belgium and Germany had to do was to send European men and women to the colonies and commence the physical occupation of the new territories.

As already mentioned, it had been rather common in early British and French colonialism for Europeans to befriend and dine with Indians and Egyptians (to name but two non-European groups) or to marry local women, as the Dutch did in the early days of colonising South Africa and Indonesia. In contrast to these initial tactics, first Germany and later Belgium implemented clear racial differentiation in the CFS and GEA.²³ This was also related to how attitudes towards the indigenous subaltern changed over the years: the “boundaries of race and gender were negotiated, policed, and reinforced”²⁴ at a time when former flexibilities gave way to increasingly rigid rules of conduct and segregation between the coloniser and the colonised. And yet, I find it extremely difficult to consider the attitudes of the colonisers discussed here towards their non-white subalterns as generally racist. Rather, I propose that these colonisers possessed a flexible ideology that varied from absolute and pure racism to paternalism or maternalism depending on the white individual in question. This is not to say that either was better or worse than the other. In fact, the term racism is too simplistic and is not deep enough to describe the sources, their authors, and how they portrayed themselves and their experiences. In the long term, those agents of colonialism who built bridges and were transcultural on both sides were forced to return to their own people and interracial activities in the private spheres ended.

As the sources have also shown, whiteness was not just the norm due to a lack of self-reflection. Rather, it was considered the norm by white people against everything and everyone non-white because it was thought that the former were superior to the latter in cultural, technological, scientific, intellectual, and religious terms. Instead of the family crests and trees that the nobility used to present their social status within Europe and partly also in North America, the members of the European middle classes turned skin colour and the European-Christo-Judean enlightenment into their banners of supremacy. Even gender perceptions were directly linked to this change in social attitude, although modern developments did not prevent the white male maintaining his position at the top of the gender-race pyramid. Racial terms as we see them today can largely be dated back to these late nineteenth-century ideas and configurations and they still cause an asymmetrical opposition between white (norm) and non-white (outside the norm). After all, as Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks

23 See Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire*; Stoler, ‘Mixed-Bloods’ in *Colonial Southeast Asia*; Julia C. Wells, “Eva’s Men: Gender and Power at the Cape of Good Hope”, in *Bodies in Contact. Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History*, ed. Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

24 Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, “Introduction: Bodies, Empires, and World Histories”, *ibid.*, 6.

has correctly stated, “the system of race as differences among black, brown, red, yellow, and white makes sense only in its unconscious reference to Whiteness”²⁵. Ultimately, all of the egodocuments that were focused on in this book show a colonial reality that was never black-or-white, even if attempts were made to present or experience them as such. Transculturation, middle grounds, and even the wish to remain white were the direct results of Europeans living in sub-Saharan territories. Race and, even if I usually prefer to avoid this term, racial culture is only challenged when confronted with another race and culture. It makes sense that whiteness was not challenged or even thought of as a construct until the rise of imperialism, which enabled an increasing number of people to travel the globe and make comparisons between white and non-white.

Every race and gender role is contextualised against the white individual and the white male in particular. This is because whiteness and being a white male have repeatedly reproduced their gendered and racialised other, “for if it weren’t for the racial and gendered other as inferior, there would be no whiteness and maleness that can claim superiority”²⁶. The female sources portray this reality too; despite being white women, they were still dependents of their male counterparts in almost every possible way. Yet, even though we profit from specialisation, “there can hardly be different *logoi* (logics) for societies of the same (human) species – as if we had different psychologies or anatomies for blacks and whites, or for developed and underdeveloped, for men and for women”²⁷.

Nonetheless, since the rise of gender studies, world history is, slowly but surely, being retold from a new angle; one which has often led to changed perceptions of the past and a certain degree of re-evaluation of historic events both big and small. The thematic foci have shifted and the previous “erasure of women”²⁸ is no more. By including egodocuments of female authorship, I have decided to actively join this development and give a formerly underrepresented type of source agency and attention. This is especially important when it is considered that the white woman had a political role in the public sphere from the late nineteenth century onwards as the bearer of national culture and was thus part of the development whereby white skin colour turned into one of the chosen bourgeois markers of modern civilisation. Accordingly, writing imperial history based on sources produced by powerful men is neither sufficient nor does it do justice to human history; luckily, Winston Churchill’s claim that ‘winners write history’ has been steadily losing its viability.

Even so, more academic work still needs to be achieved along these parameters. Tony Ballantyne, Jürgen Osterhammel, and Antoinette Burton are correct about how

25 Seshadri-Crooks, *Desiring Whiteness. A Lacanian Analysis of Race*, 20.

26 Martina Tißberger, “The Project(Ions) of ‘Civilization’ and the Counter-Transferences of Whiteness: Freud, Psychoanalysis, ‘Gender’ and ‘Race’ (in Germany)”, in *Weiß – Weißsein – Whiteness. Kritische Studien zu Gender und Rassismus/Critical Studies on Gender and Racism*, ed. Gabriele Dietze, et al. (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2006), 89.

27 Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine and Class*, 5.

28 Ballantyne and Burton, “Postcript”.

the absolute majority of archives were or still are focused on retrieving and safekeeping sources produced by men that represent patriarchal interests. For example, such archives are predominantly concerned with preserving “commercial companies and industrial concerns, the records of large religious institutions, and the mass of documentation produced by empires”²⁹. History is always linked to power structures and, for a very long time, so was the writing of history. Even today in the twentyfirst century, Western politics and scholars still nourish a colonial image of central Africa that is directly linked to the imagery of chaos and unpredictability (just like nature). And this link often leads to a misinterpretation and misjudgement of African history and realities that is directly linked to whiteness. When Western media outlets report about sub-Saharan Africa, it is often connected to an imagery of nature, chaos, and lack of (Western) order.³⁰ In the long term, I therefore hope that current and future scholars continue along the new path towards a better balance between the different kinds of existing sources, their authors, and the evaluation of as many agencies as is scientifically possible and feasible. In the same breath, however, I should acknowledge that, within the field of imperial history, nothing can be done about the regrettable lack of indigenous voices from previous centuries.

