

The Absence of the Missionary in African Ethnography, 1930-65¹

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There is scarcely one [African people]...which has not been affected, to a greater or less extent, by the work of the Christian missions, and among most of them organized communities of native Christians play an integral part in the social organization. No contemporary social study can afford to neglect this element, the form it takes, and its relations with the other groups with which it co-exists and interacts.

Beattie 1953, 178

There is perhaps no aspect of the African experience that has been analyzed with less objectivity than the Christian missionary effort.

Herskovits 1962, 204

I found it difficult, when actually in the field, not to feel disappointed at having to study the religion of the Kgatla by sitting through an ordinary Dutch Reformed Church service, instead of watching a heathen sacrifice to the ancestral spirits.

Schapera 1938, 27

Thus the missionaries and the colonial administrators and the British military recruiting officers were not really part of my story. I see now that this was a mistake.

Leach 1989, 41

An increasing number of studies highlight the important role played by Christian missionaries in the processes of change that occurred in African countries before independence. Fifteen years ago a bibliography listed no fewer than 2,859 publications on Christianity in Tropical Africa and their number has grown even more considerably in recent years (Ofori 1977). Both historians and social scientists have taken a keen interest in this issue (see Etherington 1983). But it has not always been so. Many anthropologists who claimed to write comprehensive studies of African communities failed to pay attention to the

missionary presence at a time when John Beattie (1953) remarked that no social study could afford to neglect the missionary. It is both significant and ironic that Beattie himself, like most of his colleagues, did not discuss the role of Christian missions when he published his ethnography a few years later.² That study dealt with the Nyoro society in Uganda (Beattie 1960).

In this paper we report on research in which we scanned 63—mainly British—African ethnographies published between 1930 and 1965 on their discussion of the missionary factor. The fact that a large majority of these studies do not pay attention to the missionary was easy to establish. Understanding why this should be the case proved a more difficult task. The bulk of this paper is therefore devoted to tentatively answering this question. Comments by five veteran British anthropologists conclude the paper.³ At the same time, the questions raised in the paper constitute a plea for reflexivity: ethnographers in Africa—and elsewhere—should take into account the cultural and political context in which they carry out their research.

The persistent absence of the missionary factor in African ethnographies is somewhat surprising if one takes into account the early history of the International African Institute, one of the most influential centers of anthropological research in Africa. The founding of the institute, initially called the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures (IILC), in 1926 was an initiative of scholars, most of whom were closely associated with colonial policy or missionary work, and it was meant to help solve practical problems encountered in a changing Africa. Edwin Smith, who was both a missionary and an anthropologist, stressed in a report on the first seven years of the institute “the need for an application of scientific method to a solution of the questions arising generally from the contact of Western civilization with African culture” (1934, 1). Two years later the institute’s missionary connection appeared even stronger in an editorial note:

The Institute has from the beginning laid stress on the co-operation of missionaries. The outstanding aim of the Institute is to study African languages and cultures and their educational values, and nobody can be more interested in such studies than missionaries working in Africa. The plan of founding the Institute was first conceived in a missionary circle, and missions are contributing to its financial support (*Africa* 9 [1936], 546).

Two contributions in *Africa*, the journal of the institute are addressed explicitly to missionaries to teach them anthropological skills for carrying out research in conjunction with their missionary work (Thurnwald 1931; Westermann 1931).⁴

It was hoped that the institute would improve communication between governments, missionary societies, and scientific experts. Both governments and missionaries were represented in the various meetings that preceded and followed the founding of the institute. Among the members of the first executive council we find various missionaries and missionary-anthropologists such as D. Westermann, H. Dubois, J. H. Oldham, P. Schebesta and E. W. Smith. At that period it was not unusual to read in *Africa* a report of a missionary conference, complete with citations from the pope (*Africa* 4 [1931], 235-8). It is remarkable that, in spite of such an explicit program for the study of the colonial and missionary impact on Africa, most anthropologists ended up writing ethnographies "portraying the life of people as it was before contact with Europeans had affected it" (Smith 1934, 20).

It seems that anthropologists became more interested in Christian influences in Africa around 1965. In that period the International African Institute organized two conferences which devoted considerable attention to this topic (Fortes and Dieterlen 1965; Baëta 1968). Since then, a growing number of anthropological studies about the missionary impact on Africa have appeared, both criticizing and defending the missionary role. Several publications take missionaries as their main focus of attention. Some prominent examples are the studies by Linden on Christianity in Malawi (1974), Rwanda (1977), and Zimbabwe (1980), Salamone's (1974) work on missionaries in Northern Nigeria, Ranger and Weller's (1975) collection of articles on Christianity in Central Africa, McCracken's (1977) study of the political role of missionaries in Malawi and Markowitz's (1973) study on the same topic in Belgian Congo. The most anthropological publication is by Beidelman (1982) who describes protestant missionaries in pre-independence Tanzania as a tribe that tragically strove for a sacred objective but got stuck in the secular means it used to reach that objective (for a similar conclusion see Miller 1970 and, to some extent, Huber 1988, who studied Catholic missionaries in Papua New Guinea). Anthropological articles on missionaries have become too numerous to be named here.⁵

Anthropologists and Missionaries

The relationship between anthropologists and missionaries has been (and still is) ambiguous all over the world. Their love/hate relationship can probably be explained by the fact that there are striking similarities between them and unbridgeable differences.⁶ The most obvious similarity is their shared experience of the field situation. Both live as foreigners in communities to which they belong only marginally. Their common destiny often brings them into each other's company,

especially in societies where the local population is believed to offer no satisfactory company. The fact that missionaries stay for longer periods and are, therefore, better settled puts the anthropologist usually in the position of a guest enjoying the missionary's hospitality (Nida 1966, 273). Numerous anthropologists have acknowledged their debt to such hospitality; to mention only a few: Firth (1936, xvii), Monica Wilson Hunter (1936, ii-2), Evans-Pritchard (1940, 9-10), Kaberry (1952, xii), Beattie (1960, vii; 1965, 45), Lévi-Strauss (1974, 264), and Alland (1976, 22-4). Missionary hospitality is still being acknowledged by anthropologists today. Writing about his research in Cameroon, Nigel Barley confesses that he would have fled from the field if there had not been mission posts in the neighborhood (1986). We can also assume that the actual number of anthropologists profiting from missionaries is much higher than can be detected from written acknowledgements.

Missionary presence is not only advantageous to anthropologists because it offers them succor in times of loneliness, hunger, sickness or other distress, but also because missionaries have proven invaluable sources of information. There is a second point of similarity between the two: usually anthropologists and missionaries share a keen interest in local customs.⁷ Many missionaries wrote detailed notes on the basis of their observations. Through their prolonged residence they were able to learn the vernacular better and to practice more participant observation than professional anthropologists who rarely stayed longer than two years. Rosenstiel (1959) emphasizes the high quality of anthropological writings by many missionaries in various parts of the world and claims that professional anthropologists often built their work on that of missionaries. A similar view is expressed by Smith (1924, 518). It is also known that two of the most prolific early armchair anthropologists, James Frazer and Wilhelm Schmidt, carried on a busy correspondence with missionaries in every part of the world. Frazer even tried to get a missionary, John Roscoe, appointed as a colonial government anthropologist in East Africa (Stocking 1983, 80). Missionaries were especially important to anthropologists because of their access to church documents which often constituted rare sources of information about a particular community. Another missionary contribution to anthropology mentioned by many ethnographers is that they were often the first to learn the local languages and put them into writing.

Conversely, missionaries also benefitted from anthropological investigations. Their interest in the work of anthropologists is especially reflected in articles written for the journal *Practical Anthropology* (since 1973 *Missiology*). To give a few examples, Cuthbert (1965) pleads for including anthropology in the training program of missionaries. Roth (1964) reports about a conference where

Catholic missionaries met anthropologists. He emphasizes the positive appreciation of anthropology by missionaries and seeks to make anthropological studies more available to missionaries. Taylor (1967) provides guidelines for missionaries who want to study anthropology in the United States. Townsend (1968) writes that anthropological insights should be applied to the problems which are faced by Bible translators. Another prominent spokesman of the view that anthropological insights are necessary in missionary work is Nida. According to him, "Good missionaries have always been good anthropologists" (1954, xi; Herskovits 1962, 208). Loewen, who is both a missionary and an anthropologist, writes about an experiment in which missionaries and an anthropologist (himself) cooperated in research among Chaco Indians in Paraguay (1965). Here we see an example of anthropology serving missionary aims, in the author's words, "*Anthropologia Missionis Ancilla*" (see also Lutzbetak 1961, 1963). Sutlive (n.d.), a missionary, writes that he was "converted" to the anthropological principles of holism, pluralism, and relativism.

In 1953 a conference about missionary statemanship in Africa was held at the Kennedy School of Missions in Connecticut USA, with the help of some well-known anthropologists—Bascom, Comhaire, Schwab, and Watkins. A special issue of *Civilisations* (volume 3 [1953] no. 4) contains a report about the conference and a number of papers. In the same year we witness another example of anthropology serving missionary purposes. A study edited by Phillips provided missionary societies with an overview of the state of affairs in the field of anthropological research on marriage and family life in Africa. One of the five aims of the study was:

an adjustment of Church rules and practices in this same field (African family life) to Native customary law, together with a more adequate understanding among missionaries and African Church leaders of the elements in the native social structure which are essential to its ability and development in the modern world (1953, viii).

