

Judith Becker (ed.)

European Missions in Contact Zones

Transformation through Interaction in a
(Post-)Colonial World



V&R

V&R Academic



Veröffentlichungen des
Instituts für Europäische Geschichte Mainz

Abteilung für Abendländische Religionsgeschichte
Edited by Irene Dingel

Supplement 107

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht

European Missions in Contact Zones

Transformation through Interaction in a
(Post-)Colonial World

Edited by
Judith Becker

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht



Federal Ministry
of Education
and Research

With 12 images.

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche National-
bibliografie; detailed bibliographic data available online: <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

ISSN 0170-365X

ISBN 978-3-525-10141-4

You can find alternative editions of this book and additional material on our Website:
www.v-r.de

© 2015, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht GmbH & Co. KG, Göttingen/
Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht LLC, Bristol, CT, U.S.A.
www.v-r.de

All rights reserved.

No part of this work may be reproduced or utilized in any form
or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording,
or any information storage and retrieval system,
without prior written permission from the publisher. – Printed in Germany

Printed and bound by ⊕ Hubert & Co, Göttingen

Printed on non-aging paper.

Table of Contents

Judith Becker	
Introduction: European Missions in Contact Zones.	
Transformation Through Interaction in a (Post-)Colonial World	7

I. GENERAL

Jeffrey Cox	
Global Christianity in the Contact Zone	27

II. CONTACT ZONES IN TIME AND SPACE

Mrinalini Sebastian	
Localised Cosmopolitanism and Globalised Faith: Echoes of »Native« Voices in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Missionary Documents	47

Judith Becker	
Liberated by Christ: Evangelical Missionaries and Slavery in Nineteenth-Century South India	65

Andreas Nehring	
Politics and Meditation: Christian Missions and Theravada Buddhist Reform in Nineteenth-Century Burma	87

Katharina Stornig	
Cultural Conceptions of Purity and Pollution: Childbirth and Midwifery in a New Guinean Catholic Mission, 1896–c. 1930	107

Felicity Jensz	
Reporting from the Religious Contact Zone: Missionaries and Anthropologists in Nineteenth-Century Australia	125

Stefan Rinke	
A State Within a State? The »Jesuit State in Paraguay« and Eurocentric Constructions of Space	143

III. IMAGINED CONTACT ZONES

Sabine Hübner

To Sigh before God: Prayer in the Eighteenth-Century

Lutheran Mission in Tamil Nadu 157

Peter James Yoder

»Temples in the Hearts of Heathens«: Post-Contact Developments

in August Hermann Francke's Theological Language 179

Michael Sievernich

Comparing Ancient and Native Customs:

Joseph-François Lafitau and the »sauvages américains« 195

IV. »PERSONALISED« CONTACT ZONES

Thoralf Klein

How to be a Contact Zone: The Missionary Karl Gützlaff between

Nationalism, Transnationalism and Transculturalism, 1827–1851 219

Rosemary Seton

Close Encounters, Racial Tensions: The Church of Scotland

Mission in Calcutta [Kolkata], India 239

Andreas Köller

One's Own Concept Challenged: Renegotiations of the Concept of

the »Missionary« in the Age of Decolonisation and Ecumenism 251

Heather J. Sharkey

The Case of Henry Athanassian, an Armenian in the Suez Canal Zone:

Questioning Assumptions about Missions and Missionaries 267

Brian Stanley

Afterword: Conversations with Contact Zones 287

List of Contributors 291

Judith Becker

Introduction

European Missions in Contact Zones. Transformation Through Interaction in a (Post-)Colonial World

What happens when people of different cultural, religious, political, and social backgrounds live in close contact with each other? This question has been at the centre of postcolonial studies for some years. While earlier approaches focused on the gap between colonisers and colonised and on the impact of hierarchies, newer studies underline the meaning of close cohabitation and cooperation for both sides in the contact, without leaving aside the hierarchical difference, which was indeed an important factor in the encounter. This volume discusses what living in a contact zone meant and how concepts and practices were changed due to life in this contact zone.

This change could consist of an intensification of former convictions and attitudes, a modification of the »hierarchy of values«,¹ an abandonment of certain concepts or practices or the adoption of new ones. Furthermore, it could also mean the emergence of new concepts or practices when missionary and indigenous approaches were merged.² This for instance has been shown in new songs that unite indigenous and Western traditions.³ Another example would be the Christmas *seni*, the traditional cooking of pigs on hot stones underground (earthen oven) in West Papua. Traditionally, the *seni* was practiced at important transition festivals, particularly at festivals of