Due to the absence of non-European voices in both the public sphere and in academia, we face the phenomenon of Eurocentrism in the representation of Africa, its pre-colonial and colonised past, and its present post-colonial reality. Despite liberal attitudes and attempts at neutrality by white and Western intellectuals, it is apparent that their analyses still have a Eurocentric point of departure. In particular, cultural historians like Subrahmanyam have pointed out the extent of the connected histories between different nations and continents.³¹ Accordingly, it does not suffice that Westerners apply neutrality to imperial history just because the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European source base claims that “the subaltern cannot speak”³². Ultimately, African history was not immune to foreign influences prior to European imperialism and therefore has more than one narrative.³³ Those who view

29 Ibid., 411.

30 For more on the influence of traditional colonial images still influencing modern perceptions of Africa in the West, see Kevin C. Dunn, *Imagining the Congo. The International Relations of Identity* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), Introduction.

31 See Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “Connected Histories. Notes Towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia”, *Modern Asian Studies* 31, no. 3 (1997).

32 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak cited from Katharina Hammerstein, “‘Dem edlen Männer-Auge ein Bild ...‘ Ambivalenz der anti/kolonialen Repräsentation in Peter Altenbergs *Ashantee* (1897)”, in *Koloniale und postkoloniale Konstruktionen von Afrika und Menschen afrikanischer Herkunft in der deutschen Alltagskultur*, ed. Marianne Bechhaus-Gerst and Sunna Gieseke (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2006), 140.

33 For more on the debate on how to lessen or avoid Eurocentrism, see Sebastian Conrad and Shalini Randeria, “Geteilte Geschichten – Europa in Einer Postkolonialen Welt”, in *Jenseits des Eurozentrismus. Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften*, ed. Sebastian Conrad and Shalini Randeria (Frankfurt a.M.: Campus Verlag, 2002).

the world through a European lens should rid themselves of the image of the Other and make it practicable for non-Western intellectuals to enrich the colonial field of study with more decentralised and non-Eurocentric research. Sometimes, I have the impression that a Eurocentric approach has become the norm, just like whiteness has become the neutral racial starting point for some people. However, at other moments it becomes increasingly visible how non-European scholars, even if they were trained in the West, are enriching academia with new approaches or with ways to adjust existing methodologies to an Asian, African, or Latin American arena.

As a future outlook, however, it does not suffice to simply be aware of Eurocentrism, for even the most well-intentioned Western non-Eurocentric scholars often still see the creation of the modern world as a Western success story.³⁴ It is rather irritating, albeit less surprising, that attempts at racial neutrality are often still the result of researchers coming from a white standpoint “that sets the norm and thereby immunizes itself from self-questioning”³⁵. This slightly disingenuous neutrality still fails to analyse whiteness as a race or cultural construct in the same way that it would non-white ethnicities and cultures. I therefore urge European academia in particular to continue on the path it has recently embarked on and increase its research capacities in the field of whiteness studies so that it can catch up with its American and Australian colleagues. After all, modern post-colonial Europe is still influenced by racial and racialist ideas that date back to colonial times, since they continue to affect how we see the Other as well as each other. In accordance with Dipesh Chakrabarty, it is advisable to further provincialise Europe not only in territorial terms, but also in relation to concepts of research culture based on white neutrality. I hope that this book adds to this existing but still incomplete trend.

34 For more on ways of how to avoid or limit Eurocentric approaches in history. see *Jenseits Des Eurozentrismus. Postkoloniale Perspektiven in Den Geschichts- Und Kulturwissenschaften* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus Verlag, 2002).

35 Tißberger, “The Project(Ions) of ‘Civilization’ and the Counter-Transferences of Whiteness”, 91.

8) List of Colonial Actors

8.1 Belgian Colonials

Name	Occupation	Source type
Bailliën, Pierre (*1881–†1905)	Commander of Wadelai poste	Correspondence with with relatives, diaries, travel souvenirs (Sig. 51.8)
Bodart, Henri (*1859–†1931)	FP, Captain Commander	Diaries (Sig. 81.20)
Bodson, Fortuné (*?–†?)	Trade agent for ABIR and CCC	Correspondence with his friend C. Larroze, sketches (Sig. 87.6/93.28)
Bodson, Oscar (*1856–†1891)	FP, Capitaine, Station Chef Yaminga	Diaries, correspondence, drawings (Sig. 93.28)
Bombeeck, Harry (*1876–† after 1960)	Trade agent for SAB and ABIR, Director at CCC and ABIR	Diaries, correspondence with parents (Sig. 94.17/92.32)
Boone, Fernand (*1871–†1901)	FP, Second Officer, trade agent of Société Centrale Africaine	Personal notes describing his two terms (Sig. 65.24)
Boonen, Rémi (*1891–†?)	Colonial officer for Catastral Land Register	Correspondence with family (Sig. 55.94)
Bossaerts, D. (*?–†?)	Member of the <i>Vlaamsch Gezelschap</i> (Boma)	Notes on the death of his boy Zaki (Sig. 93.53)
Brasseur, Clément (*1863–†1897)	FP, Commandant de Zone	Correspondence with brother Désiré Brasseur, travelogue (Sig. RG 768/81.15)
Briart, Paul (*1860–†1920)	Doctor, trade agent for SAB and CCCI	Diaries, travelogue, drawings (Sig. RG 989)
Cabra, Alphonse (*1862–†1932)	FP, explorer	Articles, photos, corre- spondence (Sig. 52.43/69.23/71.45)
Cabra, Berthe (*?–†?)	Wife of Alphonse Cabra	Articles, photos, travelogue (Sig. 52.43/69.23/71.45)
Cerckel, Edgard (*1866–†1957)	FP, Sergeant under Dhanis, Commander of Police Katanga, CA	Correspondence (Sig. RG 681)