However, in most circumstances the relationship between anthropologists and missionaries was less harmonious. If they shared an interest in local culture, it usually was for opposite purposes: the anthropologist was for preserving it, the missionary was for changing it; the anthropologist wanted to learn, the missionary wanted to teach (cf. Delfendahl 1981). The essence of missionary work usually was defined as conversion and that of anthropological work as conservation. In actual practice, however, these contrasts of stereotypes need to be qualified considerably. Missionaries have shown an increasing tendency to respect the cultural heritage of missionized groups⁸ and to view conver-

sion as a spiritual change.⁹ Anthropologists, for their part, have generally moved away from a static conservatism to the study of processes of change, and although most usually decline direct involvement, they are well aware that that ideal is never fully attained.

Although, in some respects, the interests of anthropologists and missionaries seem to be converging, it is important to keep in mind the fundamental differences which lie at the heart of their recurring conflicts. Moreover, in the period considered in this paper (1930-65), the differences in anthropological and missionary objectives were more obvious than they are today. Usually missionaries and anthropologists were seen as directly opposed to one another. This has led to mutual reproaches. "Missionaries were an enemy," writes Powdermaker, because they prevented the "natives" from remaining "pure" (1966, 43). Bascom writes that missionaries lacked respect for African values (1953). Westermann, who was both a missionary and an anthropologist, writes that the missionary "runs the risk of laying undue emphasis on the darker sides of native life" (1937, 145), and Rattray resented the work of missionaries because they "corrupted" traditional society (1928, viii-x). Almost 50 years later, Slater describes how she questioned an informant in Tanzania about his conversion to Christianity, and points out the "irrationality" of this conversion (1976, 146-48). She expresses her dismay at the missionary enterprise in the following observation made during a Christian church service: "all I saw was a few women preoccupied with silencing their noisy children by forcing their breast into the babies' mouth" (149). Hart, who stayed with the Australian Tiwi, exclaims "Alas, nowadays the Tiwi are monogamous, go to Mass every Sunday, and wear pants. Such is progress. How sad and how dull" (1970, 163). What Tonkinson writes about his fieldwork in Australia also clearly registers his opinion of the work of missionaries:

To gain rapport with the Aborigines I had to demonstrate that I was not a missionary, which I did by avoiding mission religious services, by carrying tobacco (by Aboriginal definition, 'Christians' do not possess or smoke tobacco), and by using my normally rather blasphemous language. My failure to attend church services upset the missionaries, who were not enthusiastic about my presence anyway, because my keen interest in traditional cultural elements might encourage the Aborigines to believe that some of their traditions were worth retaining (1974, 10).

It is not surprising, therefore, that anthropologists who do write about missionaries, often prefer to do so in an ironic mode (Huber 1988, 2-9). However, few anthropologists condemn missionaries altogether. Most of those who give their views distinguish between the religious

and humanistic activities of missionaries and express positive appreciation for the latter. Powdermaker recognizes the significant roles played by missionaries in the processes of social change (1966, 43). Herskovits praises missionaries for bringing literacy to Africans but criticizes them for undermining their cultural values (1962, 213). Firth has the "highest admiration" for the missionaries' "arduous self-sacrifice" and their "devotion to an ideal," although he does not share their views (1936, xvii). Similar feelings are expressed by Beattie (1965, 45) and Kloos (1977, 30). Middleton expresses his ambivalence towards missionaries as follows:

I myself had not approved of missionary aims, but I had soon to admit that the individual missionaries were kind and generous men who did what they thought was right with regard to the culture which was in many ways their duty to destroy. Again it is fashionable to decry missionaries and certainly I would admit that in my experience many of them behaved foolishly, ignorantly, and harmfully with the people whom they regarded as their charges. I would add that the fact that they lived with little of the affluence associated with Europeans and that they were good and kindly people had a considerable effect (1970, 27).

In spite of contrary views, missionaries and anthropologists do sometimes develop friendly relationships based on personal appreciations and this fact has a strong impact on their attitudes towards one another's work. Examples of such contradictory friendships can be found with Rattray who called himself a "rank pagan" but was a close friend of the missionary-anthropologist Edwin Smith (Machin n.d. 112, 147). Seligman and Tonkinson also developed close friendships with missionaries. But many anthropologists changed their attitudes towards missionary work when they had left the field. Nida, a missionary and linguist, writes:

Particularly galling to many is the polite congeniality of some anthropologists when they accept the missionary's hospitality, but their overt and often bitter hostility toward missionary activities when they are with the indigenous people.... Many missionaries, furthermore, have had the experience of being 'pumped dry' by anthropological investigators who seem keenly interested in obtaining all the information they can about the people whom the missionary knows well. Usually such anthropologists either promise or imply that they will be happy to reciprocate in sending the results of their studies to missionaries. Unfortunately, in very few circumstances do anthropologists ever comply with their promises. Perhaps they feel somewhat embarrassed because the results of their analyses seem critical of the missionaries.... They are interested in circulating their work among academic peers,

from whom they can get prestige. Sometimes years elapse between the collection of data and publication. The missionary, in the meantime, has long since been forgotten (1966, 273-74).

Similar grievances against anthropologists are expressed in the reactions to an article by Stipe (1980). Particularly interesting is the following by Hochegger:

During fieldwork the anthropologist may live for months in the comfortable home of the missionary, eating his food and asking a thousand questions about his long personal experience among the people. Afterwards, in his publication, the anthropologist is ashamed of having lived most of his time at the mission station, so he says nothing of the hospitality he has received there (1980, 171).

Turner makes similar comments suggesting the presence of exoticism: "a certain amount of excitement and prestige is lost if the anthropologist has to admit that some missionary was actually there long before him" (1980, 176). Nida calls anthropologists "devotees of the cult of the exotic" (1966, 273). The accusation of exoticism has been levelled frequently against anthropologists (Hiebert 1978) and will be elaborated below. In an attempt to explain why anthropologists pardon the absolutism of "the distant tribesman" while condemning the absolutist beliefs of their own countrymen, Gellner applies a *Bailey* analysis:

What characteristically happened in anthropology is rather like that pattern of alliances, in which one's neighbours are one's enemies, but one's neighbours-but-one are one's allies. Anthropologists were relativistic, tolerant, contextually comprehending vis-à-vis the savages who are after all some distance away, but absolutistic, intolerant vis-à-vis their immediate neighbours or predecessors, the members of our own society who do not share their comprehending outlook and are themselves 'ethnocentric' (1970, 31).

A last point to be mentioned here is the anti-Christian attitude of many anthropologists. Malinowski's negative attitude towards white residents, including missionaries, is likely to have influenced an entire generation of British ethnographers (Stocking 1983). He criticized them for their "biased and prejudged opinions," but there were also "delicious exceptions" among them (1922, 5-6, 10). But, also, Frazer's influence can hardly be underestimated here. His hotchpotch collection of religious data made one thing clear: Christianity is just one of the many religions found in the world (Ackerman 1987). They were all precursors of the scientific mind. The awareness that their own religion had no special status vis-à-vis other religions made anthropologists particularly uncomfortable with regard to Christianity. We

may assume that there was a similar situation in France, where—as a consequence of the Enlightenment—the university tradition has been characterized by strong anti-clericalism. Evans-Pritchard also raised this point:

All the leading sociologists and anthropologists contemporaneous with, or since, Frazer were agnostics and positivists—Westermarck, Hobhouse, Haddon, Rivers, Seligman, Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski.... I do not know of a single person among the prominent sociologists and anthropologists of America at the present time who adheres to any faith. Religion is superstition to be explained by anthropologists, not something an anthropologist, or indeed any rational person, could himself believe in (1962, 36).

MacGaffey points out that anthropologists tend to exclude their own beliefs from their description. He cites and translates Pouillon:

The believer does not believe himself to be such; it is the unbeliever who believes that the believer believes in the existence of God.... There is even a tendency to suppose that the extent and significance of the supernatural world are much more important for 'primitives' than for 'moderns' (1986, 43).

But what do anthropologists believe in? Is the unbeliever logically possible? Religion, remarks MacGaffey, "has become an infliction that *other* people have." Shweder calls anthropologists "ghost busters"; they don't believe anymore in an unseen world—"God has long been dead for contemporary anthropology" (1989, 103). Evans-Pritchard, a practicing Catholic, was an exception to the rule he calls attention to. Significantly, he delivered the lecture from which the above quotation is taken not for an audience of anthropologists, but in a Catholic priory. His remark touches upon two considerations to which we shall return later in this paper. The first is that the personal background of the anthropologist is likely to influence his work considerably. The second leads us back to exoticism. If religion is something not to be taken seriously, as, according to Evans-Pritchard, most anthropologists believe, why should they be attracted to the study of indigenous religion and not to that of Christian belief? The same question is implicitly raised by Schapera in the quotation we have used as a motto to this paper: why did he enjoy attending "a heathen sacrifice to the ancestral spirits" but not a Christian church service?

However, we should be careful not to generalize unduly about the missionary-anthropologist relationship. Frank Salamone has studied transactions between missionaries and anthropologists for epistemological purposes by examining the latter's field data (1977). Salamone

screens 72 ethnographic works (26 of which refer to sub-Saharan Africa)¹⁰ and codes a number of variables pertaining to missionary-anthropologist relationships. He concludes his survey with ten hypotheses. We cite four that seem most relevant to our discussion:

1. Contacts between missionaries and anthropologists are more likely to occur in rural than in urban areas.
2. Contacts with fundamentalist missionaries are more likely to be hostile than are those with more established groups.
3. Contacts with Catholic missionaries tend to be less tension producing.
4. Goal discrepancy is a basic cause of missionary-anthropologist conflict.

Tolerance and respect will tend to control the overt expression of hostility, but latent conflict will be present in all transactions (Salamone 1977, 410). Summarizing the ambiguous relationship between anthropologists and missionaries, one could say that the old anthropological stereotypes of the missionary as a preacher and a destroyer of culture versus the anthropologist as a listener and a preserver of culture are today being reviewed. Anthropologists and missionaries seem to have more in common than they (particularly the anthropologists) would like to admit. But even when similarities are acknowledged, they do not always pave the way for better relationships. Indeed, the very closeness itself may induce an uncomfortable friction or may be a source of embarrassment (Van der Geest 1990). It is indeed understandable that anthropologists have rarely studied missionaries in order to study themselves, as Huber remarks (1988, 9).

