

REWRITING NARRATIVES OF THE PAST: A DECOLONIAL ANALYSIS OF JAKOB
SPIETH'S ACCOUNT OF CLOTHING, BATHING AND PERSONAL HYGIENE IN
NINETEENTH-CENTURY TOGOLAND

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Abstract

Accounts of colonized peoples have mainly been recorded and written by colonizer groups, and frequently, in languages different from those in which the experiences took place and were lived. These accounts have typically presented distorted views of many formerly colonized peoples because their authors either misunderstood the phenomena they observed or elected to do so for their own purposes. This may have occurred because of the influence of the authors' personal circumstances, their beliefs and values, their membership in certain groups or the target audiences of their intended works. Because of this, accounts of formerly colonized groups must be deconstructed and reconstructed based on the culture and language through which the experiences were lived. This study does so by attempting to deconstruct and reconstruct the work of Jakob Spieth, a Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft (NMG) missionary to the Ewe people of present-day Ghana, during the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. The study employs Fairclough's approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine how Spieth discursively constructed the colonial difference and the Ewe colonial subject during that period. This approach identifies how Spieth wrote from a position of power to describe the social practices of clothing, care of clothing, bathing, and personal hygiene among the Ewes of Ho as predominantly negative and inferior to Euro-Christian standards. To obtain a more accurate understanding of these practices, this research conducted semi-structured interviews with Ewe and Ho cultural and language experts to better understand these Ewe cultural practices during the colonial period. An analysis of the interviews reveals that the people of Ho had complex cultural practices around clothing, care of clothing, bathing, and personal hygiene, which were influenced by a cosmology that considered both the physical (practical, medicinal, and aesthetic) and spiritual functions of these practices in everyday life. Consequently, this study went beyond a mere description of the social practices of the people of Ho during the colonial era by attempting to provide a fuller exposition on the practices from the people's 'world-sense'. Finally, the research demonstrated the agentic nature of the nineteenth-century people of Ho by showing how they were able to make choices that benefitted them, even in the context of the colonial encounter. Through this research, the voices of formerly colonized peoples will hopefully be heard by those who attempted to misrepresent them in the past.

Abstract – Nugɔmekuku wɔ Totodeme (Eve Hogbe)

Nutsotso tso dukɔ kewe dzi dutanyigbadzinɔlawe ɔu kpɔ ɲu ɔee fia be nutsotsoɔwe tso ametedoanyilawo gbɔ. Gawu la, nutsotsoɔwe le gbe bubu kewe to vovo tso ekewe me nutefekpɔkpɔwo kple agbenɔnɔɔwe dzo le la. Nutsotso kewe to vovo sã tso ame kewe dzi woɔu tsã la ɲu elabe eɲɔlawe mese nu ke tefe wokpɔ la gɔme o loo alo woɔoe be yewoanɔ nutsotsoɔwe ɔe wo ɲuɔ fe taɔodzinuwe ta. Dewohĩ, nuɔ yiewe dzo kple susu be nutsotsoɲɔlawe nate ɲu aɔe yɔwe ɲuɔ fe nɔnɔme (nutefekpɔkpɔ), wofe dzixɔse kple nuvãwe, wofe habɔbɔ aɔewe menɔnɔ alo ame kewe minya wole be woaxlẽ wofe dɔwo la ta. De eke taa, ehiã be woagbugbɔ adzro nutsotso kewe woɲɔ tso ame kewe dzi woɔu (wotedeanyi) va yi kpɔ la me, agbugbɔe atu ɔe dekɔnu kple gbeɔgbɔ kewe me wodzo le la nu.

Nugɔmekuku ke te kpɔ wɔ dɔ ke to ebodeɔe kple ɲkuléle ɔe afetɔ Jakob Spieth ke nye Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft (NMG) Mawunyadɔgbedela fe nutsotso tso Eveewe ɲu la ɲu gbugbɔ tui. Afetɔ Jakob Spieth nɔ Eveewe dome le Ghana le fe alofa blaasieke kple blaewe lofo. Nugɔmekuku ke zã Fairclaugh wo aɔanɲu tso Critical Discourse Analysis me kɔ lé ɲku ɔe mɔnu kewe nu Spieth wo numedzodzro to vovo tso tsã fe numekuku le Eveewe ɲu le yeyiyi miewe me la gbɔ. Emɔ ke de dzesi le yi Spieth zã efe ɲusẽkpɔkpɔɔeamedzi (ɲusẽ fe ɔofe) kɔ ɔe Ehoɔwe le wofe hadomegbenɔnɔ ku ɔe nudodowe, nudodoɔwe fe dzadzenɔnɔ, tsilele kple belele na ame ɔokui la ɲu; Efiãe be ame kewe fe agbenɔnɔmɔnuwe menyo o loo alo wole gblẽe eye womeso ɔe yevuwe alo kristotɔwe fe dzidzedzenu o. Be nugɔmekuku naɔe nyatefee ɔe go la, wozã dzedoɔo/gbebiabia ke mezo ɔe ɔoɔo nu tutuutu o la kɔ xɔ gbe tso ame kewe nya nu ku ɔe Eveegbe, Ehoɔwe fe dekɔnu kple gbeɲutinunyalawo gbɔ kple susu be gɔmesese deto nava ku ɔe dekɔnu wɔna kewe yi dzi le tetedeanyi yeyiyi mawo me. Gbebiameewe medzodzro ɔee fia be Ehoɔwo fe dekɔnu kewe ku ɔe nudodowo, belele na wofe nudodowo, tsilenyawo kple dzadzenyenyɔ ɲu godoo la de to, eye woku ɔe wofe dzixɔse le ɲutilã (nuwɔna, atikewɔwɔ kple atsyɔɔo) kple gbɔgbɔme siaa ɲuti le gbe siaa gbe fe agbenɔnɔ me. De susu ke ta la, numekuku ke menye Ehoɔwe fe hadomegbenɔnɔ le yemayi me ɔeɔe ko wòɔo o, ke boɲ edze agbagba ɔe nyame tsitotsito ku ɔe ameewe ɲuɔ fe nukpɔkpɔ le “xexeame fe gɔmesese” nu. Mlɔetɔe la, nugɔmekuku Ehoɔwe fe ɔokuisinɔnɔ to ale yi woawo ɲuɔ wowo wofe tiatia kewoe ɔe vi na wo le yeyiyi mawo me. To nugɔmekuku ke me la, woase ame yiwe dzi woɔu le blema la fe gbe, wòade dzi, bena ne ame kewe te kpɔ be yeawotsyɔ wofe mo anyi la nasee.

Dedication

To Vilawoe
My joy and inspiration

Eli vavã

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This work, and my years at York University, would not have been possible without the strong support of my supervisor and supervisory committee. To Dr. Sylvia Bawa, my supervisor, advocate and tireless cheerleader – thank you for letting me know that I had people backing me who were ready to stand for me throughout my time at York. To Dr. Philipp Angermeyer and Dr. Wendy Geniusz – thank you for agreeing to sit on my supervisory committee and for working so well with me to ensure the timely completion of my dissertation. I do not take it for granted at all. Thank you also, Dr. Angermeyer, for the additional support with the German texts I analyzed for my work. I am also very grateful to Professor Hynie, Professor Lo and Professor Mianda for graciously agreeing to sit on my examination committee to discuss my ideas further. I thoroughly enjoyed our intellectual engagement on the topic.

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TA GBĀTŌ (CHAPTER 1)

INTRODUCTION

Amedzro ŋku lolo mɛnya xɔ dome o
A stranger with big eyes does not know the innermost part of the house
(19th-century Ho proverb)¹

i. Background

Agitation for the decolonization of the African continent is not novel². The wave of independence movements that swept across the continent in the post-World War II era was evidence of Africans' readiness to reclaim power over their societies on various levels. Notable figures like Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, Tanzania's Julius Nyerere, Burkina Faso's Thomas Sankara, Guinea's Sékou Touré, and the Democratic Republic of Congo's Patrice Lumumba, among others, have long been immortalized in the history of the continent as key figures in the fight against colonization (African Peace Foundation, 2025). This recognition, however, does not obscure the important contributions of the masses in working to obtain independence from colonial forces. The Mau Mau Revolt in Kenya against the British, the Algerian War against the French, and the Angolan War against the Portuguese were all demonstrations of the African people's sentiment toward colonialization and its agents at the time. In more recent years, the advent and popularization of computers, the internet and social media have taken the struggle from the streets to the screen. Calls for decolonization have shifted from the tangible, i.e., the physical aspects involved in reclaiming indigenous lands, to the intangible, i.e., attempts to change the narratives that have long been shared and held about Africa; narratives that were born within and fueled by the colonial encounter. Said's (1978/1979) work on Orientalism successfully demonstrates how this was done at the point of contact between Europe and the rest of the world. He suggests that the knowledge created by Europe about non-Europeans was done to present the latter as different and a contrast to the former, and this was done to justify the colonial projects of domination, exploitation and oppression in non-Western societies. This was also done to develop a European identity (us) in contrast to other identities (them), which promoted the discourse of the West as

¹ The 19-century Ho proverbs used in this work were obtained from Spieth's compilation although many are still used among the Ewe today.

² Decolonization is a complex concept that encapsulates different meanings for different groups. The term is used broadly here to encompass the different efforts to undo the effects of colonization on once colonized peoples.

superior and the ‘Other’ as inferior and in need of Western intervention (ibid.). This led to the accounts produced by Europeans about Africans and other non-Europeans being largely negative in their outlook. Additionally, these accounts of non-Western societies were mostly written by Europeans who did not fully understand the cultures they were observing. As one 19th-century Ho proverb rightly summarizes, *amedzro ηku lolo menya xɔ dome o* (a visitor/stranger with big eyes does not know the innermost parts of the house), meaning no matter how accustomed a visitor/stranger is to a house, he does not necessarily know everything there is to know about the house as one living there would. Apart from the above, many accounts of non-Western peoples were also written in languages that transmitted worldviews different from those through which non-Western experiences were lived. Some of these accounts have, unfortunately, endured over time and, in some cases, serve as the primary sources of written knowledge about many non-Western societies, which are also consumed by the latter. Ali Mazrui, a leading African scholar on the subject, shared similar sentiments by stating that, “what Africa knows about itself, what different parts of Africa know about each other, have been profoundly influenced by the West” (Mazrui, 1986, p. 13). Changing attitudes among Africans have led to many online campaigns aimed at changing the negative narratives about Africa. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter (now X), WhatsApp, and many other platforms have become accessible tools for Africans in their quest to change the way the continent has been portrayed and stereotyped over the years as stricken with poverty, disease, and war (Mkono, 2022). Online initiatives, such as Everyday Africa, Voices of Africa, and the Twitter hashtag #TheAfricaTheMediaNeverShowsYou, among others, were created with this end in mind (ibid.). As Chimamanda Adichie, an African literary scholar, opines in her TED talk titled *The Danger of a Single Story*, “Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity” (TED, 2009). It is in light of the current wave of efforts taking place across the continent that this work seeks to contribute to changing the narratives about Africa by retelling some of its stories from the past from an African perspective. As Tuhiwai Smith (2021) has suggested, it is important for once colonized peoples to rewrite and ‘reright’ the narratives about themselves, so that more accurate portrayals of their people are achieved. This dissertation attempts to do so by deconstructing some colonial accounts of the people of Ghana and reconstructing them from the perspective of Ghanaian language and culture. The study specifically examines the account of the German missionary Jakob Andreas Spieth regarding the Ewe people and his negative portrayals of them in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

I hope that through this work, I have made some contribution to the ongoing decolonization efforts in Ghana and on the continent, not as a prominent figure like Kwame Nkrumah, but as a member of the masses who continue to fight the cause of their forebears.

ii. Research Context and Rationale

Jakob Andreas Spieth was widely acclaimed as the chief ethnographer of the Ewe people during the colonial era in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Meyer, 1999). He was also identified as the most important and most influential missionary of the Bremen Mission in what is now Ghana and Togo (Ustorf, 2011). Among all the European missionaries in the region, he was similarly respected as the most influential linguist of the Bremen mission (ibid.). His work on the Ewe of Togoland (the former name for the region presently occupied by Ghana and Togo during German and British rule) has been identified as the most comprehensive account of the Ewe people from the colonial era to date. Several scholars, including Diedrich Westermann, Ernst Dammann, Albert de Surgy, and Birgit Meyer, who have researched and written extensively about the people and region, have based their work on his findings (Ustorf, 2011). His work, *Die Ewe-Stämme: Material zur Kunde des Ewe-Volkes in Deutsch-Togo* (The Ewe People: A Study of the Ewe People in German Togo), is a firsthand ethnographic account of the history of the Ewe, as well as their social, economic, judicial, and religious lives and systems. The original account was written and published in German and Ewe by Spieth in 1906, with the English translation published in Ghana in 2011. Spieth himself learnt the Ewe language and led the international team of translators that produced a full-text Ewe Bible in 1913 (Ustorf, 2011). In addition to the above-mentioned book and translated Bible, Spieth is known to have written other accounts as an ethnologist and linguist of the Ewe during his over 20-year mission among the people from 1890 to 1916. He returned to Germany with the fall of the German Empire during World War I (Spieth, 1906/2011). *Die Ewe-Stämme* compiles ethnographic accounts as well as interviews conducted by Spieth and his Ewe assistants, mainly in the Ewe language (ibid.). Although a larger part of his work was written in the local language, Spieth worked to translate it into German for use by the colonial authorities and the Bremen Mission. Spieth admits in the foreword of his book that in attempting to translate, he faced difficulties in finding the exact meanings in both languages, as each language style impacted the meaning conveyed. He claims to have leaned towards the Ewe text in his final production, to the detriment of the German style, and thus hoped to have captured

as accurately as possible the real meanings of the social phenomena he recorded. He also acknowledged the mistakes and weaknesses this may pose to readers and the public.

Although a monumental piece of work that sheds light on the Ewe people's lives before and during the colonial era, it is essential to scrutinize Spieth's ethnography of the Ewe to determine if and how, like many scholars of his time, his work reproduced the colonial discourse and episteme through language. The colonial episteme, as Meghji describes it, is the "dominant ways of thinking and knowing that produced and reproduced colonial difference: the idea that the colonized were inherently different from (and inferior to) the Western colonizers" (2021, pp. 18-19). The colonial episteme has been described as favouring the worldview of a particular group of people – European, Christian, middle-class males – and several scholars have discussed how writing from the colonial perspective has misrepresented many colonized and indigenous peoples across the world in various ways (Awe, 1991; Césaire, 1955/2000; LaRocque, 2010; Lugones, 2010; Meghji, 2021; Mohanty; 1988; Oyewumi, 1997; Quijano, 2007; Said, 1978/1979; Tuhiwai Smith, 2021; Stoler, 2002). Based on this, Spieth's status as a European, Christian, and colonial male places him in a specific epistemological position that affected how he saw, described and explained the world around him, in this case, the Ewe people and their practices. There is a need to deconstruct his account, therefore, in attempting to provide an accurate picture of the Ewe people and their culture. This deconstruction also helps bring to the fore the silences that may be embedded in his accounts. As Trouillot (1995/2015) contends, archives are not always transparent or innocent. Accounts are influenced and produced by individuals and groups with specific interests and worldviews, which produce a particular type of knowledge. Archives sometimes exclude the experiences of significant parts of people groups, creating a gap in the documentation of these people's stories.

iii. Research Questions and Thesis Statement

This study seeks to contribute to important decolonial work by analyzing and deconstructing some German colonial accounts of the people of Ghana. Specifically, this research analyzed and deconstructed the colonial accounts of the Ewe (Ho³) people produced by Jakob Andreas Spieth, a German missionary with the then Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft (North German Missionary Society) in West Africa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Additionally, the study

³ The Ewes of Ho are a subset of the larger Ewe ethnic group of Ghana.

reconstructed the written account through the language and culture of the people of Ho. My research, thus, considered the following questions:

- a. How did the written accounts of colonizer groups discursively produce and portray colonial difference and the colonial Ewe subject?
- b. How did these productions differ from the actual lives and accounts of the Ewe people in their language?
- c. How did the Ewe adapt to European cultural and linguistic influence?

Based on the answers obtained to these questions, I argue in this research that Spieth's ethnography on the Ewe people was largely misleading. Like many scholars of his time, Spieth reproduced the colonial discourse and episteme of his era, possibly to cater to his target audience, which was predominantly European, Christian, and male – the embodiment of the colonial persona. Using Fairclough's approach to Critical Discourse Analysis, this research revealed the connections between Spieth's texts and the relevant discourses of the nineteenth century, as well as the structures, practices, and events of the same period, to determine that Spieth wrote about the Ewe people from a position of colonial power. Consequently, anyone and anything which fell outside the European, Christian, male classification as the Ewe people were, was written off as less or inferior and painted in a negative light. They were used as 'proof' to demonstrate the colonial difference. In this research, however, I demonstrate that the actual practices of the nineteenth-century Ewe people around clothing, care of clothing, bathing and personal hygiene prove the people's expansive knowledge and ingenuity, which enabled them to survive and thrive in their environment. My study proves that the ways of the Ewe people were neither inferior nor 'less than'. Rather, the people were ahead of their time in that they had many practices that have only more recently been discovered and validated by Western science. Secondly, this study argues that part of the shortcomings of Spieth's production on the Ewe people was because he wrote from a 'worldview' perspective, whereas the Ewe people's interaction with the world was based on a 'world-sense' perspective as argued by Oyewumi (1997). This means that whereas Spieth focused primarily on the visual in his work to draw his conclusions about the Ewe people, the people themselves incorporated multiple other senses in their understanding of the world around them. According to Oyewumi, Spieth's reliance on a 'worldview' perspective to describe the Ewe people was only a reflection of Europeans' understanding of the world at that time. Closely linked to this

was Spieth's focus on the physical aspects of life and culture, which was also in line with the European understanding of the world at a time when the physical and spiritual were placed in opposing binaries to each other. This study, however, found that the Ewe understood life and the world as an intertwining of both the physical and the spiritual; hence, their approach to life was from a dual perspective. This made Spieth's production on the cultural practices of the Ewe people of the nineteenth century very limited and incomplete. Additionally, the research demonstrates that although Spieth produced an account of the Ewe people that somewhat portrayed the colonial encounter and its influence as unidirectional, the reality proved otherwise. The colonial encounter had a profound impact on the cultures of both the colonizer and the colonized in distinct ways. Consequently, although Spieth essentially portrayed the Ewe as without agency in his work, their actions were proof that the people were clearly agentic and made some calculated choices that were to their benefit even in the colonial encounter.

iv. Focus and Scope

Spieth's body of work is impressive, as it covers almost a thousand pages. Because of the sheer size of the account, it is important to focus this study on specific portions of his work as a full analysis is beyond the range of this study. This study focuses on Spieth's account of the social lives of the Ewe people. More precisely, it looks at the clothing, care of clothing, bathing and personal hygiene practices of the Ewes of Ho. The choice of these practices was influenced by their seemingly mundane nature. This is because, growing up as a Ghanaian student learning about our history, many of the books I read focused on the bigger structural and organizational aspects of Ewe culture. Many books highlighted the political organization, religion and the grander social practices of birth and naming ceremonies, puberty rites, marriage, family and the like. The choice of seemingly everyday activities, which were not given much thought in the literature, fascinated me and prompted a sociological questioning of how these practices were understood and represented by the Ewe people. In addition to focusing the study in this manner, I chose the Ho sub-group of the Ewe people in an effort to contribute to the dearth of scholarly work on this group in academia. It was particularly important because I found no work done to date that captures the intersections between the German missionaries' presence and their contributions to the colonial project among the people of Ho through their written productions. Neither has there been any work that considers both topics using Critical Discourse Analysis. A targeted search in York University

and OMNI⁴ libraries' databases revealed nothing on the topic in the existing literature. This makes the current study novel and critical to the work being done around decolonization in Ghana. Using the keywords 'Ewe' and 'missionaries', an initial search produced seventy-eight results, some of which were repetitions, while others were reference entries. Others, still, were completely unrelated to the Ewe people. Some of these works focused on religion, spirituality and its various intersections (Burns, 2009; Gbagbo, 2021; Kraamer, 2009; Meyer, 1992; Meyer, 1997; Meyer, 1999; Ntrie-Akpabi, 2016; Nutor and Gavua, 2024; Venkatachalam, 2007; Venkatachalam, 2012; Wandusim, 2024; Witte and Meyer, 2025), Ewe culture, nationhood and the German missionaries (Meyer, 2002), Christian texts and the Ewe interpretation/reaction (Sakitey and van Eck, 2020; Sakitey and van Eck, 2022), language (Amegashie, 2017; Campbell and King, 2011; Essegbey, 2006; Lawrance, 2000), ethnicity (Nugent, 2008), history and ethnography (Geurts, 2003; Greene, 1985), education (Ustorf, 2011), missionary profiles (Pugach, 2006), and missionary archives and policies (Grau, 1968; Maier, 1981), among others. Scholars of these pieces of work typically wrote about the Ewe as a whole or focused on specific sub-groups, such as Ewedome or the Anlo. Some also focused on specific towns such as Peki and Agotime. A narrower search with the keywords 'Ho', 'Togoland'⁵ and 'missionaries' yielded no results. Neither did 'Ho', 'Togoland', 'missionaries' and 'colonial'. Replacing 'missionaries' with 'Norddeutsche' and 'Bremen' also yielded very little. Seidel's (1901) work focused on the Bremen mission station in Ho, but the text was written in German and could not be utilized in this research. Combination keywords of 'Ho', 'Ewe' and 'Bremen' or 'Norddeutsche' also produced a single result each (Brydon, 1984), and this only outlined the process of accessing the mission archives in Bremen. Other searches using the keywords 'Ho', 'Togoland' and 'colonial' or 'Ho', 'Ewe' and 'colonial' yielded only three results each. The first result was related to politics (Lawrance, 2005; League of Nations, 1970), while the second was related to politics, religion, and education (Lawrance, 2005; Nyamuame, 2013; Yevudey, 2017). A search for 'Ho', 'Ewe' and 'Critical Discourse Analysis' produced no results. However, 'Ewe' and 'Critical Discourse Analysis' produced ten results, none of which had any

⁴ OMNI provides access to other Ontario universities' databases through York University's library. This expands researchers' access to data.

⁵ Togoland had to be added to the key words because the word 'Ho' alone brought up too many entries that were completely unrelated to the Ewes of Ho. The key word helped narrow down the search to the colonial era since Togoland was a term used to designate Germany's colonial territory in West Africa.

relevance to the topic under study in this research. The above⁶ demonstrates the dearth of scholarship on the Ho sub-group, specifically, as well as scholarship on the intersections between the people, missionaries and colonialism, and the use of CDA in analyzing any work related to them.

As a general overview, the Ho sub-group belongs to a portion of Eweland called Ewedome (Uɛdome⁷), located in the interior of the Volta Region of Ghana. The Ewe, as a group, are primarily located in the southeastern part of Ghana and comprise the third-largest ethnic group in the country, accounting for 12.8% of the Ghanaian population (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021). They currently mainly inhabit the Volta and Oti regions of the country and are divided into sub-groupings with the south made up of the Anlo (Aɲlo⁸) Ewe, the interior composed of the Ewedome (Uɛdome) groups, and the north made up of the Tongu (Tɔŋu⁹) (Yayoh, 2015). The arrival of Europeans on the coast of Ghana (previously known as the Gold Coast) and the emergence of the Danes as merchants along the coast of Eweland in the early 18th century brought significant changes to the people. The arrival of Europeans led to the eventual colonization of the Ewe people by the Germans and, later, the British, until the country gained independence in 1957 (ibid.). The exchange of power between the Germans and the British happened after the fall of German power in the First World War. It is worth noting that during colonization, Eweland was referred to as Togoland, as the present-day Volta and Oti Regions in Ghana and the current Republic of Togo formed part of a single German Empire protectorate from 1884 to 1914 (Owusu-Ansah, 2005). Therefore, any reference to Togoland in this research must be read with Eweland in mind. One of the key changes that occurred in Eweland was the introduction of Christianity, with the early missionaries to the land largely consisting of Germans working with the Northern German Mission (Norddeutsche Mission) headquartered in the German city of Bremen (Agbeti, 1986). A Northern German Mission station was sited at Ho in 1876, making the influence of the mission and Spieth particularly strong in the area (Yayoh, 2015). Yayoh has stated that, although Ewedome has a unique colonial history, the region's experiences have largely gone unexplored. This is partly attributable to the people's complex colonial history, which saw the presence of two colonial

⁶ Although York University and OMNI libraries will not have all the research that has ever been conducted on the Ewes of Ho, access to their databases is a good starting point because of the sheer volume of data available.

⁷ Spelt using Standard Ewe orthography

⁸ Same as 6 above

⁹ Same as 6 above

entities at different times with differing goals. It is also due to the primary focus of research studies on other Ewe groups, such as the Anlo, whose language and culture were elevated to the detriment of other sub-groups during colonization. The Anlo dialect, for instance, was standardized and used as the default literary language, even though missionaries acknowledged the numerous Ewe dialects in the region upon arrival (Shoup, 2011). Nugent describes the abandonment of Ewedome in scholarly works as the “entrenched marginality of the region within Ghanaian studies” (Yayoh, 2015, p. 129). The focus of this research is, therefore, a recognition of this gap and an attempt to fill it.

v. ***Overview of Dissertation Structure***

This dissertation is divided into nine chapters. Chapter one (1) provides a general overview of the objectives of the study as well as the context, rationale, focus and scope of the research. Chapter two (2) elaborates on the methodology and research design used in the study. It discusses, in detail, the recruitment and data collection methods used and provides insight into how the data analysis was conducted. The ethical considerations and the limitations of the methodology are also outlined here. Chapter three (3) sums up the main ideas in the relevant literature on the topic. Here, the colonial ideology and colonial discourse that frame Spieth’s account are discussed. This includes an examination of the church’s civilizing mission and role in the colonial effort in Africa. The intersections between these two are important, considering Spieth’s role as a European missionary on the Gold Coast in the nineteenth century. Finally, the chapter considers the realities of cross-cultural literary and cultural translation, highlighting its problematic nature and suggesting ways researchers can approach translating cultures within decolonial discourse and practice. Chapter four (4) introduces Jakob Spieth to the reader by painting a portrait of who he was and some of the influences on his life and work. Here, his biography, the German Protestant mission, Pietism, and the North German Missionary Society will be examined briefly. This chapter also includes a short examination of the Ewe people among whom Spieth worked, as well as the work of the Bremen Mission in Togoland during the colonial period. Chapter five (5) applies Fairclough’s approach to Critical Discourse Analysis to Spieth’s work. This chapter provides a foundational analysis to chapter six (6) by primarily conducting a textual analysis of Spieth’s work on clothing, care of clothing, bathing and personal hygiene among the people of Ho. Subsequently, Chapter six (6) builds on this by discussing Spieth’s writing within the broader discursive and social practices of

his time. Here, the colonial, Pietist and European discourses and practices of the era are explored further to demonstrate how Spieth's work aligns with the predominant traditions of his time. Chapter seven (7) provides a reconstruction of Spieth's account based on the cosmology and social practices of the Ewes of Ho. It discusses how the Ewe people themselves understood and discussed clothing, care of clothing, bathing and personal hygiene during pre-colonial and colonial times. Following this, Chapter eight (8) outlines how these social practices may have changed with European cultural and linguistic contact. Chapter nine (9) concludes the dissertation by summarizing the findings of this research, demonstrating the relevance of the study in decolonial scholarship and making recommendations for future research work.