Name	Occupation	Source type
Collette, Joseph (*?-†?)	Surveyor of natural rubber in Jaabir	Correspondence with his family (Sig. 54.78)
Coppée, Luc (*1862-†1893)	FP, Second Lieutenant	Correspondence with his family (Sig. 89.19)
De Grenade, Paul (*ca. 1880-†1918)	Administrator of rubber factories, rubber trader	Correspondence with family, in particular with his father (Sig. 51.17/51.31)
De Meuse, Fernand (*?-†?)	Botanist	Correspondence with family and friends/colleagues (Sig. 97.28)
De Rechter, Edouard (*1859-†1891)	FP, Second Lieutenant, Captain of steamer	Correspondence with his mother about his son's funeral (Sig. 54.8)
De Walsche, Louis (*1866-†?)	FP, Captain, later Com- mander of <i>Co. du Bas- Congo</i>	Correspondence with family (Sig. 56.4)
Delcommune, Alexandre (*1855-†1922)	Public official, trade agent	Memoirs (Sig. 97.15)
Delporte, Augustin Dr. (*1844-†1891)	Military cartographer and scientist	Correspondence with his wife (Sig. 58.22/59.47)
Delvaux, Henri (*1873-†1966)	FP, Sergeant, Director of ABIR, Director of Commer- ciale Anversoise du Congo	Diaries (Sig. RG 735/RG 698)
Descamps, Georges (*1855-†1938)	FP, Lieutenant (met with v. Wissmann)	Travelogues (Sig. 61.15)
Descoville, Constant (*1872-†1934)	FP, Sergeant	A letter from L. Rom to C. Descamps (Sig. RG 631)
Dhanis, Francis (*1826-†1909)	FP, Vice Governour, Commander Superior of <i>Province Orientale</i>	Correspondence with Arabs, travelogue about Zanzibar (Sig. RG 586/49.54/54.64/55.3)
Donckier de Donceel, Xavier (*1871-†1898)	FP, Commander of Bima, Lieutenant in Uele	Correspondence with his mother (Sig. RG 772/RG 827/RG 837)
Dubois, Emile (*1880-†?)	FP, Second Lieutenant	Correspondence with his parents (Sig. 51.27)

Name	Occupation	Source type
Fiévez, Léon (*?-†?)	FP	
Gileain, Constant (*?-†?)	Trade agent, <i>Société Anversoise du Commerce au Congo</i>	Diaries (Sig. 55.23)
Gilson, Georges (*?-†?)	FP, Second Lieutenant, Commander of Meridi-Ganzio zone	Correspondence with colleagues/friends about daily life, cannibals (Sig. 52.10)
Grauwet, Remi (dit René) (*1883-†1968)	FP, Lieutenant, CSK	Diaries (Sig. 61.65/70.18)
Halleux, Adolphe (*?-†1916)	FP, Lieutenant, Commander of railway military posts	Correspondence with wife Ludovic and niece Jeanne, photos (Sig. 95.18)
Halleux, Alexandre (*?-†1914)	Head of Lomela poste	Correspondence with his niece Jeanne about daily life and his views on Africans (Sig. 95.18)
Haneuse, Louis (*1853-†1938)	FP, Second Lieutenant	Memoirs (Sig. RG 606)
Inver, Joseph (*?-†?)	FP, Second Intendant	Correspondence with the family of Raphaël Stroobant about his Congolese life (Sig. RG 710/RG 716/RG 771/96.30)
Koller, Henri (*1866-†1944)	FP, Second Lieutenant	Travelogue (Sig. RG 1041)
Lambot, Achille (*1875-†1905)	FP, Lieutenant	Correspondence with his parents (Sig. 63.50)
Langhans, Auguste (*1859-†1898)	FP, Captain Commander	Correspondence with his mother (Sig. 52.88)
Legat, Alexandre (*1859-†1898)	FP, Captain Commander	Correspondence with his mother (Sig. RG 632)
Müller, Emmanuel (*1879-†1956)	FP, Commander troops of <i>Province Orientale</i>	Correspondence with family (Sig. 52.68/54.95/63.16) + (Sig.63.16/Maurice Müller)
Petit-Bois, Gustave (*1838-†1919)	Engineer	Travelogue " <i>Quelque semaines au Congo</i> " (Sig. 59.17)

Name	Occupation	Source type
Planche, Raoul (*?-†?)	FP, Sergeant, Head of poste, territorial administrator	Travelogue (Sig. 52.32/55.47/55.71)
Rom, Léon (*1860-†1924)	FP, Commandant, Head of Station, agent of <i>Co. du Kasai</i>	Notebook, correspondence, photos, paintings, articles (Sig. 56.16)
Rorcourt, Auguste (*1860-†1898)	Lawyer	Correspondence with family and Augusta Drapiez (Sig. 63.55)
Rutten, Martin (*1876-†1944)	Lawyer	Travelogue about Kabinda (Sig. 56.33)
Sillye, Albert (*1867-1918†)	FP, Captain-Commander in Boma, Commander of <i>Province Orientale</i>	Letters, articles, photos (Sig. RG 679/51.32/52.68/54.95/55.39/59.40/63.71)
Sillye, Gabrielle née Deman (*?-†?)	Wife of Albert Sillye	Diaries, photos (Sig. RG 679/51.32/52.68/54.95/55.39/59.40/63.71)
Stroobant, Raphaël (*1868-†1895)	FP, Lieutenant	His brother wrote: “La contribution d’une famille à l’œuvre du Congo”, correspondence from Liévin and Joseph Van de Velde, Joseph Inver, and Stroobant’s mother (Sig. RG 710/RG 716/RG 771/96.30)
Tombeur de Tabora, Charles (*1867-†1947)	State Inspector, Administrator, Commander Superior	Travelogue (Sig. RG 1115/53.52/56.78)
Van de Velde, Liévin (*1850-†1888)	FP, Capitaine, went to Berlin Conference, Head of Isangila poste	Correspondence, letters (Sig. RG 738)
Van Kerckhoven, Guillaume (*1853-†1892)	FP, Captain Commander, State Inspector, founded several postes	Letters to his father, (see also De Walsche) (Sig. 53.79)
Vangele, Alphonse (*1848-†1939)	FP, Lieutenant	Travelogues, correspondence (Sig. 54.39/56.41)
Verbeque, Eugène (*1867-†1903)	SABC	Correspondence with his mother, brother, travelogue (Sig. 97.27)
Wangermée, Emile (*1855-†1924)	FP, Gouverneur General	Letters to his parents (Sig. RG 604/RG 951/49.42/52.35/53.30/53.36/54.15/54.27)