In concluding this section, it seems that anthropologists and missionaries are no more easily categorized than the peoples they study and among whom they live and work. They are equally unique and defy the stereotypes. Some anthropologists seem to match the stereotypical image of missionaries more than the missionaries themselves and some missionaries seem to be more like anthropologists than missionaries (cf. Salamone 1980).

The Missionary Factor

In this section we shall deal with the selection of the ethnographies which have been used for our investigation into the presence and absence of the missionary factor and with the quantitative analysis of our findings. In the next we shall present material which may help us

to interpret the lack of interest in Christian influence shown by the ethnographers.

In total, 63 ethnographic works have been screened on the treatment of missionary influence.¹¹ They were not a random sample but were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- a. For pragmatic reasons, all studies were chosen from the catalog of the rather small library of the Anthropological-Sociological Centre, University of Amsterdam.
- b. Only studies dealing with sub-Saharan Africa were included (Ethiopia was excluded because of its unique Christian history).
- c. Only studies with a more or less general ethnographic character were selected.
- d. Only studies which were published in the period between 1930 and 1965 were chosen.
- e. A wide geographical coverage was sought.
- f. Well-known ethnographies were preferred to others.
- g. Up to two studies by a given author could be selected provided they dealt with different ethnic groups.
- h. cursory investigation into the treatment of missionary influence, prior to selection, was carefully avoided.

In actual practice it meant that for most sub-Saharan African countries all general ethnographies which were available at the library and which corresponded with the above criteria were selected. With regard to countries which have been more visited by anthropologists, for example, Nigeria, Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, and South Africa, it was necessary to select from a larger number of suitable studies. Three of the selected studies are based on secondary sources and not on field-work. We did not regard this as a reason to exclude them. The sample is heavily biased towards British anthropologists and the British ex-colonies, a bias which is also present in the library concerned. There is still another bias in our selection. In the 1930-65 period much ethnographic work was produced by missionaries. Their work is but little represented in this selection because it was not present in the library. The topic of this paper therefore could be formulated more precisely as: the absence of the missionary in ethnographic work on sub-Saharan Africa written by professional—mainly anglophone—anthropologists. These restrictions call for some caution in our conclusions. The sample includes six ethnographies from Uganda; five from Ghana, Kenya, and

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Zaire; four from Sudan, Nigeria, and South Africa; three from Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, and Zimbabwe; two from Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, and Angola; and one ethnography from Sénégal, Bénin, Burkina Faso, Togo, Liberia, Namibia, Gabon, Guinée, Rwanda, and Chad. The 19 countries from which no ethnography has been selected are mostly small countries without an ethnography in the given period or strongly Islamic countries where missionary influence is negligible.

With regard to the treatment of the missionary factor the ethnographies were divided into three categories:

- a. Studies which do not mention missionary influence at all, or which mention only some background information about missions and/or Christians without linking this information to their data.
- b. Studies which discuss missionary/Christian influence on ethnographic data only to a very limited extent.
- c. Studies which devote a more or less substantial discussion to the influence of the missionary factor on sociocultural life.

As indicated in table 1, 42 (two-thirds) of the ethnographies do not discuss the impact of Christianity¹² on society, although in many of these societies missionary influence was substantial at the time when fieldwork for the ethnography was carried out. From the remaining 21 ethnographies, 9 discuss this impact very briefly and/or partially and 12 discuss it in a more substantial way.

Interpreting the Absence of the Missionary Factor

A number of factors are likely to influence an ethnographer's decision to include or exclude a discussion of the missionary factor. The most obvious one is the degree of importance of the missionary presence, which varies from region to region and in terms of time period. Another factor is personal background, for example, the ethnographer's attitude towards Christianity and obligations towards missionaries. Still other aspects to be considered are the specific theory most ethnographers of that period adhered to (structural functionalism), the anthropologist's concern about the disappearance of traditional culture, and the predilection for exotic phenomena.

Table 1

Discussion of the Missionary Factor in 63 African Ethnographies

None (a*)	Little (b*)	Substantial (c*)
Banton 1957	Alexandre and Binet 1958	Busia 1951
Basden 1938	Ardener 1956	Childs 1949
Beattie 1960	Douglas.1963	Hunter 1936
Bohannan 1953	Fallers 1956	Jensen &
Colson 1962	Himmelheber 1958	Krige 1943
Cornevin 1962	Little 1951	Kaberry 1952
Cory 1953	Skinner 1964	Kenyatta1938
Edel 1957	Southall 1953	Mair 1934
Evans-Pritchard 1937	Van Velsen 1964	Mayer 1961
Evans-Pritchard 1940	T= 9	Read 1956
Field 1937		Schapera 1940
Forde 1951		Wilson 1951
Fortes 1945		Winter 1950
Gamble 1957		T=12
Goody 1956		
Gray 1963		
Gusinde 1948		
Herskovits 1938		
Holleman 1952		
Huntingford 1953		
Kobben 1955		
Kronenberg 1958		
Kuper et al. 1955		
Kuper et al. 1955		
La Fontaine 1959		
Lambert 1956		
Lestrangle 1955		
Lienhardt 1961		
Luttig 1933		
Maquet 1954		
McCulloch 1952		
Mitchell 1956		
Michell & Barnes 1950		
Nadel 1942		
Paulme 1962		
Peristiany 1939		
Schebesta 1957		
Seligman 1932		
Tait 1961		
Turner 1957		
Vansina 1954		
Wagner 1949		
T=42		

* For a more elaborate description of these categories, see the text.

Regional Variation

Table 2 presents the breakdown by country and the degree to which the missionary factor is discussed in the ethnographies. It is most striking that all four ethnographies dealing with South African data contain substantial information about Christian influence, whereas all four studies of both Nigerian and Sudan peoples contain virtually nothing on this subject. These findings portray the complexity of the problem. Some findings clearly support the hypothesis that the importance of the missionary factor determines its discussion in the ethnographic context, but other findings strongly contradict this. The fact that all four Sudan ethnographies (two of which are by Evans-Prichard) do not discuss Christianity supports it. Sudan had (and still has) a very small Christian population. The fact that all four South African ethnographies discuss Christian influence rather extensively to some extent also lends support to the hypothesis. Around 1965 Christians constituted about 40 percent of the indigenous South African population. However, ethnographies about countries where the percentage of Christians is still higher (that is, Uganda, Kenya, and Zaire) paid much less attention to the missionary factor and thus tended to contradict the hypothesis. Also contradicting the hypothesis is the fact that all four Nigerian ethnographies neglected the missionary factor although Nigeria, around 1965, was about 35 percent Christian. One of the studies (Basden 1938) deals with Igbo society, where Christian influence was particularly strong.¹³

An additional reason why South African authors included Christianity in their ethnographic work may lie in South Africa's unique situation, being both home and field for the ethnographers. As South Africans writing about the black population living with them in the same country, they may have found it more difficult to leave out Christianity which played such a prominent role in the society they belonged to themselves. Moreover, in the academic world of South African anthropologists the influence of Christian churches seems to have been considerable at the time.

The presence of the missionary factor in the ethnographies neatly correlates with the proportion of Christians in the countries where the studies were conducted.¹³ Zaire, which has the highest percentage of Christians, is not represented by a single ethnography discussing Christian influence, and Uganda, which has the second largest percentage, is represented by only two out of six. Other countries which more or less contradict the hypothesis are Ghana, Kenya, and Zimbabwe.

Of course the criterion of proportion of Christians per country is crude and not very efficient. Field workers never dealt with complete countries but mostly with ethnic groups or, rather, communities within

ethnic groups. It would be more correct to collect information about the presence of Christianity in the particular community or region where the anthropologist carried out his fieldwork. Wagner, for example, in his monograph on the Bantu Kavirondo in Kenya (1949), does not pay attention to Christianity, but in a second study (1956), which was posthumously edited by Lucy Mair, we learn that the Christian presence in the region was substantial and had deeply influenced daily life. Some others indicate that the presence of Christians in their area was negligible (Bohannon and Bohannon 1953; Edel 1957; Lienhardt 1961) or nil (Kronenberg 1958; Schebesta 1957; Seligman and Seligman 1932). Unfortunately, most ethnographies do not give clear information on this point.

Table 2

Discussion of the Missionary Factor in 63 African Ethnographies by Country

None (a*)		Little (b*)		Substantial (c*)	
Ghana	4	Zaire	2	South Africa	4
Nigeria	4	Cameroon		Uganda	2
Kenya	4	Gabon		Cameroon	
Sudan	4	Liberia		Ghana	
Uganda	3	Malawi		Kenya	
Zimbabwe	3	Sierra Leone		Malawi	
Zaire	3	Uganda		Angola	
Zambia	3	Burkina Faso		Tanzania	
Ivory Coast	2				
Tanzania	2	Total	9	Total	12
Angola					
Benin					
Chad					
Guinea					
Malawi					
Namibia					
Rwanda					
Senegal					
Sierra Leone					
Togo					
Total	42				

* For a more elaborate presentation of these categories, see the text.

Table 3

Discussion of the Missionary Factor in 63 African Ethnographies
by Time of Publication

	None (a*)	Little (b*)	Substantial (c*)	Total
1930-39	7	-	3	10
1940-49	5	-	3	8
1950-59	23	6	5	34
1960-64	7	3	1	11
Total:	42	9	12	63

* For a more elaborate description of these categories, see the text.