-
- 1 Cf. e.g. Helmut THOME, Wertewandel in Europa aus der Sicht der empirischen Sozialforschung, in: Hans JOAS/Klaus WIEGANDT (ed.), Die kulturellen Werte Europas, Frankfurt ⁵2010, pp. 386–443; Hans JOAS, Die Entstehung der Werte, Frankfurt am Main 1999; Kerstin ARMBORST-WEIHS/Judith BECKER, Wertewandel und Geschichtsbewusstsein – Überlegungen zur historischen Untersuchung einer Wechselbeziehung, in: Jahrbuch für Europäische Geschichte 12 (2011), pp. 153–178; Karl-Heinz HILLMANN, Zur Wertewandelforschung: Einführung, Übersicht und Ausblick, in: Georg W. OESTERDIEKHOF/Norbert JEGELKA (ed.), Werte und Wertewandel in westlichen Gesellschaften. Resultate und Perspektiven der Sozialwissenschaften, Opladen 2001, pp. 15–39; Karl-Heinz HILLMANN, Wertewandel. Ursachen, Tendenzen, Folgen, Würzburg 2003; Helmut KLAGES/Hans-Jürgen HIPPLER/Willi HERBERT (ed.), Werte und Wandel. Ergebnisse und Methoden einer Forschungstradition, Frankfurt a.M./New York 1992; Hans JOAS/Klaus WIEGANDT (ed.), Die kulturellen Werte Europas, Frankfurt ⁵2010.
 - 2 On this approach see Judith BECKER, *Conversio* im Wandel. Basler Missionare zwischen Europa und Südindien und die Ausbildung einer Kontaktreligiosität, 1834–1860, Göttingen 2015, pp. 22–33 and 663–682.
 - 3 See e.g. Jeffrey COX, Sing Unto the Lord a New Song. Transcending the Western/Indigenous Binary in Punjabi Christian Hymnody, in: Judith BECKER/Brian STANLEY (ed.), Europe as the Other. External Perspectives on European Christianity, Göttingen 2014, pp. 149–163.

friendship between communities. When the first missionary came to the region in the early 1960s, he initially celebrated Christmas alone. After some years, the missionary's wife baked Christmas cookies. Two years later, before a significant amount of conversions had yet taken place, the missionaries pondered how to celebrate Christmas adequately with their Papua friends. They decided to give a *seni*. They bought some pigs. On Christmas morning, to their great surprise, they saw people from all neighbouring villages bring pigs to their place and prepare earthen ovens. They celebrated Christmas 1968 with 500 people and 40 pigs.⁴ It was not only the missionaries inventing a new Christmas tradition but also the Papua adopting and appropriating it to their culture, from a family celebration to a community party, from cookies to *seni*. By and by, the traditional festivals of friendship such as the *seni*'s »setting in life« were transferred to the Christian Christmas season.

The Christmas celebration with *seni* is now an integral part of Christianity in this region. The *seni* has not been transferred back to Germany, not least because of German laws, although some missionaries did celebrate *seni* with German congregations, too, albeit not at Christmas. They thus aimed to make the community between Papua and German Christians visible and enjoyable in a way perceptible to the senses.

Several concepts have been developed that describe processes and results of intercultural encounters. Homi K. Bhabha speaks of a »third space« and an *au-delà*, Mary Louise Pratt of »contact zones«.⁵ Others, like Richard Price, have described the phenomenon without framing their concepts in theoretical terms.⁶ They all agree that the times of a simple polarity that constituted the basis of Edward Said's *Orientalism* are over.⁷ Even though those studies made an important political and academic impact, it is now necessary to show the interrelatedness of all parties in cultural encounters, the entanglement and also the outcomes that shaped both sides.

This has also become an issue in many approaches to a *New Imperial History*.⁸ The impact of the empire on the metropole has come to the fore of research as have similarities, parallels and mutual influences. Richard Price, for instance, describes experiences missionaries had with the Xhosa in South Africa and their impact on developments of religiosity and humanitarianism

4 Siegfried ZÖLLNER, *Vergessene Welt. Erste Begegnungen mit den Yali im Bergland von West-Papua*, [Düsseldorf] 2013, pp. 248–251.

5 Homi K. BHABHA, *The Location of Culture*, London/New York 1994; Mary Louise PRATT, *Imperial Eyes. Studies in Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London/New York 2008.

6 Richard PRICE, *Making Empire. Colonial Encounters and the Creation of Imperial Rule in Nineteenth-Century Africa*, Cambridge/New York 2008.

7 Edward W. SAID, *Orientalism*, London 1978. Cf. also Frantz FANON, *Black Skin, White Masks*, New York 1967; id., *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York 1963.

8 See e.g. the overview in Stephen HOWE, Introduction. *New Imperial Histories*, in: Id. (ed.), *The New Imperial Histories Reader*, London 2010, pp. 1–20.

in England.⁹ Gauri Viswanathan relates attitudes towards conversion in Victorian England and India and illuminates similar structures and developments and discussions about the definition of »Englishness« that were based on experiences in India as well as in England.¹⁰

Dipesh Chakrabarty has called to »provincialise Europe«.¹¹ European values, attitudes and concepts should no longer form the basis of research. Different concepts of time, of religion, of politics should be presented side by side. In many respects, this postulate is even more difficult to fulfil than the attempt to illuminate interrelationships. This may be one of the reasons why few studies have so far heeded Chakrabarty's call. Still, it is an important voice in the discourse on historical studies in postcolonial times. Even more influential was his observation that many colonisers (and missionaries) said (and maybe believed) that they wanted the »Others« to become equal but that they were »not yet« ready for full equality or responsibility.

Homi K. Bhabha offers a model of interpretation that combines life experiences in different countries. In many respects, it is based on his experience as a literary scholar from an Indian minority who has spent most of his professional life in Europe and North America.¹² In his approach, the cultural encounter mainly takes place within a person or a group of persons that migrate or are colonised. It is a concept centred on political experiences and the arts, on imagination and personal digestion of intercultural experiences. He describes the creative relation of cultures and experiences as taking place in a »third space«.¹³ In many of his examples, the »third space« really is an *au-delà* – another of his principal terms –, is not of this world. With regard to colonial encounters, Bhabha asserts that they often produced hybridity and mimicry. In this way, he, like Pratt, focuses on the results of the encounter. Hybridity and mimicry are, however, mostly found on the part of the colonised or missionised people. These concepts are more difficult to apply to missionaries and colonisers.