TA EVELIA (CHAPTER 2)

METHODOLOGY

Mɔ didi megbɔa du ηuti yina o
No matter how long a path might be, it does not by-pass the destination
(19th-century Ho proverb)

i. Research Approach and Study Design

To achieve the objectives of deconstructing and reconstructing Jakob Spieth's account of the Ewes of Ho, this study adopted a two-step approach. The first step entailed the use of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to deconstruct Spieth's historical work, while the second step made use of interviews to obtain firsthand information about pre-colonial and colonial Ho culture. Consequently, the study relied on both primary and secondary data. Critical Discourse Analysis was important in answering the first research question – how did the written accounts of colonizer groups discursively produce and portray colonial difference and the colonial Ewe subject? Interviews were necessary for answering the second and third research questions, namely, how did the productions differ from the actual lives and accounts of the Ewe people in their language, and how did the Ewe adapt to European cultural and linguistic influence? The first part of this research used secondary data from Spieth's ethnographical material. The work contains research conducted by the author and his Ewe assistants and includes observations he made while living among the people of Ho. It also contains interviews he conducted with several Ewe inhabitants during his stay among the people. Spieth himself details his methodology and data collection methods below:

My missionary work in Eweland extended over two decades during which I was blessed with a lot of opportunities of relating with the people in a very friendly way. Thus, I had the chance of hearing a lot and being witness to events, listening to proceedings and experiencing a lot of situations which in normal circumstances have been withheld from Europeans. My method was to employ my time and energy to record my observations, oral and aural (what I had heard or experienced when and where), immediately after the experience, thereby taking liberal advantage of the help and co-operation of native eye and (ear) witnesses. I owe the best quality pieces of information to special insiders like chiefs, priests and magic-men and women. My native aides and I recorded directly from the mouth of the narrators in their own language. Whatever these people said was faithfully recorded by me or by my native aides in their own language. As the years went by, I was able to discuss these pieces of information with traditionalists and made use of them during my sermons and if once a while, the audience looked on in astonishment and wondered how come the white man got to know that, then

certainly one can perceive the reliability of the information available to me. (Spieth, 1906/2011, foreword)

Since Spieth's published work was originally written in German and Ewe with an English translation completed in 2011, my study used both versions with the help of language experts. Being a non-German speaker myself, the English translation was initially useful and served as a general guide to understanding Spieth's text although a Critical Discourse Analysis was conducted on the original German text. This was done to reduce the challenges associated with translated texts. In this case, the challenges were both temporal and spatial. With regard to time, the English translation was done over a hundred years after the publication of the original version which presents possible challenges with regard to the meaning of words and concepts. The evolution of meaning in language means that the interpretation of words may have changed over time and current users of the language may understand words differently from how they were used previously. In terms of space, the English translation was done by Ghanaian translators which means that the work was done by people who were geographically removed from the source of the German language. It was also likely done by people who had learned the German language as a second, third or other language. Besides, the German text and its English translation were written for different audiences. Spieth wrote for German readers in the early 1900s who would have known very little about Togoland, but would likely have been supportive of the German colonial project while the English translation was written for a contemporary Ghanaian audience with presumably limited knowledge about Germany, but a lot of background knowledge about Togoland. This leads to very different assumptions about what the readers can be expected to know or not i.e. what needs to be explained or not. Additionally, discrepancies between the German and English texts meant that the use of the German text was the most reliable source of information. For example, some words which were present in the original German version were omitted from the English version. A few words were also mistranslated from German to English. Because of the challenges identified above, German language experts were engaged in the analysis of the original German text. Furthermore, a late nineteenth century German to English etymological dictionary was consulted to ensure that the understanding of the German language used in Spieth's work was consistent with its time. In this study, the 1891 English version of the fourth edition of Friedrich

Kluge¹⁰'s Etymological Dictionary of the German Language was used. The first edition of the original German was published in 1883 with the fourth edition published in 1889.

a. Critical Discourse Analysis

With regard to analyzing the text, Critical Discourse Analysis was used because it considers the key role of power and control within discourses (Bloor and Bloor, 2007). For Critical Discourse analysts, “power is transmitted and practised through discourse” therefore, we can analyze “how power relations are exercised and negotiated in discourse” (ibid., p. 4). In the case of this research, the power relations considered were those between the colonizer and the colonized. This study discursively analyzed Spieth’s accounts to demonstrate how he may have produced the colonial difference in his writings despite the various efforts he made to provide an authentic account of the Ewe people. As Errington has reported, missionaries’ accounts must be analyzed because they were “agents of some of the most intimate forms of colonial power” (2008, pp. 93-94). They also had “partial vision, conflicted stances, changing perspectives, and mixed motives” (ibid., p. 2) which may lead to gaps or silences in textual records. Facts may be excluded, categories oversimplified, and stories ignored. Missionaries were themselves influenced by their social biographies, their memberships in certain groups and their beliefs, values and purposes. Their productions are, thus, not merely or necessarily records of facts but products of their interests (ibid.). In the same way, their exchanges with the African colonial subject may have created complex realities. These exchanges may have produced sites for cooperation, negotiation, confusion and struggle, among others (Gilmour, 2007). This is because the African colonial subjects also had their sets of experiences and beliefs which shaped their contribution to the production of these stories. The complexity produced suggests that it is only by “careful contextualization, ‘reading against the grain’ of missionaries’ accounts of language and language study, as well as addressing the nineteenth-century testimonies of Africans as they meditated on the nature of linguistic encounter that, [...], we can [...] analyse the complex and contradictory nature of colonialism in nineteenth-century [...] Africa” (Gilmour, 2007, p. 1772). Critical Discourse Analysis is, therefore, key in deconstructing missionary accounts because although it

¹⁰ Friedrich Kluge was a German philologist and educator who became a full professor of the German language in 1893. He became widely known through his work on the German language above which constructed the “meaning and historical origins and changes of [the] German vocabulary” based on his knowledge of Indo-European languages (Baur, 1980, Biography section, para. 2)

consists of a range of critical approaches with no single, homogenous version, they all hold a single view “of language as a means of social construction: language both shapes and is shaped by society” (Machin and Mayr, 2012, p. 4). Machin and Mayr (2012) add that, Critical Discourse Analysis investigates texts which appear neutral on the surface but which, when analyzed, may be ideological and “seek to shape the representation of events and persons for particular ends” (p. 5). The use of the term ‘critical’ in CDA is, thus, an attempt to examine the language used to “reveal the kinds of ideas, absences and taken-for-granted assumptions” about the Ewe people that will, in the end, expose the “kinds of power interests buried in these texts” (ibid.). Language, according to CDA users, is not just a tool for communication but one that produces and contributes to social construction and domination (Machin and Mayr, 2012). Social phenomena are produced as though they are natural even though they may be inherently ideological. Ideology is the set of values or beliefs a group of people in a particular social group hold, whether consciously or unconsciously (Machin and Mayr, 2012). Ideology is central to CDA and has been used to demonstrate “the way that the ideas and values [...] reflect particular interests on the part of the powerful” (ibid., p. 25). Ideology can be deeply ingrained in the language and thought of its holders to such a degree that it is taken for granted and may go unperceived by holders in their speech. The process of trying to understand meaning by breaking down its component parts is, therefore, important. This process is known as deconstruction (Bloor and Bloor, 2007). Deconstruction plays a very important role in the Critical Discourse Analysis process and is also the reason why it was used in answering the first research question in this study.

b. Primary Interviews with elders and knowledge keepers

The second phase of the two-step approach used in this research relied on the use of semi-structured interviews with Ho/Ewe cultural and linguistic experts. This approach was necessary for answering research questions two and three of the study as they were focused on understanding the Ewe perspective on pre-colonial and colonial practices. The method was also important for understanding how the practices were influenced by European cultures and languages. To date, many Ewe cultural traditions continue to be passed on by mouth – a fact which makes interviews the most appropriate method to obtain a better understanding of Ewe culture. An Ewe academic, whose research areas include Ewe archaeology, ethnography and heritage studies, was contacted and interviewed for this part of the work. Additionally, a Ho elder with knowledge of Ho colonial

practices was consulted. It must be noted that, even though only one elder was interviewed in this work, he had prior consultations with other elders in Ho to provide a comprehensive response to the questions that were shared ahead of time. All interviews were conducted in Ewe and English with the concepts being explored all discussed in the Ewe language. This was done to have as many of the ideas as possible maintained in the original Ewe language with English provided at intervals to ensure my understanding of the issues being discussed. This was important because, even though I am an Ewedome Ewe myself, with the distance between Ho and my hometown Peki Avetile barely an hour apart, the multiplicity of Ewe dialects meant some meanings were lost on me. In such cases, the Ho concepts were either repeated in English or in Peki Ewe for my understanding. Open-ended questions were also used in the interviews as they were the most suitable tool to achieve the desired results. The use of semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions was necessary to delve into the interpretative meanings of the described experiences and phenomena by opening up the opportunity for clarification and follow-up questions, as has been encouraged by Brinkmann and Kvale (2018). As Adams (2015) has addressed, semi-structured interviews use a mixture of closed and open-ended questions which have follow-up why or how questions. This opens up dialogue about things the researcher may not have considered earlier but may later find important for the research. Although this mode of interviewing is time-consuming and labour-intensive with the potential for participants to go off topic, it was the most appropriate data collection method and was well-suited for achieving the desired outcomes of my research. Even though an interview guide was used to elicit answers from experts, respondents were also given the opportunity to provide further details where necessary. The guide was provided ahead of time to allow participants time to reflect on the questions being asked and to consult with others where necessary.

ii. Recruitment and Data Collection

As this was a targeted research, I directed my recruitment efforts toward German and Ewe language and cultural experts. Native speakers of the languages were identified and recruited with an emphasis on individuals with knowledge of the historic use and context of the languages. For the German language interviews, I spoke with an elderly native speaker who currently lives in Canada and has been teaching the language for many years. I obtained her services through an online search of people with her profile who lived near me. I was put in touch with her through the

coordinator of the program she helps run.¹¹ The German language expert helped me decipher words that were not easily found in the nineteenth century German to English dictionary for various reasons. She helped me identify conjugated verb forms that differed markedly from their infinitive citation form. Others were compound words which were a combination of words that were unavailable in the dictionary. Additionally, some words had multiple meanings which meant that assistance was needed in deciphering the right use of the words within the context of the texts under study. The German language experts also helped with a fuller understanding of Spieth's texts within their cultural and temporal contexts. Conversations with these experts took place between November 2024 and January 2025.

For the Ewe experts, I approached an Ewe academic knowledgeable in Ewe archaeology, ethnography and heritage studies who has built his career on shedding more light on the history of Ghana's peoples. Even though not a member of the Ho sub-group, he is himself an Ewedome Ewe and has worked extensively on the sub-region in his work. One of his research interests involves understanding pre-colonial and colonial Ewe culture(s) and how knowledge of these may contribute to the undoing of the negative perceptions we have imbibed as a result of colonialism. His work also involves tangible decolonial efforts through the recognition and hopeful reclamation of Ewe artefacts that were taken away from Togoland to Europe during the colonial period. He is currently working with a team of other scholars on the Carl Speiss Collection. The collection features many sacred artefacts that the North German missionary, Carl Speiss, took from Togoland to Germany in the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. This makes Speiss a contemporary of Spieth. Today, the collection is held at the Übersee-Museum in Bremen, Germany. Because of his personal ties to the sub-region and the extensive work he is doing in the field, he was the right person to speak to about my study. He understood the Ewe language and culture, the German and British colonial context as well as the influence of missionary (North German Mission at that) activity in the Ewedome sub-region. I was first introduced to this expert by a fellow academic I had reached out to in my social network who was familiar with his work. Initial sampling for my work began by the dissemination of a two-page summary of my research which was shared broadly to my social network for further dissemination to others. The research summary provided a background to and the aims of the research as well as the research questions I was hoping to

¹¹ I also obtained extra support from my committee member, Professor Philipp Angermeyer, who himself is a native German speaker.

answer. A sample of some of the interview questions were also included in the summary. This dissemination approach was also useful for locating the Ho elder I engaged for this research. This language and culture expert was a resident of Ho and had lived there most of his life. He was an octogenarian who was deeply learned in the ways of life of the people of Ho. He was also knowledgeable because of his proximity to traditional power. He had a special role to play in one of the chief's palaces. Because of his age, residence status and role in traditional Ho society, he was very knowledgeable about the history, culture and traditions of the people and was a great resource for my research. I was initially intimidated by the thought of engaging him on the topic because of the respect associated with his age and status. However, after our initial conversation, which was to introduce myself and my research, I found out that he was a former pupil of my paternal grandfather who was a teacher in Ho in the 1950s. This was an unexpected coincidence which also greatly helped break the ice. It helped dispel my initial trepidation in the course of our conversation. He was very easy to talk to and he, on the other hand, appreciated the fact that this research was being conducted since he had seen a copy of Spieth's book and had read the portion of text I was hoping to address in my research. He was displeased at the kind of information in the book and asked me to correct the narrative about clothing, bathing and personal hygiene during colonial times. Both Ewe experts were sent the interview guide well ahead of the discussions to allow them better prepare for the interviews. All interviews were conducted online via the Zoom platform because I was unable to travel to Ghana as planned for personal reasons. Because of this, I employed the services of a research assistant from Ho who helped me set up interviews and assisted with the logistical arrangements necessary for the elder to join the discussion online. I, however, conducted all the interviews myself. I offered my assistant a monetary reward as a token of my appreciation. Interviews were conducted over one month in April 2025 with follow-up interviews conducted in May. For their time, effort and contribution, I offered all the experts, except Professor Philipp Angermeyer, an honorarium as a token of my appreciation. Instead of an honorarium, a donation was made to the educational program of my first German language expert.

iii. Data Analysis

Although there are different approaches to conducting Critical Discourse Analysis, Norman Fairclough's methodology was the most appropriate for the aims of this research. Fairclough is a renowned professor of linguistics who produced some of the foundational works

on CDA. Fairclough's (2004) approach to discourse analysis "is based on the assumption that language is an irreducible part of social life, dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life" (p. 2). For Fairclough, discourse analysis should take into consideration the interconnectedness between a text, a discourse and sociocultural practices to see how they reflect and impact social realities. He, thus, uses a three-dimensional approach that seeks to demonstrate the role of language and discourse in social life. To conduct a discourse analysis according to Fairclough, researchers have to consider the linguistic aspects of a text, which are largely descriptive (text analysis), the discourse practice which provides an interpretation for the text and the sociocultural practices that give an explanation to it. These three components come together when discursively analyzing texts in social research. For Fairclough (2004), texts are core parts of social events which in turn "have causal effects - i.e. they bring about changes" (p. 8). They can affect people's attitudes, beliefs, knowledge and values in the short term or contribute to longer-term impacts. Fairclough regards ideological impacts as some of the causal effects of texts and, hence, their importance to Critical Discourse Analysis. Conducting a critical discourse analysis, thus, involves going beyond 'descriptive' practices that view ideology as beliefs, positions and attitudes. It involves understanding the social discourse and theory they draw on and how power plays out within social groups. Below, I briefly discuss the three components of Fairclough's methodology and how this approach to Critical Discourse Analysis was done in the current work.

Fairclough's CDA involves a text analysis which looks at the 'internal relations' of texts. A text analysis considers the semantic, grammatical, vocabulary (or 'lexical') and phonological relations within a text (2004, pp. 36-37). Semantic relations look at the "meaning relations between words and longer expressions, between elements of clauses, between clauses and between sentences, and over larger stretches of text" (Fairclough, 2004, p. 36). Grammatical relations look at "the relationship between 'morphemes' in words ..., between words in phrases ..., between phrases within clauses, ... and between clauses in sentences" (ibid.). Vocabulary relations consider the relations of collocation between words or expressions, and phonological relations consider "relations in spoken language, including prosodic patterns of intonation and rhythm" (p. 37). Discourse is at the intermediate level between textual analysis and its social context. Here, discourse is seen as 'text as representation', that is, different perspectives of the physical, social and psychological world. The diverse realities in the world imply the existence of different and, sometimes, competing discourses within different groups in different social positions (ibid.).

“Discourses differ in how social events are represented, what is excluded or included, how abstractly or concretely events are represented, and how more specifically the process and relations, social actors, time and place of events are represented” (p. 17). These discourses fit into the sociocultural aspect of Fairclough’s CDA in that they provide representations of social events, social processes, social actors, social relations, time, space, etc. It is important to note that texts, discourses and social events are not necessarily independent of each other. In practice, there are interactions and interrelations between them. The table below sums up how Fairclough’s three levels come together. Appendix A explores the questions a researcher should ask to conduct a detailed discourse analysis according to Fairclough.

For this study, I considered the connections between Spieth’s texts, the relevant discourses of the nineteenth century as well as the structures, practices and events of the same period to determine how Spieth wrote about the Ewe people from a place of power. I considered how colonization as well as the colonial discourse shaped how Spieth wrote about the people of Ho’s clothing, care of clothing, bathing and personal hygiene practices. This is particularly important because a large part of Spieth’s target audience was the German colonial administration and some of its stakeholders. The latter actually funded the publication of his ethnographical work. In addition, this research considers how Christian (Pietist) discourses and practices, and other European discourses and practices of the nineteenth century, further reinforced the colonial episteme. This is necessary as the colonial episteme typically favoured and was framed around the European, Christian, middle-class male worldview.

Table 1: A visualization of Fairclough’s three-level approach to discourse analysis (2004, p. 36)

<i>Social structures</i>
<i>Social practices</i>
<i>Social events</i>
- <i>Actions and their social relations</i>
- <i>Identification of persons</i>
- <i>Representations of the world</i>
<i>Discourse (genres, discourses, styles)</i>
<i>Semantics</i>

Grammar and vocabulary

Phonology/graphology

The second part of my research analysis considered the concepts of cleanliness, care of clothing, bathing and personal hygiene from the Ewe perspective. Interviews were first transcribed with the help of the Zoom online platform. This was, however, only partially useful as the platform was only able to transcribe select languages. Ewe was not included in these languages. As a result of this, the English phrases were captured in the transcriptions, whereas a more manual transcription was needed for the Ewe portions of the conversations. Once transcriptions were completed, I attempted to put together concepts that were linked to each other and discussed themes as they naturally emerged. This is because, although Spieth clearly distinguished between the different concepts by discussing them under specific sub-sections, the same could not always be done with the Ewe accounts because of the many interconnections between them. Spieth's sub-sections, thus, provided loose parameters for writing the Ewe analysis. Additionally, even though this work was a general response to Spieth's work, it did not attempt to provide a direct response to every point Spieth raised. Since the study aimed at providing the space for Ewe people to tell their own stories by focusing on what was important to them, it centered on what the people chose to highlight under the topic. This means that some interviewees may have been silent on some of the issues raised by Spieth while focusing on other areas Spieth was silent on. This method was crucial in attempting to ensure the centering of non-Western voices in decolonial scholarship. Lastly, as the analysis was written for a wide audience, explanations were done in English even though the original Ewe words were used in the interviews. The Ewe words were, thus, cited in italics followed by English descriptions or explanations. The inclusion of the Ewe words was done to represent the language through which the concepts may be understood. By doing this as well, Ewedome Ewe words were represented in writing. This was important as the dialect did not form a major part of the standardized written form introduced by the Bremen missionaries. English explanations were done by partially following Ngūgĩ wa Thiong'o's recommendations in his work on decolonizing the African mind. Even though he applied the concept to the writing of African literatures, I found it pertinent for my own work on decolonization. Since my dissertation is written in English, there is always the possibility of repeating the challenges faced with translating cultures where meaning is lost when an attempt is made to make it understandable in another culture using

that culture's parameters. To overcome this hurdle, I opted to somewhat adhere to wa Thiong'o's advice to craft a version of English that was "able to carry the weight of [the] African experience. [...] a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit new African surroundings" (1986, p. 8). This was a sort of Ewe-English which hoped to capture, as much as possible, the full weight of Ewe meaning. Finally, this research also fell on decolonial and postcolonial African feminist scholarship which encourages that accounts produced about the continent be contextually rooted with relevant attention paid to social structural concerns. Here, this work attempts to follow in the footsteps of African feminist scholars like Oyeronke Oyewumi, Sylvia Tamale, Marieme Lo and Gerturde Mianda, to name a few. Particularly, Oyewumi's approach to analyzing African societies based on a 'world-sense' approach is used.

iv. Ethical Considerations

Doucet and Mauthner (2002) suggest that ethical problems arise in research because of the placing of people's private lives in the public sphere through the publication of research. Since the data being used in the first part of the study is secondary and has already been published, little can be done to ascertain the ethical issues that arose during Spieth's ethnographic fieldwork. In fact, the issue of ethics while conducting fieldwork only came to be seriously considered decades after Spieth's publication. However, Brinkmann and Kvale (2018, ch 3, p. 3) have made an important contribution to the field of research ethics by stating that ethical concerns go beyond fieldwork. To them, ethics need to be considered right from the thematizing to research design stage, as well as in the interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, verifying and reporting stages of research. I considered the last three processes while conducting my Critical Discourse Analysis of Spieth's work since the first two had already been completed by Spieth. Shaw (2003) has outlined specific areas of concern when considering ethics in research. These include questions around informed consent, the confidentiality and privacy of research participants, power and positionality between the researcher and the researched, the possibility of exposing research participants to harm, the contextual relevance and use of research, and issues of social justice. Consequently, in analyzing, verifying and reporting the first part of my research, I attempted to draw on Shaw's various concepts, particularly, when dealing with the accompanying images Spieth published in his work. As informed consent and the confidentiality and privacy of photographed individuals could not be established, I opted to write my analysis and final report without adding the pictures to prevent the

replication of any ethical offences Spieth may have committed. Also, although the photographed individuals are long deceased, I hoped not to repeat any harm that may have been done to them through the photographing of their bodies. Lastly, the use of Critical Discourse Analysis to demonstrate the place of power from which Spieth wrote is, in itself, my attempt at restoring the unequal power relations between the researcher and the researched. Consequently, even though the first part of my research relied on secondary data, I still attempted to consider ethical issues when analyzing and reporting on Spieth's work.

The second part of my study, which involved interviews with Ewe and Ho language and cultural experts, considered Shaw (2003)'s concepts more fully. Interviewees were given informed consent forms which were approved by York University's Office of Research Ethics to ensure compliance with university standards. Also, all identifying information about interviewees was removed from interview transcripts and the final report to maintain participants' privacy. With regard to power and positionality, I attempted to constantly consider how these might have influenced my work throughout the stages of interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, verifying and reporting. I did this by practising reflexivity throughout the process. Hunter (2002) describes reflexivity as a process that helps reduce bias in research. It helps researchers "become more aware of their assumptions ... [it] has also been used as a tool for addressing the power differences between the researcher and the participant, especially when there are additional differences of race, class, and other axes of power" (ibid., p. 133). Nicholls (2009) breaks reflexivity down into three types: self-reflexivity, inter-personal reflexivity and collective reflexivity. Self-reflexivity involves the researcher alone and requires them to identify the hidden assumptions that underpin their research (p. 121). This includes, in addition to power and positionality, the theories that structure the research and the influence of the source of funding on research. Inter-personal reflexivity asks the researcher to consider how they collaborate with others as opposed to leading, controlling or delegating. Collective reflexivity speaks to how the collaboration in number two leads to social change. This last point falls in line with Shaw's ideas on the use of research for achieving social justice. All of these were considered in my work. In terms of the interviews, I constantly considered how I may have been influencing the research process by the way I framed my questions and sought clarification during discussions. I was also highly aware of the respect held for these experts within their communities and provided the space and time they needed to share information in the manner they preferred. Because of this, the interview process was largely

determined by how they wanted to proceed in accordance with their beliefs and practices. Self-reflexivity also occurred during the transcribing, analyzing, verifying and reporting stages of my research by considering how my own thoughts and experiences might have been influencing these processes. Collective reflexivity was hopefully achieved by contextualizing and writing about Ho practices from their perspective in an attempt to present the voice of the Ewe people as authentically as possible. Also, by reconstructing historical records and by giving a voice to the people of Ho to tell their own stories, power is hopefully being returned to its rightful owners. Consequently, it is hoped that some level of social justice has been attained by the mere publication of this work.

v. *Limitations*

Even before considering the limitations of the current study, it is important to highlight a few challenges which were already present in Spieth's work. Although one of the key strengths touted by Spieth was the involvement of 'native' Ewe assistants in the recording and compiling of information, this was in itself limiting as the native assistants were themselves European-schooled and, therefore, citizens living in two worlds. As Hokowhitu (2012) has identified, colonialism produced Victorian-schooled indigenous people who were at the crossroad between indigeneity and Europeanness. Consequently, it is important to understand that although these African assistants were in a position to know the indigenous culture, they might also have been influenced by their Western-style education. This may have caused them to see and record things differently from those without the European educational influence. Again, the fact that these assistants were mostly male means their positioning and perspective may have tainted how they saw, described and analyzed information that was captured in the book. These may have had an impact on the quality of the secondary data available for this research. Lastly, since this book keeps with the European tradition of placing importance on written works, the myriad sounds, oral expressions and other non-written forms of communication that contribute to meaning may have been eliminated from the book. This makes the secondary data already limiting in nature. In terms of the current study, the following limitations were found. Conducting a Critical Discourse Analysis of the German text while writing an exposition of it in English meant that the study faced some of challenges translations typically face. Some concepts were difficult to 'transfer' from the source language into the target language making it challenging to give the reader the exact meaning of

the concept in another language. Directly linked to this was the reliance on language experts for my understanding of the German text. Relying on language experts meant that my research findings were based on their interpretations and use of language. Similarly, Critical Discourse Analysis is generally quite subjective as it depends on the manner in which an individual reads and understands the material under consideration. This is directly influenced by one's positionality. In the case of this study, my positionality as a citizen of a formerly colonized country, and an Ewe more specifically, may have influenced my attitude towards Spieth's writing even after practising self-reflexivity. Also, my position as a woman may have influenced how I understood and wrote about a male missionary's account. Indeed, although gender was not the primary focus of this study, the gendered nature of Spieth's writing was apparent to me immediately I began to read his work. This might not have been apparent to another reader. Concerning the second part of the study which used interviews as a data collection method, it is important to note that the fact that respondents are themselves living in the current post-colonial disposition has implications for the knowledge produced. Some pieces of knowledge may have been forgotten over time while others may have, knowingly or unknowingly, been filtered through the post-colonial and/or decolonial lens. By post-colonial or decolonial, I mean filtering information through a lens that portrays pre-contact culture through rose-coloured glasses. Additionally, oral history may have been influenced by post-colonial events in such a way that an accurate picture of pre-colonial and nineteenth century Ho culture may not have been fully possible. Furthermore, individual experts' own positionalities mean respondents could also be retelling history from their unique position in the world, and this may not be representative of the bigger Ho culture. Nevertheless, this research provides a starting point for future research and provides a good foundation on which to build. Finally, many of the records of the Bremen mission that could have given more insight into missionary life in Togoland are, today, located at the Staatsarchiv in Germany. Most, if not all, of these records – reports, private and mission letters, etc. – are also recorded in the German language. Accessing the records requires a physical visit as well as knowledge of nineteenth century German. This was not feasible at the time of this research. This narrowed the scale of the study because of the inaccessible nature of some of the existing data. Further research is needed to fill in the gaps that the lack of access to these types of data produced. As the 19th century Ho proverb encourages, *mɔ didi megbɔa du ηuti yina o* (no matter

how long a path might be, it does not by-pass its destination) – meaning it is only in searching for something further and long enough that one finally finds it.

TA ETŌLIA (CHAPTER 3)

THEORETICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Tsiamee gbã du, eya kee dɔnɛ dɔ
The chief's linguist can ruin a town, but can also restore it to favour
(19th-century Ho proverb)

i. Colonization and the colonial ideology

Western history places the start of colonization during the Great Discoveries when Western European countries ‘discovered’¹² faraway lands in the West Indies and, subsequently, erected trading posts in India, Asia and Africa (Ferro, 2005). Conversely, the Arab tradition asserts that European expansion and imperialism started with the Crusades. In this case, the centrality of Christianity to imperialism is immediately established (ibid.). Whichever school one adheres to, it must be stated that the act of colonization is not novel and cannot be limited to the so-called Age of Discovery or the Crusades. Long before Western European conquests around the world, different groups attempted to annex other peoples and their lands with varying degrees of success. The Greeks, Arabs, Turks, Chinese and Japanese, among others, all sought to increase their sphere of influence in distant lands prior to Western European activities in the fifteenth century (Ferro, 2005). The fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, and the increase in European overseas travel, however, cannot be overlooked as they proved to be a significant period in world history. That period defined and shaped, to a large extent, the current global world order and the international hierarchy of power. Ferro identifies “religious zeal, love for adventure, thirst for wealth, revenge by conquest” (2005, p. 6), “scientific and technical developments” and demographic pressure (ibid., p. 7) as accounting for the European ‘discoveries’ and subsequent colonization of non-European peoples. Despite the different debates that the subject of colonization may spark, one thing is certain – contact between Western Europe and other parts of the world provided an opportunity for the former to define itself and create its identity within the global sphere. As Said (1979) has shown, a distinct European identity was carefully curated by portraying and representing non-Europeans as the opposite ‘other’. The idea of ‘us’ (Europeans) versus ‘them’ (non-Europeans), and ‘us’ as superior and ‘them’ as inferior, was the defining character of the

¹² Many of these lands were already occupied by other peoples, hence, the term discovery is challenging as the lands had already been discovered by others before European arrival.

relationship between the former and the latter. Mudimbe (1988) adds that in the African case, such representations often portrayed Africans as ‘others’ which reinforced the stereotype of inferiority and primitiveness. This was made possible because Western colonial discourses were shaped by an ethnocentric perspective which saw African cultures through a Western lens (ibid). Among the many things that influenced this way of thinking was the Enlightenment – the intellectual movement of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which marked a turning point in how Europeans conceived and understood the world. Here, the belief in God was replaced by the use of reason and science in understanding the world (Duignan, 2023). An important scientific work, Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species*, came to be applied to human societies around the world. A Social Darwinism was created where evolutionary biology was applied to human societies such that, only the fittest of the human species could survive in the world. The European deemed himself the ‘fittest’ and most developed among the human species and, therefore, placed himself at the top of a racial hierarchy while others were ranked in differing levels below. This reinforced the notion of the difference between Europeans and non-Europeans and the ‘superiority’ of the former over the latter (McClintock, 1995). Particularly, European ‘superiority’ was embodied in the middle-class heterosexual Christian male who was deemed to be at the apex of the evolutionary hierarchy. In addition to this classification of the world’s peoples, Social Darwinism was drawn upon and applied to the mapping of world history based on the evolution of natural space and time. McClintock analyzes this when she discusses the concepts of panoptical time and anachronistic space (1995, p. 36). The linear image of progress which rated humans in terms of the level of evolution attained to survive in the world was also applied to time. In panoptical time, progression was marked by a move from the so-called archaic state to the modern, from a prehistoric time to a ‘modern’ era. The latter signified the highest and most desirable state of development and was identifiable by industrialization – a state that had been attained by Western Europeans. In terms of space, the European metropolis was considered the most developed place on earth because of its ‘modernity’ and, the further one went from the geographic space occupied by (Western) Europe, the further one travelled back in time and development (McClintock, 1995). Because of the influence of this way of thinking at the time of contact, Africa and other parts of the world came to be seen by Europeans as a physical space existing in a prehistoric time. These places were deemed historically abandoned and inhabited by undesirable peoples, and they needed to be ‘civilized’ according to the European way. This portrayal of Africa and other parts of the non-

Western world has been criticized by Césaire (1955/2000) who reassigns the barbarism, brutality and violence attributed to non-Western peoples to the European colonial powers. Césaire breaks down the whole idea of the ‘civilized’ notion of Europe and demonstrates how in exacting torture, violence, and race hatred towards non-Europeans, Europeans proved themselves to be the very barbarians they accused others of being and for which they needed civilizing. Césaire, like Said, also reinforces how Europe depends on the idea of the so-called less developed ‘Other’ to maintain its sense of domination and superiority. In any case, the productions about Africa and other non-European societies in Europe during and after the ‘Age of Discovery’ facilitated the launch of the colonial conquest and the ‘civilizing mission’. The intent of this mission was to bring other peoples to the same level of ‘progress’ as Europeans and the idea of ‘difference’ between peoples, cultures and places became the defining discourse that shaped the civilizing mission.