8.2 German Colonials

Name	Occupation	Source type
N.N., Eduard v.		Travelogue
N.N., Robert (1888–†26.02.1957)	Soldier DOAG	Travelogue
Arndt, M.	Prospector	Letters
Baumann, Dr. Oscar (25.06.1864–†12.10.1899)	Doctor, Antislavery- Committee	Travelogue, article
Behr, Hugold v. (28.12.1866–†?)	Officer in Wissmanntruppe	Photos, travelogue
Blatt, Hr.	Steuermann, Antislavery- Committee	Article, travelogue
Bley, Hr.	Doctor (in Usungila)	Article, FvB's diary
Böters, Hr.	Korvettenkapitän Möwe	Article, FvB's diary
Borchert, Oscar	Antislavery-Committee	
Braun, Hr.	DOAG Sansibar	Article, FvB's diary
Brüning, Hr.	Lieutenant, DOAG, Antislavery-Committee	Diary
Bülow, Albrecht Frhr. v. (24.06.1864–†10.06.1892)	Civil servant DOAG	Articles, diary
Bülow, Frieda Freiin v. (12.10.1857–†1909)	Nurse	Diary
Denhardt, Clemens (03.08.1852–†?)	Explorer	Brother of Gustav
Denhardt, Gustav (13.06.1856–?)	Explorer	Article, FvB's diary
Eberstein, Frhr. v.	Civil Servant of DOAG	Diary
Elson, Hr.	Kapitän Möwe	Article, FvB's diary
Fischer, Baron	Antislavery-Committee	Article
Fischer, Gustav Adolf (03.03.1848–†11.11.1887)	Explorer, doctor	Travelogue
Flegel, Eduard	Soldier DOAG	Diary
Fonck, August (26.07.1868–†?)	Lieutenant DOAG	Travelogue written with his brother Heinrich
Fonck, Heinrich (05.09.1869–†?)	Lieutenant DOAG	Travelogue written with his brother August
Frey, Hr.		Article, FvB's diary
Gravenreuth, Karl Frhr. v. (12.12.1858–†16.11.1891)	DOAG Sansibar	Article, FvB's diary
Greimer, Hr.	Pastor	Diary, articles, FvB's diary

Name	Occupation	Source type
Günther, Hr.	Lieutenant	Article, FvB's diary
Hake, Hr. v.	Adjutant (DOAG)	Article, FvB's diary
Hirth, Hr.	Bishop of Uganda	Travelogue
Hochstetter, Hr.	Engineer, Antislavery-Committee	
Jürgensen, Hr.	Kapitän für Sultan Bargash ben Said	Article, FvB's diary
Junker, Wilhelm (06.04.1840–†18.02.1892)	Doctor, explorer	Travelogue
Kling, Dr.	Doctor in Sansibar	Article, FvB's diary
Koch, Dr.	SS Möwe	Article, FvB's diary
Langheld, Wilhelm (23.05.1867-?)	Lieutenant, Antislavery-Committee	Travelogue
Leue, Hr.	Civil Servant/caretaker at hospital on Sansibar	Article, FvB's diary
Meyer, R. Lieutenant	Officer; Antislavery-Committee	Travelogue, letters
O'Swald, Hr.	Konsul Sansibar	Tagebuch
Paasche, Hermann/Hans (24.02.1851–†?)	Explorer	Travelogue
Pascha, Emin (aka Eduard Schnitzer)	Diplomate (?), doctor, explorer	Tagebuch
Peters, Dr. Carl	DOAG	Diary
Prager, Max	Captain	Memoirs
Prince, Magdalene v. (1870–†1936)		Diary
Prince, Tom v. (09.01.1866–†04.11.1914)	Lieutenant, Antislavery-Committee, DOAG	Diary, travelogue
Reichardt, P aul (02.12.1854–†?)		Article, FvB's diary
Richelmann, Georg (17.03.1851–†?)	Oberstleutnant	Memories
Schmidt, Rochus (10.07.1860–†?)	Soldier, DOAG	Diary, travelogue
Schroeder-Poggelow, Dr. Wilhelm (25.12.1851–†12.03.1910)	Plantagensellschaft in DOAG	Article, FvB's diary
Schweinitz, Hans Hermann Graf v. (21.02.1865–†?)	Explorer, Antislavery-Committee	Diary

Name	Occupation	Source type
Schwesinger, Dr.	Stationschef, Urambo	Travelogue
Schynse, August Wilhelm (21.06.1856–†18.11.1891)	Missionary	Travelogue, correspondence, diaries
Spring, Albert (09.05.1861–†?)	Captain, Antislavery- Committee	Diary
St. Paul, Hr. v.	DOAG Sansibar	Article, FvB's diary
Stephens, Hr.	Trade agent for Ww. O'Swald Comp. from HH	FvB's diary
Streeck, Robert	Navy	Diary
Studier, Hr.	Lieutenant, Antislavery- Commission	Travelogue
Stuhlmann, Hr.	Doctor, Antislavery-Com- mittee (knew Emin Pasha)	Travelogue/diary
Thallwitz, Albert	Civil Servant, GEA	Correspondence
Tschepe, Hr.		Article, FvB's diary
Ungemach, Hr.	Ober-Ingenieur DOAG	Article, FvB's diary
Vüllers, Hr.	Lieutnantkapitän Möwe	Article, FvB's diary
Wendt, Frau	Wife of a German captain employed by Sansibarian sultan	FvB's diary
Weule, Karl (29.02.1864–†?)	Professor, explorer	Travelogue
Wissmann, Hermann von	Major	Lt. Meyer's diary
Wolf, Hr. († on Sansibar 03.08.1887)	Regierungsbaumeister DOAG	Article, FvB's diary
Wolf, August	Civil servant GEA	Correspondence
Wolf, Ludwig (in the CFS: 1885–1886) (*1850–†1889)	Doctor	Diary "Tagebuch 1885–1886; Central Afrika, XIII. Heft" (12.12.1885–17.03.1886) (Sig. 96.54)