Mary Louise Pratt's concept of »contact zones« uses a different approach. It seems particularly helpful for research on the impact of intercultural cohabitation in two respects: A first aspect is that it stresses the significance of actual cohabitation, of its terms, place and time, the political and cultural

9 PRICE, *Making Empire*. See Stephen HOWE (ed.), *The New Imperial Histories Reader*, London 2010.

10 Gauri VISWANATHAN, *Outside the fold. Conversion, Modernity, and Belief*, Princeton, NJ 1998.

11 Dipesh CHAKRABARTY, *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial thought and historical difference*, Princeton, NJ 2000; Dipesh CHAKRABARTY, *Provincializing Europe: Postcoloniality and the Critique of History*, in: Stephen HOWE (ed.), *The New Imperial Histories Reader*, London/New York 2010, pp. 55–71.

12 See also Wolfgang REINHARD, *Postkoloniale Intellektuellendiaspora*, in: Peter BURSCHEL (ed.), *Intellektuelle im Exil*, Göttingen 2011, pp. 89–112.

13 BHABHA, *The Location of Culture*.

situation. The contact does not only or mainly take place in an *au-delà* but in real, historical situations. It is not so much about what happens when people live *between* different cultures and try to integrate them in their life as what happens when people of different cultures *meet* and begin to interact.

However, we feel that the concept has to be broadened in two directions in order to comprehend the different kinds of contact and of contact zones that were relevant to the historical protagonists.¹⁴ Besides the actual contact between people living together in a particular place, a second contact zone was important to most missionary communities: the contact zone between Christians living in Europe and those living abroad. This was mainly an imagined contact zone but it was maintained by people travelling between the countries, by letters and reports, by gifts such as books but also in the form of material goods deemed necessary, and by mutual intercession and the belief in an invisible community of saints in which all believers were united. The last point was of vital interest to the missionaries and their supporters in Europe, as Sabine Hübner tells us in this volume. It was this believed unity of the Church and all believers that made them leave their countries and begin to evangelise. And it was this believed unity that they invoked in their letters to and from Europe. When the unity was central to their faith and their life, even those who remained in Europe became open to integrating new ideas and practices they learnt in the contact zones, as Peter James Yoder demonstrates by the example of August Hermann Francke.

The third aspect of the contact zone was a »personalised contact zone«. Several contributions to this volume demonstrate how one person became a kind of contact zone in him- or herself by integrating aspects of different cultures in their life. They sometimes represented one culture to one group and another to the other – or were assumed to do so. These were cultural brokers who facilitated the contact but that often had to pay personally for their interaction, especially when they were not considered to be European, such as Henry Athanassian, whose case Heather J. Sharkey presents in this volume and Mary Pigot from Calcutta, whose story is told by Rosemary Seton. The third cultural broker in this volume, Karl Gützlaff, of whom Thoralf Klein tells us, was indisputably European by birth. He was much less attacked than the other two, although in each of the former cases the attacks only arose when Athanassian and Pigot came into conflict with comparatively recently-arrived Europeans, that is, with people who had not yet adapted to the contact zone and perhaps had no desire to do so. They decried those who formed links between cultures and people.

14 The term »contact zone« is placed in quotation marks when it refers to the theoretical concept and left without quotation marks when used to describe places (in a broad sense) where people of different backgrounds met.

The volume is arranged in three sections according to the different kinds of contact zones. In some cases, the allocation of the chapters to the sections could be questioned because the articles deal with different kinds of contact zones at once. They appear here under the heading that seems most pertinent to their overall argument. Most contributions to this volume deal with the first, the Prattian, kind of contact zone, where interaction occurred in a specific space and at a specific time. This is partly due to the scope defined by the invitation to the conference but it also mirrors the aspect that is not only most important to Pratt but also the case for which the concept is most important and can bring most new results.

Some chapters point to limits of Pratt's concept, above all Thoralf Klein's on Karl Gützlaff who was entangled in so many contact zones and crossed so many borders that »transculturalism« seems a term more appropriate to his person than the reference to contact zones. The chapter by Andreas Köller on concepts of mission and missionary in the early postcolonial period also suggests limits to the use of the concept of contact zones. When treating the clash of different theoretical concepts (even when they are founded in the practice of individuals), other concepts may be more helpful, for instance Homi K. Bhabha's »third space«, which relies more on imagination and mental accommodation to different cultures.

A second important point of the concept of »contact zones« is that it focuses on developments in the contact zones as well as the results of the encounter. With its assumption of the emergence of new ideas, concepts, and practices, it allows for the transgression of the boundaries between European and non-European, coloniser and colonised. Most interesting for our topic are the conclusions Pratt draws from her concept. She bases it on the linguistic discourse about »contact languages«, new creole languages that emerge where people of different languages interact. The contact perspective can show »how subjects get constituted in and by their relations to each other«.¹⁵ It is this perspective on interrelations that makes Pratt's concept valuable to historical studies. They can illustrate the variety of interactions and connections that took place in one contact zone, and with the perspective on hierarchical differences, they can show how definitions of hierarchy changed according to different perspectives. The same person or group of persons could, at the same time, be higher-ranking and subordinate, depending on the actual interaction and the other persons he or she was in contact with. Still, above all, the concept, as we understand it, focuses on the results of the encounter in contact zones,

15 PRATT, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 8.

on individuals and groups of people, because it presupposes that all actors changed in the contact. These modifications and the newly emerging concepts, actions or attitudes are at the centre of this volume.