The fact that there is a strong Christian influence in a particular society does not necessarily determine that this influence is discussed in an ethnography. This is borne out by information supplied by the ethnographers themselves. A few examples can be given here. Winter writes that missionary influence among the Bwamba in Uganda was only slight, yet he pays considerable attention to it (1950, 7). The opposite is more common however. La Fontaine (1949), Kuper et al. (1954, 36), Colson (1962), Alexandre and Binet (1958), Luttig (1933), Vansina (1954), Wagner (1949), and Maquet (1954) devote hardly any attention to Christianity although they make clear that its influence was considerable. Maquet writes: "nous avons choisi d'étudier le système social rouandais au moment où il a été façonné par l'action de nombreuses forces, à l'exclusion des contacts européens" (1954, 13). Other authors make similar statements. Sometimes two authors writing about the same society show extreme differences in their treatment of missionary influence, for example Childs (1949) and McCulloch (1952) on the Ovimbundo of Angola; Childs discusses the missionary factor extensively whereas McCulloch does not mention the topic at all. The same applies respectively to Kenyatta (1965) and Lambert (1956) who both write about the Kikuyu in Kenya. Other authors such as Evans-Prichard (1937, 1949), Fortes (1945) and the Bohannans (1953) did not discuss missionary influence but indicated that its presence was negligible. It will be clear from the above discussion that a strong missionary

presence is not a sufficient condition for it to be discussed in ethnographic studies.

The Time Factor

The assumption that the growing impact of Christianity over a period of time will result in more attention being paid to the missionary factor is not substantiated by the sample of 63 ethnographies. Table 3 shows that the attention given to the missionary factor gradually decreased among ethnographers of Africa. The same tendency is visible if we compare the ethnographies which deal with the same society. In both cases (Kikuyu and Ovimbundu) the earlier ethnography treats missionary influence and the later one does not. This trend seems in agreement with our observations about the International African Institute, which at its beginning was strongly influenced by missionary organizations but later moved away from them.

Personal Background

In an essay with personal reminiscences of the history of British social anthropology, Leach pleads that more attention should be given to the personal background of anthropologists and to the particular conditions under which they have conducted their fieldwork and written their observations (1984, 22). In the past 10 to 15 years a large number of biographical and autobiographical studies about anthropologists have been published. They reflect the interest noted by Leach, and some of these shed a great deal of light on the particular predilections and obsessions in ethnographic works. Two rather disconcerting examples are found in Malinowski's diary (1967) and Freeman's *Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of Mead's Anthropological Myth* (1984).

It seems likely that their personal background also influences ethnographers to discuss or disregard the missionary presence among *their* people. Three aspects of the authors' biography seem particularly relevant here: whether they have a missionary or active Christian background; whether they have strong anti-missionary feelings; and whether they have become in some way indebted to missionaries in the field. Our information about the biographical details of the selected authors is far too scanty to provide any firm conclusion, but some suggestions may be useful to encourage additional research into this question.

It sounds reasonable to argue that ethnographers who are missionaries and those who have a missionary or an active Christian family background will be more likely to pay attention to missionary influence than those who have no connection at all with Christian missions.¹⁴ This supposition does not seem to apply unambiguously, how-

ever. At least four of the selected ethnographers are also missionaries: Basden, Childs, Gusinde, and Schebesta, but only one of them (Childs) discusses the impact of Christianity. Monica Wilson is represented by two ethnographies in which the Christian presence is discussed extensively (Hunter 1936; Wilson 1951). She was the daughter of a missionary and was brought up in a missionary institution (Hunter 1936, 12). In another publication Wilson (1971) has explained her attachment to the Christian faith and in her obituary Brokensha remarks that she wrote "as an anthropologist and a Christian" (1983, 86). A positive appreciation of missionaries is expressed in three more studies (Jensen-Krige and Krige 1943; Kaberry 1952; Mair 1934). Jensen-Krige and Krige came from missionary families. We do not know whether the other two authors had a strong Christian background.

An outspoken negative judgement of missionary work is also likely to prompt an author into discussing the missionary factor. Jomo Kenyatta's Ph.D. thesis, written under Malinowski's supervision, is an example. The description of his people's culture is full of denunciations of missionaries, who are accused of corrupting or misrepresenting the Kikuyu way of life. The following quotation illustrates Kenyatta's style:

The missionary associated polygamy with sexual excess, and insisted that all those who want salvation of their souls must agree to adopt monogamy. In their attempt to break down the system of polygamy and other African institutions, they imposed monogamy as a condition of baptism, and demanded that even those who had more than one wife must give up all but one (1965, 261-62).

Although Kenyatta spends several pages discussing the role of missionaries, his way of dealing with them produces little clarity on the precise contribution of missionaries to cultural change in Kikuyu Society. His approach lacks specificity and detachment and merely reinforces the stereotypes of the misunderstanding, culture-destroying missionary versus the well-informed, culture-preserving anthropologist (130, 158). His praise for the latter at that moment is more than a coincidence, for his ethnography was going to admit him to the ranks of anthropologists.

A last biographical detail that might have moved ethnographers to pay more attention to missionaries is positive experiences with missionaries in the field, but this supposition cannot be tested. Authors who neglect the missionary presence in their ethnographies may also suppress their indebtedness to missionaries in their prefaces and acknowledgements. One could perhaps argue that direct dealings with missionaries during fieldwork make it more difficult for the ethnographer to leave the missionary completely out of the text. On

the other hand the long period that often elapses between fieldwork and final writing may induce a gradual amnesia regarding the missionary's presence in the field (Nida 1966). While writing their ethnography, anthropologists no longer meet missionaries who may criticize their drafts. In the academic environment are only anthropological colleagues who feel the same ambivalence towards missionaries. They are likely to encourage each other to retouch their ethnographic pictures until the missionaries have disappeared completely. Missionaries thus share the lot of most natives who do not get the opportunity to talk back to their ethnographers.

As we have seen, one ethnographer discussing the missionary factor is himself a missionary (Childs). Five others do indeed acknowledge missionary help. Kaberry (1952, ix, xi) writes that she came to the field "by courtesy of the Basel Mission" and stayed for three months in their resthouse. She also enjoyed hospitality from other missionaries; nuns, for example, regularly gave her gifts and vegetables. Mair lived three months in a missionary guesthouse (1934, xi). Jensen-Krige and Krige (1943, vi), Wilson (Hunter 1936, 11-12) and Read (1956, vi) express their gratefulness to missionaries in more general terms. The Mayers (1961), Schapera (1940) and Winter (1950) pay attention to the missionary factor, apparently without such obligations.

Exoticism¹⁵

The history of anthropology is a history of exotic experience. The confrontation with otherness has been seminal to the rise of anthropology for at least two reasons, a psychological and an epistemological one. The psychological reason is, of course, that differences arouse interest. Together with the Orient and the New World, Africa has captured the imagination of generations of European intellectuals. The origins of anthropology are associated with travelers and explorers. Ethnography has been called "the exotic as profession" (Kohl 1979) and the anthropologist a "professional stranger" (Agar 1980). Edward Said goes still further stressing that the exotic (the Orient) was invented, not found by the West (1985). Mudimbe (1988) makes a similar point with regard to Africa. Western scholars and artists thus defined themselves vis-à-vis the other (see also Foster 1982).

Anthropology, until recently, could be rightly characterized as *exogamic*: it had to find its *partner* elsewhere. The experience that the exotic was difficult to understand was not an obstacle. On the contrary, it increased its appeal. We are reminded of Blaise Pascal's adage that man's principal illness is his restless curiosity to know what he cannot know.

It may be true that anthropology can no longer be termed the study of other cultures, but it is significant that those anthropologists

who turned to their own society usually chose to study a group of people to which they did not belong themselves. These people represented the exotic nearby: guest laborers, youth gangs, drug addicts, tramps, and so on. Anthropologists rarely do work *at home* (Greenhouse 1985; Jackson 1987). Perhaps psychologically they are ill-equipped for it.

We do not believe that exoticism in anthropology was a temporary trend which has now been replaced by another trend. It is true that the predilection of otherness is paralleled by a search for sameness as Michael Jackson argues (1989), but that search has always been present in anthropology alongside exoticism. Part of the anthropologist's pleasure was exactly to suggest sameness and an underlying common experience in the presentation of other people's strange customs. It has always been—and still is—the business of anthropology “to make superficially exotic practices appear familiar and superficially familiar practices exotic,” as James Boon says (1983, 131). The delight in exotization has seldom been so great among anthropologists as today (De Sardon 1992).

What we have termed an epistemological reason is derived from the former one. The exotic only satisfies if it can be related to the familiar. It is in the comparison with the familiar that it assumes its exotic meaning. It is thus perceived as different and raises questions about the familiar. In turn one's own culture is affected by the experience of otherness. Put simply, the effect can be either confirmation of the familiar or doubt about it, ethnocentrism or relativism. The exotic interest of anthropologists is a prerequisite for raising questions about the taken-for-granted status of their own society.

One could perhaps argue that anthropologists were missionaries in reverse as they tried to convert members of their own society into seeing the truth and civilization of peoples which heretofore had been portrayed as irrational and uncouth. This missionizing project seemed most effective when they described African cultures untouched by Western influence. For the purpose of this paper, we are mainly concerned with the psychological aspect of exoticism. Exoticism presents itself as a methodological bias leading to the neglect or suppression of the missionary factor in African ethnography. Schapera's motto for this paper summarizes aptly the main point of the argument: that anthropologists were more eager to investigate and describe phenomena that were new to them than those they knew already in their own culture (for example, Christian customs). This implies that ethnographers are likely to have suppressed other forms of Western influence as well. Various authors concur with this observation by making reference to the disappearance of colonialism from ethnography (Asad 1973; Leclerc 1972; Loizos et al. 1977; Magubane 1971; Stauder 1974; Leach 1989). Our attention was first drawn to exoticism as an explanation for the neglect

of missionary influence by a passage in a study of processes of change in Kenyan church communities. The author (De Wolf 1977, 10) criticizes Beattie (1965) and Middleton (1970) for only paying attention to traditional cults and overlooking Christianity as a factor of change. Fortes, writing about himself, also showed a preference for otherness at the start of his fieldwork among the Tallensi in Northern Ghana:

I was attracted to this area not only because it was virgin country ethnographically, but more because it seemed to meet the aims I had set myself. I wished to work in a society that was minimally acculturated, economically and politically traditional, and above all with a 'family system,' as I put it, that was distinctively 'African' in contrast to the West European type I had worked with in London (1978, 7).