It is important here to briefly discuss the role of discourse in the colonizing process. Hall defines discourse as “the production of knowledge through language” (1992, p. 291). Falling on Foucault’s work on knowledge and power, Hall states that power is always involved in discourse and is one of the ways through which it circulates.

The knowledge which a discourse produces constitutes a kind of power, exercised over those who are ‘known’. When that knowledge is exercised in practice, those who are ‘known’ in a particular way will be subject (i.e. subjected) to it. This is always a power-relation. (1992, pp. 294-295)

Said (1978/1979), whose work has been used extensively to illustrate this, agrees with the relationship between discourse and power and explores this in detail in his work on Orientalism. Said suggests that the ‘West’ discursively managed and produced the Orient “politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period” (p. 27). The Orient was not just about an idea or system of ideas created by the West. It was about the relationship of power, the domination of the West over the Orient and the knowledge produced and consumed about the latter. Orientalism, thus, created an unnatural difference between the West and the Orient based on a largely ideological foundation. Hall (1992) is, however, careful to note that although discourse is usually linked to ideology – “a set of statements and beliefs which produce knowledge that serves the interests of a particular group or class” (p. 292) – it cannot simply be reduced to it even though discourse is hardly ever ideologically

neutral. With the colonial encounter, knowledge about the colonized was not ideologically neutral because Europe transported its

cultural categories, languages, images and ideas to the New World in order to describe and represent it. It tried to fit the New World into existing frameworks, classifying it according to its own norms, and absorbing it into western traditions of representation. (Hall, 1992, pp. 293-294)

Hall and Said's discussions on discourse, power and knowledge production summarize the colonial project and how they lay the groundwork for the tangible acts of colonial rule. Colonial rule later served as the "direct territorial appropriation of another geopolitical entity, and exploitation of its resources and labor, and systematic interference in the capacity of the appropriated culture . . . to organize its dispensations of power" (McClintock, 1992, p. 88).

ii. Colonization and the European church

The European colonial conquest, with its accompanying civilizing mission, was closely connected to the work of Christian missions in Africa and other parts of the world. This was because, firstly, through varying efforts to quell the challenge of the spread of Islam, Christianity was made, and became, the cultural identity of Europe (Hall, 1992). Therefore, being European and being Christian became quasi synonymous during that period. Secondly, saving the 'dark souls' of the so-called barbaric peoples of the world and introducing them to European civilization were very much entwined with, and the main focus of, evangelization (Gifford, 2012). For the Christian missions, the religious ideas and practises of African peoples were considered heathen, and this separated them from God. The people lived in 'darkness' and needed salvation to be free of the power of Satan and to be brought back into relationship with the Christian God (Meyer, 1999). The idea of 'darkness', whether as a deviation from modernity or as spiritual separation from God, permeated both the colonial and evangelical Christian discourse. As Etherington (2008) summarizes, "although missions and the official Empire were quite different operations, they play related parts in a larger drama—the spread of modernization, globalization, and Western cultural hegemony" (pp. 3-4). The 'civilizing' aims of colonization and evangelization, thus, went hand in hand. Additionally, discourses within Christianity at the time made the colonial project even more acceptable to missionaries because of the widespread idea that Africans were the descendants of the Biblical character Ham who was cursed because of his sin towards his father Noah (Goldenberg, 2017). Missionaries linked 'blackness' or 'negritude' with this curse for which the

African continent was in ‘darkness’ and needed European enlightenment (Meyer, 1999). The name Ham was supposedly linked to the Hebrew word for ‘black’ or ‘brown’ and, in some accounts, the word for ‘hot’, which led to the classification of dark-skinned Africans who happened to also live in hot climates as the descendants of Ham. Goldenberg (2003)’s extensive study, however, refutes these assertions and finds no basis for the claims made by colonial missionaries. In any case, the attainment of ‘civilization’ was closely linked to Christian missionization such that, “[c]ivilization’ could come only with instruction: Christian religious instruction and literacy” (Irvine, 1993, p. 27). Cummins uses the Spanish term *reduccion* (reduction) to summarize the civilizing process. It entailed the pacification, subjugation, resettlement and conversion of indigenous peoples around the world in order to bring them to a ‘more perfect’ state, order, reason or spiritual and moral regeneration based on Euro-Christian beliefs (2002, p. 203 in Idem and Udoh, 2022). It explains why “the deep textual roots of traditions of salvation and enlightenment” were the claims used by colonialists to justify their brutal colonizing and invasive projects as well as their pervasive hierarchies (Errington, 2008. p. 12). Consequently, “[c]olonization in the early modern period was as much about religious missions, about ‘the harvest of souls,’ as it was about expanding territorial boundaries and economic resources” (Lachenicht et al., 2016 in Lachenicht, 2019, Introduction). Because of that, Rodney (1972/2018) has noted that Christian missionaries became “agents of colonialism in the practical sense whether or not they saw themselves in that light” (ch. 6).

The important role Christian missionaries played in colonial efforts through the ‘civilizing’ mission has prompted some to conclude that, in the implementation of colonial rule, the sequence was “first the missionary, then the Consul, and at last the invading army” as stated by J.A. Hobson (Etherington, 2008, p.1). Others saw the “mission station as ‘a colonialist institution *par excellence*’” which passed on the essential elements of imperial rule (ibid., p. 4. Emphasis in original). Supporters of anti-colonialism have also been known to quote a derivation of this by phrasing it as follows: “[f]irst they had the Bible and we had the land; now we have the Bible and they have the land” (ibid.). Some historians of religion have, however, found such generalizations problematic as records have shown the clashes between colonial administrators and Christian missionaries in many places. In the West Indies, for example, there was resistance to missionaries who sought lands under colonial control. In Sudan and Nigeria also, colonial authorities prevented missionaries’ access to certain areas under their control. On the other hand, some missionaries

resisted colonial rule in the lands they worked in, example, Malawi, South Africa and New Zealand (ibid.). No matter one's orientation on the matter, the impact of the presence of missionaries in once colonized societies cannot be overlooked. A comprehensive discussion of the contribution of missionary presence to global colonial efforts will be impossible in this work because of the sheer volume of information available. The nuances and, sometimes, conflicting experiences make broaching such a topic a herculean task. Because of this, only the two influences relevant to this work will be discussed. The first will consider the role of the missionary in bridging the gap between the colonizer and the colonized through language while the second will review the role of the missionary as ethnographer of indigenous peoples. These topics are important to this work as Spieth played both roles among the Ewe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

iii. Missionaries and language, missionaries and ethnography

Language “stood at the heart of the colonial encounter, mediating relations between Africans and Europeans” (Gilmour, 2007, p. 1762). To achieve the evangelizing and civilizing objectives, missionaries typically mastered indigenous African languages which were considered the missionaries' most important tool and the ‘weapon’ in the war against heathendom (Meyer, 1999). Mastering indigenous languages helped missionaries communicate in the language readily available to the indigenous population (wa Thiong'o, 1986) because early efforts to use European languages, even with the help of interpreters, were especially exasperating and unfruitful (Idem and Udoh, 2022). Different colonial authorities also had varying attitudes to indigenous peoples learning the colonizer's language. In the German colonial case, for instance, there was a belief that Africans were not good enough to speak German because of the persistent notion of their ‘natural state’ of being. It was for this very reason that the German colonial government attempted to introduce a simplified version of German called ‘Kolonialdeutsch’ (Colonial German) to its colonies close to the end of its rule (Mühleisen, 2009; Schwoerer, 1916). Also, in the event that an African managed to learn the original German language, it was believed that they would feel equal to the colonial master and become demanding and disruptive, thereby, undercutting the authority of the colonial master. The German Evangelist Missionary Societies, thus, called on Prussia to prevent the spread of European languages in Africa (Errington, 2008). The French and English colonialists, however, thought differently. To them, the acquisition of the colonial language was a symbol of ‘civilization’ and was used as an instrument of rule. Africans, for instance, only had

worth when they were able to speak French (ibid.) even though Vigouroux finds that, like the Germans, the belief that Africans were “incompetent speakers of French” because of their “putatively primordial ape-like stage in the evolution of mankind” (2017, p. 6) persisted. The use of local languages among missionaries was, therefore, the practice, and local language studies were vigorously pursued by missionaries who stayed with locals for long periods to study, record and learn their languages (Heller and McElhinny, 2017). The widespread study of indigenous African languages by missionaries have produced texts – grammars, dictionaries, etc. – about various languages for over four centuries and have made missionaries the group that has “produced the single largest body of knowledge about linguistic diversity around the world” (Errington, 2008, p. 13). Their work also makes up a bulk of colonial archives (ibid.). For Errington, the missionaries’ emphasis on languages and language studies was also directly linked to the belief that they were either redressing God’s curse on the tower of Babel or achieving some version of Pentecost.

While missionaries’ understanding of the local language for preaching and communication was important, particular emphasis was placed on the written word. The Protestant (which was one of the founding groups of the North German Missionary Society which Spieth belonged to) belief focused on the individual’s direct access to the scriptures (Gilmour, 2007). It was only through understanding Biblical truths by an individual’s direct knowledge and understanding of the text that their ‘dark’ minds, imaginations and souls could be converted and saved (Errington, 2008). Missionary translations of Biblical texts were, therefore, key instruments in Christian evangelization and the written language became an essential condition of Christianity and civilization (Severo and Abdelhay, 2022). The oral African languages were reduced to writing through organization and standardization, and a move was made to focus on ‘creating’ grammars, dictionaries, orthographies, Biblical translations, catechisms and other texts (Idem and Udoh, 2022). These written texts were created based on European language systems (Greek-Latin grammatical and semantic frameworks), Hebrew, Spanish, English, French and Portuguese structures (Tomalin, 2011) with written languages created around the phoneme-grapheme model where the alphabetic system is used to represent speech (Severo and Abdelhay, 2022). Speech sounds were ‘fixed’ and made to fit within familiar orthographic conventions (Errington, 2001) and in the process, a binary was introduced where written texts were privileged over the spoken and semantics/meaning over phonology/pronunciation (Severo and Abdelhay, 2022). This happened because many of the missionaries had their training in classical languages and had only

them to draw from (Tomalin, 2011). In addition to facilitating the spread of Christianity, the reduction of spoken African languages to grammar laws in European languages was intended to make them ‘intellectually’ and universally accessible and in harmony with other languages for the eventual restoration of the unity which was lost at the Tower of Babel (Idem and Udoh, 2022). A double *reduccion*, therefore, happened with African peoples. It was not just a *reduccion* of their persons but of their languages as well through this creation of written texts (Severo and Abdelhayeh, 2022). The conversion of oral languages to written texts also entailed the process of standardization which followed European language culture because linguistic diversity was perceived as a sign of barbarism and likened to the conditions of the Tower of Babel (Errington, 2008). Linguistic homogeneity was, on the other hand, perceived as noble. Written language, thus, had to be regulated (Errington, 2001). The choice of a ‘standard’ was based on wide distribution and use, power, perceived historical prestige, exogeneity and familiarity, amalgamation of dialects, the localization of its use or its proximity to a mission (Idem and Udoh, 2022). In many cases, colonial linguists created new lingua francas from language varieties which they deemed degenerate forms. These new forms were seen as the ‘normal’ version of the languages even though they usually lacked native speakers and original chronotypes in the beginning. They, however, soon became the prescribed choices through the colonial and missionary school systems (Errington, 2001). The language variant taught and spoken at school was pushed as the ‘better’ and more ‘correct’ version and was “thus, accepted as the natural part of a (*sic*) children’s language development” (Idem and Udoh, 2022, p. 107). Lastly, the decision on the adaptability of the new standard language to missionary work was based on its ability to seamlessly transfer religious concepts without falling on non-Christian beliefs (*ibid.*).

The activities of missionaries with regard to African languages produced several intended and unintended consequences which mostly supported the colonial logic and project. African languages were organized, written and re-produced in such a way that they became objects of knowledge in order that their speakers were made subjects of power (Errington, 2008). The practice also constituted a ‘kidnapping’ of languages by colonizers through the bodies of its speakers as has been noted by Greenblatt (1991). Also, Christianity and the introduction of indigenous languages to Christian and Western ideologies meant that indigenous peoples’ societies and worldviews were transformed and controlled (Heller and McElhinny, 2017) because the “languages had to be transformed into objects of Christian expression and Western civilization as

they transitioned from orality to literacy” (Idem and Udoh, 2022, pp. 90-91). As Severo and Abdelhayehave concluded, “language policies are not only about languages, but about practices and worldviews” (2022, p. 122). For them, missionary language policies created different ideological understandings of the world. There was a dissociation, for instance, between body (sound) and soul (meaning) and between concepts like truth, universality and sacredness, which differed largely from the indigenous way of life. The “Indian life, from heart, soul, and mind to self- image, bodily practices, lived space, and everyday conduct, including speech” were fully and severely altered (Hanks 2010, p. 7 cited in Severo and Abdelhayehave, 2022, p. 117). Replacing existing languages with new forms, which imbibed different worldviews that were alien to the people, meant that a people’s understanding of the world and their related social systems were disrupted. In addition to the above, hierarchies were created among some African languages and ethnicities as the missionaries promoted some over others in their bid to standardize language (Gilmour, 2007). They, in some cases, also invented new identities, ethnolinguistic groups and languages that would later on be problematic for the indigenous peoples. European missionaries applied their worldview of national groupings which linked linguistic groups to ethnic groups or ‘tribes’. Colonial agents and missionaries ascribed to a territorial logic which was applied to colonial linguistic work. Heterogenous groups were remarked as homogenous once the idea of monolithic languages was transposed over demarcated borders. These groups were denoted as ethnolinguistic homogenous groups that were naturalized and assigned ‘tribes’ or ethnicities’ (Errington, 2001). This caused a disruption in the existing composition and view of social formations (Gilmour, 2007). Errington (2001) for instance, notes the breakdown of the complex chieftainship and kinship linkages among the Tsonga people because of the spread of the missionary lingua franca. Pre-colonial social formations were also disturbed with the rise of a new socio-economic class of literate Africans who formed a sort of proto bourgeoisie class that promoted the political and economic agenda of the colonial state (Errington, 2001). These individuals would later hold key positions within the colonial administration, thereby, reshaping their positions within the social systems. The hierarchies created within African societies also applied to the European and African languages themselves. Because indigenous African languages were seen from the conceptual understanding of European and classical languages, they were always put in comparison with them and were considered inferior and subordinate (Idem and Udoh, 2022). Darwin’s theory of ‘natural selection’ was applied to the progression of languages

as well with colonizer groups introducing an artificial difference between European and ‘less evolved languages’ based on ‘science’ (Errington, 2001).

In addition to African languages, missionaries had an influence on how indigenous peoples were written about and perceived in colonial times. As their major aim was to convert Africans to Christianity, it was imperative for them to understand the cultures of the people they were working with. The long periods of time spent by missionaries among African peoples meant that they were more familiar with the ways of life of the people than many others in Europe. The latter included anthropologists at the time who were curious about life outside Europe (Barnes, 2014). Missionary ethnographers played a key role in providing insights into the cultural practices and languages of indigenous African peoples and provided ‘expert’ knowledge during the rise of nineteenth- and early twentieth century anthropology¹³ (Cinnamon, 2006). As W. C Willoughby, a nineteenth century missionary to Africa, once stated boldly in 1913, “Anthropology was born of the marriage of foreign missions and modern science,” (Willoughby, 1913, p. 588 in Etherington, 2008, p. 238). Consequently, many of the published writings of missionaries became the key sources of information about African peoples to colonial, intellectual and other circles, although some questioned the scientific robustness of their writings. Anthropologists are, for example, “identified as having painted the ethnographic studies conducted by missionaries as blinded by religious convictions” (Barnes, 2014, p. 279). As Etherington (2008) shows, nineteenth century missionary literature typically comprised magazines, bulletins, journals and religious tracts with information on the practices of non-Christian societies around that world that needed ‘salvation’. Photographs were also used as propaganda material to incite metropolitan Christians to fund missionary work outside Europe. Because of this and other reasons, other ‘experts’ emerged from within European intellectual communities who presumed to “look at Africa without the coloration of Christianizing eyes, and because of this, could better identify strategies for ‘developing’ Africa with European interests in mind” (Barnes, 2014, p. 280). Missionary publications went on to obtain less validity over time in the middle decades of colonization (ibid.). No matter one’s thoughts on the subject, the impact of missionaries’ work on the production of knowledge on African peoples during the colonial period cannot be overlooked. Particularly, the frequently problematic ways in which missionaries wrote about non-Western peoples requires a second look at their productions. As

¹³ The missionary Jean de Léry is credited by Claude Lévi-Strauss as producing the first ethnographic work with his *Histoire d'un voyage en terre du Brésil* in 1578 (Etherington, 2008).

Oyewumi (1997) has noted, accounts of colonized peoples have largely been recorded and written by colonizer groups, and frequently, in languages different from the ones in which the experiences took place and were lived. For her, however, languages go beyond words. They express the thoughts and way of life of a group of people and can confer on a thing much more than is initially perceived, based on the context in which it is used. Oyewumi claims that languages are an important source for understanding the philosophies and world views of many precolonial peoples and societies before European contact. “Language is a social institution and at the level of the individual affects social behavior. A people's language reflects their patterns of social interactions, lines of status, interests, and obsessions” (1997, p. 157). Because of this, surface level translations to and from colonizer and indigenous languages, as was done by many missionary ethnographers, risk losing out on the real socio-cultural meanings of indigenous peoples’ experiences. These translations have also caused misrepresentations of colonized cultures around the world. This was worsened by the pervasive discourse during the colonial era which saw the need to ‘civilize’ the colonized based on their perceived difference and inferiority. As has been noted elsewhere, the historiographies produced by missionaries aided in powerfully “[c]onceptualizing, inscribing, and interacting with [colonialized people] on terms not of their own choosing” (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1991, p. 15 in Errington, 2001, p. 24). These linguistic descriptions by colonizer groups typically simplified very complex situations which led to often “fantasmatic representation[s] of authoritative certainty in the face of spectacular ignorance” (Greenblatt, 1991, p. 90). Missionaries, in particular, were seen by some to be especially critical of non-Western peoples in their productions because of their religious beliefs and because of their preconceived understandings of the new environments they were entering (Harries and Maxwell, 2012). The anthropologist, Edward Taylor, is said to have thought that missionaries were “so occupied in hating and despising the beliefs of the heathen, that they always misinterpreted native life” (Herbert, 1991, p. 152 in Harries and Maxwell, 2012, p. 3). Their texts “buttressed the view that non-European peoples were fixed at lower levels of evolution and that only missionary supervision could bring about their spiritual and secular salvation” (Etherington, 2008, p. 240). Harries and Maxwell note, however, that although missionaries often used the tropes of savagery and darkness in their works for the purpose of obtaining funding from their readers for their continued work among non-European peoples, they also often “stressed the picturesque and romantic sides of African life in their anthropological writings” (2012, p. 4). Some missionary accounts such as those of French

Protestant missionary to South Africa, Eugène Casalis, and bishops of the Anglican church, Henry Callaway and John Colenso, have been seen as painting more positive accounts of indigenous societies (Etherington, 2008). By working with native assistants, informants and others, missionaries came to understand non-European cultures in new ways. Through this, missionaries contributed significantly to the various fields of linguistics and social anthropology and others like medicine, botany, medicine, zoology, geography, meteorology, among others (Harries and Maxwell, 2012). Harries and Maxwell's mention of native assistants requires addressing, even if briefly. As Hokowhitu (2012) has identified, colonialism produced Victorian-schooled indigenous boys who lived between two worlds – indigeneity and Europeanness. It is important to understand, therefore, that although these African assistants were in a position to understand the indigenous cultures in place, they may also have been influenced by their Western-style education which could have caused them to understand and record things differently from those without that educational influence. Also, the fact that these assistants were mostly male means that their positioning and perspective may have influenced how they saw, described and analyzed information. Gilmour (2007) adds that the African colonial subject had their sets of experiences and beliefs which additionally shaped their accounts. This produces a certain complexity which needs to be considered when reading missionary ethnographies about non-European peoples. This complexity is further exacerbated when considering the fact that the missionaries took the data provided by their African assistants and informants, “reclassified it, placing it into their own categories, publishing it in their own texts, and giving it their own meanings” (Harries and Maxwell, 2012, p. 25). Because of these and other challenges, it is important to question the content of missionary accounts by deconstructing and reconstructing them through the linguistic and cultural contexts within which events took place. This, albeit with its own challenges, has the potential of bringing the reading audience closer to more authentic accounts of indigenous peoples around the world.

iv. Translating cultures

Since many missionaries played the role of ethnographers and linguists in Africa, it is important to consider what the process of drawing cultural portraits of others for foreign consumption entails. Rubel and Rosman (2003) have suggested that “translation is central to ‘writing about culture’” (p. 1). This is because the aim of anthropological studies is to understand cultures. The process of translation in anthropology involves passing on words, ideas, meanings,

and concepts from one culture to another. This implies that translation is not limited to the realm of linguistics alone. Silverstein (2003) adds that translation is cultural and not individual. To him, individuals' minds operate within cultural contexts and, therefore, translations are the transfer of cultural knowledge. They are social acts related to social relationships. This makes the concept of translation key in ethnographical work done by anthropologists and sociologists working within and across cultures. Cultural translation, what it comprises as well as the processes involved have been widely debated over the centuries across different disciplines. The extent of the debate is beyond the scope of this work. What is relevant for ethnographers, however, is that translation plays a key role in understanding both cross-cultural and intracultural phenomena as has been discussed elsewhere by Jakobson (1959/2012). Since this research focuses on the meeting point of two cultures at the time of the colonial encounter, more focus will be placed on intercultural translations. Saler (2003) suggests that the ethnographer metaphorically plays the role of a 'bridge-builder' in that, he or she is tasked with "facilitating a 'crossing' into the sensibilities and sensitivities of others ... to allow the reading public to cross over to new understandings, new understandings of others and perhaps of themselves" (p. 209). The prospect of this ability to 'cross' has, however, been hotly debated for years. Since the work of the anthropologist Franz Boas among North American indigenous peoples, the idea of the differences in European and non-European languages has contributed to the impression that cross-cultural translations are difficult and almost impossible (Hanks and Severi, 2015). These linguistic relativists of the Boasian tradition insist that the very diversity of languages worldwide, as well as the differences in conceptualizations of reality, make translation a herculean task. Conversely, scholars of the Chomskyan tradition insist on the underlying structural similarity of all languages. To them, translation between any two languages is made possible by the inherent universal cognitive grammar every human being is endowed with which gives them the ability to take up any language. "All cognitive experience ... is conveyable in any existing language" (Severi, 2015, p. 54). Consequently, no language (and by extension culture) is unknowable or untranslatable (Hanks and Severi, 2015). Hanks (2015) finds issue with both schools of thought and contends that the issue of similarity and difference as discussed between both are not as opposed as conceived. To him, the existence of differences within same groups and cultures does nothing to deter mutual understanding among them. People in such cultures use different techniques like glossing, paraphrasing, reporting and other elements of self-interpretation to promote mutual understanding. Translations across cultures are, therefore,

possible. To Hanks, “translation reveals difference as much as similarity” (2015, p. 42) and for Saler (2003), difficulties in cross-cultural translations are merely “extensions of the difficulties that we encounter in understanding others in our own societies” (p. 211). The very idea of difference within and across cultures introduces the epistemological considerations within the translation process. To Hanks and Severi (2015), translation occupies an epistemological position where “what we can know, how we can know it, and how we can make it known” plays a central role (p. 3). This, in addition to the above discussions, makes intercultural translations an important process that requires the appropriate skills.

Translating between cultures goes beyond finding denotational equivalents (Mannheim, 2015). Ethnographic translation, according to Mannheim, is an updated version of Quine’s notion of ‘radical translation’. Ethnographic translation is one “grounded in evidence linguistic and cognitive, and embedded in the contexts of use and lexical and indexical relationships” (p. 205). For Hanks and Severi (2015), while undertaking intercultural translations, one does not merely redescribe a cultural form. One must understand it first (Hanks, 2015). Rubel and Rosman (2003) add that, in line with ethnographical aims, good translations should enable one to identify with people in the source languages and understand their customs. “A good translation should fulfil the same purpose in the new language as the original did in the source language” (p. 8). The nineteenth century German scholar Schleiermacher, who wrote *On the Different Methods of Translating*, identified the two directions intercultural translations go – bringing the author (read new culture) to the language of the reader (domesticizing a text) or vice versa (foreignizing a text) (Schleiermacher, 1813/2012). Foreignizing a text encourages the disruption of the cultural codes of a target language and rectifies the power imbalance between the target language (mostly Westernized industrial nations) and source language (mostly subaltern peoples around the world) by allowing the latter to be heard in their own terms (Rubel and Rosman, 2003). This explanation makes the latter approach more compatible with the ideals of cultural anthropologists (Leavitt, 2015), and, by extension, postcolonial sociologists. For Nida (1964/2012) though, there should be some form of ‘dynamic equivalence’ that balances both, that is, domesticizing and foreignizing texts. For him, even though the equivalence of meaning should come from the source language, it should also somehow be comprehensible in the target language and culture. It must be noted that Nida's position was significantly informed by missionary values as his work was developed with the purpose of being applied by missionaries in translating biblical and religious texts for non-

Western peoples around the world (Rubel and Rosman, 2003). Whatever position one takes, Lloyd (2015) is careful to add that translation as finding meaning is itself problematic as there is no one 'meaning'. There are always multiple meanings because "each ontology deals with a particular manner of ordering reality" (ibid., p. 308). This should, however, not make translations impossible. The key is for the ethnographer to consider the cosmologies of those being studied and to acknowledge that some people's cosmologies are more comprehensive and explicit than others. At the same time, ethnographers must revise what they took for granted as their knowledge about key concepts related to the people being studied (ibid.). This line of reasoning, and the acknowledgement of multiple meanings, leads Leavitt (2015) to submit that contemporary translation goes beyond asking how one should translate to what a "society chooses to translate and why" (p. 288). Because of the nuances highlighted above, Rubel and Rosman (2003) suggest that writers of culture be modest in their expectations when attempting to translate cultures as there is no perfect translation which is able to "catch[es] all the meanings and nuances of the original. A perfect translation is a utopian dream" (p. 16). Anthropologists and sociologists can only hope to do the best they can.