As we define it in this volume, the term »contact zone« does not necessarily imply the concept of (geographically or otherwise) defined cultures that are clearly delimited and can be distinguished from each other. Rather, cases like that of West Papua mentioned above, where European missionaries met people who had never seen a white person before, were very rare. And even there, the missionaries found that some of the villages had already heard about Christianity. On the other side, too, the missionaries did not come from a monolithic, clearly delimited culture, but their culture and religion had developed and was continually developing in contact with other cultures and religions. Culture itself – just like religion – is a fluid concept and must not be falsely essentialised as an entity.

Thirdly, Mary Louise Pratt developed her concept of »contact zones« with a thorough postcolonial (and present political) critique in mind. She defines them as »social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination«.¹⁶ In her book, she is most interested in hierarchical relationships between Europeans and non-Europeans in colonial situations.

When this volume studies European missions in contact zones, hierarchy necessarily is one of the parameters. Several chapters ask how indigenous voices can be found in missionaries' writings and thus refer to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's question: *Can the subaltern speak?*¹⁷ Furthermore, the book focuses on the relationship between missionaries, indigenous people and other Europeans. It therefore discusses the idea that living in a contact zone changes both (or: all) parties involved and that something new can emerge from the encounter. By looking at contact zones from different angles, at different times and in different parts of the world, this volume examines the informative value of the concept. The unifying point of comparison is the focus on European missions in non-European countries.

Missionaries were among those Western people who lived in closest contact with indigenous people, sometimes under the same roof. In most instances these missionaries were trying to do what they perceived as best for their »neighbours«. How the indigenous people reacted to this, and if they appreciated the missionaries' paternalism, is a different question. Contacts between the two, in any case, were manifold and multifaceted, and they included more or less hierarchical relationships between missionaries and

16 PRATT, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 7.

17 Gayatri Chakravorty SPIVAK, *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, in: Rosalind C. MORRIS (ed.), *Reflections on the History of an Idea. Can the Subaltern Speak?*, New York 2010, pp. 21–78.

(future) converts, servants, indigenous language teachers, non-Christian assistants, and schoolteachers. But they also included – albeit less often – non-hierarchical relationships with indigenous clergy. Moreover, the missionaries came into close contact with missionaries and church members from other Western proveniences and, as a matter of course, with those serving at different levels of political authority. In the course of these encounters, conceptions and attitudes of missionaries and those considered the missionised changed and new ideas and practices evolved.

Two main angles of approach have to be included: the perspective of the Europeans, and that of the non-Europeans. It would not be proper to assume that, for instance, the missionaries were responsible for »giving« and indigenous individuals or groups were simply passively »receiving«. The volume presupposes that both sides gave and received. Yet changes can best be studied against the background of particular views and opinions people had before the encounter. This is still true for those missionaries who left Europe in the twentieth century when missionary organisations had already been well established and for those missionaries involved in the developing theology of missions in the 1960s and 1970s. These more recent individuals also held forms of »orientalist« or romanticist views, which they had to modify once they encountered the »Other«. Therefore, most articles focus on one side or the other.

Furthermore, due to both political and social as well as theological and religious modifications, the kinds of contact altered over the time. The interplay between politics and missionary encounters as well as religious attitudes and theological convictions have to be included in the analysis. Missions in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries differed considerably from those during the age of high imperialism, and these differed even more in contrast to evangelisation after independence, when mission often came in the guise of social and developmental work. Just as important as the external situation, however, were the personalities and attitudes of the individuals involved.

Therefore, this volume asks the following questions: How did concepts, attitudes and practices change when European missionaries lived in contact zones with non-Europeans? What emerged from these encounters that was new? What and how did missionaries report back to Europe, thus maybe creating an imagined contact zone and modifying European perceptions as well? And how did hierarchies play out in the contact zones, thus enabling or preventing people from living a contact life? The integration of new approaches and the active use of new ideas (of both sides) are central to this question.

Jeffrey Cox begins with some general reflections on the concept and mission historiography. He gives an overview of the history of mission historiography

as it relates to postcolonial studies and discusses different approaches, their advantages and their drawbacks with regard to the question how and to what extent they illuminate the agency of the different parties involved in the contact, above all missionaries and missionised. At the same time, Cox tests several of the terms introduced by Pratt as to their applicability to mission studies. While many studies of the colonial era focussed on the missionaries, postcolonial studies of mission history can be divided into different categories: Some concentrate on »indigenous« Christianity, meaning Christian practices and theology as they were appropriated by indigenous people. The role of the missionaries is eclipsed in these studies. A subgroup coming from a different angle are those studies that concentrate entirely on indigenous agency. Others try to vindicate the missionaries by »narratives of anti-conquest«, focussing on the positive intentions and those parts of the outcome of the encounter that were positive to the indigenous people. Even authors who explicitly try to overcome binaries, such as the Comaroffs or Catherine Hall, tend to reinforce binarism, thus Cox. He thus demonstrates the complexity of mission situations and the resulting challenges to mission studies. Cox finds several of Pratt's terms helpful for the study of mission history, besides the »contact zones« and »narratives of anti-conquest« above all »transculturation«.

The first section deals with contact zones as places where people of different cultures and different social backgrounds met. They all focus on the interaction that happened when people lived or worked together and analyse the outcome of the encounter for one or more sides. They demonstrate how concepts, attitudes and practices changed in the encounter and how new ideas emerged.