Adam Kuper was hardly exaggerating when he called the anthropologist a romantic, someone "who wanted to preserve 'his tribe' from any outside contacts, and to keep them as museum exhibits in splendid isolation from trade, government, and Christianity" (1975, 141; Owusu 1979, 155). Only two out of the 63 ethnographies discussed in this paper have been written by African authors (Busia and Kenyatta). Significantly, both of them discuss the missionary factor quite extensively. One could argue that for them preference for the exotic rather included an interest in Christianity and other facets of foreign influence. It is no coincidence that nearly all photographs in Evans-Pritchard's ethnography show naked Nuer whereas the people pictured in Deng's (an African anthropologist) study of the neighboring Dinka are all fully clothed (Leach 1989, 41). MacGaffey, discussing western ethnocentrism in African historiography, suggests that anthropologists and political scientists in Africa looked out for true religion, the state, the market, etc., and declared African societies primitive because those western institutions were found to be missing (1986, 42-43). We would rather turn his statement around: anthropologists, for certain, were on the lookout for things different from home. The outcome, however, was the same: their exotic predilection enabled them to categorize African societies as primitive.

It is further striking (and supportive of our view) that at the time that European and other non-African ethnographers were overlooking the missionary factor, African novelists showed an overwhelming interest in the disrupting influence of Christianity, and of colonialism as a whole, on social life in African towns and villages. It suffices to mention here the names of Achebe, Ngugi, Aluko, Oyono, Beti, and Soromenho. This trend is now decreasing, but has certainly not disappeared. Dinwiddy, discussing novels by Munonye, Nzekwu, Sellormey, Djoletto and Mulaisho, suggests that missions and missionaries are still

important themes in contemporary African literature (1978). Similar developments can be seen in other fields of writing. According to Kapteijns, early Nigerian historians were particularly interested in the missionary factor, but at the end of the 1960s their interest became more autochthonic (1977, 64).

Another development lending support to the exoticist interpretation is the fact that many anthropologists, while neglecting the role of the traditional Christian missionary churches, focused their attention on the rise of African prophetism, independent churches and other forms of Christianity which differed sufficiently from the European version to arouse their interest. Banton, for example, in his study of tribal life in Freetown, shows more interest in independent churches than in the European-based ones (1957).¹⁶

As we have seen, the supposition that exoticism leads non-African anthropologists to neglect the missionary factor has as its corollary that indigenous African ethnographers are specially interested in the role of missions. It would be worthwhile to check whether this applies to more African ethnographers. The number of African anthropologists between 1930 and 1965 is rather small, but a cursory check of eight ethnographic studies written by Africans after 1965 supports this view partially: five of them discuss missionary influence extensively, three do not.¹⁷

There is a last dimension to exoticism that must be pointed out briefly. At the outset of this section we have stressed that the fascination with the exotic lies in its being different and unknown. We seem to suggest that studying the exotic is choosing the difficult part. This is true only to some extent. Studying the culture to which one belongs also poses difficulties, as we know from countless anthropological reports. Being an insider has at least three considerable drawbacks for ethnographers: 1) they see too much, 2) they see too little, and 3) they are not free. Knowing too much—because they are natives themselves—makes it difficult for anthropologists to see a clear structure in the culture under study. The abundance of knowledge interferes with their attempts to put their data in order. If Margaret Mead had been a Samoan, she would probably not have dared to say that the Samoan culture is very simple and uncomplex (Mead 1973, 5; Freeman 1984, 285). But insiders also see too little. In a sense, they are blind to their own culture. What looks remarkable and even puzzling to the outsider goes without saying for the insider and does not invite questions, let alone research. Focusing on the other culture, therefore, is also an escape from the insoluble methodological problems anthropologists face in their own culture. The third advantage of being an outsider to the culture one studies is that one is free to ask any questions, to doubt everything, and to understand nothing. In other

words, the more they are outsiders, the more innocent anthropologists become and the freer they are, in a psychological sense, to carry out their research. The Akan in Ghana, like many other African societies, call the stranger a child who will always be pardoned and someone who cannot break the law. Beidelman begins his study of a tribe of missionaries in preindependence Tanzania with similar remarks:

Any study of groups which resemble one's own is in some respects far more difficult than research among alien, exotic societies. In residing with Kaguru, I was not disturbed by the kinds of exotic beliefs and behavior they presented. Nor was I dismayed when rebuffed or deceived by Kaguru. I experienced less difficulty than I anticipated in discussing sensitive topics such as witchcraft, adultery, and thefts, perhaps because I was an outsider and therefore my opinion was already defined by Kaguru as not significant. Also they recognized that I could never, as a stranger, become deeply involved in local personal relation.... In contrast, my relations with missionaries and colonial officials were far more complex precisely because we appeared to speak a common language and shared sufficiently common backgrounds to grasp many nuances of education, class, income, and personal character. Our mutual expectations were highly ambiguous (1982, xv).

Indeed, opting for the exotic is often the easier path. We believe that exoticism, in the broad sense that has been used here, provides an important explanation for the disappearance of the missionary from African ethnography.

Disappearing Cultures

Rattray, in the first volume of *Africa* (1928), wrote that the chief function of anthropology should not be "to record the cultures of 'primitive' peoples ere their final disappearance before advancing civilization," but there is little doubt that for many ethnographers that aim continued to be the most important for a considerable period of time. Several ethnographers make explicit mention of their desire to record the cultural traditions before their extinction or at least to describe a society as if it has not been touched by Western influence. Even some of those who did discuss the missionary presence in the area have this in mind. Read, for example, writes that her study of the Ngoni attempts "a reconstruction of Ngoni life at the time of the first European contacts" (1956, v).

As we shall see, the older anthropologists interviewed by Kirby also stressed this point. Some of them referred to this interest in reconstructing traditional culture as a focus on *zero point*. The wish to record disappearing cultural features would therefore encourage ethnographers to block out the missionary and other symptoms of colonial pres-

ence. In that case the missionary's eclipse would not have been the result of oblivious or half-conscious suppression, but a deliberate attempt which was rather prompted by his presence. Ethnographers who, for that purpose, omitted the missionary from their work, had a legitimate reason to do so.

Most authors do not clearly state their purpose, however; did they intend to give an eyewitness account of the situation as it was at the time of their fieldwork or did they mean to describe culture as it was before Western colonization? Many seem to be convinced that reconstruction is not possible and, moreover, smacks of an obsolete style of practicing anthropology. They give the impression that what is really important is the African part of the story. It seems that most of them take it for granted that one does not travel to Africa to investigate European matters; thus what is referred to as zero point or concern for disappearing cultures is ultimately grounded in exoticism. Leach seems to draw the same conclusion:

In the past, tribal ethnographers have been primarily interested in the contrast between European culture and non-European culture. By the time the ethnographer came to the scene the empirical contrast had usually become blurred. In order to bring things into sharper focus, palpably European elements in the ethnographer's notes were omitted from the published record or else treated as an alien contamination grafted onto whatever was there before (1989, 35).

But, as Leach emphasizes, such an approach in ethnography is based on the assumption that there was a static society, outside history. However, that society existed only in the imagination of the ethnographer. Few authors stated their zero point intentions explicitly. Two of those who did explained that their study of traditional customs was meant to provide information for the colonial courts (Cory 1953; Holleman 1952).

Structural Functionalism

Structural functionalism, which was the dominant research strategy for many of the authors discussed here, provides another angle from which one can look at the way missionaries are treated in African ethnographies. There is no need to pause over the numerous criticisms that have been leveled against structural functionalism by its children. We believe that structural functionalism is still very much alive today and that successive approaches, such as ecological, Marxist, and cognitive-symbolic orientations, have thrived—perhaps unconsciously—on functionalist axioms. Here we want only to draw attention to a rather paradoxical development in the structural-functionalist research of the

period under review. It called for direct fieldwork producing a snapshot of a society at a particular moment—a call that was a reaction to the conjectural approach of evolutionist predecessors; and yet it often led to describing a society that no longer existed. Communities were stripped of their alien features, such as the vestiges of colonial officers, traders, and missionaries. A subtle form of conjecture returned insofar as a pre-colonial original community, which could not be directly observed, was reconstructed (Leach 1989). In their attempt to produce a convincing picture of the functioning of a society they were seduced into redrawing that picture by omitting the dysfunctional features of the presentday. The past was suggestively described in the ethnographic present.

The structural-functionalist model suggested as it were a simplified static version of social reality. It had great didactic and theoretical advantages because it helped the anthropologist to see order and coherence—in one word, structure. Missionaries, colonial officers, and all the others only confused that orderly picture. Claude Stipe, stressing the anthropologist's inclination to see a culture as an organic unity, essentially confirms this point (1980, 166-67). Several authors link this tendency to the political situation. Kuper views functionalism as an "implicit refusal to deal with the latent colonial reality in a historical perspective" (1975, 146). Maxwell Owusu lists seven handicaps of African ethnography (1979, 154-55), most of which are derived from what he calls "the functionalist doctrine" and Matthew Schoffeleers, in an article on religious anthropology writes:

During the heyday of colonialism anthropological attention focuses mostly on beliefs and cults that are considered genuinely autochthonous, such as ancestor cults, royal cults and witchcraft beliefs. They are routinely described in functionalist terms as directly or indirectly contributing to the maintenance of law and order and the physical survival of the 'tribe' or the 'indigenous state.' The colonial state remained more or less invisible, and Christian missions or churches were hardly ever mentioned (1985, 6).