8.3 Swedish Colonials

Name	Occupation	Source type
Alhenius, Julius Evald (07.09.1877–†09.02.1910)		See: Hultberg
Andersson, Mr	FP	Article
Bengtsson, Johan Bernhard (10.10.1868–†07.04.1894)	Sous-officier (FP)	Correspondence
Börtzell, Axel Jean (22.08.1868–†06.06.1894)	Lieutenant (FP)	Correspondence
Ceder, Teofil		Diaries
Eriksson, Johan Ernst (08.05.1866–†22.04.1930)	Lieutenant (FP)	Correspondence
Gleerup, Sten Edvard (01.11.1883–†?)	Sous-Officier (FP)	Co-author of <i>Tre år i Kongo</i> with Möller & Pagels
Göransson, G.E.	Captain (FP)	Correspondence
Gustafsson, Albert	FP	Correspondence
Hultberg, Theodor Per (20.04.1881–†?)	“Hedersmajor”	Autobiographical literature (1937): <i>Anyoto. Äventyr bland infödda soldater, dvärgar och fetischörer i Ekvatorialafrikas urskogar</i> (see: Kaltsenberg & Alhenius)
Kjellgren, Hugo Magnus		Conversed with D. M. Luwel of the RMCA and sent photos
Laman, Karl Edvard	Missionary, Mission Covenant Church of Sweden	Letters
Möller, P.A. (*1858–†1951)	Lieutenant	Co-author of <i>Tre år i Kongo</i> with Gleerup & Pagels
Näslund, Jonas (22.01.1870–†?)	Machinist	Correspondence
Pagels, Georges Wilhelm (18.02.1855–†31.03.1897)	Officier (AIA)	Co-author of <i>Tre år i Kongo</i> with Gleerup & Möller
Schwerin, Hans Hugold Baron von (17.09.1853–†18.12.1912)	Explorer (and academic from Lund)	Correspondence
Sjöblom, Edvard Vilhelm (18–19)	Baptist missionary	Diary
Sjöblom, Ebonne	Wife of the missionary E.V. Sjöblom	Photographs

Name	Occupation	Source type
Sjöstedt, Yngve (03.08.1866–†?)	Professor, explorer	Travelogue
Stenfelt, Gustaf Johan Thure (07.04.1858–†?)	Boat Captain	Autobiographical literature (<i>Kongominnen af Skeppar Lärka</i>)
Svinhufvud, Axel (18.08.1867–†16.12.1939)	Lieutenant in FP	Correspondence
Ulff, Fredrik Wilhelm (11.11.1857–†02.1896)	Director of <i>La Compagnie des Produits du Congo</i>	Correspondence
Walldén, Wilhelm	Missionary	Photographs and correspondence
Walldén, Mrs		Photographs
Walléen, C.A. (Baron) (?–†17.06.1901)	“Stabssergeant”	Letter by Liebrecht to von Schwerin
Westlind, Nils	Missionary	Correspondence
Westmark, Theodor (04.01.1857–†?)	“Adjutant” Trade agent	Articles for the Bulletin <i>Société de Géographie de Lille</i> (Trois Ans au Congo, 1886; Le Prix d’une Épouse ; Quinze Mois Chez les Cannibales du Haut Fleuve; Chez les Bangala) ^{a)}

a) See Per Erik Tell, *Detta Fredliga Uppdrag* (Umeå: H:ström Text & Kultur, 2005), 215.