Mrinalini Sebastian focusses on indigenous agency in the missionary encounter. She describes missionaries and Indians alike as mediators and as those who were transformed in the contact. Sebastian gives three examples: She draws our attention to botanical knowledge about India that was spread in Europe not only in academic works but also in school textbooks and the information of which relied on a cooperation between European missionary amateur botanists and Indian doctors and Brahmins. She then analyses conversations between Halle missionaries and Indians as reported in the *Hallesche Berichte* as examples of negotiations about religion and religiosity, particularly conversion and the underlying theological and anthropological conceptions and social backgrounds. Sebastian underlines that in the published conversations readers can also find the voices of marginalised people. She sees the conversations as a product of the contact zone where both sides could add to the discourse: The Indians introduced a sense that religious

claims do not necessarily imply the denegation of other beliefs while the missionaries offered a worldview that implied equality even to marginalised persons. Sebastian's third example shows how a Dalit woman who had converted to Christianity tried to improve her social status. With these examples, the chapter illuminates the mutual transformation that took place in Indian contact zones.

The chapter written by Judith Becker shows the transformations Basel missionaries underwent in the first half of the nineteenth century in India. Becker asks how arguments that were used in the antislavery discourse and based on experiences in Africa and the Caribbean were transferred to the Indian context. She underlines that, to the Basel missionaries, slavery was both a religious and a humanitarian problem. They tied it directly to spiritual slavery. With respect to India, Becker describes the interpretation as developing in four steps: In the beginning, the missionaries interpreted what they saw in India in terms of their European awakened concepts: Indians lived in the bondage of sin and Satan. Then, they reported primarily about their teachings of liberation and their hope for the Indians. Freedom and equality were at the centre of their teaching at the time. The third phase was marked by a return to the notion of bondage, this time, however, with regard to particular Indian practices, social conditions and Hindu doctrines. Freedom then meant, according to the missionaries, freedom of choice and behaviour, commitment. In the fourth period, belief in the agency of the Devil and his binding power became more and more important to the missionaries because they believed that they encountered the Devil in certain Hindu practices. In this process, they developed a »contact religiosity«. In two case studies, Becker narrates how the missionaries Hermann Gundert and Herrmann Mögling changed their views on physical slavery due to their encounter with Indian slaves, with Gundert becoming more and more disenchanted by the former slaves whom he had at first held in very high esteem as model Christians and Mögling becoming interested in slaves only late in life and thinking more highly of them after getting to know them better. Becker demonstrates how life in the contact zone fleshed out the missionaries' conceptions of bondage, liberation and freedom and how their system of values and their religious notions changed due to the contact experiences.

Andreas Nehring investigates the impact of Christian Mission on Buddhist meditation concepts and practices. He finds transculturation processes in Theravada Buddhist meditation practice and philosophy due to the encounter with Western mission and illuminates how the concept of mindfulness that is very popular today was developed as a response to Christian missions. According to Nehring, the focus on the agency of Buddhists in the encounter can help to overcome the binaries that influenced Said's and other concepts of colonialism. In an overview over the political history of

Burma in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the interaction between Europeans and Burmese, Nehring illustrates the appropriation and transculturation of European concepts and techniques by Burmese, notably in the case of King Mindon. At the same time, religious reforms took place in Burmese Buddhism, and meditation was one of their centres. It was an old tradition that had been fallen into neglect by the beginning of the nineteenth century. Nehring discusses the connection between the introduction of Christian concepts of the future, particularly eschatology, and Buddhist eschatology. In the Buddhist view, secular decline hastens the coming of the next Buddha and is therefore not necessarily negative. The interpretation of Western influences as accelerating the decline was therefore at the centre of many discourses. Meditation became a central practice of dealing with contingency. Nehring thus illuminates an indirect but nevertheless strongly felt influence of European missionaries rather than a direct one.

Catholic missionary nuns in New Guinea and the reactions of New Guinean women are at the centre of Katharina Stornig's contribution. She demonstrates how conceptions of purity and pollution changed due to their interaction in the contact zone. In New Guinea, childbirth was considered to be polluting, which is why indigenous men and women were not allowed to assist women in labour. For Catholic nuns up to 1936, assistance was prohibited, too, because they were meant to stay pure. In both cases, conceptions of purity and pollution, though they were very differently founded, impeded help. In 1930, nuns petitioned the mission's headquarters to be allowed to assist at least in difficult cases. Stornig asks why conservative Catholic nuns tried to change a doctrine that was central to female Catholic orders. She answers by describing experiences in New Guinea and changing conceptions in Germany. Stornig explains that, because of the taboo, other women kept a distance from mothers in New Guinea. Even for some time after the birth, the social and spatial isolation of mother and child continued. The practice resulted in relatively high death rates among newborn children. When the first Catholic priests arrived in this area in 1896, they furthered the deployment of female missionaries who would be able to approach mothers and children. At the same time, in Germany, obstetrics and maternal and child health care became increasingly professionalised. In some mission areas, the training of nuns as midwives began. For the indigenous women, visits by nuns changed the practice and experience of childbirth. The nuns also soon became involved in childcare, a practice that had previously also been forbidden, due to Catholic ideas of purity. Stornig demonstrates the impact of life in the contact zones on the modifications in concepts around childbirth.

Felicity Jensz contrasts anthropologists' and missionaries' reports about and attitudes towards Indigenous Australians in the nineteenth century.

