



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



Arbeitskreis **H**istorische **B**elgienforschung  
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WAXMANN

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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”<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup> 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

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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?<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> The few existing colonial societies in Germany focussed on

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- 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 Weiblichkeiten. 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.<sup>5</sup> Expeditioners like the German Duke Adolf Friedrich zu Mecklenburg who planned and executed research trips to central Africa were even rarer.<sup>6</sup> 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 egodocuments<sup>7</sup> in the CFS and GEA from a trans-

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*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.<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, I advocate "cross-contextualization"<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup> Instead, this research employs primary sources to compare the phenomenon of a created white identity amongst colonisers in imperial Africa.

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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.<sup>12</sup> 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.<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup>

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

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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”<sup>15</sup> 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”<sup>16</sup> – 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*.<sup>17</sup>

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.<sup>18</sup> 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*.<sup>19</sup> He concludes that the European colonial mentality was “dominated by a Manichean allegory of white and black, good and evil, salvation

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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 object<sup>20</sup>. 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.<sup>21</sup> 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*"<sup>22</sup>. 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.<sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup> 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

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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*.<sup>25</sup> 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.<sup>26</sup>

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"<sup>27</sup>. 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

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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.<sup>28</sup> 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.<sup>29</sup> 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.<sup>30</sup> Other historians back this theory by stating that the idea of a white Euro-

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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.<sup>31</sup> 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.<sup>32</sup> 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.<sup>33</sup> 'White, but not quite' was how those in power initially considered the Irish and the Jews.<sup>34</sup> The remarkable trait of whiteness is that it became invisible over time; Spivak referred to it as the "unmarked marker"<sup>35</sup>. 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

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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.<sup>36</sup> They were replaced by notions of enlightened vs. backward, modern vs. underdeveloped, and Christian vs. heathen.<sup>37</sup> 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.<sup>38</sup>

History “often leaves out the wider context of Europe and the rest of the non-imperial world”<sup>39</sup>. 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

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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.<sup>40</sup> 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*.<sup>41</sup>

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"<sup>42</sup> to that of the brutish and barbaric African, a quintessence of evil incapable of morals and values who needed rescuing by the white man.<sup>43</sup> Rudyard Kipling's famous poem *The White Man's Burden*<sup>44</sup> is a good example of *zeitgeist* literature that informs us of the European's duty to save the "uncivilised, primitive African"<sup>45</sup>. 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

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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.<sup>46</sup> 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.<sup>47</sup>

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.<sup>48</sup> 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”<sup>49</sup>. 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

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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"<sup>50</sup>. 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.<sup>51</sup> Ultimately, "colonizer and colonized were themselves unstable categories with multiple forms"<sup>52</sup>. 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"<sup>53</sup>. 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.<sup>54</sup>

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.<sup>55</sup> 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

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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.<sup>56</sup> 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.<sup>57</sup> 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.<sup>58</sup> 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.<sup>59</sup> Having

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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.<sup>60</sup> 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.<sup>61</sup> 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.<sup>62</sup> 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.<sup>63</sup> 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.<sup>64</sup> Belgium hired hundreds of Scandinavian colonisers because it needed their nautical and mechanical skills and the Swedes were the largest

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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.<sup>65</sup>

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.<sup>66</sup> 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.<sup>67</sup>

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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-