Despite the discussions above, some scholars have highlighted the challenges, and ensuing consequences, when ethnographic translations are not done properly. The 19th century Ho proverb *tsiamee gbã du, eya kee dɔnɛ dɔ* (the chief's linguist can ruin a town, but can also restore it to favour) holds true here. The proverb suggests that an unreasonable chief's linguist can cause a lot of damage but a reasonable chief's linguist can contribute just as much. Therefore, anyone acting as a linguist by translating one culture into another holds the power in how their translation affects the translated. Harmful translations have been described in various way; as traitorous (Rubel and Rosman, 2003), as manipulative (Rubel and Rosman, 2003; Sengupta, 1996), as promoting hierarchy, hegemony and cultural dominance (Rubel and Rosman, 2003) which reinforce the global power imbalance and the political and ideological agendas of target cultures (Gyasi, 1999; Said, 1996; Venuti, 1993), as ethnocentric violence (Dingwaney, 1996; Rubel and Rosman, 2003), as betrayal (Herzfeld, 2003) and as political (Asad, 1996; Dingwaney, 1996; Muller, 2007; Nida, 1964/2012). The traitorous nature of translation is observed in situations where texts are domesticized to suit the sensibilities of the target culture (Rubel and Rosman, 2003). Rubel and Rosman (2003) also discuss the ethnocentric violence committed when translations are domesticized by stripping source texts of their cultural and social contexts and forcing them to

conform to the target texts in a bid to make them supposedly more transparent and intelligible. For Dingwaney (1996), this violence takes place when the culture being translated is seen as the 'other', typically in cases where colonial powers speak about the so-called 'Third World'. Manipulations, on the other hand, occur when writings reflect ideologies that consider different peoples in different ways. This was a technique typically used during colonization to paint non-Western groups as the 'Other' (ibid.). Sengupta (1996) asserts that this representation or construction of an image of the 'Other' constitutes manipulations of power relations which preserve the hegemony of the group doing the translations. In the colonial situation, the rewriting of texts and cultures by colonizer groups was made to conform with pre-existing discourses about colonized peoples (as 'simple', 'natural,' 'other-worldly' or 'spiritual') to justify the 'colonizing mission'. The manipulation of texts discussed above is, itself, founded within the domains of power and conquest. Gyasi (1999) highlights the use of translation as a means to showcase, consciously or unconsciously, the power relations between the translator and the translated. To him, the way the 'Other' is represented by the West shows the relationship between the two, with the West having the power to explain the 'Other' based on their matrix of understanding. This takes away the power of the 'Other' to describe and represent themselves as they choose. The asymmetrical power relations are compounded by the idea of what is seen as 'strong' (colonizing) and 'weak' (colonized) languages and cultures (Said, 1996). Herzfeld (2003) finds that because translations cross boundaries, they also have the potential to destroy the cultural intimacy of the source culture by exposing them to outsiders which constitutes a form of betrayal to them. Additionally, Rubel and Rosman (2003) have noted the heterogeneity and diversity within languages and cultures which make meaning pluralistic and divided. This makes translation challenging. Considering this plurality, Asad (1996) has described the act of translating as a very political act which is never neutral. To him, the act always entails discrimination, interpretation, appraisal and selection by the translator. The choosing of meaning, to Müller (2007), is closely linked to the positionality of the translator and, therefore, is quite subjective. Translators are likely to choose meanings of words in other languages that fit in with their life experiences and their understanding of the world making the process of translation a highly political one. As Nida summarizes, "one must not imagine that the process of translation can avoid a certain degree of interpretation by the translator ... A translation remains perhaps the most direct form of commentary" (1964/2012, p. 141). This leads to meaning hegemony as the translator's

understanding takes on the primary meaning in the works they produce (Müller, 2007). Dingwaney (1996) adds that who and what gets translated, that is, how certain voices, views and texts are selected as speaking for the group, and who is effectively silenced, always come to play in the process of translating. Finally, the varied meanings available for use and the complexity of words in source languages being rendered in target languages continues to remain a challenge when translating cultures. Müller (2007) discusses how some languages have several contextual and complex meanings which may not find their equivalents in other languages. By replacing the richness of these multifaceted words with simplified versions in other languages, one misses out on the nuances of the word and the reconstruction of the value of that word in another language. To Müller, the act of re-articulating meaning in a target language from a platitude of meanings of a word in a source language becomes a political act because some meanings are included and excluded in the final translation. (Cultural) translations are, therefore, always situated and finding equivalent meaning in other languages (cultures) is always partial and never total (Müller, 2007).

While the above paragraphs have looked at intercultural translations in general, this paragraph will consider translations related to the Christian missionizing activities in non-Western societies as they presented unique challenges and consequences. This is particularly pertinent for the third research question of this study – how did the Ewe adapt to European cultural and linguistic influence? As has already been discussed, translation played an essential role in missionaries' attempts to present Christian and biblical concepts to many non-Western peoples. In Protestantism, from which the North German Missionary Society sprang, for instance, translation practice insisted on the importance of referential meaning to that of language forms (Leavitt, 2015). This idea was particularly encouraged by Martin Luther who stated that the goal was

to produce clear language, comprehensible to everyone, with an undistorted sense and meaning" ("Preface to the Book of Job," cited in Rosenzweig [1926] 1994: 48); "in speech the meaning and subject matter must be considered, not the grammar, for the grammar shall not rule over the meaning" ("Translator's letter," 1530, cited in Bassnett 2014: 59). (Leavitt, 2015, p. 264)

With this background, the mission groups encouraged the use of colloquial vernaculars that non-Western peoples could understand because it was only through accessibility to God's word through one's language that they could be truly converted (ibid.). Evidence in numerous colonial missionizing encounters, however, shows that the use of non-Christian based vernaculars to carry Christian concepts was not necessarily easy or unproblematic. Additionally, it significantly

transformed the indigenous languages as well as the social lives of the people (Schieffelin, 2007). An example will be explored below. In attempting to introduce Christian concepts and ideas to non-Western peoples, missionaries faced unique circumstances. Hanks (2015) identifies five principles that guided missionaries in translating Christian concepts – interpretance, economy, transparency, indexical grounding and beauty. Interpretance was the foundational principle that any expression in the mission language had a possible adequate vernacular interpretation. Economy suggested that a minimum number of vernacular roots were to be used in expressing the maximum number of mission language concepts. Transparency referred to translators’ creation of vernacular “neologisms whose morphosyntactic elements were clearly distinguishable and relatable to discrete aspects of the target meaning” (p. 39). For example, ‘enter water’ was used for baptism. Indexical grounding is defined as

the process whereby newly minted neologisms were bound to their canonical referents. Part of this process was the binding of the expressions into prayers and other texts, so that their meaning would be anchored in the cotextual elements. (ibid.)

The principle of beauty stipulated that an aesthetically pleasing translation would be effective in “moving the heart of the new Christians” (ibid.). The principles that guided missionary translations had significant effects on the linguistic and cultural lives of indigenous converts. Firstly, words that could not be translated directly between the mission language and vernacular created new ones which led to significant changes in vernacular languages. Evangelization led to “hybridized, translocated and dislocated language forms and practices” (Schieffelin, 2007, p. 140). Hanks calls these changes commensuration. Commensuration is the provision of a ‘common denominator’ that brings two incommensurable cultural worlds in alignment (Hanks, 2015, p. 39). Commensuration leads to, not only changes in the linguistic structure of indigenous peoples, but a change in culture and social lives of the people as well. Gal (2015) explains this further by stating that registers within languages are the “sets of linguistic and multimedia signs that are culturally associated with particular social practices and with the person-types understood to engage in such practices” (p. 230). Each register embodies specific perspectives and social positionalities, that is, specific forms of knowledge. Any single register is one of several diverse ones. The adoption of Christian concepts, doctrines and practices meant a change in the registers of indigenous converts which led to differences in both speaking and acting (ibid.). Missionizing translations were not limited to language and language forms alone. They produced “new objects, practices, person-types and

knowledge” (Gal, 2015, p. 236). They contributed to changes in the worldview of many indigenous peoples across the world and these effects can be seen and felt even today. Ortiz (2019) mentions the effect on people groups when one culture meets another. In such cases, transculturation may take place such that “a new culture characterized by uprooting and mixing of all the different demographic elements” takes place (p. 25). This may be said to have happened in many African cultures where European and other cultures have mixed with traditional African cultures over time to produce new forms.

v. *(Mis)translating cultures – an Ewe example*

A practical example of the challenges associated with translating across cultures has been briefly captured below from Meyer (1999)’s work on the religion of the Ewes of Peki in Ghana. Birgit Meyer’s work, *Translating the Devil: Religion and modernity among the Ewe in Ghana*, is an in-depth exploration of the pre- and post-colonial religion of the people of Peki among the Ewedome sub-group. Following missionary practice in Africa, the German missionaries worked to find appropriate Ewe terms that were familiar to their listeners, but which could, at the same time, bear their message. To them,

in principle, each language could provide the word forms (or the signifiants) to express the Christian content (or the signifié), and [...] it was possible to separate the former from their previous signifié. Thus, in theory, the translatability of Christianity was considered unproblematic (1999, p. 58)

This would prove challenging in practice. One example is discussed here. *Mawu*, the term used by the missionaries to designate (the Christian) God, was not so pre-Christian contact. The name was tied to a particular deity who was supposed to have made human beings and was fully detached from them after that. The well-being of humans was not a concern of this deity. The German missionaries, however, insisted that the Ewe people needed to have a relationship with *Mawu* (God). The insistence on this relationship by missionaries caused conflictual understanding within Ewe communities given traditional Ewe beliefs about *Mawu*’s distance from humans. An inhabitant trying to explain this to the missionaries stated that, *Mawu* first created the *trɔwo* (loosely translated deities) to look after human beings who were created second. Since *Mawu* was faraway, the *trɔwo* were the immediate source of help for the people should they need it. Per this reasoning, if the *trɔwo* were sent by *Mawu* to look after human beings, they formed a key part of the *Mawu* ‘team’. Missionaries, however, classified all *trɔwo* as evil and belonging to devil-

worship. Breaking down the term from both perspectives, therefore, falls on opposite sides of the good and evil binary which formed a major part of Christian doctrine. The same term had different meanings for both the missionaries and the Ewe. Each translated Ewe term then became ‘a kind of linguistic parallax’ – an expression first used by Lienhardt (1982) to denote a term viewed from both the indigenous and Christian ‘point of observation’ (Meyer, 1999). “There was no single clear meaning of translated Ewe terms. Rather, each of them called for religious comparison from two viewpoints” (ibid., p. 81).

vi. Decolonial Theoretical Framework

Decolonization, was in its early days, used to describe the period of the dismantling of the European empire around the world and the political reclamation of colonized lands by colonized peoples. It was largely political and economic and involved state sovereignty and the conversion of colonies into independent nation-states (Wenzel, 2017). It meant “the rejection of the civilization of the white man” (Delavignette 1977, p. 131 in Betts, 2012, p. 23). Since then, the term has been expanded by several post-colonial scholars like Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, Amílcar Cabral and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o to denote a psychological and cultural separation from colonial powers. For Lee (2013), it also “constitutes a complex dialectical intersection of competing views and claims over colonial pasts, transitional presents, and inchoate futures” (p. 384). Lee’s observation is pertinent especially when discussing how non-European peoples’ cultures and ways of life were recorded in written history by former colonizer groups. For Tuhiwai Smith (2021), decolonization involves critiquing how indigenous peoples have been represented in historical accounts, the latter which have largely been from the colonizer’s perspective. It also includes indigenous peoples telling their own stories and “reclaiming the past” (p. 38) by “rewriting and *rerighting* [their] position in history” (emphasis in original, p. 31). This is important because, Western history “is a modernist project which has developed alongside imperial beliefs about the Other” (ibid., p. 33). This critique of Western history is important as it makes one question the idea of history’s ‘innocence’, that is, the idea that “‘facts’ speak for themselves and that the historian simply researches the facts and puts them together” (Tuhiwai Smith, 2021, p. 34). Trouillot (1995/2015) has noted the dual nature of history. History involves the “facts of the matter and the narrative of those facts, both ‘what happened’ and ‘that which is said to have happened’” (p. 2). For him, the difference between ‘what happened’ and ‘what is said to have

happened' is not always unproblematic. For decolonial scholars like Tuhiwai Smith, reclaiming the narrative of indigenous peoples' histories by indigenous peoples themselves begins the process of bridging the gap between the two. In addition to indigenous peoples reclaiming their past, some decolonial scholars have suggested that the form in which the reclamation is done is also very important. In the case of Africa, Mudimbe (1988) suggests that scholars desist from using Western epistemological frameworks, which do not fully capture African rationality and traditions, in their work. He suggests that the use of Western categories, constructs, concepts, contexts and methods in African Studies is limiting because everything that falls outside these frameworks, which includes African ways of life and understanding of the world, remain unaccounted for. Using Western frameworks of reference do not paint an authentic picture of African ways of life. Mudimbe proposes an African gnosis which encompasses methods of knowing, inquiry and structured knowledge which is able to capture the African perspective of the world. In this case, knowledge about Africa becomes distinct from opinion (doxa) and science (episteme). wa Thiong'o adds that this process includes the psychic, cultural and linguistic acts of decolonization. In this form of decolonization, African writers are encouraged to abandon the practice of writing in foreign languages which pays homage to them. To wa Thiong'o, decolonization happens when African writers express themselves in their own languages (1998). This enables the different aspects of their culture to be adequately captured and expressed to others. It also enables children within those cultures to understand the world from their own viewpoint instead of the confusion brought through education in Western languages. It is only through this that the African mind starts to be decolonized. Although focusing on African literature and fiction, wa Thiong'o's thesis is useful for decolonial research in general as it buys into the idea of language as a transmitter of culture. For decolonization to happen, not only does he encourage Africans to write in their indigenous languages but also, if need be, to use European languages as a conduit for their worldviews. This can only be done, not by using the European languages as they are, but by coopting them and creating newer versions that "carry the weight of [the] African experience" (wa Thiong'o, 1986, p. 8). The new language is "still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit new African surroundings" (ibid., p. 8). For him, a West African or other type of English is, after all, not very different from the different versions of the English language that have sprung up around the world – Canadian English, New Zealand English, Australian English, etc. The purpose of having this type of coopted English is so that African ideas, thinking and

philosophy may be adequately expressed without compromising their transfer. This is in line with Pannwitz (1917, p. 240)'s thoughts that,

the fundamental error of the translator is that he holds fast to the state in which his own language happens to be rather than allowing it to be put powerfully in movement by the foreign language, in particular when he is translating from a language very distant from his own he must revert to the ultimate elements of the language at that very point where image and tone meld into one he must broaden and deepen his own language through the foreign one... (cited in Benjamin, 1923/2012, p. 82)

For those who insist on writing in European languages, some techniques have been encouraged to maintain meaning in writing when translating culture. This has been discussed at length in what has been called critical translation (Müller, 2007; Robinson, 2017). Although it does not necessarily talk about decolonization, the content and intent of critical translation seek to give power and agency to colonized peoples whose languages are often translated into colonizer ones. Critical translation allows one to dehegemonize and depoliticize the process and is helpful in decolonial work. Temple and Young (2004) advocate for keeping source language words in their original form when transferred to target languages to maintain their unique body of meaning when translatability is challenging. This is called holus-bolus. It allows translation to draw on the contingency of meaning. "By situating the expression from the source language in its social and cultural context and explicating its genealogy, the critical translating geographer can generate awareness for the polyvalency of meaning" (Müller, 2007, p. 211). Another way to perform critical translation is the use of back translations. Here, borrowing from Edwards (1998) work on interpretation, a translation is done from a source language into a target language and a different translator translates the translated piece from the target language back to the source language to see how the two versions compare. If both translations produce the same meaning, then translations have been done right. Edwards sees this as a useful assessment tool for crosschecking the accuracy of translations. Nabokov (1955/2012), on his part, insists on providing very detailed footnotes with translations to contextualize them. He advocates for literal senses within these footnotes where there is "no emasculation and no padding" (1955/2012, p. 125) so that, when the translation is done, it will conform with meaning to the original text. This is called glossing. For Nida (1964/2012), it is important to provide supplementary information and annotations to translations because foreign texts rely on their own cultures for intelligibility. Contextual information is, therefore, necessary to provide comprehensive understanding of others. Müller (2007) suggests

that the aim of critical translation as related to the politics of translation is not to be overly concerned with finding ‘better’ translations but by “destabiliz[ing] and denaturaliz[ing] the hegemony of the translated text” (p. 209) where questions of representation and the agency of the researcher are examined. The first step, thus, falls on the translator to explore his positionality during the act of translating and how this shapes the latter. In addition, Temple and Young (2004) argue for making the process and act of translation visible to readers so the latter does not fall into the danger of blind and easy categorization based on familiarity. Bialasiewicz and Minca, (2005) add that, translation is,

therefore always a conscious ethical political choice; a model of political action that not only presumes a respect for diversity but also an element of (not only linguistic) hospitality. Choosing the model of translation means accepting imperfection, accepting incompleteness, all the while striving for the best translation possible; it means an attention, an openness to the Other with whom we seek communication. It means respect of all the Others in the process of translation. (p. 370)

Finally, “true translation is transparent: it does not obscure the original, does not stand in its light, but rather allows pure language, as if strengthened by its own medium, to shine even more fully on the original” (Benjamin, 1923/2012, p. 81). From the above, although translating cultures is not an easy task, there is a real possibility of doing so in ways that do more justice than harm to the people being translated. Doing this properly has the potential to right some of the wrongs of the colonial past.

TA ENELIA (CHAPTER 4)

INTRODUCING SPIETH, THE NORTH GERMAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY, PIETISM AND THE EWE PEOPLE

Axa ko wotsɔna dia tefee
If a person wants to lie on a crowded mat with
others, he squeezes himself in sideways before lying on his back
(19th-century Ho proverb)

i. Biography of Spieth

Jakob Andreas Spieth was a German Protestant Basel-trained¹⁴ Bremen missionary to Togoland¹⁵ in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He was born in 1856 to pietist parents in Hegensberg, Württemberg where he was also raised (Bischofberger, 1998). Spieth's parental home, "characterized by piety, prayer and patriarchy" (Ustorf, 2010, p. 88), was immensely shaped by the pietist tradition where missionary literature from Basel featured prominently. The pietist orientation interpreted culture through biblical standards even though it also emphasized the individual's own practice of faith (Ustorf, 2010). Spieth's background in Württemberg Pietism shaped him and continued to play an important part in his later life. Like many of the Basel missionaries of his time, Spieth belonged to the lower classes and was the son of a peasant father who prevented him from gaining an education beyond the elementary level (ibid.). This was not uncommon during that period. Wilhelm Schlatter's examination of the social background of Basel and Bremen missionaries between 1816 and 1882 shows that missionaries typically came from "Württemberg peasant or workman families with many children, had a Pietist orientation and were of low educational backgrounds" (ibid., p. 88). Thorsten Altena's analysis of about 400 biographies of German Africa missionaries during the colonial era reveals that they typically shared a common cultural and social background and missionary spirituality (Ustorf, 2010). Ustorf has noted that the modern missionary movement was attractive to men like Spieth because it offered opportunities for social advancement and the acquisition of knowledge which was unattainable to them due to their lack of education and access to property. The modern

¹⁴ Although Basel is in Switzerland, many German Protestant missionaries were trained there because the city became the hub of Protestant and Pietist missionary activities in the region in the nineteenth century.

¹⁵ Togoland is the colonial name for the region currently occupied by present-day southeastern Ghana and Togo. Togoland was a German protectorate during the colonial era and should not be confused with the Republic of Togo.

missionary movement was not only the opportunity to further the Christian project of evangelizing but also “the Enlightenment project of self-emancipation from ignorance and the freedom of independent thought” (ibid., p. 88).

In 1874, at the age of eighteen, Spieth joined the Basel Mission seminary in Switzerland in preparation for missionary work (Bischofberger, 1998). Like all missionary hopefuls, Spieth produced a CV as part of his application to demonstrate his suitability for training at the seminary. In it, he described his upbringing which included pilgrimages to the Basel Mission Festival, the reading of missionary tracts and the holding of fellowship sessions at home (Ustorf, 2006). He also highlighted the presence of a strict father and a mother who was a ‘happy complement’ to this father, who was the head of the home. Spieth also mentioned his protection from the other children in the neighbourhood and his bothered conscience when he did mingle with the ‘bad boys’ as evidence of his suitability for mission work. Lastly, he raised the fact that he was the only one from his town who had turned from the ‘sinfulness of youth’ to a path in Christ and who had made a decision to give up his life for the sole service of missionary work among the ‘heathen’ (Ustorf, 2006). After his six-year training at the seminary, Spieth was sent to Ho, Togoland in 1880 following the request from the Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft (NMG) based in Bremen. Interestingly, the period of Spieth’s missionary work in West Africa coincided with the shift from

free trade colonialism to high imperialism (with its much more rigid structures in terms of colonial domination and the engineering of cultural change) and, theologically, ... the increasing accommodation of missionary Pietism to the liberal project of global knowledge and humanism. (ibid., p. 87)

In any case, two years after arriving in West Africa, Spieth married the daughter of another missionary and had four children, three of whom were born in Africa. Spieth spent a total of twenty-one years in Togoland with a brief return to Germany from 1883 to 1885 due to ill-health. He rose to the position of superintendent from 1887 and returned to Germany indefinitely in 1901 because of repeated episodes of fever. The remainder of his years in Germany were spent directing the Bremen mission house in Hamburg until his death in the same city in 1914. He was buried in his hometown after his death (Bischofberger, 1998).

Spieth’s lengthy stay among the Ewe led to writings on the language, religion and culture of the people, including a translation of the Old Testament into Ewe with the help of Ludwig Adzaklo, an Ewe Christian (Bischofberger, 1998). These efforts obtained him an honorary

doctorate from the University of Tübingen in 1911 (Ustorf, 2010). Ustorf, however, finds conflict in Spieth's writings stemming from his dual position as missionary and scholar. He claims that Spieth the scholar was more empathetic and understanding of African culture whereas Spieth the missionary was highly critical of it. For example, about the Ewe language, Spieth the scholar publicly wrote:

In previous years, one could sometimes hear complaints about the poverty of vocabulary and ideas in the Ewe language. Westermann's dictionary, which defines 20,000 Ewe words, is a shining refutation of that accusation... Also, Westermann draws attention to the great richness of the Ewe language in adjectives and adverbs which define every quality or activity in the most exact way, while we must only satisfy ourselves with "very", "extraordinarily", "monstrous", "frightfully". Further, he draws attention to the changes in meaning which result when words are doubled, and points out how the doubled form has a high and a low tone form, one for smaller and the other for bigger items... Such a rich language, which is capable of further enrichment, would be highly suitable as a language of culture, education and trade and the greatest crime that Europe can commit against that tribe would be to suppress their most valuable native inheritance under European languages or even as much as declaim against it. If we want the Ewes to retain their valuable intellectual individuality, then we must seriously ensure that this language remains, and that the up and coming youth of that country develops an insight into the beauty and worth of their mother tongue. (Spieth, 1906/2011, pp. 40-41)

In his private letters, however, Spieth "was scathing as to the moral and intellectual status of the language and the traditions of his target culture" (Ustorf, 2010, p. 95). Spieth, for instance, stated that,

Just like the Ewe people, so is their language ... The language is another piece of evidence that the Ewe have regressed from the bright pinnacle of a higher intellectual talent to a level where speaking consists largely of the instinctive application of misunderstood phrases to a given situation. (Ustorf, 2010, p. 95)

Similarly, four years after writing his public scholarly work, Spieth the missionary, in 1910, stated that Ewe traditions were like a "water- and hopeless wilderness offering nothing to those searching for God" (Ustorf, 2010, p. 92). Ustorf summarizes that, Spieth's denigration of African traditions and cultures in archival documents was so blatant that one could almost speak of 'Negrophobie'¹⁶ (original German word, 2006, p. 78).

The short discussion above highlights, not only the conflict between Spieth as scholar and as missionary, but also the conflict in both his private and public personas. I note this conflict

¹⁶ The English translation 'Negrophobia' was first used in the 1810s (Oxford English Dictionary, 2023) and is no longer in use (Merriam-Webster, n.d.)

because of the complexity this brings to analyzing his public work which is the aim of this study. It is important to consider the different epistemological positions Spieth held and how these may come to play, visibly or otherwise, in his writing about the Ewe people even though he might have intended his more accepting side to show in his public work. In addition to this, it is important to state beforehand that Spieth's public work currently under study - *Die Ewe-Stämme: Material zur Kunde des Ewe-Volkes in Deutsch-Togo* - was financed by the German Colonial Society (Ustorf, 2010). This is a significant point to note as Doucet and Mauthner (2002) have highlighted how external factors, including the institutions and funding agencies around a researcher, may influence research outputs. In Spieth's case, the financing of his work by the German Colonial Society adds further complexity when analyzing his work. For context, the German Colonial Society (Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft) was formed in 1887 as an amalgamation of the German Colonial Association and the Society for German Colonization with the aim of directing Germany's "national effort" toward colonization in a coordinated way and to resolve open questions about the goals and methods of German settlement abroad" (German History in Documents and Images, n.d.). An analysis of Spieth's ethnographic account is, therefore, a complex project and requires careful attention by any researcher.

ii. Pietism, Württemberg Pietism and the Basel Missionaries

As Pietism was a strong influence in Spieth and other Basel and Bremen missionaries' lives, the concept will be briefly considered here. Pietism originated in modern Germany and had a significant and lasting influence on Protestantism in Europe and around the world. It was a Protestant religious movement that began in the seventeenth century and reached its height in the eighteenth century (Nasim, 2023). It has been said that Pietism was the most significant change within the Protestant movement since the sixteenth century (Shantz, 2013). Pietism "promoted a practical Christianity marked by personal transformation, programs for social betterment, hopes for Christ's kingdom on earth, and calls for an end to denominational strife" (Shantz, 2013, p. 1). The movement promoted a Christianity where 'born-again' lay people took charge of their own spirituality and spiritual growth. Members met in non-church settings for Bible study, prayer and fellowship (ibid.). The movement, like many others, was, however, not a homogenous group and changes were recorded over time and space, that is, based on regional, structural and political influences (Nasim, 2023). The particular brand of Pietism that was mostly practised in Basel and

some parts of Alemannic-speaking Germany and Switzerland in the 1800s was Württemberg Pietism, named after the region (ibid.).

Figure 1: Map showing Württemberg between 1871 to 1918 (Britannica, 2024)



For context, Württemberg was a duchy in present-day southwest Germany until it grew and attained the status of a kingdom in a loose German confederacy in the Napoleonic era (Nasim, 2023). Württemberg had a population of 1.5 million in the mid-nineteenth century with Pietism making up ten percent of the Protestant population of 800,000 (Jenkins, 1980). Because Pietists were under constant persecution for challenging government authority, they were often in search of places where they could practise their beliefs without oppression. Finally, in 1743, the Württemberg government passed the ‘Pietist Rescript’, a law which allowed Pietists freedom from persecution as long as they observed certain boundaries. This led to an exponential growth of the Pietist population in Württemberg along with their influence in the area (Nasim, 2023). The city of Basel in Switzerland, as mentioned earlier, was the centre of Protestantism in the region. It became the central point for Württemberg Pietism along with the missionary movement that emerged in the nineteenth century. The aim of Basel and the new missionary movement was to promote a “more practical and active approach to Christianity” (ibid., p. 51) which involved

evangelization and welfare work locally and globally. Pietists saw the need for this because of the concern about the loss of Christian values in Europe brought on by the French Revolution and the economic and social changes that came with it. The destruction of traditional communities, to them, was a sign of the second coming of Christ to earth and, consequently, the end of the world. This outlook fuelled the desire of Pietists in Basel who sought to evangelize the world before the apocalypse happened, thereby giving birth to the fervency in missionary activities from the city of Basel (Nasim, 2023). Württemberg Pietism, for example, came to play a huge role in the evangelization project in Africa as more than half of the missionaries recruited and sent to the Basel Mission's two fields there, were, up until the first World War, from the Pietist circles in Württemberg (Jenkins, 1980). Jenkins has noted that the influence of this group in the Basel Mission was likely greater than expected.

I make a quick diversion here to paint a brief portrait of the missionaries that came from the Württemberg Pietist tradition. Missionaries from Württemberg typically had a common Schwabian dialect and had family and friendship ties. Many of the Württemberg missionary candidates in the Basel Mission were raised in a traditional village with a peasant upbringing. Families were led by heads of the household (men) who expected to lead their families and subordinates in an 'authoritarian way' (Jenkins, 1980, p. 431). The limited level of industrialization in Württemberg in the nineteenth century meant an important focus was on food production on small plots of land and on local crafts. For many missionaries of this orientation, peasant life was the ideal and "God ... created humankind to live in free agricultural communities, and the story of the Tower of Babel shows his judgement on large cities and complicated hierarchies" (ibid., p. 428). This veneration of the traditional farming community was foundational to Basel Mission policy. In addition to this, Württemberg Pietism insisted on a demanding code of personal and family ethics with morality playing a key role. This was transferred to the African missionary fields where Christian settlements were created outside of local communities to instill in converts the moral discipline the missionaries were themselves subject to. The focus of conversion for Pietists was, however, not only on standards of conduct, but also on the inner spiritual and emotional life of believers of the faith. Missionaries were expected to have a heartfelt need to

experience the release from guilt which the teaching of forgiveness promises ... and were expected to experience this forgiveness repeatedly as a confirmation of God's call to take up a particular vocation and behave in particular ways, in spite of, by definition, never being able to achieve the divinely prescribed standards. (ibid., pp. 430-31)

Despite being trained at the Basel Mission seminary for five years, it has been noted that the life of returned missionaries in the second half of the nineteenth century was clear evidence that their training at the seminary did not separate them from their Württemberg social background – a trait which “informed their missionary ideals and intentions” (Jenkins, 1980, p. 426).