Jensz investigates how life in Australian contact zones shaped the concepts of religion of missionaries and anthropologists. European missionaries used descriptions of Australian religions to prove the »degradation« of indigenous people and to emphasise their duty to »raise« them. Many anthropologists, in contrast, concentrated on a supposedly religious »essence« of the indigenous. They were not interested in changing the Australians, their view of whom was static. They were often highly critical of missionaries, not only because they suspected the latter of spoiling the indigenous culture but also because they accused them of projecting their own notion of God onto indigenous religion and therefore not to be reliable. Today, these early anthropologists are being criticised by their successors for projecting their own concepts onto the Australians, too. Jensz demonstrates how indigenous Australians adapted Christian teaching to their own views, gave »autoethnographic« descriptions and explained their own religion to missionaries. Missionaries and indigenous people came to know each other and their respective religious teachings better and began to discuss them, and the missionaries also reported the indigenous Australians discussing Christianity with each other, but without being impressed. Rather, they gave the missionaries dismissive responses when the latter tried to evangelise. Jensz interprets mission reports as offering »glimpses into the religious contact zones« while underlining the tactical goals of the publications.

The focus of Stefan Rinke's contribution is on early modern Jesuit missions in Paraguay and political implications of life in the contact zone. It is one of two articles dealing with the experiences of early European Catholic missions in their encounters with American societies. Rinke draws the attention to the processes of translation and transculturation and asks if and how concepts of social and religious life changed in the encounter. He shows how Jesuits and indigenous Americans formed a community against Spanish settlers and how the Jesuits resettled several thousand people in new »missions«. The Jesuits aimed at Christianising and »civilising« the Guaraní among whom they worked. Therefore, they founded reductions. A strict hierarchy between missionaries and Guaraní was observed with the missionaries controlling the converts' lives and having an entirely negative opinion of the indigenous people. Still, they cherished the ideal of mutual love and trust between missionary and missionised. They did adapt certain Guaraní interests, above all in music and visual arts, and learnt local languages in order to translate the catechism. In this respect, they were progressive. And the Guaraní were inventive in appropriating European objects and customs, as Rinke shows. In the end, the »Jesuit State« was dissolved after the Jesuits had been expelled from the Spanish colonies. Rinke relates this to the success of the interactions in the Jesuit contact zones in Latin America that had »produced new forms of

social life«.¹⁸ The Jesuits seemed, to outside observers, to be building a state of their own. It seems that life in the contact zone had become so successful that it was perceived as dangerous to the Catholic Church and the Spanish Empire.

The second section focusses on »imagined contact zones« as those perceived by missionaries, supporters and converts and maintained in the exchange of information and goods. This does not mean that the whole world became one contact zone (which would make the term useless) but that in the minds of a certain group of Christians, the actually existing contact zone was broadened to encompass an imagined community which included people of the same faith in the mission area and in Europe.

Sabine Hübner examines changing concepts of prayer in the eighteenth-century Tamil Nadu mission. Prayer was an important aspect of Christian (and Hindu) religiosity and therefore central to mission endeavours and, accordingly, in mission reports. Through intercession, Christians in Europe and in India felt united and built one community, one imagined contact zone. In the contact zone in India, missionaries and Indians negotiated the right kind of prayer, in the contact zone between India and Europe, they explained this to their European audience. Hübner distinguishes between an »intensive« contact zone in India and an »extensive« one that included other parts of the world.¹⁹ August Hermann Francke, the central founding figure of the Tamil Nadu mission, taught that it was central to prayer that it came from the heart. Public prayer became also a mission method. The missionaries thought they could detect the state of conversion of Indians in their prayers. Heartfelt prayers were meant to go along with strong emotions, often with tears. Hübner demonstrates how a new form of Christian prayer evolved in the contact zone when European Christian and Indian Hindu concepts met. The missionaries expected detailed »heartfelt« prayers, the Hindus did not want to use many words or open their hearts in public. They rather used formulaic, repetitive prayers, which stood in direct opposition to the Pietist missionaries' expectations. The solution was, and here European and Indian expectations converged, to introduce sighs as proper form of prayer in the Christian contact zone. These sighs were short, formulaic prayers that united elements of certain Christian (though not Pietist) and Hindu traditions,

18 Stefan RINKE, *A State Within a State? The »Jesuit State in Paraguay« and Eurocentric Constructions of Space*, in this volume, p. 152.

19 Sabine HÜBNER, *To Sigh before God. Prayer in the Eighteenth-Century Lutheran Mission in Tamil Nadu*, in this volume, p. 158.

especially the *bhakti* movement. The missionaries themselves began to pray in this way. In prayer, a spiritual contact zone was established.

Peter James Yoder, too, focuses on the Danish-English-Halle Mission, but with his perspective on the German side, its founder August Hermann Francke and the impact the mission and the imagined contact zone had on him. He analyses the effects the mission reports as means of the imagined contact zone had on Francke's theology, particularly on the meaning of the terms »heathenism« and »atheism«. Francke first used the terms to criticise the Lutheran Church and its members as not being truly Christian. He called himself an atheist during his conversion experience, when he experienced intense doubt. He also called those who advanced »worldly« knowledge and learning in the Church »heathens«. Also, Francke referred to non-Jewish people who did not worship the right God by the term »heathen« in sermons on the Old Testament. The same was true of opponents of the early Church. What they had in common with his contemporaries was that they all led people away from true faith. Furthermore, he applied the term to the morality of individuals. After he had become involved with mission and received reports from India, Francke modified his notion of »heathenism«. »Heathens« were now those who had no knowledge about God as Father, the first person of the Trinity, or those who lived in ignorance of Christian rebirth, i.e. were not yet converted.²⁰ Contrary to his view of his European Christian contemporaries, he cherished hopes that Indian »heathens« would eventually convert. Therefore, the term received a positive meaning with regard to them. The chapter shows how Francke's interpretation of »heathenism« was broadened due to the indirect encounter, the imagined contact.