It would be another simplification if we suggested that this myopic preference for a harmonious society obtained everywhere. Several fieldworkers in that period showed a keen interest in the changes that African communities were undergoing. Lucy Mair, who became a professor of applied anthropology, was one of them. Monica Wilson, who, with her husband, wrote one of the first studies of social change in Africa, was another. Both paid considerable attention to the missionary factor in their ethnographic work (Mair 1934; Hunter 1936; Wilson 1951). But it does not seem an exaggeration to state that ethnographers at that period felt strongly attracted to describing pure African soci-

eties that functioned perfectly, yet did not really exist. In a recent interview Schapera expressed this dilemma in a rhetorical question:

The functional method was drilled into us: describe them as you find them at the moment you are there. Could you imagine one writing a book about the Bakgatla and, in the section of religion, pretending to describe a world without Christianity? (Comaroff and Comaroff 1988, 562)

In Summary: Three Suppositions

That missionaries do not appear in a large number of African ethnographies is not surprising. Some ethnographies describe societies where missionaries were hardly known. Some authors deliberately chose to portray cultures as they were before the arrival of colonialism. The absence of the missionary is, however, surprising where anthropologists set out to give an eyewitness account of the way of life in African communities where the missionary presence is strongly felt. The disappearance of the missionary from those accounts is contradictory to the goals of ethnographic work and yet seems logical when viewed in the light of the fieldworker's position. There are three main suppositions that could make the absence of the missionary intelligible. First, the predilection for otherness that made Western anthropologists travel to Africa. In that perspective it was to be expected that they overexposed what differed from life at home and neglected familiar things. The second consideration dovetails with the first one: the dominant research model of that period led ethnographers to view society as an organically working unit, and to overlook alien aspects that threatened to disturb and complicate that clear picture. Missionaries constituted one such complicating factor. The third supposition is of an entirely different, almost psychological nature. Anthropologists tend to feel quite ambivalent about missionaries. They usually oppose their proselytizing objectives, but often appreciate them on a personal level. Many anthropologists actually benefited directly from the missionary presence. This ambivalence and concomitant embarrassment may lead them to ignore the missionary. Only those who feel no ambivalence and are clearly against or in favor of missionary work are likely to devote substantial attention to it.

Comments by Five Veteran Anthropologists

Because live anthropologists are much more complex and interesting than the models that characterize them, we thought it important to ask anthropologists who did fieldwork in Africa before the mid-1960s their opinions on the three suppositions just mentioned. The latter

part of this paper is the result of interviews made in 1978 with five prominent British social anthropologists on this question.

Meyer Fortes (died 1983)

During the period of his first fieldwork among the Tallensi in Northern Ghana (1934-35), Meyer Fortes explained, there were very few missionaries in the area. An important question is, then, why did he go there in the first place? He could have gone to a people who had experienced the missionary presence even in 1934 (for example, the Asante). This question becomes even more problematic in the light of his grant from the IALC, which was one of many specifically given to study acculturation, including the missionary factor (Smith 1934, 9; personal communication with Richards below). In his second fieldwork done in the 1960s among the Tallensi and the Asante, he recognized the importance of missionaries with regard to education. He therefore strongly disagreed with his characterization in category A (table 1).

Over the years there had been some major changes in missionary attitudes and methods which he heartily applauded. Missionaries in the early times explicitly aimed to convert and educate. They considered the traditional beliefs and customs to be evil, especially polygamy and sexual promiscuity. Nowadays missionaries appreciated culture and attempted to incorporate aspects of the traditional practices into the Christian faith. They were tolerant and combined a personal faith with scientific understanding of mankind and the universe. Therefore they were highly respected by the people. The former type of missionary taught "unscientific" Bible stories and "tended to confirm the people's low opinion of themselves." Their work in medicine and agriculture, however, was praiseworthy and beneficial. Their success in establishing such an anomalous West African institution as a congregation of native nuns was "astonishing."

The problem of opposing goals remained unresolved, however. The goal of missionaries was to convert and that of anthropologists was "to record the truth and preserve knowledge." It was no less abusive to use anthropological knowledge to preserve the myth of the noble savage for Western governments, philosophies, or economic systems than it was to use it to serve Western religion. Whether in religion or in the discipline of anthropology, only the continuous search for knowledge had any justification.

As far as his own religious beliefs were concerned, Fortes maintained that he was an atheist; he did not believe in the "old man up in the sky" or that "the world was made in seven days"; but he did believe in good and evil and in "prescriptive altruism" or a built-in tendency to grow into doing good, which is in the natural scheme of things. He felt that most other anthropologists were also atheists.

Audrey Richards (died 1984)

Audrey Richards was interviewed at her small apartment in Cambridge. She was extremely alert and her comments soon expanded into uninterrupted monologues. It is noteworthy in this regard that her ethnographies were not among the 63 sampled and thus have not been categorized.

She argued that there had always been serious interest shown toward the missionary factor and colonial administrations in anthropological research. As early as 1932 the IALC sponsored a scheme funded by the Rockefeller Foundation to study the effects of missionary and colonial influences on change. It was headed by J. H. Oldham and H. Fisher. Those doing research under this scheme included M. Read, M. Hunter (Wilson), M. Fortes and many others, including four missionaries. Both Read and Hunter kept to the theme of the missionary factor and change. To cite the 1960s as the approximate date marking a new interest in missionary activity from the perspective of anthropologists was misleading because the role of organized religion still continued to be largely ignored by most anthropologists. In her own case, she wrote very little about the missionary factor among the Bemba in 1932, because this was simply not what she set out to do. "It seems to me rather like abusing a trombone player in an orchestra because he is not playing the violin! If we had set out to study changes introduced in an African society by European influences and had left out the missions then we could reasonably and very properly have been accused of suppressing material by missions." If a broader selection of her works would be reviewed, however, especially "The Village Census in the Study of Culture Contact" (1933), it could be seen that the missionary factor was not entirely absent.

Richards did encounter missionaries. She objected to some White Fathers who, in the 1930s, burned native shrines and were only concerned with the lewd or obscene aspects of local beliefs in an effort to prohibit these. Missionaries had accused her of trying to idealize Bemba rituals and, while she admitted that this was probably somewhat true, she felt that she was in at least as good a position to judge their true significance as the missionaries were, simply because she had sat through them whereas the missionaries had not. She did admire their command of the language and their efforts to help the people. Her goal had been to record as much of the traditional system as possible. The goal of the missionaries was to bring about changes in this system. Thus there were bound to be conflicts.

On the question of the exotic nature of fieldwork, she said that she, along with Schapera, Nadel, and others was constantly reminded by Malinowski in the early 1930s not to go after the exotic. Nevertheless, "it was natural to do so." Seligman used to tell her to do

something scientific: "Don't just go and talk with Africans wearing shirts and trousers.¹⁸ Go to the bush where the real Africa is. Study how it was!" There was a concept of trying to capture the zero point, that is, the point where the true culture is shown; that point in history before any influence from the outside by missionaries, slave traders, colonialists, etc. Thus the concept of exotic was only one aspect of the zero point phenomena. On the whole, however, she felt that the bias towards the exotic was overdone in our paper:

Of course we made observations on unusual rituals, dances, etc., but we also made painstaking studies of agriculture and, in my case, diet. I might also say that, brought up in a very Protestant milieu as I was, some of the rituals and attitudes of the Catholic Fathers and Sisters with whom I was friendly were just as exotic as those of some of the Bemba!

She commented on the influence of the structuralist-functionalist model as well. Evans-Pritchard invented the structuralist method "to get away from the untidiness and loose ends of the Malinowski approach. Simplified, static-harmonic models are helpful because they clarify. Structures are important because they provide logical ways to clarify observations. But they are limited." Evans-Pritchard wrote a whole book on kinship without once mentioning the family. Evans-Pritchard's reply was, "because the family is messy! In families there is divorce; there are exceptional situations etc., none of which can easily be categorized." In addition to this, at least with regard to her study of the Bemba, there was no question of even recognizing any change until something had been recorded of what existed as the ground or zero point situation—that mythical precolonial state of pristine culture. Thus the very first ethnographies gathered information about societies about which no one knew anything. It was impossible to study the effects of British rule or the effects of the missionary in the 1930s, because neither had been around long enough to make any kind of impression. Thus even the stated goal of the IALC's five-year program was too ambitious for the time.

Richards described herself as an agnostic but "religious by temperament." She understood the need people had for religion, especially for the comfort and the help it offered. But Evans-Pritchard had allowed his Christian faith to influence his view on Nuer religion. This was especially evident in his treatment of their sacrifice in terms of Catholic liturgical principles. One's faith need not be a bias which skews objective presentation, and here she cited the work of Monica Wilson, who did not confuse Nyakyusa religion with her own. She felt that most anthropologists were atheists.

Although Audrey Richards used the static-harmonious model, described exotic rituals and felt a certain ambivalence toward missionaries, she did not feel that her work should be overly characterized by this and she offered alternative reasons for not dealing with the missionary factor. Furthermore, she showed that these other reasons characterized a whole zero point era. If we wished to consider seriously the facts with regard to the neglect of the missionary factor, we had to consider the limitations of the various eras and the stages in the development of the discipline itself. The threefold explanation was too simple.