Map

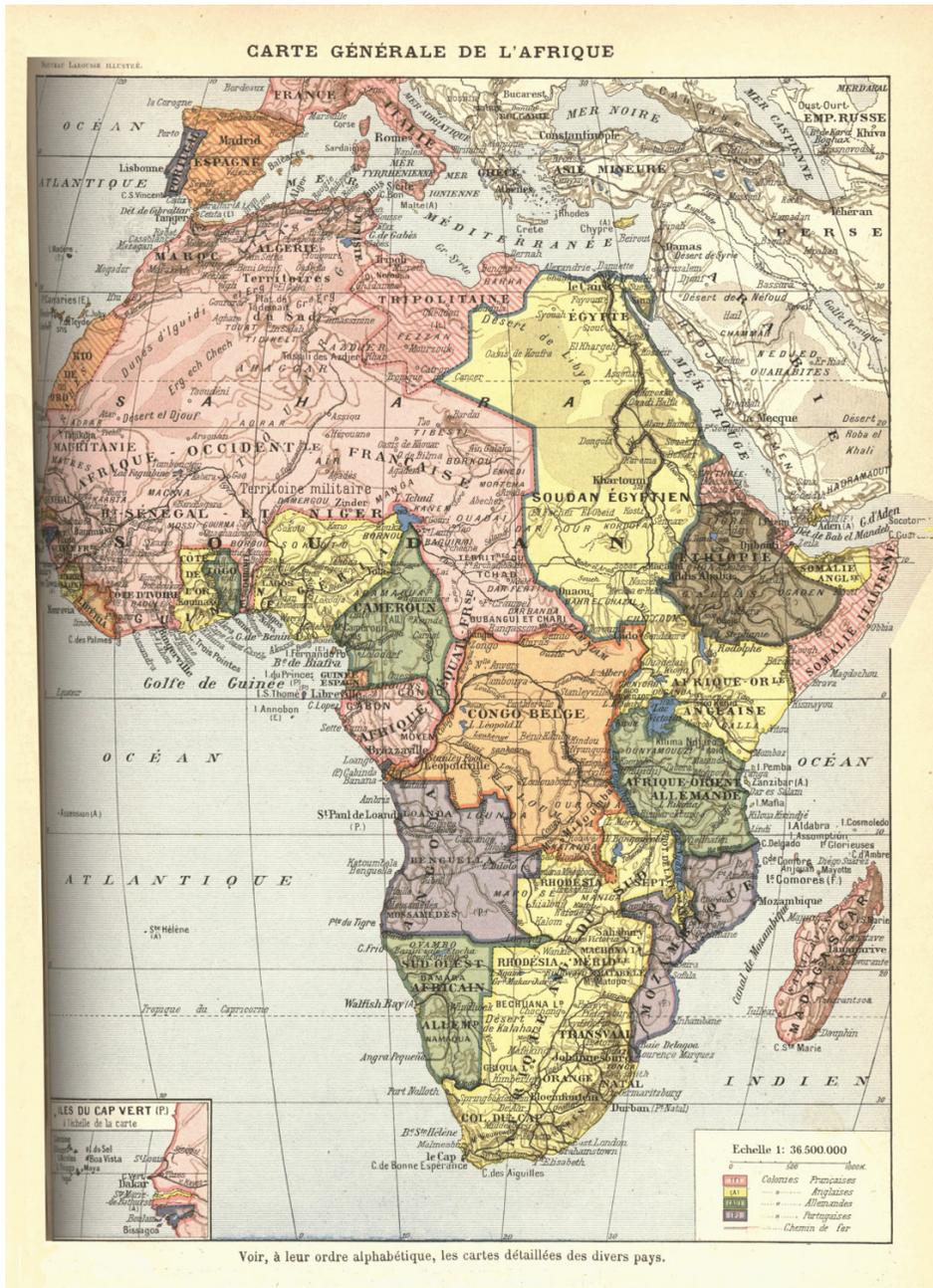


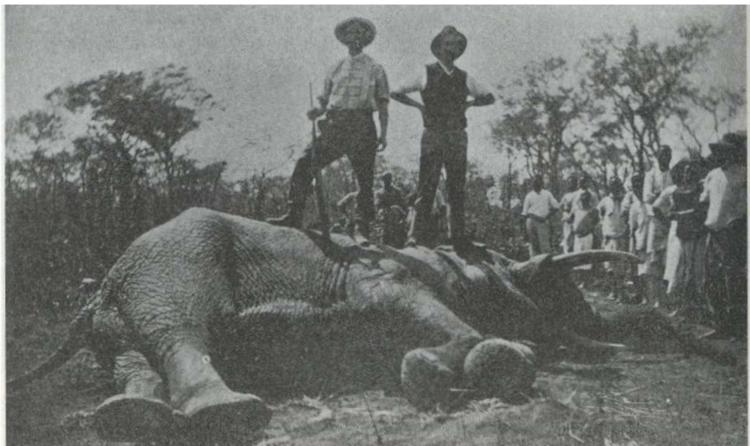
Figure 13: Contemporary map of European colonies in Africa in 1898¹

1 French map of Africa from 1898, originally published as “Carte Générale de l’Afrique: Voir, à leur ordre alphabétique, les cartes détaillées des divers pays” in: Nouveau Larousse illustré; dictionnaire universel encyclopédique, publié sous la direction de Claude Augé.

Appendix

Appendix I

Photographs of Léon Rom



Rom (mit Flinte) nach einer Jagd.

Figure 14: Léon Rom holding a rifle and standing on an elephant after hunting big game.¹



Figure 15: Captain Léon Rom (sitting) and J. Badjoko (behind), a Bangala boy, at the station of Stanley Falls (1895).²

1 Hochschild, *Schatten über dem Kongo*. P. VI.

2 N.N., “Le Capitaine L. Rom (Assis) Et J. Badjoko (Debot), Ancien Boy Bangala, Attaché À La Station Des Stanley Falls (1895)”, ed. La mémoire du Congo. Le temps colonial (Tervuren: Musée Royal de l’Afrique Centrale, 2005).

Appendix II

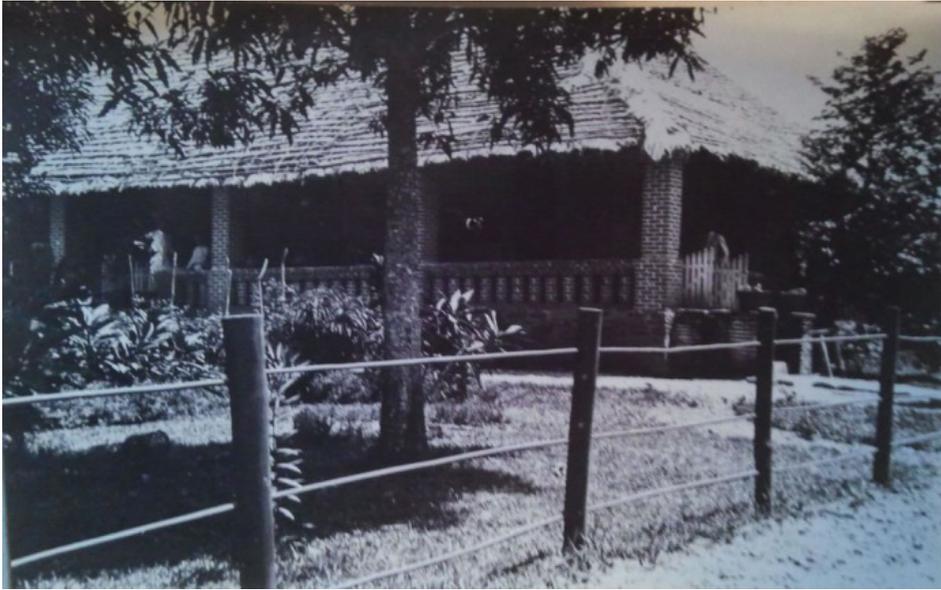


Figure 16: The house of Commandant and Mrs. Sillye during their stay in Stanleyville.³



Figure 17: Between 1904 and 1907; in Avakubi; 7 April 1905; Province Orientale; Commander Sillye, Mrs. Sillye, and Commander Martin Enosh (Norwegian).⁴

3 French: Á Stanleyville Habitation du C^{dt} et M^{me} Sillye. Sillye, “Archives Albert Sillye”, HA.01.024 (DMN: 2012.03.30 10.44.31).

4 French: Entre 1904 et 1907; á Avakubi; le 7 avril 1905; Province Orientale; C^{md} Sillye, M^{me} Sillye avec C^{md} Martin Enosh (norvégien). Ibid. (DMN: 2012.03.30 11.35.34).



Figure 18: Drawing by Albert Sillye taken from one of his letters to Gabrielle.⁵

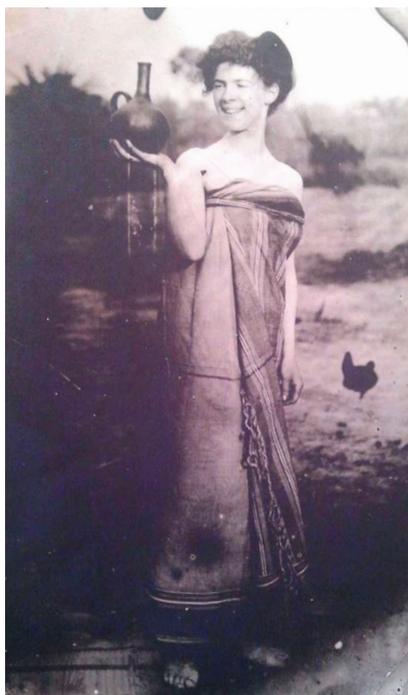


Figure 19:
Gabrielle Sillye in a native towel –
photograph taken from one of her diaries.⁶

5 Ibid., HA.01.024 (DMN: 2012.03.29 10.59.39).

6 Sillye, “Archives Albert Sillye”, HA.01.024 (DMN: 2012.03.30 10.28.43).



Figure 20:
Ct. Albert Sillye and his wife Gabrielle passing through Marabu on the bridge of Marabu as part of a caravan (14 November 1904).⁷

Appendix III

A selection of diary entries by Gabrielle Sillye.