The last chapter in this section, Michael Sievernich's analysis of Joseph-François Lafitau's *Mœurs des sauvages américains* from 1724, an ethnographic description, demonstrates the impact a relatively short stay in the contact zone of Jesuit missions had on the author and on how he sought to impart his insights to a European audience. Lafitau lived from 1712 to 1717 in Jesuit missions among the Mohawk in Canada. He had been educated in the humanist tradition and came into conflict with leading figures like Voltaire, Diderot and d'Alembert about the question of whether people like indigenous Canadians could have a »religion«. While the Enlightenment scholars denied this, Lafitau, from his experience of living with Indians, claimed they did indeed have a religion. With his *Mœurs des sauvages américains* he intended to inform the European audience about Indian customs, religion and politics and to demonstrate that there were no nations without either. In comparing different Native American peoples and adding Greek and Roman authors to the comparison, he became a founder of comparative ethnology. Lafitau

20 This recalls Chakrabarty's »not yet« but with a very different, eschatological perspective.

established different categories (such as origin, religion, leisure) along which he compared peoples and attitudes. He saw these as anthropological constants and »developed a kind of global cultural semiotics«. ²¹ The result was a depiction of humanity as being one. Lafitau included many illustrations in his publication and Sievernich depicts the frontispiece as hermeneutical key to the whole book. There, different cultures are united in one picture both on the level of symbols and on the interpretative level and woven together by a certain interpretation of time. Sievernich concludes that Lafitau was only able to write his comparative ethnographic work because of his experiences in several American contact zones but that the most important outcome of his work was not to be found in American missions but with his European audience who was, by this book, included in the contact.

The last section concentrates on »personalised contact zones«, that is on individuals who lived in contact zones for such a long time that they themselves became a kind of »contact zone«. ²² They embodied different cultures and were able to translate and to mediate. They often tried to bring together ideas or people (or both) of different cultures and to open spaces for interaction.

Thoralf Klein develops this idea in his article on Karl Gützlaff, who was German by origin but worked in such close contact with British people, married English women and published more works in English than in German, that he became a person of contact between different European nations and cultures. His life in different Asian contact zones intensified his transculturalism. Klein points to the significance of comprehensive (i.e. not only linguistic) translation processes for transcultural interactions. He calls cultural brokers like Gützlaff »a ›contact zone‹ in their own right« ²³ because they embody several cultures, but emphasises that this implies neither an equality of the cultures within this person or in his or her actions, nor a neutral or disinterested representation of the cultures towards others. Klein underlines that Gützlaff was a cultural broker both in his activities and in his writings and that both furthered transcultural mediation. Klein finds transnational, national and transcultural aspects in Gützlaff's life which can be roughly attributed to different periods. From 1820 to 1842, he had a »transnational career«. He was trained in Germany and the Netherlands and first sent to today's Indonesia by the Netherlands Mission Society. From there, he moved

21 Michael SIEVERNICH, Comparing Ancient and Native Customs. Joseph-François Lafitau and the »sauvages américains«, in this volume, p. 201.

22 This idea, though not the term, was first introduced at the conference by Thoralf Klein in his presentation on Karl Gützlaff under the title »How to be a contact zone«.

23 Thoralf KLEIN, How to be a Contact Zone. The Missionary Karl Gützlaff between Nationalism, Transnationalism and Transculturalism, 1827–1851, in this volume, p. 220.

to Bangkok and then to Macau, where he dissolved his contract with the Society. He organised a transnational network supporting his mission. This network included individuals and institutions from most Protestant European countries as well as North America and was based on Gützlaff's transcultural abilities. In the period from 1842 to 1850, Klein sees Gützlaff as flirting with, though not embracing, nationalism. This was at least partly due to political and social changes. Still, he insisted on the transnational and interdenominational character of his China mission. He acted as a cultural broker all the time and mediated, in both directions, between the West and Asia. Gützlaff found his greatest impact in China and Japan by his translations. Klein demonstrates how new words Gützlaff invented entered everyday Chinese. Concluding, he describes Gützlaff as a »transcultural persona«²⁴ that was shaped by life in contact zones and his perspective on the global world.

Rosemary Seton places Mary Pigot, who was of French and maybe Eurasian descent and born and raised in India, at the centre of her contribution. Miss Pigot was the Lady Superintendent of the Church of Scotland's Female Mission in Calcutta in the second half of the nineteenth century. She hosted mission meetings in which Indians and Europeans participated and which attracted several hundred people. In the course of these meetings, Indian and European customs were mixed and people sang songs in English and several Indian languages. Consequently, Miss Pigot was extremely successful. But she was accused of misconduct and impropriety by the recently arrived Principal of the General Assembly's Institution in Calcutta, William Hastie. After 13 years in her position, Miss Pigot was dismissed in spring 1883, but defended herself by suing Hastie for defamation of character, a case she ultimately won. Seton describes Miss Pigot's Mission House as contact zone. Mary Pigot was fluent in Bengali and acquainted with upper-caste Bengali families and leading figures of the Brahmo Samaj. In 1877, she moved with the mission house into the heart of the »native city«, and maintained a house that was always open. She accommodated wives of Indian gentlemen who wanted their families to become more »European« as parlour guests, because she wanted to »civilise« as well as Christianise. The accusations against her seem to have arisen from a plot of newcomers who contested her standing in the mission society. Her supposedly being Eurasian was one of the charges against her. Most important, however, was her ability to »effortlessly criss-crossing racial boundaries in India and in Britain«.²⁵ After she was dismissed, the close encounter between Europeans and Indians in the Mission House ceased. It had relied on this person who embodied the contact zone.