Godfrey Lienhardt

Lienhardt objected strongly to being accused of neglecting the missionary factor in his work, though in fact the particular work in question (1961) did not mention the work of missionaries or its effects on the people.¹⁹ Lienhardt showed an ambivalent attitude toward missionaries. He shaved his beard because "it made him look like a missionary." Although he saw the work of some missionaries as good and others as not so good, he generally stayed away from mission stations and kept his commerce with them to a minimum. But this was more for political reasons and reasons related to the impressions that it would give the people than for any religious purpose or on account of a dislike for missionaries. On the contrary, he enjoyed socializing with the Catholic missionaries.

Although he did not specifically mention goals, it was apparent that he felt that the role of the anthropologist was to record the traditional situation in general, while the missionary's goal was to change the society. He distinguished between types of approach used by missionaries, much as Fortes did, between an older mentality and a more recent one, but tended to place the source of the difference between missionaries in the persons rather than in their relative age-groups.

The term exoticism could be misleading. "There is nothing exotic about living in a swamp for six months of the year and in a desert for the next six." Exoticism had not been a factor in his own research. The qualification rather described the prejudice of the outsider viewing the work of the anthropologist. "It is the tendency to romanticize life in far-away places without any idea about the loneliness and isolation that an anthropologist or missionary actually experience." Only a particular type of person is attracted to the life of a missionary or anthropologist in the first place. What we rather crudely call exoticism is generally a part of this motivation. It is a quest for the unknown, a spirit of adventure, which equally applies to explorers and scientists.

Lienhardt described his own religious beliefs as being sceptical but generally favorable to Christianity and to the work of missionaries. Most of the traditional hostility which anthropologists bore to-

wards missionaries was a result of their poor understanding of Christianity itself and theology in general. A better understanding would help anthropologists to differentiate between missionaries in respect to their actions vis-à-vis their stated goals. What Evans-Pritchard said to the effect that most anthropologists were atheists (1962, 36) was simply not true at Oxford, where in the early 1950s many anthropologists converted to Catholicism, but it was probably true in other places.

Lienhardt, like the others, was not interested in change, so it was not surprising that he chose a place that was not greatly influenced by Christianity. The missionary factor simply did not arise as a significant question, because there were no missionaries in the area. His explanation for the rise in *no discussion* of the missionary factor during the 1950s (table 3), despite a disfavored static-harmonious model and a lessening of interest in exotic themes, was simple but to the point—an acute interest in other matters dictated by the irrepressible sweep of a new era. Like Richards he stressed that if exoticism could be equated with a quest for the unknown, then the very reason we could now address the notion of absence of the missionary factor at that point in history was thanks to anthropology's exotic nature.

John Beattie (died 1990)

More than any of the others, Beattie felt that he had been wrongly categorized as not discussing the missionary (table 1). He had recognized the extreme importance of both the missionary factor and the various other European influences in bringing about change and had been quite explicit about this in his work.²⁰

On the question of the ambivalent attitude toward missionaries, Beattie said that he found some missionaries more congenial than others, but that he had had good relations with all with whom he came in contact. He had been at times dependent on them for help and was, quite naturally, grateful for this. He would not describe his attitude toward them as ambivalent. While discussing differences between missionaries and anthropologists, and among the missionaries themselves, he pointed out the irony of the situation: to the Africans, "all white men were the same."

Although the goals of anthropology and religion were different, that did not make them incompatible. Religion was important as a symbolic system. He did not speak of his own beliefs, but confirmed that most anthropologists were atheists. It was not bad for anthropology to serve missionary aims. The work of Aylward Shorter in East Africa was an example of how this could be done well (1972).

The hypothesis regarding the static-harmonious model did not seem to be borne out in Beattie's case. His central concern during field-

work was change, and he had set himself the task of documenting this change: "we can record what happens when a coherent social system is subjected to the often disruptive impact of European civilisation" (1960, 59). One of the four reasons for doing his study was precisely to de-emphasise the ideas of "certain functionalist anthropologists" who would seem to want to make the various parts of society all fit neatly into a jigsaw puzzle (1960, 59).

There was no such thing as a zero point and he denied the presence of any exotic factor in his work: "it would be an illusion to suppose that in pre-European times Nyoro inhabited a sort of Golden Age, in which all values were in perfect harmony" (1960, 81). In the case of Beattie, therefore, the hypothesis was challenged at every turn. At least in the majority of his works, he did not neglect the missionary factor. He had not been influenced by the exotic factor. He had concentrated on societies in change and had not been ambivalent in his attitude toward missionaries.

Edwin Ardener (died 1987)

Ardener thought that the missionary factor was so important in the Cameroons that "it (the country) wouldn't be there without it." Yet, despite its importance, it had indeed been neglected by anthropologists. His own work did mention it (1956), but he would make more mention of the missionary factor now than he had done at the time.

His attitude toward missionaries had grown over the past 20 years from "a very closed approach" to an open one. While in the field he had maintained good but distant relations with them and used their facilities without seeing it as a compromise. Like Fortes, he distinguished between fundamentalist missionaries, whom he found to be ethnocentric and nonscientific, and enlightened missionaries who merged scientific knowledge and appreciation of other cultures with a personal faith. He got along very well with the latter type. The Vatican II Council of the Catholic Church had been a turning point in the relations between missionaries and anthropologists. Pre-Vatican II theology stressed conversion, while post-Vatican II theology professed "the same goals as anthropology." However, many anthropologists were still pre-Vatican II in their theological development. He took a sceptical, agnostic approach toward religion, although he felt that Evans-Pritchard's evaluation of anthropologists as atheists was true.

Exoticism was an important element in the neglect of the missionary factor. But, whereas exoticism may have been the reason for going to the field, it couldn't remain the reason for staying there. In the 1930s and 1940s the first priority went to gathering information that would disappear completely if not gathered quickly. This was a necessity, not exoticism. The structuralist-functionalist model had been dominant, but

only up until World War II; it had played an important role in removing the missionary from the anthropological literature until that point. After that we should look for other factors.

Of all the respondents, Ardener agreed the most with the three-fold explanation for the neglect of the missionary factor. Although admitting that he had neglected this factor in the past, he now emphasized its importance and was at the time of the interview even directing a thesis (by Fiona Bowie) on the missionary factor in the Western Cameroons. Although he admitted a certain ambivalence toward missionaries in the past, in more recent times he saw missionaries as becoming more conscious of the goals of anthropologists and becoming less ethnocentric and pejorative toward local customs.

Conclusion

A non-random sample of 63 African ethnographies published between 1930 and 1965 generally neglected the Christian and missionary presence. No less than 42 did not discuss Christianity at all, 9 included it to a very limited extent and only 12 devoted a more or less substantial discussion to its influence. If anthropologists during that period had set out to give an eyewitness account of daily life in their communities, assuming that the missionary actually played a significant role there, this omission would constitute a serious flaw in their work. Except for a few cases, for example ethnographies of peoples in some parts of the Sudan, Chad, Guinée, and Sénégal, we may assume that missionaries were indeed present. In an attempt to explain this contradiction, we suggested a number of hypotheses which were tested, as it were, in the 63 selected works.

Whether the Christian population of a given society was large or not had no effect on the ethnographer's decision to devote attention to the missionary factor. Nor did the growth of Christian influence lead to a stronger representation of Christianity in the anthropological descriptions. The selected ethnographies rather suggest that the attention given to the missionary even decreased over time.

A more plausible explanation is that anthropologists were led by a quest for the exotic. Remarks given by the ethnographers themselves suggested that they were mainly interested in what was "distinctly African," as Fortes called it (1978, 7). This attitude dovetails with anthropology's own epistemological and psychological roots: looking for otherness to arrive at self-definition. Closely connected with this bias was the concern about the disappearance of cultures. Many ethnographers set out to record them before they became extinct.

The dominant theory at the time, structural functionalism, seems to be another factor influencing anthropologists to disregard the mis-

sionary. Functionalism emphasized cohesiveness and harmony in the local community rather than disruptive influences and changes brought by missionaries.

The ethnographers' own idiosyncracies feature strongly enough to provide a third explanation for the absence of the missionary factor. Those who had strong feelings, whether positive or negative, about the work of missionaries were most likely to say something about it. If we suppose that most anthropologists had ambivalent feelings about missionaries, that they probably appreciated them personally and even benefited from them while not necessarily approving of their missionary work, then it would seem quite plausible that many anthropologists solved this dilemma by simply remaining silent about them. This suggestion becomes even more plausible when we consider that back home, while writing up their material, they only met anthropological colleagues who probably took the same stance toward missionaries.

Five veteran anthropologists who had done work in Africa were asked their views about the suggested explanations for the absence of the missionary factor. Their vigorous rejection of the allegation of exoticism was significant. Apparently, their dislike for an exotic bias was as strong as their distaste for its corollary, ethnocentrism—the worst of all anthropological bugbears. Three of them whose ethnographies had been categorized as not paying attention to the missionary factor, disagreed strongly with this label and hastened to show that they had discussed the missionary in other works. The reaction was remarkable, as it did not deny that the selected ethnography did in fact neglect the missionary. They particularly disliked the term exoticism, which seemed overly critical of their work, and suggested other terms. Their remarks did show that exoticism may indeed be too harsh a term to capture the ethnographic spirit of the time. More issues were involved such as the concern about the disappearance of cultures and the colonial situation. Nevertheless, we still believe that exoticism (or whatever euphemism is preferable) does constitute a basic underlying explanatory theme for the neglect of the missionary. Recent discussions on the history of ethnography and on the literary quality of anthropological writing (Boon 1983; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Clifford 1988; Leach 1989) add support to this view; claims of objectivity are increasingly being challenged and ethnographic work is more and more seen as the product of the authors' imagination. Autobiographical traits and the authors' predilections are likely to be reflected in their accounts. Interest in otherness could be one of them. As regards the other two hypotheses, they were not really rejected by the five veterans but merely qualified and fit within the context of their own biographical circumstances.