Figure 21: Mosquito⁸; Leaves taken from a coffee plant (avakubi)⁹

7 Passage de la caravane du C^{dt} et M^{me} Sillye sur le pont de Marabu, à Marabu 14 Nov^{bre} 1904. Sillye, "Archives Albert Sillye", HA.01.024. (DMN: 2012.03.29 13.47.03).

8 French: moustique. Sillye, "Archives Albert Sillye", HA.01.024 (DMN: 2012.03.30 11.10.34).

9 French: Feuille de cafeier, Avakubi. Ibid. (DMN: 2012.03.30 11.14.38).

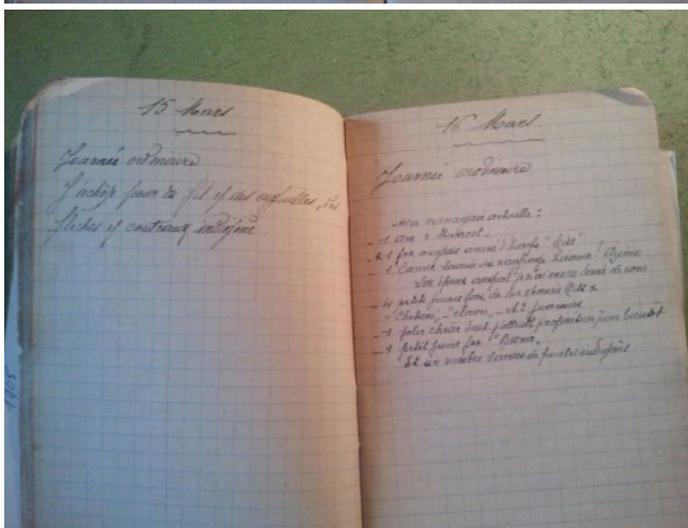
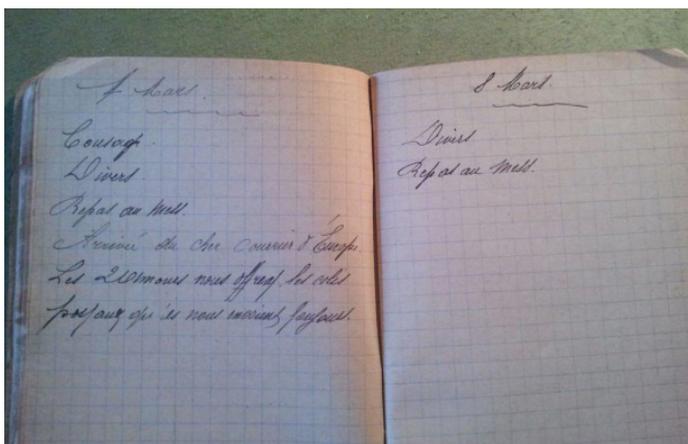


Figure 22: Miscellaneous¹⁰; Ordinary day¹¹

10 French: divers. Ibid. HA. 63.71.4 (DMN: 2012.03.30 10.33.47).

11 French: Journée ordinaire. Ibid. HA. 63.71.4 (DMN: 2012.03.30 10.33.58).

Appendix IV

'The White Man's Burden' by Rudyard Kipling

Take up the White Man's burden--
Send forth the best ye breed--
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait in heavy harness,
On fluttered folk and wild--
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half-devil and half-child.

Take up the White Man's burden--
In patience to abide,
To veil the threat of terror
And check the show of pride;
By open speech and simple,
An hundred times made plain
To seek another's profit,
And work another's gain.

Take up the White Man's burden--
The savage wars of peace--
Fill full the mouth of Famine
And bid the sickness cease;
And when your goal is nearest
The end for others sought,
Watch sloth and heathen Folly
Bring all your hopes to nought.

Take up the White Man's burden--
No tawdry rule of kings,
But toil of serf and sweeper--
The tale of common things.
The ports ye shall not enter,
The roads ye shall not tread,
Go mark them with your living,
And mark them with your dead.

Take up the White Man's burden--
And reap his old reward:
The blame of those ye better,
The hate of those ye guard--
The cry of hosts ye humour
(Ah, slowly!) toward the light--
"Why brought he us from bondage,
Our loved Egyptian night?"

Take up the White Man's burden--
Ye dare not stoop to less--
Nor call too loud on Freedom
To cloke your weariness;
By all ye cry or whisper,
By all ye leave or do,
The silent, sullen peoples
Shall weigh your gods and you.

Take up the White Man's burden--
Have done with childish days--
The lightly proffered laurel,
The easy, ungrudged praise.
Comes now, to search your manhood
Through all the thankless years
Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom,
The judgment of your peers!