24 Ibid., p. 236.

25 Rosemary SETON, *Close Encounters, Racial Tensions. The Church of Scotland Mission in Calcutta [Kolkata], India*, in this volume, p. 250.

Andreas Köller analyses changes in the concept of what it meant to be a missionary in times of decolonisation by the example of Basel and Church Missionary Society missionaries in South India. He underlines that the concept of the missionary has always been unstable and contested and points to the developments of the concept in mission contact zones. By the end of World War II, images of the missionary changed due both to political transformations and to modifications in mission theory and ecclesiology on a global stage such as the World Mission Conferences. People with different concepts of the missionary met in the contact zone. Yet, the different concepts could not be attributed to distinct national groups but found supporters among European missionaries and Indian Christians alike. Evangelical Indians who were interested in keeping the focus on mission sided with European missionaries with the same aim, albeit for different reasons. Köller discusses the definitions of mission that were prevalent after 1945: mission as development aid, and the integration of mission as part of the newly founded Church of South India (CSI). He claims that in the meeting of the different concepts of the missionary, a new concept emerged. Köller investigates how individual missionaries coped with the competing concepts and how they themselves became a kind of contact zone. Missionaries who now worked mostly in the social sector (as many of their predecessors had) interpreted this explicitly as a kind of mission work. According to Basel missionary Jacques Rossel, what counted was the »inner conviction«. His colleague Emanuel Kellerhals stated that working in the church was mission work because of the »spirit of pioneering«. Köller asserts that these missionaries developed »a fluid self-understanding drawing on different missionary concepts«²⁶ and calls them »»third space« people«, thereby referring to Homi K. Bhabha's concept which he finds better suited to his case than Pratt's term »contact zones«.

The last contribution to this volume is by Heather J. Sharkey and deals with another person who embodied the contact zone: Henry Athanassian, an Armenian who worked in Egypt for the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) in the mid-twentieth century. He was dismissed, like Mary Pigot, and turned out of an apartment in »the Bible House« of which he claimed to be the rightful tenant. Again, a newly arrived British official was behind these procedures. Sharkey aims to demonstrate the dichotomy in the BFBS between British xenophobia and Christian universalism and to illuminate the ambiguities in the definitions of »European« and »missionary«. Athanassian worked for the BFBS from 1909 to 1953 and had occupied an influential position as its *de facto* (if not *de jure*) agent for several years. He had originally come from Constantinople and as a child fled to Bulgaria and from there to

26 Andreas KÖLLER, One's Own Concept Challenged. Renegotiations of the Concept of the »Missionary« in the Age of Decolonisation and Ecumenism, in this volume, p. 264.

Egypt. Port Said, where Athanassian lived and worked, was itself a vast contact zone and an important hub for the BFBS. When World War II had ended, the BFBS sent out a young Canadian minister, Leonard Geary, as its British agent but appointed him to work on the same level of authority as Athanassian, who had in fact if not in name filled the vacant position of secretary during the war. However, because they considered Geary to be »English« they granted him a higher salary than Athanassian. Obviously, Geary did not fulfil his position wisely (or even correctly). The society, however, did not bring proceedings against, as they later would against Athanassian. When they discussed the affair of Athanassian's apartment and salary, they made racist comments obviously based on orientalist views. Although Athanassian had worked for the society for many decades, he was not recognised as European or British. Athanassian died in 1978 after living in England for 22 years, eventually becoming a British citizen. Sharkey concludes that Athanassian could not be simply placed on one side but was rather »a kind of one-man ›contact zone‹«. ²⁷

The volume concludes with an Afterword by Brian Stanley that contextualises it within postcolonial mission historiography and intercultural theology. The volume demonstrates the richness of the concept of »contact zones« and also some of its limits. The concept has proved to be very helpful for the research of entanglements and, at least to a certain extent, for overcoming simple binaries. At the same time, several chapters have shown that those individuals who tried to overcome binaries entirely, like Mary Pigot, were in danger of being expelled from the contact zone. This indicates that the contact zone was often constituted in oppositions, not only in theory but also in practice and in the imagination of the people involved. The main outcome of the research on »contact zones«, however, is the illustration of changing concepts, conceptions and practices on all sides of the encounter.

This volume is based on the concluding conference of the junior research group »Transfer and Transformation of Missionaries' Images of Europe in Contact with the Other, 1700–1970«, which was held in Mainz in April 2014. The group consisted of the group leader, Judith Becker, two doctoral students, Andreas Köller and Sabine Hübner, and three post-doctoral fellows-in-residence who each spent a year in Mainz, Katharina Stornig, Peter James Yoder and Mrinalini Sebastian. They all contributed to the conference and the volume, which accounts for its focus on South India. At the conference,

27 Heather J. SHARKEY, *The Case of Henry Athanassian, an Armenian in the Suez Canal Zone. Questioning Assumptions about Missions and Missionaries*, in this volume, pp. 284f.

all world regions were discussed, but unfortunately papers given on Africa, Australia and North America (some of which focused on Catholic missions) could not be included in this book.

The junior research group as well as the conference were generously supported by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the Leibniz Institute of European History (IEG), and I would like to thank both institutions and particularly the Institute's directors, Professor Irene Dingel and Professor Johannes Paulmann, and Dr Claudia Hauser of the PT-DLR, the project management agency acting on behalf of the BMBF, for their support. I would also like to thank Ute Latz for her help with the redaction of the book, as well as the editors Joe Paul Kroll and Vanessa Brabsche. Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues in the junior research group for providing an enjoyable working atmosphere throughout the years. It has been a pleasure to do research on mission histories with you all.

I. GENERAL