Pietism's focus on ending denominational strife, as mentioned in the first paragraph, meant that different denominations came together to form coalitions for mission work. A result of this was the creation of the Deutsche Christentumsgesellschaft (German Society for Christianity) in Basel in 1780. The society was made up of a diverse group of people including politicians, theologians, business owners and clergymen from the Alemannic region (Nasim, 2023). Its main aim was to build networks with other evangelical groups in Europe and to distribute Christian literature. The group's keen outlook on global missionary work led to the establishment of a seminary that trained evangelists for overseas work in Basel in 1815. This seminary was pivotal in training most of the Basel and Bremen missionaries sent to Africa, including Spieth (ibid.). During the nineteenth century, support for the Basel Mission grew greatly across Switzerland and Germany such that independent mission societies grew from it. These mission societies included the Berlin Mission established in 1824, the Rheinische Mission established in 1828 and the Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft (NMG), where Spieth would later be posted as a missionary, established in 1836. All these organizations continued to have close contact with the mission in Basel (Nasim, 2023).

iii. *The creation of the Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft (North German Missionary Society)*

“I shall not die. but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord. Psalm 118:17 (R.S.V.)”
Motto of the North German Missionary Society (Debrunner, 1965, p. 63).

As mentioned earlier, the cooling of attitudes toward, and outright opposition to, the church and Christianity in the wake of the Enlightenment period in Europe led to dissatisfaction among Pietist circles about its negative effects on social life. During this period, where the belief in reason as against the belief in God reigned, Biblical and theological knowledge decreased even in the church. The effects of the French Revolution further contributed to the feeling that the apocalypse was near (Debrunner, 1965). Several Pietists in South Germany, at the time, came to hold the belief that was aptly captured by Pastor Johann August Urlsperger as follows:

there exists a highly pernicious mixture of true and false, light and darkness, good and bad, acceptable and deleterious, and this not in small matters, but in important questions ... each one lives the life he chooses, thinks what he chooses, does what he chooses ... (ibid., p. 65)

To combat the influence of the Enlightenment, Pastor Urlsperger proposed that there be voluntary associations of active Christians who would live lives that dispelled the disorder in society. He stated:

What will become of our Christianity ... if God does not have pity and stir up men and societies, who with the help of correctly applied remedies will gradually put a stop to this disorder, firstly by encouraging each other amongst themselves to keep to certain guiding principles on all the chief points on which evangelical congregations think alike according to their published creeds; next to settle them again on the inescapable foundation of their creed; thereafter to arouse others to think with them correctly according to God's word... (Debrunner, 1965, p. 65)

This proposal was readily accepted in the Reformed Church and led to the creation of the 'Deutsche Christentumsgesellschaft' (German Society for Christianity) in Basel in 1780. A similar society was formed in Bremen three years later. Another group, the 'Evangelische Missionsgesellschaft' (Evangelical Missionary Society) was birthed from this apologetic movement in 1815 with the main aim of spreading Christianity generally. There was such a strong link between the Reformed Church in Switzerland and the one in Bremen such that, Swiss pastors often worked in Bremen (Debrunner, 1965). This orientation caused the people of Bremen to think in terms of the whole world and, at the urging of Swiss pastor Passavant, an auxiliary for the Basel Mission was founded in 1819 (ibid.). Similar auxiliaries were birthed in other north German areas. Firstly, in the Lutheran Hansa-cities of Lübeck and Hamburg and, later, in other towns in Germany, France, Austria, Denmark and Norway. Basel was, at this time, the largest centre where "exchanges of missionary interests on the Continent took place" (Debrunner, 1965, p. 66). As time went on, the regional missionary auxiliaries themselves developed so much that they in turn birthed new societies. The Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft (the North German Missionary Society) was founded in these contexts in 1836. The distance from Basel, the length of time it took to exchange correspondence, the increase in their own confidence and their ability to take on more responsibility, and an emerging tiredness of the people being recognized as simply auxiliaries, caused them to consider this move (Debrunner, 1965). Also, Bremen was a major port city second only to Hamburg during nineteenth century overseas travel from Germany. This, certainly, would be important in future missionary efforts. Just like the Basel Mission where different groups

(Lutherans of Württemberg, the Palatinate, the United Church of Baden and the Reformed Church of Switzerland) worked together, the new mission society desired to include members of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches (ibid.). This arose from their belief that “the standpoint of missions, as a work of faith and love, is neither in Wittenberg nor in Geneva, nor in Rome, but in Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives” (Debrunner, 1965, p. 66). Thus, the articles of association were outlined as follows:

The Society, consisting of members of the Lutheran and Reformed comrades in faith, does not wish in any way to impair the existing relations between the two evangelical sister churches; but with regard to the spread of the Kingdom of God amongst the heathen it keeps to the command of the Lord in Matt. 28:18-20. For we are convinced that our confessional difference, which arose out of history, should not be transplanted to the heathen world, but that by the preaching of the gospel under the guidance of the Lord and his Spirit the church will develop a character of its own amongst the heathen - Theological basis of the North German Missionary Society. (Debrunner, 1965, p. 67)

This article was foundational in terms of the theological basis of the NMG, and the new mission society established a mission school in Hamburg in 1837. Hamburg later became the seat of the mission society and would become the place where Spieth spent his time as director upon his retirement from mission work in Togoland. Management of the society was passed round from year to year among the local missionary groups which formed it. With its formation, the society started to look for its own field of operation in the ‘heathen’ world and, in 1842, missionaries from the mission school in Hamburg were sent to their first ‘fields’ in India and New Zealand. The mission in India was later discontinued and handed over to another missionary society while the New Zealand mission proved too small with little chance of development (Debrunner, 1965). Other fields became viable options for the NMG, and Africa became of interest with the high appeal of the continent to the European mission societies during that time. Positive reports of the Wesleyan missionary Freeman about his work in Africa only fuelled this interest. This began the NMG’s mission quest on the Gold Coast in West Africa and later among the Ewe in Togoland (ibid.).

It is important to conclude this section by noting that, although orthodox Protestants and Pietists in the nineteenth century initially opposed the idea of Protestantism and German nationalism as identical, they eventually came to see both as two sides of the same coin after the establishment of the German Empire (Meyer, 1999). This caused many Protestants to look on German imperialism and colonialism positively, even though Protestants of the Pietist orientation were keener on building nations among non-Western converts than germanising them.

Consequently, although the activities of Protestant mission societies among non-Western peoples obviously served German imperialist interests, the relationship between the two was not always straightforward (ibid.).

iv. A Brief Portrait of Togoland and the Ewe People

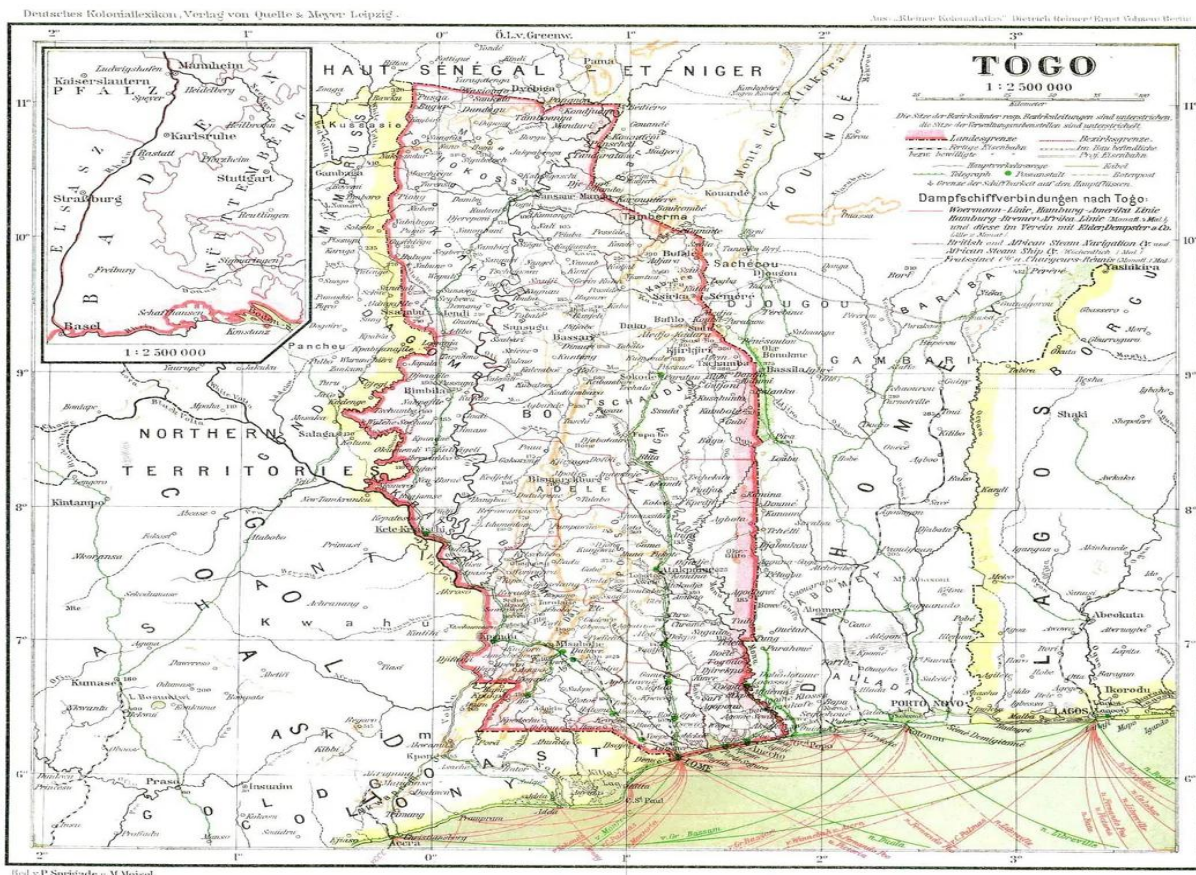
The majority of the Ewe people inhabited the territory between the Rivers Volta (formerly in the Gold Coast and in present-day Ghana) and Mono (formerly in the ancient Kingdom of Dahomey and on the present-day Togo-Benin border) which covers some 100 miles from east to west and about 80 miles inland (Manoukian, 1952/2017). Gunn (2017) extends the area eastward to the Oueme River in present-day Benin and northward some 93 to 124 miles (approximately 150 to 200 kilometres). The difference in reported mileage might be due to the varying publication times of the two accounts and the changes that may have taken place in-between. Nevertheless, the territory is bound to the south by the Atlantic Ocean (ibid.) and is made up of three main geographical regions: coastal lowlands, central plains and northern highlands (Akyea, 1998). Today, it is estimated that there are about five million Ewe people, with approximately 2.7 million in Ghana, 2.1 million in Togo and 0.2 million in Benin. The Ewe people are also found in Nigeria and the Ivory Coast although as a minority group (Butt, 2017). The Ewe were never a centralized group and were divided into several subgroups called *dukowo* (loosely translated as chiefdoms). Each *duko* was ruled by a paramount or chief (Akyea, 1998). The people speak Ewe (Eve or Evegbe¹⁷ in the indigenous orthography) even though there are numerous dialects, and mutual intelligibility varies based on location (Ameka, 2001; Manoukian, 1952/2017). The language is part of the language cluster known as Gbe or Tadoid which belongs to the Kwa branch of the Niger Congo family. Its closest Gbe relatives are the Gen (spoken in Togo and Benin), Fon (spoken in Benin and southwestern Nigeria) and Aja (spoken in Togo and Benin). Other Kwa non-Gbe relatives are Ga-Dangme, Akan (both spoken in Ghana) and Yoruba (a Benue-Congo language spoken in Nigeria, Benin and Togo). A written standard Ewe variety was developed by the NMG missionaries in the 19th century and was a hybrid of various Ewe dialects with the majority of it derived from the coastal Anlo (Anɔ) dialect (Ameka, 2001).

The history of the Ewe has been highly debated. Some scholars, both Ghanaian and foreign, have pointed to Ketu (Kotu), in the former Dahomey (currently Benin), as the genesis of the Ewe

¹⁷ The pronunciation changes based on one's dialect. əβə εβε eβε are all possible options (Ameka, 2001).

(Asamoah, 1986; Manoukian, 1952/2017). Others, again Ghanaian and foreign, have placed it further in the former Oyo Kingdom in present-day Nigeria, and east of the River Niger, before settlement at Ketu during the wars of the 1300s (Akyea, 1998; Buah, 1998; Gunn, 2017). From there, they settled in Tado in the late 1400s where some later moved to Notsie (both are in present-day Togo) where they spread out further east into present-day Ghana after suffering under the oppressive King Agokoli (Akyea, 1998; Asamoah, 1986; Buah, 1998; Gunn, 2017). Ameka (2001), an Ewe scholar, suggests that there are theories that place the origins of the group even further east in Egypt and Mesopotamia even though this claim is difficult to support. Relying on oral history, Dotse (2011), also an Ewe, places the group's birthplace in Babylon, present-day Iraq. He states that the group settled in Adzatome, a settlement founded by Ham, the second son of Noah in the Bible. After that, they migrated to Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, between the Niger Bend and the River Senegal, Nigeria, Dahomey and Togo and then to their current home. One wonders how much oral history might have been reconstructed after biblical influence. Whatever the history, it is quite clear that the settlement of the Ewe in present-day Ghana is a relatively recent historical production, and their presence inspired several other historical events. The Ewe have largely remained in their current location since their arrival and have experienced significant political events, one being the influence of colonialism by different colonial powers beginning in the 19th century.

Figure 2: A map of Togoland (also showing steamship routes) during the colonial era. Inserted is the map of Württemberg to the same scale as the map of Togoland. Source: Quelle and Meyer, 1920



The British were the first colonial administrators of Ewe territory. They imposed their rule between 1850 and 1874, first occupying the area currently inhabited by the Anlo sub-group of the Ewe before extending further along the coast. In 1884, the Germans attempted to take over this same territory from the British. To settle the dispute, the territory was partitioned between the two colonial groups during the Berlin Conference of 1884-5, obviously without the consultation of the local population (Akya, 1998). This moment was the first time Germany made a major bid to be recognized as a colonial power (Magdoff, Nowell and Webster, 2025). Around the same time, the Germans also expanded their claim over other areas in the south of current Togo. German soldiers captured chiefs from Anecho and initiated forceful negotiations aboard their warship while they claimed Lome as a protectorate further west. By the early 1890s, German rule had expanded from the coast and, in July 1890, Germany and Britain signed a treaty which transferred part of the Peki Ewe state to the Germans (Laumann, 2003). The Germans occupied Togoland for thirty years,

during which time the colony was touted as a model colony due to its lack of major wars and the production of balanced budgets. Other achievements were also boasted of – the construction of roads, railroads and the telegraph system. These so-called achievements were, however, attained through forced labour, harsh punishments, inadequate health care and education systems, prohibition of the colonized from numerous commercial activities, and the imposition of excessive and arbitrary taxation on the Ewe people. The infrastructural developments were also limited to the southern parts of the colony (Akyea, 1998; Laumann, 2003). This harsh treatment caused many Togolandese to flee to the British-ruled Gold Coast until World War 1 when Germany was defeated and forced to surrender its colonies to Britain and France (Akyea, 1998; Laumann, 2003). The colony was formally divided between Britain and France in 1922 under a League of Nations mandate with two-thirds of the territory and its occupants, including Lome, becoming French Togoland, while the rest bordering Gold Coast became British Togoland. The two Togolands became United Nations trust territories in 1946 (Britannica, 2023). French rule in French Togoland was, reportedly, no better than German rule and there was agitation by the French Ewe colony to join the British Ewe colony. This began efforts to reunite the people as one group – a movement which lasted till the late 1950s when African countries began agitating for independence (Akyea, 1998). British Togoland would later form part of the independent country Ghana in 1957 while French Togoland became a part of the independent Republic of Togo in 1960 (Britannica, 2023). In the wake of the independence movement in Africa during the 1950s and 60s, the reunification of Ewe territory was seriously considered and the case taken to the United Nations where a special vote was taken on Togo and Ghana. Unfortunately, from the perspective of Ewe reunification, the results of the vote opposed any changes to the standing colonial borders (Akyea, 1998) and the Ewe have continued to be spread across borders in Ghana, Togo and Benin. Reunification efforts still exist, albeit in a weaker form, today.

v. ***The Bremen Mission in Togoland during the colonial era***

“When thinking of missions in Africa we must direct our gaze not only to the coast and its immediate neighbourhood, but also to the interior where no ray of light issuing from the sun of righteousness has fallen, where all the abominations of darkness, lust, murder, manhunts and slavery have their essential habitation”

Pastor Vietor, director of the North German Missionary Society, Bremen, 1851 (Debrunner, 1965, p. 63).

The North German Missionary Society (Bremen Mission or NMG) was not the first Christian mission to the Gold Coast (now Ghana). Their arrival followed years of work which had been done by Roman Catholic Franciscan friars who first accompanied Portuguese traders in 1482 as chaplains. The Basel Society later established a permanent mission station in Accra in 1828, and then, in the Akwapim ridge, while the Wesleyans arrived in Cape Coast in 1835 (Ahlijah, n.d.). Around this time, missionary interest in Africa grew exponentially in Europe because of the reports of the Wesleyan missionary Thomas Birch Freeman who had achieved great success in Asante, Abeokuta and Dahomey (Debrunner, 1965). His focus on the interior was particularly inspiring because many missionaries at the time were settled on the coast and did little to move to the interior for various reasons. Freeman's reports, as well as the interest in the interior by Europeans in the 1840s, inspired the North German Missionary Society to consider operations in Africa around the same time after the poor outcomes in India and New Zealand. The society was ready for another area for missionary activity which made Freeman's reports particularly exciting after plans for a base in South-West Africa fell through (ibid.). The Bremen Mission first came to the Gold Coast on May 5, 1847 (Ahlijah, n.d.). Its missionaries initially stayed in Cape Coast where they were welcomed by missionary Freeman. They later moved to the area between the Volta and Mono rivers in Togoland (Debrunner, 1965) where they later set up a seminary in 1864 with funds from trade in palm oil and cotton (Ahlijah, n.d.). The mission's composite motivation was the Enlightenment, humanism and Pietism (Ustorf, 2011).

The first missionary, Reverend Lorenz Wolf, started the first mission station at Peki in 1847. He died four years later although he outlived his companions who died upon arrival. His work produced very few converts until the new missionaries who arrived to replace him opened a mission station in Keta in 1853 (Debrunner, 1965). Two other stations were opened in Anyako, in the south, and Wegbe, near Ho. Another one was later opened in Lome (present day Togo) in 1896. Due to the first World War, Bremen missionaries were expelled from Togoland in 1916 because of the perceived fear of German military spying at the mission's influential post at Nsaba (ibid.). The first missionaries to arrive included ordained missionaries Luer Bultmann and Lorenz Wolf, as well as the saddler Carl Flato and the Danish shoemaker Jens Graff. Bultmann and Flato died from malaria shortly after arriving, leaving the other two to consider setting up a station as a mission field on their own (Debrunner, 1965). The two considered the unoccupied stretch of land between Ada and Anecho for their mission, but the territory lay in the area where Ga-Adangme

was spoken which was already taken by the Basel missionaries. Anecho also had prior connections to the Methodists. This left Keta and the interior as the only options for the two men. However, the war against the Danes¹⁸ in Keta made the area unstable for any missionary work. Thus, the interior was the only available location for the missionary societies at the time (ibid.). The interior town of Peki became a viable option because of its close connection to Accra. In addition, a son of the chief of Peki, who was a student at the Basel mission school in Christiansborg at the time, also assured the missionaries of his father's readiness to receive them. Wolf would later go to Peki to investigate the appropriateness of the site as a mission station and found the warm reception he received important for the development of NMG's mission work in the Gold Coast. For Debrunner, this initial relationship of confidence between the missionaries and the Ewe people was what helped the mission society brave the storms when mistakes were made and problems arose. Graff had, in the meantime, also succumbed to malaria leaving Wolf as the only missionary of the NMG in the Gold Coast at that time (ibid.).

In attempting to set up a missionary station in Peki, Wolf's key challenge was the people's faith because they held their 'fetish priests' in high regard and were wholeheartedly devoted to them (Debrunner, 1965). "It was not in Wolf's nature to acquaint himself calmly and objectively with the faith of the Ewe; missionary zeal was burning too fiercely in his heart" and to him, "all fetishes were of the devil ... and all fetish priests deceivers and liars" (ibid., p. 69). This strong prejudice and attitude of Wolf against the Ewe people's beliefs would later change and soften as with other missionaries after him, but it "endured in essentials" (Debrunner, 1965, p. 70). Wolf went ahead to open a school for boys in 1848 where he taught reading, writing, biblical history, arithmetic, singing and rote learning even though his greatest success was as a healer. It was his role as a healer which gained him the confidence of the people and produced the first results of his missionary work. Wolf also attempted to learn the Ewe language which commenced the NMG's vocation in delving into the language of the people. Bernhard Schlegel was one of the early NMG missionaries who pioneered written works in the Ewe language including an Ewe primer, dictionary, grammar, a Bible history, the life of Christ and a translation of the four gospels (Buah, 1998, p. 142). In 1851, Wolf returned home to Germany for health reasons but, because of his pioneering personality, no other missionaries could immediately take over his work. They all

¹⁸ The Danes had trading posts and economic interests along the Gold Coast, and they saw the Anlo Ewe as a threat to their interests.

returned with him leading to a diminishment in the work of the mission among the Ewe. This event, along with others, would significantly change the constitution of the NMG's missionaries as the society had to rely on missionaries from the Basel Mission school where Spieth would later be sent from (Debrunner, 1965).

Wolf's return to Germany coincided with an impoverishment in the European country that came with the 1848 revolutionary period in Germany. This caused a significant strain on the finances of the NMG. This was coupled with the chaotic administration of the mission which had an ever-changing leadership. At the time, only two students were left in the mission's school and these were later transferred to another school (Debrunner, 1965). The NMG mission school shut down never to reopen. The administration was later reorganized, and at the return of Wolf and the other two missionaries to Germany, the decision was made to work with the Basel mission to continue the work of the NMG in Africa.

Since we serve the same Lord, and work for the same kingdom, our labours too may be done in common; though our stations will each have their particular field, and their own battle and building ground, yet they will be in connection with each other and should help each other materially and spiritually. (as recorded in the monthly bulletin of the NMG, 1851, p. 10 in Debrunner, 1965, p. 73)

As the NMG did not have any missionaries of its own in Peki at this time, the Basel missionary provided missionaries which led to significant consequences for the work of the mission among the Ewe. In the period that followed, the NMG trained all its missionaries at Basel. As a matter of fact, of "the 90 missionaries and commercial staff sent out between 1851 and 1899, only a few builders and business men serving the mission were North Germans, and so were only 8 of the ordained missionaries mostly sent out after 1890" (Debrunner, 1965, p. 73).

Therefore, it was, as in the Basel Mission, mainly young men from Württemberg, stout-hearted, tough, but often obstinate, pious hard-headed Swabians, as well as a smaller number of men from the Palatinate, Baden, Switzerland and Alsace, who served in the Bremen Mission and helped mould its character. (Debrunner, 1965, p. 74)

This is an important fact as it helps us identify and position Spieth within the beliefs and practices of the Basel Mission. Civil unrest in and around Peki would later cause the NMG to move its base to Keta in the south and, later, to three others - Anyako, Waya and Wegbe Ho (ibid.).

Although the missionaries had, as their main aim, the conversion of Ewes to the Christian faith, they also had a latent objective of 'civilizing' them. This was mainly done through education in the mission schools and took place in the Christian villages that were built on the outskirts of

many Ewe townships (Meyer, 1999). These Christian villages were built and furnished according to Western design, and life was organised according to the Western ‘civilised’ way (ibid.). This led to an exportation of many European cultural values to Eweland. The implementation of the educational project would, however, prove difficult in the beginning primarily because of language challenges. Most of the Europeans in Eweland in the 1860s did not know enough of the local language to build an educational program on (Buhler, 1987). Secondly, the limited number of Europeans meant the missionaries would have to rely on Africans to establish both their educational and religious programs. These Africans would also serve in the roles of guides, interpreters and managers for the expansion of missionary work in the region. Recruiting such men was difficult as few Africans spoke European languages. Those who did were usually merchant middlemen and men of mixed local and English or Portuguese descent (ibid.). Thirdly, Ewe parents feared that their children would be sold into slavery, an activity that was fairly common in the region. The missionaries also had difficulty convincing parents of the value of literacy while the parents in turn feared the social repercussions of having their children viewed as pawns of the Europeans. All these reasons delayed the establishment of schools in Eweland (ibid.). The later work of one African, John Wright, who trained at a Basel Mission school and had excellent control of the Ewe and English languages, proved very crucial in the missionary endeavour. Wright was familiar with the local customs and contributed immensely to the establishment and success of mission schools where education took place in the local language (Buhler, 1987). Missionary Franz Michael Zahn, Director for the NMG Mission, is credited for further developing the education system and putting in place a comprehensive policy based on a “systematic and methodical approach” (Ustorf, 2011, p. 236).

Zahn held the position of Director of the mission from 1862 to 1900. He was raised in an upper-class family and was a product of the Lower Rhine branch of Pietism. He drew up a ‘teaching plan’ that was used in the education of the Ewe people in the mission until 1914 (Ustorf, 2011). This plan was influenced by the educational policies of his father who himself ran a teacher training college in Germany, a place where Michael Zahn also lectured before relocating to Togoland. The older Zahn insisted on an education based on the Bible alone and his “main concern was to make Christian truth again the mother of all education” (ibid., p. 236). He also insisted on character formation based on the biblical-Christian framework of interpretation. These beliefs were also held by his son and significantly shaped the younger Zahn’s educational policies in

Togoland. Michael Zahn's long-term goal in Togoland was to produce an African church that was spiritually independent by way of its constant supply of African teachers, catechists and interpreters. According to him, the Ewe peoples' 'inherent' inferiority made it an impossible short-term goal. One of Zahn's main policies was implementing a missionary education that was rooted in and conducted through the Ewe language (ibid.). For Zahn, it was only through one's own language that it was "possible to talk with God in a genuine way" (ibid., p. 239). Also, to Zahn, "the language and identity of the Ewe nation were a valuable heritage that had to be protected, for 'Christianity does not ... kill individuality or the individual character of a people but elevates, purifies and renews it'" (Zahn 1895, 347f in Ustorf, 2011, p. 239). Owing to the diversity of Ewe dialects, a standardized Ewe was created which was spoken and taught in the mission school. This standard version was considered a 'renewed' and 'refined' form of the Ewe language because the dialects that existed till then were supposedly "in a lamentable, run-down condition" (Zahn, 1895, 342 in Ustorf, 2011, p. 240). Nevertheless, Zahn's ambitious program, which consisted of 'elementary subjects', 'linguistic knowledge' and 'religious knowledge', became the blueprint for NMG missionary education in Togoland (Ustorf, 2011). Because of Zahn's approach, and with the help of several Africans, many schools were built in Togoland, with the largest built in Ho and a seminary for training missionary assistants established at Wegbe (Buhler, 1987). As the 19th century Ho proverb *axa ko wotsɔna dia tefee* proposes, if a person wants to lie on a crowded mat with others, he squeezes himself in sideways before lying on his back. This proverb was used to suggest that it is only with tact and shrewdness that a person achieves their goals. The success of Zahn's policies and the increase in enrollment caused the mission to move away from purchasing the freedom of slave children who formed the first cohort of students in the mission school (ibid.). These children were expected to assist the missionaries in their future work, however, the NMG's expectations were cut short as most of the students saw the economic value of their education at the mission schools. Instead of continuing the work of the missionaries, graduates from mission schools went on to take up important roles in the trade between locals and Europeans and by 1879, of the approximately 100 students trained at the seminary, only a handful stayed in the service of the mission (ibid.). Eventually, the idea of a European education became appealing to Africans because of the economic value it brought with it and more parents enrolled their children in mission schools. Missionaries used this increase in interest to make "conversion to Christianity a prerequisite to enrollment in the schools" (Buhler, 1987, p. 60). This move was nonetheless futile

as student converts rarely remained in the faith after graduating. If they did, their faith was quite nominal (ibid.).