Appendix V

Ebonne and Edvard Vilhelm Sjöblom

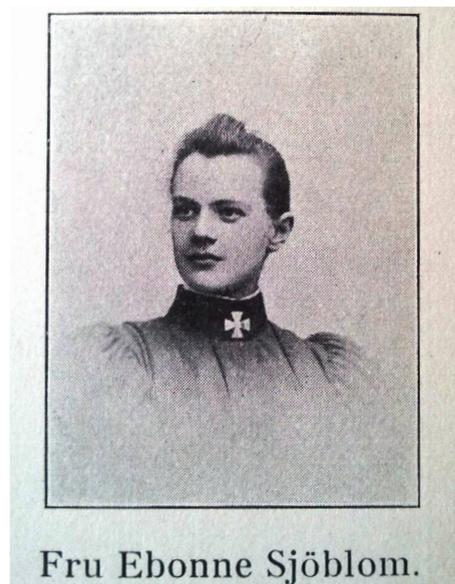


Figure 23: Portrait photograph of Ebonne.¹²

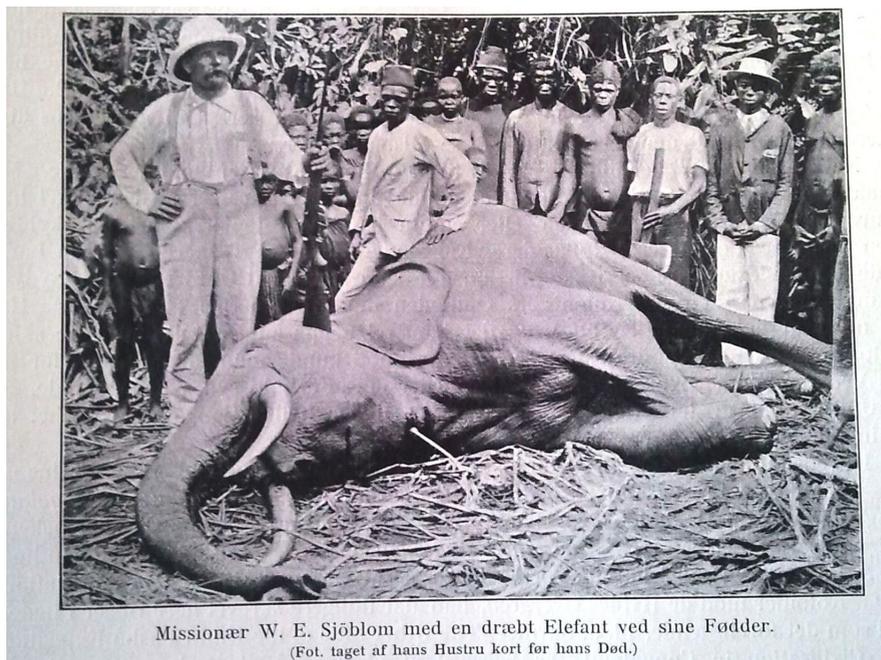


Figure 24: E.V. Sjöblom after he shot an elephant and a short time before his own death.

¹² Jenssen-Tusch, *Skandinaver I Congo*, 476.

Appendix VI

Berthe and Alphonse Cabra



Figure 25: Uvira, Tanganyika. 9 April 1906.¹³

13 Cabra, Alphonse. “Inventaire Des Archives De Alphonse Cabra, 1862–1932”, edited by C. Liben. Tervuren: Musée Royal de l’Afrique Centrale, 1977 (Sig. DMN: 20.07.2012_05746).

List of Abbreviations

ABIR	Anglo-Belgian India Rubber and Exploration Company
AIA	Association Internationale Africaine
AIC	Association internationale pour l'exploration et la civilisation de l'Afrique centrale
ASB	Antisklavereibewegung
BAB	Bundesarchiv Berlin
BAF	Bundesarchiv Freiburg
BCB	Bibliographie Coloniale Belge
CA	Campagne Arabe
CCC	Comptoir Commercial Congolais
CCCI	Compagne du Congo pour le Commerce et l'Industrie
CEC	Comité d'études du haut Congo
CFS	Congo Free State
CdK	Compagnie du Kasai
CSK	Comité Spécial du Katanga
COMANCO	Commerciale Anversoise du Congo
DFKK	Deutsch-nationalen Frauenbund zur Krankenpflege in den Kolonien
DKG	Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft
DKL	Deutsches Kolonial Lexikon
DOAG	Deutsch Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft
DTA	Deutsches Tagebuch Archiv
EMDO	Evangelische Missionsgesellschaft für Deutsch-Ostafrika
FDKG	Frauenbund der Deutschen Kolonialgesellschaft
FP	Force Publique
GEA	German East Africa
GDK	Gesellschaft für Deutsche Kolonisation
GSWA	German South-West Africa
KS	Kaiserliche Schutztruppen
MMR	Maji Maji Rebellion
MRAC	Musée Royale de l'Afrique Central
RA	Riksarkivet
SAB	Société Anonyme Belge pour le Commerce dans le Haut-Congo
SIDFA	Société internationale des chemins de fer en Afrique
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
WWI	World War I
WWII	World War II

List of Archives

Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde

Bundesarchiv Freiburg

Deutsches Tagebucharchiv, Freiburg

Musée Royal de l'Armée et d'Histoire Militaire, Brussels

Musée Royale de l'Afrique Central, Tervuren

Riksarkivet, Stockholm

Völkerkundemuseum Hamburg

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Abstract

It is no coincidence that the implementation of a 'white' culture is intimately linked to colonialism and its active supporters. Within this context, *Pursuing Whiteness in the Colonies* offers a new comprehension of colonial history from below by taking a profound look at remnants of individual agencies from a whiteness studies perspective. It highlights the experiences and perceptions of colonisers and how they portrayed their identities and re-interpreted their lives in Africa. The trans-colonial approach is based on ego-documents – both written and visual sources – produced by Belgian, German, and Swedish men and women who migrated to central Africa for a variety of reasons: a love for adventure, social betterment, new gender roles, or the conviction that colonising was their patriotic duty.

This book proves how European colonials continuously constructed their whiteness in relation to the subaltern in everyday situations that were connected to friendship, gender issues, and food. Colonisers were, for instance, more likely to befriend the supposedly higher educated Muslim Afro-Arab traders than indigenous Africans. Alternatively, some Europeans preferred friendships with their dogs as opposed to a colonial subaltern. Pedigree dogs were status symbols and tools for racial segregation. Furthermore, ever-changing gender roles influenced Europeans to leave their homelands. While especially single white men wished to re-enforce more traditional ideas of masculinity in the new territories, most of the European women went to the global South in search for feminist liberties. A further example of a bourgeois understanding of Western civilisation was practiced to maintain and to enhance the picture of the superior white colonial by upholding a European dining culture. The notion of 'breaking bread' with a non-white acquaintance was substituted with a white dining culture that reinforced white identity thereby creating yet another line of separation between white and non-white.

Overall, these individuals developed new roles, reacted to foreign challenges, and shaped their lives as imperial agents in sub-Saharan Africa. By combining German and Belgian colonial history with whiteness studies in an African setting I provide a different understanding of imperial realities as they were experienced by European colonisers in situ and how they created an influential racial bias that is often still practiced in the 21st century.