The recent dramatic rise in popularity of the missionary factor in research about both colonial and post-colonial Africa provides additional support for the three explanations given above. It seems that this topic now gives rise to less ambivalence than it did in earlier periods, making it easier to discuss their roles without emotional overload. At the same time, missionaries have themselves become somewhat of a disappearing culture, at least in the eyes of anthropologists, and are not without an exotic appeal. Anthropological research is now being conducted in various Christian institutions, such as monasteries and convents, places of pilgrimage, and missionary societies.²¹

This inversion, however, also coincides with a completely different development, which has led to a greater convergence on both sides. Reflective anthropologists have come to the conclusion that they themselves exhibit, quite unexpectedly, some features of the missionary and that so-called missionaries demonstrate qualities unmistakably anthropological. At the same time an increasing number of missionaries are being converted to anthropology (Sutlive n.d.; Kirwen 1987). The awareness of such hidden similarities will undoubtedly further the dismantling of cherished stereotypes.

It should be clear by now what the implications of our investigation are for those who, in the 1990s, seek to understand the African past by reading ethnographic work from the 1930-65 period: crucial historical actors have often been omitted from these pictures of Africa's recent past. African cultures have not merely been described by anthropologists, but have also been modeled by them according to their own preoccupations. Today's Africanists have to bring back the missionary and other foreign actors if they want to understand Africa's history.²²

Notes

1. This paper has benefited from suggestions made by many people. We are grateful to the late Edwin Ardener, John Beattie, Meier Fortes, and Audrey Richards, and to Godfrey Lienhardt, all of whom gave their comments on drafts which led to the present formulation. We would also like to thank Isaac Schapera, Jean La Fontaine and Ioan Lewis, who sent their written comments to us. Finally, we would like to include Adam Jones and two anonymous readers who contributed to the final version of the article.
2. It should be said in fairness, however, that Beattie did discuss missionary influence on Nyoro society in some other publications. He was kind enough to point this out to us in a letter in 1979 (note 20).
3. The history of this paper dates back to 1978 when the first author presented a paper on the "suppression of the missionary factor" in ethnographies of Africa. That paper was based solely on bibliographic research. The second author took up the issue and discussed the conclusions of the first paper with five British anthropologists who had worked in Africa before 1965: Meyer Fortes, Audrey Richards, Godfrey Lienhardt, Edwin Ardener and John Beattie. (In total, 10 anthropologists were

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approached for an interview. Two of them did not respond and three, La Fontaine, Schapera and Lewis, preferred to write their comments. Their reactions are not included in this paper.) The outcome of the interviews was the basis of a second paper in which the hypotheses of the first were tested, as it were. Both authors then got involved in other research and the two papers were left as drafts that were occasionally read and commented on by interested colleagues. The initial plan to collate both papers into one and to include some of the recent upsurge of anthropological and historical publications on this issue has now finally been realized. Unfortunately four of the old generation anthropologists, Fortes, Richards, Ardenner, and Beattie have died in the meantime.

4. Wilhelm Schmidt, founder of the journal *Anthropos* (1906), did a similar thing. He encouraged missionaries and local clergy to write anthropological contributions to his journal (see Henninger 1967; Brandewie 1985).
5. Some articles deserve to be mentioned at least in a note: Comaroff and Comaroff 1986; Du Toit 1984; Etherington 1977, 1983; Fields 1982; Forster 1986; Hvalkov and Aaby 1981; Miller 1970, 1981; Rigby 1981; Rivière 1981; Salamone 1977, 1986; Savinshinsky 1972; Shapiro 1981; Stipe 1980; and various articles in Bensen, Marks and Miedema 1990; Salamone 1985; Schneider and Lindenbaum 1987; and Whiteman 1985. Some of these discuss the uneasy relationship between missionaries and anthropologists, others describe missionary contributions to processes of change in various non-western cultures. For the latter, missionaries have become an inherent part of the culture to be studied.
6. The ambiguity in the relationship between anthropologists and missionaries has been discussed more extensively in Van der Geest 1990.
7. There are also exceptions, that is missionaries who hardly have any interest in local traditions and live an insular type of life. For a description of these see Rapaport, who studied missionary efforts among the Navaho (1954), Tonkinson who did research among Australian Aborigines (1974, 117-38), and Beidelman, who studied a missionary community among the Kaguru in Tanganyika (1982).
8. Missionary journals are replete with examples of missionaries becoming staunch defenders of indigenous customs. An interesting example is cited by Ranger, who describes a missionary campaign against the Beni movement in rural Tanganyika, because the people involved in it were not African enough (1975, 123-33). Many missionaries "felt and expressed the sharpest dislike for Africans who wore European clothes" (p. 123).
9. The term *conversion* may seem inappropriate in current missiological theories which view mission as bringing hope (Moltmann 1964) and liberation (Gutiérrez 1972). Many missionaries, especially in Latin America, are also involved in mundane conversion: making people aware of their political rights and enhancing their self-consciousness (Droogers 1990).
10. The 72 ethnographic works are not listed in the bibliography to Salamone's paper but he sent the list to us. Forty-five are ethnographies, the remainder are mostly articles about fieldwork experiences. No less than 37 out of the 45 ethnographies belonged to the "Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology" series (popularly called "Spindler Series") published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
11. All the ethnographies have been included in the list of references and are marked with an asterisk. The study by Kuper, Hughes and Van Velsen counts as two ethnographies.

12. The term Christianity in this article refers to the work and presence of missionaries. Although Christianity in Africa cannot be equated with missionaries, the two do overlap in the period discussed here.
13. The following percentages of Christians were estimated around 1965: Zaire 65, Uganda 60, Kenya 58, Malawi 55, Cameroon 49, Ghana 46, South Africa 45, Angola 40, Tanzania 40, Nigeria 35, Zimbabwe 35, Zambia 30, Sierra Leone 23, Sudan 4 (derived from Morrison 1972, 31; except for Angola, Zimbabwe, and South Africa).
14. A considerable number of ethnographers in Africa were Catholic priests or Protestant ministers. Some of the best known are Basden, Childs, Gusinde, Junod, Murphree, Pauw, Roscoe, Schebesta, Shorter, Edwin W. Smith and Westermann. We have not checked whether they paid more than average attention to the missionary factor, but De Wolf suggests that they did (1977, 11). Beside these missionary-anthropologists there are also numerous theologians who have published studies about Christianity in Africa which are highly relevant to anthropologists. Some of the best known are Sundkler, Taylor, Baëta and Oosthuizen.
15. The term exoticism irritated several of the anthropologists interviewed by Kirby. We have maintained the term, however, because it quite precisely conveys the methodological bias we want to describe: picking out what is different and portraying it as different.
16. For a critical overview of studies in new African religious movements see Fernandez, who, by the way, points out that missionary authors too have been very much preoccupied with these movements. He presents Barrett's (1968) statistical analysis of 6,000 independent churches as an attempt "to convert his missionary colleagues to a greater love and respect (agape) for things African" (1978, 229).
17. The eight studies are Fadipe 1970, Mbey 1975, Nsugbe 1974, Nukunya 1969, Ocholla-Ayaya 1976, Okafor-Omali 1965, Owusu 1970 and Uchendu 1965.
18. "Wearing trousers" seemed a popular symbol for the "spoiled native" among anthropologists as well as among missionaries! (See also the remarks by Hart and Ranger, cited earlier in this paper and note 8.)
19. He mentions Fr. Nebel, who had been a missionary among the Dinka, but only in the context of his linguistic and ethnographical work. The word missionary in a footnote (p. 59) and non-Christian (p. 319) are the only other references. Both are incidental to other arguments. In a more recent article, however, Lienhardt devoted attention to the Dinka reception of Catholicism (1982). He shows that, for the Dinka, Christianity was primarily a vehicle of progress, a means to acquire foreign knowledge and competence. This anthropological approach to the Christian religion in an African context was a reason for his colleagues to present him with a collection of essays, *Vernacular Christianity* (James and Johnson 1988), on the occasion of his retirement.
20. Beattie 1960 mentions missionaries explicitly on only four pages (2, 4, 23 and 79), but Western and European influences are on almost every other page. There are, however, frequent references made to missionaries in his other works of the same period: *Understanding an Africa Kingdom: Bunyoro* (11-12, 19, 45-46); *The Nyoro State* (17, 31, 79, 149, 211-12); "Spirit Mediumship in Bunyoro" (108); "Group Aspects of the Nyoro Spirit Mediumship Cult" (pp. 25, 28); "The Ghost Cult in Bunyoro" (262, 270, 272-3); and "Bunyoro through the Looking Glass" (1, 91-93). His review of Oliver's *The Missionary Factor in East Africa* also stressed the importance of Christianity in Africa (see first motto to this article).

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21. In 1983 a section of the International Conference of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences in Quebec was devoted to Missionaries and Anthropologists. The papers that were presented there have been published in Salamone 1985 and Whiteman 1985. At the 1985 American Ethnological Society Meeting in Toronto a panel was held on Christian evangelism both in Europe and in mission outposts. Its papers plus a few other ones were published in a special issue of the *American Ethnologist* (Schneider and Lindenbaum 1987). In 1988 Dutch anthropologists held a seminar on the relationship between missionary and anthropologist. The proceedings have been published in Bonsen, Marks and Miedema 1990. Some recent anthropological studies of missionaries and Christianity include Burridge 1991; Corbey and Melssen 1990; Huber 1988; James and Johnson 1988.
22. At the same time, we accept Ranger's critique that there is a tendency to study Christian churches by focusing too exclusively on missionaries: "The emergence of an African Christianity was a dialectical process, an interaction between missionary and African consciousness" (1987, 182; Pels 1990).

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