For the Ewe students who chose to stay and promote the Christianizing and educational programs of the missionaries, further ‘civilizing’ programs were necessary. Students had to be “‘cultivated’ and ‘uplifted’ in order to become exponents of true Christian Ewe culture” (Meyer, 1999, p. 182). The NMG made the decision to start educating some of its Ewe students back home in Württemberg. This was also necessary because of the regular death of European missionaries from fevers and the need for the indigenous population to take over the running of some of the mission’s churches and programs which were growing exponentially at this time. The Ewe school in Württemberg was run by Reverend Johan Conrad Binder, himself a former NMG missionary, and it followed a “harsh Pietist regime” (Meyer, 1999, p. 185). The school trained twenty Ewe young men between 1871 and 1900 in preparation for service in the mission once training was completed. Training included studying English, drawing, gymnastics and music. German, Bible stories, oral German, geography and natural science, mathematics and confirmation were taught in class one, whereas German history, church history, physics, arithmetic, pedagogies and methodics, Bible knowledge and comparative religions were taught in class three (Agbeti, 1991). Garden work, carpentry and excursions were also included, and, on some occasions, students were invited to speak at church services about the importance of the NMG’s work in Togoland (Meyer, 1999). The latter was done to encourage more people to give financially toward mission work in Africa (Nasim, 2023). A unique feature of the training in Germany was the deliberate effort by the NMG to confine students to the rural Pietist life which was seen as untarnished by the evils of industrialization and urbanization. On the few occasions the students were taken to the bigger cities of Stuttgart or Bremen, they were not left alone. Neither were they given money to purchase anything. Students were “reduced to a state of childhood and bereft of the opportunity to get acquainted with those aspects of German society that were detested and feared by Pietists” (Meyer, 1999, p. 185).

This reduction of students and converts to the state of childhood is a consistent theme that runs through the NMG’s treatment of the Ewe people. Even the education given to Ewe students in Togoland was deliberately made less comprehensive than the missionaries’ because the Ewe students were meant to remain assistants to the missionaries and not replace them. The

asymmetrical power relations within the missionary structure meant that Ewe students were not considered equals and were reduced to serving the missionaries in quiet obedience (Meyer, 1999, p. 186). The inequality in power relations was also visible in the differences in pay for the missionaries and their Ewe counterparts (Ustorf, 2002). This was again seen in the lack of recognition given to the work of the Ewe people in Bible and other translations, and in the writing of ethnographic accounts of the people. The disparity was evident even though without the contributions of the Ewe people, the missionaries' attempts were doomed to fail (Wandusim, 2024). This inequality created tensions between the Ewe students and the NMG missionaries and strong oppositions began to arise within the mission. Azamede (2013), Meyer (1999) and Ustorf (2013) have all documented the various ways in which the African students became dissatisfied with the missionaries and the message they preached about Christianity. To them, the claims of equality of all persons before God was not what they experienced with the missionaries. Albert Binder, one such Ewe student, stated that he "was convinced that this act was not a plan of God but just ideas of human beings" (Azamede, 2013, p. 207). Hermann Yoyo, another Ewe convert, went further to take issue with several of the NMGs theological positions about African traditions (Ustorf, 2013). Yoyo drew the conclusion that the version of Christianity brought to them by the missionaries was tainted by a European outlook and was not necessarily the truth. He started to question the superiority of a Christianity influenced by European culture and asked why an African Christianity founded in the traditions and cultures of the people was not possible. He asked, "what social tradition was the African Christian to adopt, »the European or the African«?" (ibid., p. 56). These examples show the tensions between the European missionaries and their Ewe counterparts and the beginnings of the agitation towards more balanced power relations between the two. Fortunately, (or unfortunately depending on who is asked) the first World War and the withdrawal of German missionaries presented the opportunity for the development of a more independent and local leadership although the Scottish Mission took over the work of the Bremen Mission during the period (Evangelical Presbyterian Church, n.d.). The Scottish missionaries introduced the Presbyterian system of governance and leadership to the mission which would influence the indigenous church in later years (Global Evangelical Church, n.d.). In 1921, Reverend Andreas Aku was elected as the first indigenous moderator of the church and, in 1923, a 5-member Synod Committee with an Ewe majority was created. In 1926, the established Ewe church was given the new name Ewe Presbyterian Church which reflected the influence of the earlier Scottish

missionaries. The name was later changed to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in 1954 (Evangelical Presbyterian Church, n.d.). Later disagreements in the church led to a division which produced the Global Evangelical Church (Global Evangelical Church, n.d.). Both churches currently have a strong presence in the Volta Region of Ghana and have branches worldwide (Evangelical Presbyterian Church, n.d.; Global Evangelical Church, n.d.). Today, even though the Norddeutsche Mission is not as active in missionary work as it was in the nineteenth century, it still partners with the two Evangelical Presbyterian Churches in Ghana and Togo who make up two of its six member churches. The mission takes part in projects around “transcultural learning, development cooperation and climate justice” with its partner churches in the two countries (Norddeutsche Mission, n.d.).

vi. The Influence of the Bremen Mission in Togoland

The effects of the work of missionaries among non-Christian and non-Western cultures has been studied extensively. Ustorf (1998) summarizes some of them here:

In the areas of cultural transformation and education, for example, the missionary interventions had a tremendous impact, particularly in tribal societies. They helped to promote changes: in lifestyle and sexual behaviour; in family structures; in the role of women, and in social emancipation in general; in ethics and individual discipline; in health care and personal hygiene; and not least, in the emerging patterns of economic production demanded by a developing world market. The missionary movement also, unintentionally and dialectically, contributed to the transformation of Christianity itself by initiating the de-westernization of this tradition. (p. 592)

The scope of this chapter does not allow a full discussion of the impact of missionary activity in Ewe society. Such a singular work covering the gamut of information about the subject might, indeed, be impossible. A few of the impacts will, nevertheless, be highlighted below. Meyer notes that in Togoland, “the mission anxiously took care to keep the students within the confines of Pietism, in terms of space, social relations, and ideas” (2002, p. 185) and this impacted Ewe traditions and cultures extensively. In the case of the Ewe seminary students and converts, childhood betrothals, concubinage, adultery and polygamy were prohibited. Also, husbands and wives were expected to share ‘table and bed’ in one house as opposed to the autonomy husbands and wives had when they owned their individual spaces after marriage before missionary contact (Meyer, 1999, Ustorf, 2002). This is interesting as some missionaries were known to have broken some of the very rules they set for converts. There were silenced stories, for example, of missionaries impregnating Ewe women they were not married to. The mission made sure to

prevent these stories from spreading to promote the ‘superiority’ of the European Christian (Ustorf, 2002). In any case, the new marriage rules negatively impacted Ewe women as the practice of gift-giving by the groom to the bride, which was prohibited within Christianity, deprived the wife of personal property (Meyer, 1999). The fact that women were trained for the domestic sphere to look after their husbands and children further deprived them of other economic means and affected their financial independence. Farming and trading were key economic activities of many Ewe women pre-missionary contact (Akyea, 1998, Meyer, 1999). Because of this, Meyer (1999) notes that conversion to Christianity was unattractive to Ewe women who took much longer to adhere to the religion. This was the opposite for Ewe men who obtained financial and economic advantages because of their involvement in trade after missionary education. In the domestic sphere, and in relation to the raising of children, women became the primary caregivers (Buhler, 1987). With regard to education, Ewe communities were known to pass down their customs and traditions to the children through observation, imitation and participation. Flogging children was a taboo pre-missionary contact. Both changed in mission schools where rote learning was promoted and physical punishment dished out (Ustorf, 2002). Funeral ceremonies were also altered as noise, gun-firing, lamentations and funeral meals were prohibited. Clothes, jewellery and other objects could also not be buried with converts. The rules of inheritance governing converts also changed. Inheritance was limited to a man’s wife and children while the extended family was neglected (Meyer, 1999). Again, according to Pietist traditions, converts were expected to dress ‘decently’ and per European fashion. This changed the standards for dressing and personal adornment in traditional Ewe society (Buhler, 1987; Ustorf, 2002). In the area of health, ‘heathen’ medicines were strictly prohibited in the Christian villages even though Nasim (2023) has noted the efficacy of many local medicines in curing diseases. Some of the missionaries themselves attested to this. Basel missionaries, for instance, relied on African herbal medicines and African medical men for the treatment of dysentery, obstipation, headaches, skin diseases and fever. Cold ablutions for fevers were, for instance, described by one Basel missionary as the most useful “African fever therapy” and was discovered there long before it took root in Europe (ibid., p. 285). Despite the above, the impact of missionary activity was not all negative in Togoland. Buhler (1987) has demonstrated that the economy of the region was enhanced with the increase in international trade. The improvement in irrigation and agricultural outputs, the production of crops year-round which was impossible with customary farming methods, the introduction of new agricultural techniques

including irrigation, and the construction of bridges and roads all positively contributed to the indigenous society. Cash crops like cocoa and cotton were also introduced for export and these enhanced the local economy (Akyea, 1998). Nasim (2023) also mentions the slew of African diseases that were cured because of European knowledge. These examples show that cultural contact and missionary activities were not always negative and should be analyzed critically to produce balanced accounts of the past. The above discussions also highlight the agency of many indigenous peoples during the colonial period even though numerous colonial accounts do not portray them as such. Many non-Western societies took advantage of the positive contributions of missionary activities to enhance their societies even though some of their strategic choices did not bear long-term outcomes.

TA ATŌLIA (CHAPTER 5)

FAIRCLOUGH'S CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS I: A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF SPIETH'S ACCOUNT ON CLOTHING, CARE OF CLOTHING, BATHING AND PERSONAL HYGIENE AMONG THE PEOPLE OF HO

Tsiamee gbã du, eya kee dɔnɛ dɔ
The chief's linguist can ruin a town, but can also restore it to favour
(19th-century Ho proverb)

Jakob Spieth is unique in the sense in which he is atypical of many pre-colonial, colonial and even post-colonial European anthropologists, ethnographers, philologists and historians who tend to filter Africa through the narrow, insular and often condescending prism of Eurocentric paradigms. Spieth does a good job in divesting his work of wanton prejudice and hasty judgment, recording, transcribing and translating only that which carves a true and authentic picture of the Ewe people across time and space...

Kofi Anyidoho and Mawuli Adjei¹⁹

i. Background

Spieth's ethnographic work on the Ewe people of present-day Ghana and Togo has been identified as the most comprehensive account of the people from the colonial era to date. Several scholars – Diedrich Westermann, Ernst Dammann, Albert de Surgy and Birgit Meyer – who have researched and written extensively about the people and region, have based their research on his findings (Ustorf, 2011). This work has, thus, played a significant role in the knowledge produced about the Ewe people from colonial times to present. Kofi Anyidoho and Mawuli Adjei, themselves distinguished Ewe academics, have praised the body of work as a “complex and comprehensive document, almost encyclopaedic in scope, [which] remains a major source of information on the Ewe people” (Anyidoho and Adjei, 2011). The work has proved to be a vital resource in contemporary Ghana because of its role in the resolution of present-day chieftaincy and territorial disputes in Ho and Eweland thanks to its ability to provide historical documentation on pre-colonial and colonial Togoland (Amoaku, 2011). The importance of Spieth's account is

¹⁹ (Anyidoho and Adjei, 2011, Afterword). Kofi Anyidoho and Mawuli Adjei are renowned Ewe scholars whose work have included the traditions of the Ewe people, oral tradition and literature, and post-colonial literature, among others.

undeniable. It is not the intent of this study to diminish the significance of Spieth's work for past, present or future generations. The aim, however, is to consider and contend with some of the ways in which the account has been praised as 'objective', 'atypical' of its time and largely unproblematic in its rendering of the Ewe people and their culture. This work is not intended as an attack on the glowing reviews given about Spieth's work. Rather, it is an attempt to untangle the complexities involved in accounts written by colonizer groups about colonial subjects. As Spieth's account is a large body of work (about a thousand pages), this study is unable to analyze his entire collection. Instead, a very small piece has been selected to determine how Spieth discursively produced and portrayed colonial difference and the colonial Ewe subject in his work. Specifically, his portrayal of order and cleanliness in the Ho domestic space will be considered. Here, I will discuss clothing, cleanliness of clothing, bathing and personal hygiene as this has received less attention in the existing literature. The analysis will consider Spieth's original German account with words and phrases translated into English based on an 1891 German-English dictionary for appropriate contextual understanding of the text. To analyze this work, I will fall on Norman Fairclough's²⁰ approach to conducting Critical Discourse Analysis.

ii. Brief overview of Spieth's work on family life in Ho during colonial times

Spieth discusses family life in Ho under the chapter *Das soziale Leben*²¹ (Social Life). The chapter is divided into five main sections, including *Die Ehe* (marriage), *Die Familie* (the family), *Das häusliche und gesellige Leben* (family and social life), *Krankenpflege und Behandlung Verunglückter* (nursing and treatment of accident victims) and *Tod und Begräbnis* (death and burial). This research will concentrate on section three: *Das häusliche und gesellige Leben* (family and social life) and, more specifically, on *Das häusliche Leben* (family life). Here, Spieth divides the sub-section into two main parts – *Ordnung und Reinlichkeit* (order and cleanliness) and *Die häuslichen Arbeiten* (housework). Although the content on family life covers a mere seven and half pages (pictures cover about two and half pages of this number), extensive work is required to conduct a textual analysis of this piece of writing. Hence, this research will focus on things pertaining to the care of the body, that is, clothing, cleanliness of clothing, bathing and personal

²⁰ Fairclough is one of the early proponents of Critical Discourse Analysis as used in sociolinguistics.

²¹ The original German will be placed in italics with the English translation placed in parenthesis after it.

hygiene. The discussion of these concepts will fall primarily on the material found under ‘order and cleanliness’ as Spieth focuses more extensively on this area in his work on family life. Order and cleanliness cover about seven pages in the original German text while housework is treated in fourteen lines. A few observations must, however, be made before a full analysis of his text on the care of the body is made. Firstly, it must be acknowledged upfront that any analysis done in this research is from the perspective of the researcher. Analyses are based on the researcher’s understanding and interpretation of the text. Consequently, different results may be obtained by other researchers replicating the study. As scholars like Meghji (2021) have indicated, an individual’s understanding of the world is shaped by the social and political experiences that shape their lives. Standpoint theory is based on the ways in which the world is understood from different perspectives, and neither is right nor wrong. The analysis in this study, therefore, reflects the researcher’s positioning in the world and her understanding of it through this unique perspective. Secondly, the researcher’s gleanings from the text should not be taken as Spieth’s original intent as that cannot be ascertained. Any thoughts about Spieth’s account should not be seen as reflecting his personal position on matters discussed. Even with the numerous guidelines for using a Critical Discourse Analysis approach, it must be noted that such research is not necessarily free from the influences of the researcher’s own belief systems and values. Therefore, this research should be seen as one way in which Spieth’s work may be read and understood by a section of society. Thirdly, relying on other experts for an analysis of the non-English translations means that other perspectives would likely come to play in analyzing Spieth’s account. However, this does not take away from the importance of this work. This study contributes to the work being done in decolonial scholarship and provides a starting point for further analyses. The sections below will consider Fairclough’s approach to Critical Discourse Analysis in analyzing Spieth’s work on the Ewe. Specifically, a textual analysis on clothing, cleanliness of clothing, bathing and personal hygiene will be conducted with a discourse and social analysis done in chapter 6. As has already been discussed in detail in the methodology section, a textual analysis considers the ‘internal relations’ of a text. By internal relations, Fairclough means the semantic, grammatical, vocabulary (or ‘lexical’) and phonological relations within a text. Semantic relations look at the “meaning relations between words and longer expressions, between elements of clauses, between clauses and between sentences, and over larger stretches of text” (Fairclough, 2004, p. 36). Grammatical relations look at “the relationship between ‘morphemes’ in words ..., between words in phrases

..., between phrases within clauses, ... and between clauses in sentences” (ibid.). Vocabulary relations consider the relations of collocation between words or expressions, and phonological relations consider “relations in spoken language, including prosodic patterns of intonation and rhythm” (p. 37). These elements will be considered in the analysis of Spieth’s text although phonological relations will be omitted since Spieth’s work is not an oral record.

iii. Textual analysis of Spieth’s account using Fairclough’s approach to Critical Discourse Analysis

a. Kleider (Clothing)

Die Kleidung ist im häuslichen Leben bei Männern und Frauen häufig eine sehr mangelhafte. Jüngere Frauen schämen sich nicht, nur mit einem schmalen Lendenband versehen, mit den Ihrigen zu verkehren, oder sogar in diesem Zustande sich auf der Dorfstraße zu zeigen. Auch der Mann ist oft nicht besser bekleidet. Für gewöhnlich trägt die Frau einen etwa ½ m breiten Streifen Zeug, der um die Lenden geschlungen ist. Der Mann dagegen hat ein langes Landeskleid so über sich geworfen, daß die rechte Schulter mit dem rechten Arm unbedeckt bleiben. Nur in etwas frischen Morgenstunden werden zum Schutz gegen die Kälte beide Schultern bedeckt. Unter dem Kleid trägt auch der Mann sein Lendenband, godotse. Bei der Feldarbeit ist der Mann immer nur mit dem Lendenband bekleidet¹.

Spieth introduces nineteenth century Ewe dressing to his reading audience by a rich use of adjectives, adverbs and verbs that deserve a closer examination. In this section, most of the adjectives used have a negative overtone within the context of the text – *mangelhaft* (inadequate), *schmal* (narrow/scanty/slender), *nicht besser* (not better), *unbedeckt* (uncovered). The use of the adjective *frisch* (fresh/cool) is used in relation to the weather and not the people, and the adjective *lang* (long) is associated with men’s clothing alone. In describing the clothing of the Ewe people, Spieth clearly passes judgment and makes his and his target audience’s values evident. His tone is observable by his choice of words. *Die Kleidung* (the clothing) of Ewe *Männer* (men) and *Frauen* (women) is *mangelhaft* (inadequate). Inadequate gives the reader the idea that there is a norm that he and his audience consider the standard – adequate – for which Ewe people’s clothing falls short. Spieth follows the sentence with a description of the clothing of *Jüngere Frauen* (young women) as *nur* (only/simply) a *schmal* (narrow/scanty/slender) *Lendenband* (loin cloth/band). This

description additionally stresses their opinion that Ewe clothing, especially young women's clothing, is scanty. By focusing and stressing on the narrow loin wrapper, Spieth also inadvertently uncovers Ewe women's torso without directly saying so. To add to this, he evokes another standard which he feels Ewe women should recognize about their clothing but which they do not. They should be ashamed (*sich schämen*) of being *in diesem Zustande* (in this state), but they are *nicht* (not). This is an evaluative sentence. Spieth writes in a way that shows that the clothing of young women is problematic, and that there is an expectation that Ewe women express a negative sentiment at their state of (un)dress. However, they do not. They are not ashamed to even *versehen* (wear) the narrow loin cloth to *mit den Ihrigen zu verkehren* (to interact with their loved ones) *oder sogar* (or even) *sich auf der Dorfstraße zu zeigen* (show themselves/appear in this manner on the village street). Firstly, Spieth finds it problematic that young women should be clothed in like manner while interacting with other people. It would appear that Spieth and his target audience see the uncovering of the body as a private affair. It appears problematic that young women would interact with others – even people in their inner circle – in such a manner. Secondly, the use of the adverb *sogar* (even) demonstrates that Spieth was further bothered by the fact that women went beyond their inner circles to associate with others in the more public village street dressed in this manner. His use of the verb *zeigen* (to show [themselves]) placed in the full sentence appears to demonstrate that the women in their 'inadequate' clothing ought not to make themselves seen or visible in the public space of the village street. Spieth further uses the adverb *gewöhnlich* (usually) as an indication of the frequency with which the woman wears the 1/2m length wrapper. This helps Spieth portray the idea that this type of dressing is the habit or norm. In sum, Ewe young women's clothing, in the manner that Spieth saw, interpreted and wrote about it, was not concealing enough. It was also something that was meant to be kept private and outside of the full view of other people.

In talking about Ewe men's dressing, Spieth places them on the same level as the women – they are *nicht besser bekleidet* (not better clothed). Parts of their bodies are uncovered like the women because, even though they have *ein langes Landeskleid* (a long native cloth) that covers them more than the young women, *daß die rechte Schulter mit dem rechten Arm unbedeckt bleiben* (the right shoulder and the right arm remain uncovered). The introduction of the adverb *dagegen* (however) to introduce Ewe men's clothing after describing the women's 'scanty' clothing shows that, despite Spieth's initial displeasure at the state of dressing among both men and women in the opening sentence, men are a little different, if not better. The latter idea may be observed from his

lack of use of negative adjectives to describe the men's clothing even though they also wear *Lendenband* (loin cloth. Called *godotse* in Ewe) like the young women in public spaces, i.e. the farm. He does not state that men ought to feel any shame in appearing within any spaces – home and farm – in their 'state' of clothing. Spieth's presentation creates a differentiation between men and young women's 'inadequacy' of dressing. He does find the baring of parts of the men's shoulder and arms inadequate through his subsequent sentence – *Nur in etwas frischen Morgenstunden werden zum Schutz gegen die Kälte beide Schidtern bedeckt* (only in/during the cool/fresh morning hours are both shoulders covered for protection against the cold). The use of the adverb *nur* (only), again, comes across as though the covering of both shoulders should be the norm but that cold mornings are the unique time that men choose to do so. Spieth specifies that this unique act with clothing is done for a purpose – protection against the cold. If this situation does not present itself, the reader understands that Ewe men do not cover both shoulders. However, the inclusion of this act of men is interesting. It accords to Ho men a certain rationality that is not given to the women. The men know to protect themselves against the elements, but for the women, Spieth is silent. It would be surprising to think that one section of the population felt the cold while the other 'less covered' one did not. Whether this was an overlooked detail in Spieth's account is not the point. Indeed, creating this differentiation between men and women would appear to be the expectation of his European audience at that time. In any case, what is included and excluded within a text paints a particular picture for the reader who was not present at the occurrence of the event. In this case, the picture one sees is that of the rational Ho man and his non-rational woman counterpart. This differentiation between Ho men and women is further seen by how Spieth writes about their clothing in general. Spieth adds another piece of clothing – the *godotse* – to the men's clothing. This is the loin cloth Spieth claims the Ho men wear under their traditional cloth. It appears that the Ewe man is more clothed than his woman counterpart because, whereas he has longer cloth and a loin cloth in addition to it, the young woman only has her loin wrapper. It is only during farm work that the Ewe man wears just his loin cloth like his woman counterpart. Although these might seem like minor observations, it sets the tone for how Spieth writes about men and women throughout his account. The difference between Ho men and women is a recurring theme that comes through in his account on family life. Some of these will be evident in the ensuing analyses.

Spieth's written production on Ewe women and men's clothing is striking when analyzed alongside the images²² he produced throughout his work. In several pictures, different clothing forms among both men and women are shown. Children's clothing is also seen. Yet, Spieth focuses his energies in the written production on specific clothing types – the ones that are more 'revealing' for women and more concealing for men. In the pictures, some of the women's clothing covered the torso to the knees or below, reaching the same length as the men's (example p. 64*²³, 190, 231, 337, 341, 378). Some women also appeared to have another piece of cloth covering the shoulders over the cloth worn around the torso (example p. 65*, 188). For the men, some wore loin cloths alone without any covering for the torso or they wore their *godotse* while in public spaces (example p. 47*, 14, 231, 263). Children's clothing is also seen (example p. 104, 180, 181, 245, 246 (boys), 209, 231 (girls)). Children are also shown wearing the *godotse* (example p. 183, 231 [girls]). Spieth never mentions women wearing the *godotse*, stripping them further of clothing. It is difficult to believe that children (young girls included) and men wear the *godotse* while women do not. The silences in Spieth's writings about the different Ewe subjects, whether intentional or otherwise, portrays the social actors in Ho differently. His writings produce a particular type of story to the reader. It is, therefore, important to recover the voices of those being written about by foreign subjects to get a fuller picture of social practices in previously colonized societies.

b. Reinlichkeit der Kleider (Cleanliness of Clothing)

Reinlichkeit der Kleider trifft man bei fast allen Hoern. Ein Kleid wird etwa von Montag bis Freitag getragen, um dann von der Frau einer Wäsche unterzogen zu werden. Die Frau erhält dazu vom Manne die Seife. Manche sind jedoch nachlässig und lassen Wochen verstreichen, bis sie ihre Kleider waschen. Darin liegt jedoch zuweilen Absicht. Manche gehen in schmutzigen Kleidern umher, um sich dadurch arm zu stellen, während sie in ihren Kleidersäcken zu Hause Samt und Seide haben. Jemand, der oft seine Kleider wechselt, macht die Öffentlichkeit auf sich aufmerksam, wird oft um Geld angegangen und muß fürchten, von seinen Neidern verzaubert zu werden. Der Beweggrund hiefür ist Eifersucht, weil der Reiche angesehen und geehrt ist, wogegen der Arme in der öffentlichen Meinung nichts zu bedeuten hat. Eine Schande ist es,

²² I prefer not to add the images in Spieth's work in order not to replicate the ethical challenges involved when colonized peoples' images were taken, used and published largely without their consent.

²³ The asterisks are a replication of how some of the pages were numbered in the German version.

wenn sich in den Kleidern oder in den um die Arme gebundenen Zauberschnüren Läuse eingenistet haben; denn die Kleiderlaus verdankt ihr Dasein nur der Unreinlichkeit. Wer z. B. sein Kleid selten wäscht oder es im Nachttau liegen läßt und wieder anzieht, bevor es getrocknet ist, wird mit Wahrscheinlichkeit Kleiderläuse bekommen. Manche trocknen ihre Zauberschnüre nach dem Bade nicht sorgfältig; es setzen sich dann Seife und Schmutz darin fest, und damit sind die Bedingungen für das Gedeihen der Kleiderlaus gegeben. Manche Menschen lassen sich von ihr die Vorderarme oft übel zurichten. Solch einem Züchter von Kleiderläusen wird von einem andern zuweilen ins Ohr gesagt: „Mein Freund, du hast eine Laus im Kleid.“ Hat er dagegen mit seinem Nachbar Streit, so benützt er diese Wahrnehmung zu seiner Beschimpfung und sagt: “Du bist ja kein Mensch, sondern ein Tier.”

Zerrissene Kleider tragen die Frauen häufig, um ihre Männer damit zu ärgern, weil sie so den Anschein erwecken, ihre Männer vernachlässigten sie. Geht die Frau in zerrissenen Kleidern umher, so ist das für den Mann deswegen eine Schande, weil er in diesem Fall unter der Frauenwelt als faul und pflichtvergessen besprochen wird. Man sagt: „Wäre der ein rechter Mann, so würde er seiner Frau auch die Kleider flicken.“

On cleanliness of clothing among the Ho people, Spieth notes that cleanliness was the norm – *Reinlichkeit der Kleider trifft man bei fast allen Hoern* (cleanliness of clothing can be found among almost all the people of Ho). *Fast allen* (almost/nearly all) gives the impression that although there might have been people who fell outside of the norm, the majority of the people followed this practice. The account follows with evidence of this practice as norm – *Ein Kleid wird etwa von Montag bis Freitag getragen, um dann von der Frau einer Wäsche unterzogen zu werden. Die Frau erhält dazu vom Manne die Seife* (a cloth is worn from Monday to Friday and is then washed by the woman/wife²⁴. The woman/wife obtains the soap from the man/husband²⁵). The timeframe of the wearing of cloth is given to show the length of time possibly considered by the author and his target audience as a reasonable enough time before clothes are washed. By following the introductory positive statement with the time frame, the account gives the impression that

²⁴ The German word translates to both ‘woman’ and ‘wife’ in English. ‘Wife’ is included in this section because there appears to be a spousal relationship as seen from other parts of Spieth’s account, which places some actions within this section example, cloth mending, within the spousal relationship.

²⁵ The German word translates to both ‘man’ and ‘husband’ in English.

Spieth finds the time frame reasonable enough before clothes are subjected to washing. The use of soap to wash the clothes as placed directly after these positive statements also seem to emphasize the notion of cleanliness. There is an acceptable ‘tool’ – *seife* (soap) – used to ensure cleanliness of clothing. The woman/wife obtaining the soap from the man/husband, however, introduces specific social agents in the practice of cloth cleaning – women/wives and men/husbands. All other social actors in the household are silenced. The reduction of the social players to only women/wives and men/husbands in the text does not give a full picture of the opening sentence – *almost all people of Ho*. The cleaning of clothes is also placed within a particular space – the marital space alone. The full picture of the reality in the Ho household is left unpainted in Spieth’s account.

Following the presentation of cleanliness of clothing among the Ho people, the account introduces a contrast – *jedoch* (however). This indicates that despite the positive statement given earlier, there is a contrast in the reality which is that, *Manche²⁶ sind jedoch nachlässig und lassen Wochen verstreichen, bis sie ihre Kleider waschen* (some are negligent and let weeks pass by before they wash their clothes). Instead of the five-day ‘acceptable’ period for cloth-washing, some people go for weeks without washing them. A number of people (*manche* – some) appear to break the norm on clean clothing, and the account spends some time explaining why in the ensuing sentences. Breaking the norm is *Darin liegt jedoch zuweilen Absicht* (sometimes, however, done intentionally), meaning that it is only on occasion (*zuweilen* – sometimes) that this is so, and when it is, it is done *absticht* (with intention). This appears to corroborate the inherent state of cleanliness of clothing among the people. The reasons for the deliberate dirty appearance of people are elaborated on in five lines. People²⁷ do it to obtain an expected end – to protect themselves from unwanted public attention, requests for money and from being bewitched by envious people (*Jemand, der oft seine Kleider wechselt, macht die Öffentlichkeit auf sich aufmerksam, wird oft um Geld angegangen und muß fürchten, von seinen Neidern verzaubert zu werden* – someone who changes his clothes often attracts public attention, is often approached for money and must fear being bewitched by envious people). Even though such people appear dirty, it is not real. It is a cover-up because *Manche gehen in schmutzigen Kleidern umher, um sich dadurch arm zu stellen*

²⁶ The published English translation genders this word by translating it as ‘many men’, thereby, narrowing the focus of the English text and painting a slightly different picture from the original German text.

²⁷ Same as above.

(many people walk/go about in dirty clothes pretending that they are poor) even though, in reality, they have nice clothing at home (*während sie in ihren Kleidersäcken zu Hause Samt und Seide haben* – while in their clothing bags at home they have velvets and silks). This gives the impression that they are not truly dirty people but are simply taking on the role for their own intents – they are the objects of other people’s malicious acts and are merely protecting themselves. Here, Spieth introduces the tensions between the rich and poor within Ho society. Both groups of people are perceived in different ways by society. The rich are respected and honoured (*der Reiche angesehen und geehrt ist*) while the poor have no significance in the public opinion (*wogegen der Arme in der öffentlichen Meinung nichts zu bedeuten hat*).

Although Spieth speaks in general terms about the state of cleanliness of clothing among the people of Ho, his focus on women/wives toward the end of the section is worthy of note. Spieth says nothing about women's cleanliness of clothing specifically. They would appear to follow the norm of ‘cleanliness of clothing among almost all people of Ho’. This idea is plausible as Spieth identifies them (women/wives) as the ones who take care of the cleaning of clothes. However, where he appears not to have anything bad to say about women’s cleanliness of clothing (bad because he does not shy away from presenting Ho women in a negative light in all the other sections under order and cleanliness i.e. clothing, bathing and personal hygiene), he introduces another failing unrelated to cleanliness – *zerrissene kleider* (torn clothes). So far, throughout this section, cleanliness is the only thing Spieth discusses. Spieth introducing women’s torn clothes seems to be an effort to still present Ho women in a negative light even when it appears there is nothing bad to say about them when discussing cleanliness of clothing. In terms of torn clothing, he identifies a reason why women fall short – *ihre Männer vernachlässigten sie ihre Männer vernachlässigten sie* (they like to give the impression that their husbands²⁸ neglect them). Here, Ho women appear malicious. They like to look unkempt because they want to make their husbands look bad even though they are not (they like to give the impression of neglect). They also disgrace the men because the latter are then seen as lazy/worthless and negligent of their duty/obligation when they dress this way (*Geht die Frau in zerrissenen Kleidern umher, so ist das für den Mann deswegen eine Schande, weil er in diesem Fall unter der Frauenwelt als faul und pflichtvergessen*

²⁸ Even though the German word *Männer* can mean both men and husbands, one can be sure Spieth is talking about husbands and wives here because he specifically states in the section under the ‘Economic Relationship of the Spouses’ that it is the husband’s responsibility to mend torn clothes.

besprochen wird). Giving an impression of neglect assumes that husbands do not do so in reality. The reason for the women's actions is not explored by Spieth. The picture painted in this account appears to make women malicious towards their husbands for no reason. Also, the use of the adverb *häufig* (often) in the opening sentence shows how frequently they do this – regularly. A certain characterization of men and women is seen here and in the other sections under order and cleanliness. Ho women somehow appear to be lacking in moral character as compared to their men. They are malicious whereas the men are not portrayed as such. Finally, it is in this part of the text that one finds the only duty of men regarding order and cleanliness in the household – mending clothes. Spieth does not, however, mention it directly like he outlines women's work in earlier paragraphs. The reader finds out about it in a roundabout way – *Man sagt: „Wäre der ein rechter Mann, so würde er seiner Frau auch die Kleider flicken.“* (One says, if he were a right/just husband, he would mend his wife's clothes). By phrasing it in this way, Spieth appears not to directly mention men's work using his own voice. It begs the question whether he himself acknowledged the role of men in the home in terms of order and cleanliness even though the above evidence from Ewe society appears to show this. Whatever it is, he does not present the work of Ewe men in the household in a direct manner where the man is the subject of actions pertaining to order and cleanliness. He maintains women as the key figures in the domestic space in this regard.

After presenting the norm of clean clothing among the Ewe in two and half lines, Spieth follows with a discussion on cloth lice. He devotes fourteen lines to discussing the matter. Here, he details the effects of unclean clothing which is cloth lice – *die Kleiderlaus verdankt ihr Dasein nur der Unreinlichkeit* (the cloth louse owes its existence only to uncleanliness). *Nur* (only) shows that there is no other reason for cloth lice. The sole reason is uncleanliness. When these cloth lice settle in clothing or magic cords for the arms, it is considered *Eine Schande* (a disgrace). This appears to be a reaction from the Ho people themselves and not Spieth's judgement from the example he gives in the following: *Solch einem Züchter von Kleiderläusen wird von einem andern*

zuweilen ins Ohr gesagt²⁹: “Mein Freund³⁰, du hast eine Laus im Kleid” (such a breeder of cloth lice sometimes has another whisper in their ear: “My friend, you have a louse in your cloth”). In instances where there are less cordial relations between two people, the disgrace of having cloth lice is used as a weapon of insult – *Hat er dagegen mit seinem Nachbar Streit, so benützt er diese Wahrnehmung zu seiner Beschimpfung und sagt: “Du bist ja kein Mensch, sondern ein Tier”* (If, however, one has a dispute with one’s neighbour, this [negative] perception is used to insult them by saying: “You are not a human being, but an animal/brute”). This appears to corroborate the introductory sentence that cleanliness of clothing is seen as the norm by the Ho people themselves. Anyone who departs from the norm loses the respect of the people, hence, their being regarded as not human. After detailing the effect of unclean clothing – settlement of cloth lice – Spieth goes further to give an example of how lice settle in unclean clothes. Whoever, for example, rarely washes his cloth (*Wer z. B. sein Kleid selten wäscht*) or leaves it in the night dew and wears it again before it dries (*oder es im Nachttau liegen läßt und wieder anzieht, bevor es getrocknet ist*) will very probably get cloth lice (*wird mit Wahrscheinlichkeit Kleiderläuse bekommen*). Although cleanliness of clothing is the norm, many people provide the right conditions for the accumulation of soap and dirt which leads to the settling and thriving of lice (*Manche trocknen ihre Zauberschnüre nach dem Bade nicht sorgfältig; es setzen sich dann Seife und Schmutz darin fest, und damit sind die Bedingungen für das Gedeihen der Kleiderlaus gegeben* – some people do not dry their magic cords carefully after bathing; soap and dirt then settle in them, and this creates the conditions for the body lice to thrive). These elaborations of unclean clothing are followed by a random addition – *Manche Menschen lassen sich von ihr die Vorderarme oft übel zurichten* (some people often leave their forearms in a bad state). In this sentence, it is understood that a number of people have the habit of leaving their forearms in a state that is unpleasant or unacceptable to Spieth and his target audience. There is no evidence in the rest of the account that this ‘bad state’ is perceived similarly by the people of Ho. Spieth’s evaluative voice is seen here and his personal judgement of the state of Ho people’s forearms is evident. Nothing more is said about the state of

²⁹ The reference to the whispering of this piece of information into the offending person’s ears in the German version shows the disgrace/embarrassment associated with having cloth lice and the subtle attempt to draw the offender’s attention to it. This subtlety is missing in the published English translation which makes it sound more antagonistic than intended in the original German.

³⁰ The addition of the phrase ‘*mein Freund*’ (my friend) when addressing the offending party further shows the respectful nature of the approach in the original German version. This is missing in the published English translation which, again, makes it sound more antagonistic than in the original German.

the forearms and how it is related to cloth lice. It is assumed that a person who leaves their forearms in such a state contributes to the thriving of cloth lice judging from the sentence that follows it – *Solch einem Züchter von Kleiderläusen* (such a breeder of cloth lice). The assumption here is that whoever has their forearms in a bad state also breeds cloth lice. These people are told from time to time (*zuweilen* – sometimes) about the fact that they have lice in their clothing, however, the statement of fact takes on a malicious turn when the person is in a quarrel with another person. These people are no longer considered human beings. They are insulted and reduced to the level of animals. This reduction is deduced from the fact that the application of this saying is to cause offense to the listener. It appears from this statement that, even though clean clothes were the norm among the people of Ho, and having cloth lice was seen as a disgrace, the people who fell short of the expectation had their attention called to it, presumably to address it. It was, however, used as a tool for offense when there was bad blood between the person and another. A fact becomes a weapon depending on the situation. This subsection is interesting because even though Spieth states in the beginning that the norm is cleanliness of clothing, he barely spends three lines describing the norm in detail. He spends twenty-two lines on the exception placing the norm in the background while highlighting dirt and uncleanness. Five lines are dedicated, for example, to elaborating on the claim of unclean clothes through an example. The same grace is not given the norm which is cleanliness of clothes. As a reader, the primary image taken away, at least personally, after reading the account becomes dirt and uncleanness and not the norm of cleanliness.

c. *Badeplätze (Bathing Places)*

Badeplätze sind zwar an jedem Hause; doch macht sich ein großer Mangel an sittlichem Empfinden gerade hier geltend. In manchen Gehöften ist der Badeplatz mit einem dichten Zaun vor den Blicken der Außenwelt abgeschlossen. Das gehört jedoch zur Ausnahme. Das gewöhnliche ist, daß sich der Badende hinter das Haus zurückzieht. Häufig baden sich auch Groß und Klein mitten im Gehöfte ohne jeglichen Schutz nach außen. Die Wasserplätze waren bisher da, wo die öffentlichen Wege den Fluß kreuzen. Ehe die Frauen ihr Wasser schöpfen, pflegen sie sich mit großer Ungeniertheit zu baden. Von diesen öffentlichen Badeplätzen kommt viel sittliches Unheil her, und es ist ein Verdienst der deutschen Regierung, daß sie diese anstößigen Einrichtungen nach Kräften verbietet. Gerade von dort her sind die Frauen genau

unterrichtet über Körperschönheit und Perlenreichtum der andern. Diese ihre Kenntnisse benützen sie aber, um sich gegenseitig zu beschimpfen und weh zu tun. Der Neid der Ärmeren gegen die Reichen wächst dadurch, und die eine sagt etwa zu der andern: „Meinst du vielleicht, wegen deiner Kleider und Schmucksachen seiest du mehr als ich?“ Umgekehrt beschimpft etwa die Reiche die Arme: „Habe ich vielleicht etwas von dir entlehnt? Hast du mir vielleicht Kleider oder Schmuck gegeben?“ Bei derartigen Streitereien kommt es sogar bis zum Eidschwur. Die Beleidigte schwört und sagt: „.... Die beschimpft mich in meinen Kleidern, wohlan, laßt sehen, wer von uns beiden die Schönste oder die Häßlichste ist!“ Der Eid ist geschworen, und beide stellen sich einem Gericht, das aus dem Sprecher, sowie aus dem Manne besteht, vor dem der Eid abgelegt wurde. Sie müssen dann ihr Urteil abgeben, welche von beiden Frauen die Schöner sei.

Spieth begins this section with a positive statement of what each house possesses in terms of the facilities meant for promoting cleanliness/hygiene – *Badeplätze* (bathing places). He states that *Badeplätze sind zwar an jedem Hause* (Bathing places/areas are indeed found in each house). The use of the adverb *zwar* (indeed, truly, of course) appears to emphasize the availability of bathing places in Ho homes. There is no doubt of their existence. Spieth follows the sentence with one laden with negatives. The adverb *doch* (however/yet/nevertheless) foreshadows the introduction of a negative phenomenon or practice after the introductory positive statement – *doch macht sich ein großer Mangel an sittlichem Empfinden gerade hier geltend* (however, a great lack of moral consciousness becomes clear especially here). First of all, Spieth writes in a way that finds the level of moral consciousness among the people of Ho problematic. He introduces a few words that highlight the extent of the ‘negative’ state of affairs. He qualifies the noun – *Mangel* (lack), which in itself is a negative perception, with the adjective *großer* (great, large, huge) to show the extent to which he views poorly the moral consciousness of the Ewe people. The word *gerade* (especially) also further emphasizes the extent of his negative view of the people. He continues with what would appear to be a ‘positive’ feature of the people’s bathing – it is a private affair. In the ensuing sentences, one may deduce Spieth and his target audience’s thoughts on where bathing should take place. In the sentence *In manchen Gehöften ist der Badeplatz mit einem dichten Zaun vor den Blicken der Außenwelt abgeschlossen*, Spieth shows that in many Ho compounds, the bathing places are cut off from public view/the outside world by a thick fence.

This is, however, an exception (*Das gehört jedoch zur Ausnahme*). The norm (*Das gewöhnliche*) is for the bathing person (*der badende*) to withdraw to the back of the house to bathe (*hinter das Haus zurückzieht*). Aside from this, people – both old and young (*Groß und Klein*) – also often (*häufig*) bathe in the middle of the compound without any protection from the outside world/public (*baden sich auch Groß und Klein mitten im Gehöfte ohne jeglichen Schutz nach außen*). Spieth recognizes that in a lot of compounds, the bathing place is within a private space, but he also shows that it is not the norm. He uses the adverb *jedoch* (however) to show that despite the previously mentioned occurrence, one does not expect to observe private bathing spaces as the norm. Instead, the more common practice (*das gewöhnliche*) is for bathing to take place behind the house. In several other cases also, bathing takes place in the middle of the compound, and this is done without thought to age – both the old and young do it. The actions of adults and children are placed on the same level. Spieth’s singling out of specific groups of people – old and young – without lumping them all together by the use of a general term like ‘people’, appears to provide a certain expectation that different behaviours might have been expected from the different groups. Public nakedness, for his target audience, for example, might have been more easily acceptable in children than in adults. In any case, Spieth mentions the two groups and shows that they both exhibit the same behaviour in bathing. The phrase ‘without any protection against the outside world/public’ also appears to demonstrate Spieth’s expectation of bathing practices – that bathing is a private activity and that there should be some protection from others observing the activity. It would appear he writes from a perceived norm as the starting point for his discussions on bathing in Ho. It would also explain why he starts his account by positioning the phrase in the introductory sentence of his account. It is only when he sets this standard as the (his) understood norm that he follows that this is an exception. One would expect the norm in the place being described to be the starting point after which exceptions are recounted. His emphasis on protection from the outside world while bathing in the introductory and closing sentences on bathing in the household seem to demonstrate his personal beliefs, and possibly those of his target audience, about where bathing should take place. Additionally, his use of the adjective *dicht* (thick) to qualify the noun *Zaun* (fence) appears to further reinforce the idea that others need not observe the act of bathing. This idea is again seen in his follow-up sentences:

Die Wasserplätze waren bisher da, wo die öffentlichen Wege den Fluß kreuzen. Ehe die Frauen ihr Wasser schöpfen, pflegen sie sich mit großer Ungenietherheit zu baden. Von diesen öffentlichen Badeplätzen kommt viel sittliches Unheil her, und es ist ein Verdienst

der deutschen Regierung, daß sie diese anstößigen Einrichtungen nach Kräften verbietet. Gerade von dort her sind die Frauen genau unterrichtet über Körperschönheit und Perlenreichtum der andern.

Spieth addresses the public nature of the water places where Ho women take their baths. These water places (*Die Wasserplätze*) were, until the time of Spieth's writing (*waren bisher da*), where the public road/path and the river crossed/intersected (*wo die öffentlichen Wege den Fluß kreuzen*). Here, in this public area with foot traffic, is where Ho women take their baths before they draw water (*Ehe die Frauen ihr Wasser schöpfen*) for other uses. Spieth's challenge with the public nature of women's bathing is seen when he mentions the *großer Ungeniertheit* (great shamelessness) with which the women bathe in this public space. It seems such an act should carry with it a negative sentiment – shame – which the women do not have. He adds that these public places cause problems because they promote unhealthy morals (*Von diesen öffentlichen Badeplätzen kommt viel sittliches Unheil*). The addition of the adjective *viel* (much) demonstrates the supposed level of negative morality these places promote in Spieth and his target audience's view. Spieth credits the German government (*es ist ein Verdienst der deutschen Regierung*) for forbidding these offensive facilities as much as possible (*daß sie diese anstößigen Einrichtungen nach Kräften verbietet*). Here, one gets the impression that the Ho women themselves are either ignorant of the negative effects of their actions or refuse to proactively take any action to end it. It is, thus, important for an external actor – the German government – to step in and put an end to it. The idea of Ho women's ignorance is made even clearer because it appears that it is only through the work of the German government that they learn about bodily beauty and the ornaments (pearls) of others (*Gerade von dort her sind die Frauen genau unterrichtet über Körperschönheit und Perlenreichtum der andern*). They appear not to have known this before the arrival of the Germans. This highlights the idea of the 'ignorant' African in contrast with the 'more knowledgeable' European. It also highlights the idea of the 'inferiority' of African ways as compared to the 'more superior' European ways.

Diese ihre Kenntnisse benützen sie aber, um sich gegenseitig zu beschimpfen und weh zu tun. Der Neid der Ärmeren gegen die Reichen wächst dadurch, und die eine sagt etwa zu der andern: „Meinst du vielleicht, wegen deiner Kleider und Schmucksachen seiest du mehr als ich?“ Umgekehrt beschimpft etwa die Reiche die Arme: „Habe ich vielleicht etwas von dir entlehnt? Hast du mir vielleicht Kleider oder Schmuck gegeben?“ Bei derartigen Streitereien kommt es sogar bis zum Eidschwur. Die Beleidigte schwört und sagt: „.... Die beschimpft mich in meinen Kleidern, wohlan, laßt sehen, wer von uns beiden die Schönste oder die Häßlichste ist!“ Der Eid ist geschworen, und beide stellen sich einem

Gericht, das aus dem Sprecher, sowie aus dem Manne besteht, vor dem der Eid abgelegt wurde. Sie müssen dann ihr Urteil abgeben, welche von beiden Frauen die Schöner sei.

Even after obtaining ‘superior’ German knowledge, it appears Ho women are still somehow ‘lacking in character’. Instead of using this knowledge in a way that Spieth approves of and finds befitting, they use it differently and in a negative way – *Diese ihre Kenntnisse benützen sie aber, um sich gegenseitig zu beschimpfen und weh zu tun* (they use their knowledge, however, to insult and hurt each other). The verb ‘use’ (*benützen*) appears to imply an intentional active action meant to obtain a particular outcome. The Ewe women use access to German knowledge to purposely cause negative outcomes for each other. Another negative emotion is introduced as a result of the spreading of German knowledge on beauty and ornaments among Ewe women – *Neid* (envy). Here, Spieth introduces two groups of women – the rich and the poor (*Ärmeren, Reichen*) – and the animosity between them because of access to German knowledge. Particularly, the poor appear to already have an existing jealousy against the rich. Access to Western knowledge only increases this jealousy – *Der Neid der Ärmeren gegen die Reichen wächst dadurch* (the jealousy of the poor against the rich grows through that). The ensuing phrase *und die eine sagt etwa zu der andern* (and one says to another) appears to be the resultant conversation demonstrating the jealousy between the poor and rich. The statement *Meinst du vielleicht, wegen deiner Kleider und Schmucksachen seiest du mehr als ich?* (Do you think that because of your clothes and jewellery you are better than I?), although not specifically attributed to the poor woman appears to be from her. This is validated by the following statement – *Umgekehrt beschimpft etwa die Reiche die Arme* (conversely, the rich insults the poor). The rich woman replies by ‘insulting’ the poor woman. Jealousy is attributed to the poor whereas insults are hurled by the rich and both lead to bickering³¹ (*Streitereien*) among Ho women. Without the introduction of Western knowledge about clothing and ornaments, it appears this specific reason for the bickering between rich and poor women would be inexistent or, at least, reduced. And these vices are only present because of how negatively Ewe women choose to use the information they receive about the beauty and ornaments of others. The bickering between the rich and the poor appear to be serious enough to escalate to a point where execrations/curses³² are involved – *Bei derartigen Streitereien kommt es sogar bis*

³¹ The published English translation uses the term ‘quarreling’ but the German term connotes a more pejorative meaning hence the choice of the word ‘bickering’ in this work.

³² This is an archaic German word for execration/curse which is no longer used in the same light. Today, the word is understood as ‘to swear’ as in ‘swearing an oath’.

zum Eidschwur (such bickering even results in the placing of execrations/curses). The use of the adverb *sogar* (even) seems to convey the idea that the outcome of the bickering is serious enough to lead to extreme ends. It escalates to the point where a third and neutral party is needed to judge who, between the two women, is more beautiful – *beide stellen sich einem Gericht, das aus dem Sprecher, sowie aus dem Manne besteht, vor dem der Eid abgelegt wurde. Sie müssen dann ihr Urteil abgeben, welche von beiden Frauen die Schönere sei* (An oath is sworn, and both face a court consisting of the speaker and the man before whom the oath was taken. They must then give their verdict as to which of the two women is the more beautiful). Spieth seems to produce an account where German beauty standards are superior to Ewe beauty standards. Yet, it appears that the social practice places both on the same level with the ability for one to judge individually which is better. The struggle of power between the classes appears apparent and being rich is not an automatic claim to power in Ho society in this regard.

d. Körperpflege (Personal Hygiene)

Die Körperpflege läßt manches zu wünschen übrig. Männer, Frauen und Kinder baden häufig. Für die Reinlichkeit der Haare trägt der Mann mehr Sorge als die Frau. Die Frauen machen sich häufig in ihren Hütten, sowie auf offener Straße vom Ungeziefer frei. Oft kann man beobachten, daß Frauen, die ein Kopftuch tragen, statt in den Haaren zu kratzen mit dem Knöchel der linken Hand nach der Stelle schlagen, wo es sie beißt. Die Ursache ist bei ihnen Mangel an genügender Haarpflege. Schweiß, Staub und dergl. bleiben oft nicht nur Wochen, sondern sogar Monate hindurch im Haar sitzen. Hat sich eine Frau heute einmal gründlich die Haare geordnet, so vergehen bei manchen wieder zwei bis drei Monate, bis sie es wiederholt, und natürlich sind die Haare inzwischen ein eigentliches Brutnest von Ungeziefer geworden. Andere bekommen das Ungeziefer auch von der Nachbarin, die ihr die Haare ordnet. Fällt der einen eine Laus aus dem Haar in das der andern, so sind dort alle Bedingungen vorhanden, unter welchen eine Nachzucht gedeihen kann. Plagt sie einmal das Ungeziefer zu sehr, so lassen sie sich die Haare sehr kurz abschneiden. Jemand, der auf sein Äußeres etwas hält, badet zweimal am Tag. Ist dagegen jemand in Trauer versetzt, so badet er mehrere Tage hindurch gar nicht und nimmt auch keine Speise zu sich.

Spieth's position on the state of personal hygiene among the Ho people is immediately seen in the opening sentence. The maintenance of personal hygiene is not done to his and his reading audience's standard because it *läßt manches zu wünschen übrig* (leaves much to be desired). He continues by stating that everyone (*Männer, Frauen und Kinder* – men, women and children) bathes often (*baden häufig*) even though he does not specify what the normal frequency is. He, however, states later in the second paragraph that *Jemand, der auf sein Äußeres etwas hält, badet zweimal am Tag* (someone who cares about his appearance bathes twice a day). It would appear that even though Ho people bathed often, it was likely not twice a day since Spieth clearly shows his disapproval of the (ir)regularity of their bathing. Immediately after his opening statements, Spieth makes a gendered analysis by stating that *Für die Reinlichkeit der Haare trägt der Mann mehr Sorge als die Frau* (the man takes better care of his hair than the woman). He does not provide any supporting information to back his claim. In fact, after this statement, his account mainly focuses on the women and how they fall below his perceived standard of hygiene. Throughout the three paragraphs dedicated to personal hygiene, Spieth addresses men's hygiene once, as seen in the preceding comment about their care of the hair. He gives no examples to concretely show how the men care more about the cleanliness of the hair than women. It is left to the reader to take Spieth's claims as the truth without any evidence. The rest of the first and second paragraphs focus on women's (poor) hygiene while the third paragraph focuses on the care of the hands and teeth within the general population. On women's hygiene, Spieth suggests the *Mangel an genügender Haarpflege* (lack of sufficient care of the hair) which causes an accumulation of *Schweiß, Staub und dergl* (sweat, dust and the like). These, in turn, cause the hair to itch. This accumulation happens *oft* (often/frequently) and over a long period of time – *nicht nur Wochen*³³, *sondern sogar Monate hindurch* (not only for weeks, but for months on end). 'Not only ... but' seems to give the impression that leaving one's hair uncared for may be forgivable for a shorter period (weeks), but that the idea of months on end appears excessive. He clarifies that it takes two to three months for a woman to 'thoroughly tidy her hair' after doing it once before (*Hat sich eine Frau heute einmal gründlich die Haare geordnet, so vergehen bei manchen wieder zwei bis drei Monate, bis sie es wiederholt* – If a woman thoroughly tidies her hair today [once], two to three months pass before some repeat the process). The use of the adverb *gründlich* (thoroughly)

³³ The English version translates *Wochen* as days and not weeks, which does not give the right duration of time used in the original German version.

assumes different standards in tidying the hair/hair care. It also suggests that women may be engaging in other levels of hair care at other times. The detailed cleaning (whatever that looks like) takes place every two to three months. Spieth does not address the other levels of hair tidying which causes one to assume that this level of ‘thorough’ cleaning is what he considers the standard which is unmet by Ho women. The reason might be because, during the two to three-month interval, *natürlich* (of course/naturally), the hair becomes a breeding ground for vermin (*die Haare inzwischen ein eigentliches Brutnest von Ungeziefer geworden*). This breeding of vermin (lice) by one person leads to the spread of lice in the wider community – *Andere bekommen das Ungeziefer auch von der Nachbarin, die ihr die Haare ordnet* (Others get the vermin from their neighbours in the process of getting their hair done by them). The spread is possible because the others also have the right conditions for lice to breed and thrive – *Fällt der einen eine Laus aus dem Haar in das der andern, so sind dort alle Bedingungen vorhanden, unter welchen eine Nachzucht gedeihen kann* (If a louse falls from one person’s hair into another’s, all the conditions under which the louse can thrive may be found there). Interestingly, only women pass the lice on to each other. Spieth makes no mention of men or children having lice and if/how lice are spread from them to the others. The focus on women, again, appears to present them as the key breeders and transmitters of bodily dirt and uncleanness without much mention of how the other actors in the home may be participating in the process. The following sentence does little to change this perception – *Oft kann man beobachten, daß Frauen, die ein Kopftuch tragen, statt in den Haaren zu kratzen mit dem Knöchel der linken Hand nach der Stelle schlagen, wo es sie beißt* (often, one can observe that women wearing a head scarf, instead of scratching their hair, hit the spot where it itches with the knuckle of their left hand). The picture one obtains from this, and previous sentences, is that Ho women breed vermin. They are typically unbothered by the activities of the vermin and can live with them until such a time where it becomes unbearable. At this time, they finally cut the hair – *Plagt sie einmal das Ungeziefer zu sehr, so lassen sie sich die Haare sehr kurz abschneiden* (once the vermin begin to bother her too much, she cuts the hair very short). If the vermin do not bother her too much, it appears she is able to accommodate the lice and gets by by scratching her head. The paragraph ends with the appropriate number of times a person who observes good personal hygiene bathes a day – *zweimal am Tag* (twice a day), and ends with when an exemption from bathing is made – *in Trauer* (during mourning). During mourning, a person neither bathes

nor eats food for several days (*Ist dagegen jemand in Trauer versetzt, so badet er mehrere Tage hindurch gar nicht und nimmt auch keine Speise zu sich*).

Auf Reinlichkeit der Hände wird viel gehalten, doch erfahren dieselben eine ungleiche Pflege. Die rechte oder "Eßhand" darf nichts Unreines anrühren. Alle Arbeiten, die das Reinlichkeitsgefühl verletzen, werden mit der linken Hand besorgt. Diese heißt deswegen auch miësi oder asinyagë, d. h. die Hand, die das Häßliche besorgen muß. Vor und nach dem Essen wird die rechte Hand sorgfältig gewaschen, weil ja sie dem Munde die Speise zuführen muß. Unter den Fingernägeln der rechten Hand wird man selten Schmutz finden.

Die Pflege des Mundes wird von vielen peinlich genau besorgt. Dieselbe besteht darin, daß der Mund nach dem Essen mit Wasser ausgespült wird. Dazu kommt dann noch, daß die Zähne mit einem kurzen Holze gescheuert werden,') dessen eines Ende pinselförmig breitgekaut wird. Noch andere, die weniger sorgfältig sind, reinigen die Zähne mit den Fingern oder mit dem nassen Badelappen.

The last paragraph addresses the care of the hands and mouth among the people of Ho. In this paragraph, Spieth deviates from his negative outlook on personal hygiene and comments on the cleanliness of the hands and mouth. Although Spieth focuses greatly on women's failings in the care of the body and clothes in the previous subsections, here, where he appears to tell a positive story of cleanliness among the people, a specific reference to women is absent. The story becomes one of the people of Ho in general. The cleanliness of hands and the care of the mouth can be attributed to anyone in the population. The sentence begins on a positive note – *Auf Reinlichkeit der Hände wird viel gehalten* (cleanliness of the hand is very important). By using *viel* (much) to describe the attention given to the cleanliness of the hands, the idea gathered from Spieth's writing is that this is beyond the average he knows or is used to. Here too, even though not mentioned explicitly, it possibly reflects the position of the writer and his target audience. It would be interesting to know if the people of Ho saw this as special or as a normal part of their cleanliness routine. In any case, the account is presented as though this focus is beyond the 'normal' average. Immediately after his introductory positive sentence, a contrastive one follows – *doch erfahren dieselben eine ungleiche Pflege* (yet/however these same [hands] experience unequal care). This phrase demonstrates that even though the hands have been treated in a positive way so far, the very

hands can be perceived in a way that is not necessarily so. In this case, it is the ‘unequal treatment’ of the hands. Again, this suggests reference to a worldview that holds that the hands should be treated in a certain way – equally (as defined by Spieth and his target audience). In the present case, the right hand appears to be given better treatment than the left because it is meant for eating and must not touch any unclean thing (*Die rechte oder “Eßhand” darf nichts Unreines anrühren* – the right or ‘eating’ hand must not touch any unclean thing) while the latter is used for everything that is considered unclean (*Alle Arbeiten, die das Reinlichkeitsgefühl verletzen, werden mit der linken Hand besorgt* – all works that violate the sense of cleanliness is taken care of by the left hand). This last sentence is interesting and worth further exploration. Spieth begins this section with the ‘poor’ state of personal hygiene among the people of Ho (women specifically). In previous paragraphs also, he writes as though the people do not care much about personal hygiene and the care of the body and clothes. Yet, the statement ‘all works that violate the sense of cleanliness’ is intriguing. It appears there is an internal standard of cleanliness among the people. It just seems to fall short of Spieth and his target audience’s own norms or standards and begs the question whether Spieth was really objective in his writing and if he indeed painted “a true and authentic picture of the Ewe people” as described by Anyidoho and Adjei (2011). His discussion on the state of the people’s hands ends with a description of the careful care of the right hand – *Vor und nach dem Essen wird die rechte Hand sorgfältig gewaschen* (before and after meals the right hand is washed carefully). Spieth attributes the reason for the careful care of the hands to its role in eating – *weil ja sie dem Munde die Speise zuführen muß* (because it must bring food to the mouth). However, this only considers the stage before eating and not the one after. Again, a partial picture is given. Because of this careful care of the right hand, however, *Unter den Fingernägeln der rechten Hand wird man selten Schmutz finden* (one rarely finds dirt under the fingernails of the right hand). After commenting on the treatment of the hands, Spieth dedicates four lines to discussing the care of the mouth. Here, too, he finds that *Die Pflege des Mundes wird von vielen peinlich genau besorgt* (the care of the mouth is meticulously taken care of by many) and this is evidenced by the fact that *der Mund nach dem Essen mit Wasser ausgespült wird* (the mouth is rinsed with water after eating). Also *die Zähne mit einem kurzen Holze gescheuert werden* (the teeth are scrubbed with a short piece of wood). The follow-up sentence shows that any type of cleaning that falls short of the previously mentioned format is considered less meticulous – *weniger sorgfältig*. The other forms of cleaning the mouth – *reinigen die Zähne mit den Fingern oder mit dem nassen Badelappen*

(cleaning the teeth with the fingers or with a wet bath cloth) – are considered less than, and people who use these forms are seen as less meticulous (... *andere, die weniger sorgfältig sind* – others who are less careful). In Spieth's treatment of clothing, cleanliness of clothing, bathing places and personal hygiene, it is only here, under the care of the hands and mouth, that the reader experiences an almost fully positive view of the practices of the people of Ho. It is still, however, not written without the usual introduction of some level of negative evaluation based on Spieth's presentation of the matter.

iv. How Spieth portrayed the colonial Ewe subject

Spieth's work paints a mostly negative picture of nineteenth century Ho culture with regard to clothing, cleanliness of clothing, bathing and personal hygiene. As the 19th century Ho proverb illustrates, *tsiamee gbã du, eya kee dɔne do* (the chief's linguist can ruin a town, but can also restore it to favour), meaning an unreasonable chief's linguist can cause a lot of damage but a reasonable chief's linguist can contribute just as much. As the 'linguist' of the Ewe people who translated their culture to his European audience, Spieth's work did a lot of harm because of the way he portrayed the people. Spieth's account appears to paint a picture of the state of 'undress' among the Ewe people. His account paints a vivid picture of the 'inadequacy' and 'narrowness' of the people of Ho's clothing. He also refers to this state of 'undress' when discussing the bathing practices of the people. Through his writings, we see the disapproving manner in which he evaluates the 'naked' Ewe body in public spaces. This disapproval is particularly gendered as Spieth focuses more on the naked Ewe woman. He also specifically addresses 'nakedness' among the adult population and hardly addresses children's clothes. Additionally, he writes in a manner that makes the people appear unaware of their state of 'undress'. Because of that, they do not demonstrate the necessary shame and embarrassment such a 'state' should produce. The people of Ho, thus, fall short of some perceived standard regarding clothing and the state of the body in public spaces. The manner in which Spieth writes also portrays the state of hygiene in Ho as problematic. Many of the people are supposedly dirty and do not practice 'proper' personal hygiene even though Spieth admits that a certain standard of cleanliness is observed. Ho women, in particular, appear dirtier than their male counterparts. Lice, vermin and dirt feature prominently in these presumed substandard practices of cleanliness and hygiene even though the use of soap appears to demonstrate the people's knowledge of some hygiene practices. The 'scrupulous' care

of the mouth and hands, however, shows that the Ewe people have some knowledge of good hygiene practices as perceived by Spieth. Although Spieth does not pointedly set out to speak about marriage, family and gender, these themes play a very important role in how he writes about the people. The domestic space he writes about is founded on marriage. Wives and husbands are the visible actors with children appearing from time to time in a passive way. Wives, however, appear as the primary actors within the domestic space of the family. Other actors are not mentioned at all. One obtains no insight into how any of these other actors functioned within the domestic space with regard to cleanliness and hygiene. The gendered nature of the domestic space shows the differences between Ho men and women. Ho men appear more rational and of better character than their female counterparts. This difference is not only between Ho men and women but between Ho women and European women as well. European women's ways are spoken of as superior to Ho women's. They have superior beauty standards and ornaments. Among Ho women themselves, there are differences as the tensions between poor women and rich women are visible. This class difference is also perceivable between rich Ho men and poor Ho men. Gender and race, gender and class, and race and class are visible and appear to intersect in different ways. All in all, even though Spieth specifically writes about order and cleanliness in the Ewe home, he inadvertently broaches the subjects of gender, race and class and shows the various intersections between them. Religious difference, even though not outrightly stated, may be gleaned from how Spieth writes about the morality of his Ewe subjects as well. In any case, the perceived differences pertaining to race, gender, religion and to a lesser extent, class play an important role in the productions around order and cleanliness in the colonies during the colonial period. These productions were informed by the existing discourses and social practices of their times as well as by the target audience of the productions. Chapter 6 will elaborate on this further.

v. *Other Critical Observations*

Although more detailed textual analyses have been done above, interesting observations may also be made about Spieth's account in general. Firstly, considering the structuring of his writing, the following may be seen. Under family life, it has already been stated that the section was divided into two – order and cleanliness, and housework. What is curious here is that Spieth classifies a lot of women's housework under 'order and cleanliness' while men and children's housework is classified under 'housework'. Indeed, he begins the section under order and

cleanliness as follows: “*Die häusliche Ordnung und Reinlichkeit hängt wie bei uns, so auch in Ho von der Tüchtigkeit der Frau ab*” (Domestic order and cleanliness in Ho depend, as with us³⁴, on the abilities/competence of the woman) (1906, p. 230). Immediately, one observes gender lines being drawn. The significance of this observation is not to dispute the role of Ewe women in the domestic space in terms of order and cleanliness. It is to question the reduction of the other social actors within this space and the classification of their work in different ways. Women are placed at the center of activities around order and cleanliness in the home and are the active agents that make them happen. They clean the clothes, beds and living places, hearth, cooking utensils and dishes. The activities of men and children are hardly mentioned under order and cleanliness. They are placed under the ‘housework’ section. When the work of men is mentioned under order and cleanliness, it is done in a brief and indirect way with the primary focus on the activities of the women. One deduces that the mending of torn clothes is the work of men after a lengthier discussion on women’s (malicious) activities. This has been discussed in previous paragraphs. Ho men’s domestic responsibilities are discussed under housework as follows:

Die häuslichen Arbeiten des Mannes sind verschiedener Art (the domestic work/housework of men is of different kinds). *Er muß zuweilen das Dach decken, den Zaun flicken oder sonst an dem Hause etwas in Ordnung bringen* (he must sometimes cover the roof, mend/fix the fence or otherwise bring/put the house in shape/order). *Zu Hause beschäftigt er sich aber hauptsächlich mit Weben, Färben, Garnzetteln und dergl* ([when] at home, however, he keeps busy by [engaging in] weaving, dyeing, yarn designing/warping and the like). *Manche verstehen sich auf etwas Sattlerarbeiten, nähen Sandalen, Messerscheiden, Patronentaschen und dergl* (many are skilled in saddlework, sewing sandals, knife sheaths, making bags for bullets and the like). *Andere wiederum flechten Körbe und Matten* (others on the other hand weave baskets and mats). (p. 238)

About children Spieth writes, *Die Kinder fangen schon sehr frühe an, ihren Eltern zu helfen* (children start helping out their parents at a very early age). *Der Knabe muß des Abends die Schafe und Ziegen einfangen und sie im Gehöfte an den Strick legen* (In the evenings, the boy must catch the sheep and goats and tie them up with ropes in the compound) (p. 238). A few ideas may be explored under this. Firstly, Spieth’s placing of men’s work outside of the maintenance of order and cleanliness begs the question – did men’s housework not contribute to order and cleanliness in the home? Did thatching the roof, mending the fence and bringing the house into shape

³⁴ Spieth’s use of the pronoun ‘we’ shows clearly how he is addressing a particular kind of reader that he identifies with (an inclusive we) and to whose prior shared knowledge he appeals -- i.e. he is clearly not writing for a "neutral" or "timeless" reader, and this influences the way he presents the people of Ho in his work.

(whatever that may mean) not contribute to the maintenance of order and cleanliness? Why does Spieth not deem these activities worthy enough to fit under order and cleanliness? It becomes even more difficult for the reader to consider these questions in detail because Spieth does a good job of providing very limited information about the details of men's housework. Whereas he dedicates paragraphs to discussing women's work (the section on maintaining the dwelling place, cooking utensil and dishes, for instance, is described in detail in three paragraphs), Spieth does not make much of an effort to elaborate on the different steps involved in the implementation of men's housework. He only names them. Even there, he mentions a few and finishes off with 'and the like'. Spieth clearly refuses to engage much with men's housework here. Interestingly, although he mentions these few activities as housework, he discusses them more fully under Ho economic life even when the products of some of these activities were meant for the home and not for economic consumption. Even the mending of clothes, which comes up briefly and indirectly under order and cleanliness, is discussed more fully elsewhere under "the economic relationship of the spouses" – *die wirtschaftlichen Beziehungen der Ehegatten* (pp. 191-192).

Regarding the other social actors in the home – children – Spieth again refers to them in passing. He states that they help their parents, but he does not elaborate further. Elsewhere in the ethnographic account under the upbringing of children (pp. 208-210), however, Spieth shows how the girl child's work (he does not specifically state housework in the title) includes learning farm work, making the fire at home, washing the cooking pots and putting water on the hearth, helping to cook, fetching water, washing clothes, mopping the floor, removing seeds from cotton, roasting and grinding maize, looking after little siblings and taking care of the household in the absence of the mother. How often the mother is absent for her to do this is not discussed, however, many of these tasks fall under what Spieth addresses under order and cleanliness in the home. The boy is not given any specific tasks in early childhood according to Spieth. As he grows, he learns to farm for domestic consumption and for economic purposes and weaves clothes for his mother and father. He also cares for his sick mother in the absence of a daughter by fetching water (which is used for bathing and cleaning) and cooking³⁵ for her. Spieth discusses these activities under order and cleanliness. Also, although a boy's work is seen as generally less domestic except in specific cases, he ordinarily also weaves and contributes to clothing his parents. Clothes, their description

³⁵ Mealtimes are discussed elsewhere under Order and Cleanliness but are not the focus of this work.

and the ways in which they are worn and cleaned, feature in Spieth's writing on order and cleanliness in the home. The presence of other social actors in the maintenance of order and cleanliness in the home is obvious. Yet, Spieth does not focus on them. He places the woman as the sole visible social actor in the maintenance of order and cleanliness in his writing. By doing so, he highlights and obscures different actors within the domestic space which produces a particular story about Ho family life.

Finally, to analyze Spieth's work using Fairclough's approach to textual analysis, one must, in addition to studying the use of vocabulary, semantics and grammar which has hopefully been done above, also conduct an analysis of assumptions, evaluation and difference. Some of the assumptions have already been addressed, i.e. assumptions about the norms around dressing, cleanliness, gender and public and private spaces. Spieth's assumptions influence his presentation of the people of Ho in an evaluative way where the actions of the people are largely negative, undesirable and fall short of his and his target audience's standards. Occupying a position where such evaluations are possible highlights the power wielded by the author. It falls excellently within Said (1978/79)'s postulation about the power differentials between the colonizer and the colonized in terms of the representation of the latter. Because of this, and according to Fairclough's approach, Spieth's orientation towards difference is one of an accentuation of difference. Spieth does not appear open to or accepting of Ho difference, neither does he attempt to resolve or overcome difference or bracket difference by focusing on the commonality between him and the people. Instead, he accentuates the difference and demonstrates how vastly dissimilar the Ho people are to him and his target audience. Regarding the place of intertextuality as discussed by Fairclough, one perceives the voices that are included and excluded in the account. Spieth's voice/position is seen as the main one while not much is seen in terms of the voices of the people he wrote about and their perception and understanding of the social practices around them. In this way, the voice of the colonized is silenced and the authorial colonizer voice supersedes it. This is limiting and does not present a full understanding of Ho social life. It is for this reason that it is important to obtain a people's understanding of the world from their perspective(s) when representing them in writing.

TA ADELIA (CHAPTER 6)

FAIRCLOUGH'S CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS II: SITUATING SPIETH'S ACCOUNT WITHIN THE DISCURSIVE AND SOCIAL PRACTICES OF HIS TIME

Agɔ mefoa nu dzro o
A fan palm tree does not speak for nothing
(19th-century Ho proverb)

i. Situating Spieth's work

The previous chapter addressed the first part of Fairclough's approach to conducting Critical Discourse Analysis. It focused on conducting a textual analysis of Spieth's work. This chapter considers the second and third parts of his approach to CDA which look at how Spieth's text may be situated within the dominant discourses and social practices of his time. As Fairclough suggests in his work, written texts such as Spieth's are not produced in a vacuum. They are usually reflective of the dominant discourses of their time which are, in turn, influenced by the social events and practices of the same period. Fairclough's submission reiterates the 19th century Ho proverb which states that *agɔ mefoa nu dzro o* (a fan palm tree does not speak for nothing i.e. the rustling of the branches of the palm tree is an indication that the wind is blowing). The proverb means that whoever speaks has a reason behind their words. Because of that, this chapter will consider the existing European, colonial and Christian (Pietist) discourses and practices of the nineteenth century that may have influenced the way Spieth wrote about the Ewes of Ho. The choice of European, colonial and Christian (Pietist) discourses and practices is necessary because they reflect, not only Spieth's background, but that of his target audience as well. Spieth, in his foreword, acknowledged the support of the Colonial Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the publication of his work. He also expressed delight at the decision of the Colonial Congress of 1905 to make more funds available for the publication of his other ethnological works on Togoland. Important figures within the German colonial administration like Consul Vohsen³⁶, and

³⁶ Ernst Vohsen was a German colonialist, politician, businessman and publisher in the late 19th and early 20th centuries who was appointed as the first German consul in Sierra Leone in 1881 to promote German interests by imperial decree (Geographicus, n.d.)

those from the scientific community like Professors v. Luschan³⁷ and Carl Meinhof,³⁸ showed keen interest in his work. As Spieth himself noted in his foreword, “the Consul Vohsen has shown colonial and scientific interest in the publication of the book by taking over the publication as well as the make up” (1906/2011, p. xv). The colonial administration’s interest in Spieth’s work, as well as its role in composing and publishing it is significant and worthy of note. Some portions of his work were also read at the Oriental Seminar³⁹ in Berlin when the first pages of his manuscript were published. In addition to his colonial audience, Spieth also acknowledged his Christian audience in his foreword. He mentions the directorate of the North German Mission Society in Bremen and the mission’s inspector A. W. Schreiber for their role in the production of the work. It would appear from Spieth’s foreword that his audience comprised both colonial and missionary patrons, and these two were not necessarily at odds with each other in certain respects. As Gifford (2012) has shown, the ‘civilizing’ mission was a key argument in both European colonizing and missionizing projects. Although German colonization leaned more toward economic and territorial expansion with a lesser focus on ‘civilizing’ the native African populations, the latter was not totally absent in its colonial project. As Friedrich Fabri (named the ‘father of the German colonial movement’) observed in his 1879 thesis *Does Germany need Colonies*⁴⁰, the goal of a German global economic expansion necessitated a strong colonial policy that would also witness an emigration of Germans to the colonies (Fabri, 1879 published in German History in Documents and Images, n.d.). Once there, these emigrants would take over the land by ousting the native population and building German centres that would contribute to the fatherland’s economic expansion, support the reduction of the threat of social democracy and further Germany’s global ‘cultural mission’. For this to happen, the native populations who would become labourers in the new economy had to be educated both intellectually and morally (ibid.).

³⁷ Professor Felix von Luschan was a renowned Austrian ethnologist, anthropologist and archaeologist who did not believe in the ‘superiority’ or ‘inferiority’ of races based on colour or other criteria. He was, however, tolerant of colonialism and supported it, eugenics and German nationalism (Smith, 2002)

³⁸ Professor Carl Meinhof was a German linguist and former pastor who extensively studied African languages. He took up a position at the Seminar for Oriental Languages in Berlin and, in 1909, became a professor at the African Languages department of the Colonial Institute (Pugach, 2012)

³⁹ The Oriental Seminar was established to give instruction to people in the imperial service on non-European languages (Pugach, 2012)

⁴⁰ “Fabri tended to overemphasize the singular influence of his book in launching colonial enthusiasm in the early 1880s; nevertheless, both he and his book were much discussed in social circles that also participated in the colonial movement, including bankers, intellectuals, businessmen, and military leaders” (German History in Documents and Images, n.d., Abstract)

Since the centre of gravity of these sub-tropical colonies rests entirely upon the white immigrants, they necessarily oust the generally scanty residue of coloured natives. Accorded equality with the white man before the law, albeit not entirely equal where political rights are concerned, they are either scattered over the colony as labourers, or restricted to certain specific areas. A situation which, when it is accompanied by humane aspirations for the intellectual and moral development of the natives, may be said in practice to be entirely well-conceived. (Fabri, 1879, published in German History in Documents and Images, n.d., para. 13)

As Giordani (1916) has noted, Bernhard Dernburg, the first Minister for the Colonies

asserted that the native was the most important factor in colonization; the natives furnish in great part the labourers in the colonies, it is necessary therefore to treat them well, to educate them and to lead them slowly towards European civilization. (pp. 114-115)

The ‘civilizing’ of the natives would be a means to an economic end even though this proved ineffective in reality. In any case, at some point during the German colonial project, the ‘civilizing’ mission, albeit short-lived, played a key role and the Christian missionaries had the “most holy duty” of ensuring it (Nasim, 2023, p. 159). Pugach (2012) has noted the important intersections between the Protestant missionaries in Africa and the colonial project. She has noted that, although the German Protestant missionaries in Africa in the early and mid-nineteenth century mostly identified themselves based on religion, by the rise of German imperialism in the late nineteenth century, “most missionaries moved toward affiliation with German imperium and away from ecumenism” (p. 3). Although we cannot determine if Spieth fell within this majority, his close association with the German colonial administration in the production of his ethnography provides great context for understanding his work. This chapter will, therefore, consider the relevant European, and, specifically, colonial nineteenth century discourses and social practices around the themes of cleanliness and hygiene, and the body and nakedness which Spieth addresses in his work. It will also address the discourses and social practices around the sub-themes of marriage, family and gender which, even though not the key focus of his work, also feature prominently. This chapter will finally consider the Christian (Pietist) discourses and social practices of the nineteenth century and how these may have influenced Spieth’s writing on the Ho people.

ii. Order and Cleanliness

Spieth’s interest in the cleanliness and order of the people of Ho was not novel in the nineteenth century. Within the colonial context, cleanliness and order were a major source of interest for imperial administrations both in the colonies and in the metropolises. The colonial

tropics, and Africa in particular, had been regarded as spaces of disease and death since the seventeenth century (Johnson, 2009). West Africa, in particular, obtained the moniker of ‘the white man’s grave’ because of the numerous accounts of Europeans dying almost immediately upon arrival. The discourse created around the region during that time was synonymous with “‘primitive tribes’, burning heat, fever-laden swamps, swarming insects, and miles of trackless jungle” (Curtin, 1961, p. 94). Tropical medicine initially emerged as a way of combatting the negative influences of the tropics on the health and lives of colonial and missionary subjects (Nasim, 2023). It later grew exponentially and focused on the control of diseases within the tropics and within native populations. This was important in the German case particularly because the native populations were meant to be the working force, and healthy natives would promote German colonial and economic interests. Hygiene and the control of infectious diseases became a key component of tropical medical science. In German colonies in particular, “hygiene and the campaign against infectious diseases [were] objects of serious preoccupations” (Neill, 2015). This was consistent with the progress being made in the scientific field in metropolitan Europe at the time. Western medicine had undergone several revolutions so that, by the late nineteenth century, there was a shift from the belief in humoral theory as the cause of ill-health to the belief in pathogens as the causative agents of ill-health. The humoral theory held the belief that ill-health emanated from an imbalance of energies or fluids. Parasitology, however, understood disease as taking place at the cellular level, and the malfunctions of the body’s physiological processes were linked to the actions of pathogens (Nasim, 2023). Renowned German scientist Robert Koch, and other scientists like France’s Louis Pasteur and Alphonse Laveran, played key roles in the introduction and study of microbes as the cause of disease and ill-health. The study of pathogens and the introduction of the germ theory started to centre hygiene and cleanliness as effective means of disease prevention and death (Neill, 2015). The prevalence of the health and cleanliness discourse was true both in Europe and in the colonies. In Europe, the major typhus and cholera epidemics of the time pushed hygiene to the fore of governments’ agenda. In the public sphere, governments took charge of the construction of sewage systems, street cleaning and waste collection in order to combat ill-health (Nasim, 2023). In the private sphere, the hygiene movement relied heavily on middle-class women who had largely been pushed out of the labour market due to increasing industrialization. Women came to be seen as the strongest allies for the movement in terms of personal hygiene and domestic cleanliness and they were routinely targeted with materials

on the subject. Housekeeping manuals, women's magazines and newspapers all produced materials aimed at this section of the population. Girls were also introduced at a young age to their role in promoting hygiene and domestic cleanliness through the mandatory housekeeping lessons they received in primary and secondary school (ibid.). Although the discourse around and the practice of hygiene became a key part of bourgeois society in the eighteenth century, the nineteenth century became the turning point that "put the body at the heart of private as well as public worries and attention" (ibid., p. 131). In addition, the idea of modernization was placed firmly within the hygiene movement and disease became linked to political unrest and social disorder. Scientific medicine took on a social nature and, in German-speaking Europe, the advocacy of physicians like Rudolf Virchow and Salomon Neumann emphasized the need to "address the general working and living conditions of the entire population" (Nasim, 2023, p. 133). In addition to the association of social disorder with disease within the modernization discourse, the hygiene movement went further to consider the "improper distribution of bodies in space" (Nasim, 2023, pp. 136-7) as linked to disease. Unknown people and places were considered dangerous and diseased, and it was important to regulate the movement of people and things to prevent contact with these 'dangerous' entities. It was hoped that the regulation of movement would prevent the spread of disease. This had implications for social policy both in Europe and in the civilizing missions abroad. The hygiene movement started to promote a "spatial system of ordering with inward and outward boundaries, which located filth in specific physical and cognitive spaces" (Nasim, 2023, p. 138). A set of visible signs was used to define what was clean and healthy and this visualization of hygiene was created around gender, race, class and religion. Consequently, hygiene advocates began to identify "female, non-white, poor and non-Christian parts of the world population as a threat to the civilised virtues of cleanliness, health and order" (Nasim, 2023, p. 138). These sections of society were then stigmatized on the grounds that they were dirty, unhealthy and dangerous to the larger populations of the world (ibid.).

Europe's tropical African colonies were placed within the above identifiers of dirt, disease and ill-health and within the modernization discourse where social disorder was supposedly present within non-modernized parts of the world. These discourses were used to describe Africa even though Nasim (2023) has pointed out the presence of indigenous hygienic practices on the West African coast long before the arrival of Europeans. The latter only refused to consider them in the same light as European ones, hence, the European discourse around tropical hygiene

continued to be wholly negative. The discourse around the tropics as locations of disease, death and primitive ways of life helped to launch the field of tropical medicine in addition to the novel scientific findings that were occurring in Europe around the same time. Just like colonization and evangelization, tropical science took on the mantra of the ‘civilizing mission’. This time around, it was a “medical civilizing mission” because “the value of Western medicine [...] had the duty to elevate ‘inferior races’” (Neill, 2015, p. 78). Non-western parts of the world were, however, not just at the receiving end of the finished products of Western medicine. They also became key sites of heavy European scientific interest and further research. For Germany in particular, the increase in opportunities for scientists expanded with the establishment of German protectorates in Togo, Cameroon and other parts of Africa. The *Institut für Schiffs- und Tropenkrankheiten* (The Institute for Maritime and Tropical Diseases), which was built in Hamburg in 1900, was one outcome of these activities. The institute conducted laboratory research and trained German doctors for their posts in the colonies (Neill, 2015). Other scientific organizations were also born and flourished with the increased interest in and access to the tropical colonies. Detailed reports and other literature were produced that helped control, manage and cure some tropical diseases based on scientific research in the African colonies. Consequently, some scientists were able to find their place in world history based on the scientific opportunities that existed for them in the colonies (ibid.).

The discussion above is useful in situating and contextualizing Spieth’s writing on the Ewe people. That Spieth presented an overwhelmingly negative report on the state of cleanliness of the people is simply a product of the discourses and practices of his time. With significant colonial interest in and influence on his work, it is not surprising that Spieth followed the existing discourse that portrayed the tropical colony as dirty. Even though Ewe people had their own hygienic practices, Spieth wrote of them as though they were sub-standard in comparison to European ways. As has already been discussed in detail in chapter 5, he actively praises the work of the colonial government in helping the natives attain higher standards of hygiene and beauty. This would appear to give validity to the German colonial presence and to its mission to ‘civilize’ the Ewe people. Also, the placing of the hygiene discourse within the modernization discourse does a fine

job of painting a comparative picture between Europe⁴¹ and Togoland. Disease was associated with primitiveness which would also validate the colonial civilizing presence and mission. The modernizing discourse which placed certain bodies within dirty and diseased spaces would also explain why Spieth did not only describe Ewe people as dirty but also specifically gendered the subject he wrote about. Spieth's focus on the Ewe woman as dirtier and somehow more problematic than her male companion is understandable considering the discourse of the time found, the "female, non-white, poor and non-Christian parts of the world population" as "a threat to the civilised virtues of cleanliness, health and order" (Nasim, 2023, p. 138). The Ho woman occupied almost all these positions. Oyewumi (1997) has discussed elsewhere how colonization affected African women twice because of their gender and race whereas African men were more privileged by their gender in the colonial situation. Specifically related to health, Zeleza (1993) agrees with the placing of African women below the African man and states that in the colonial situation, "African women came to be viewed as 'clumsier, stupider, and dirtier than African men'" (p. 103). Spieth's production is, therefore, not a deviation from the happenings and discourses of the late nineteenth century colonial situation. Again, it is interesting that Spieth paired cleanliness with order in his title. The idea of disease as linked to political unrest and social disorder would explain why cleanliness and hygiene were connected to order. Additionally, Spieth's use of particular words like 'vermin', 'cloth lice' and 'dirt' all fall within the medical discourse of the period where ill-health was attributed to pathogens and germs. Vermin, cloth lice and dirt were all conduits for the germs that caused ill-health. As Johnson (2009) attests, "imperial tropical medicine" focused on "vector-borne parasitic diseases" (p. 533). Spieth's discussion of vermin and cloth lice in his work falls within and contributes to the scientific and medical discourses of the late nineteenth century. It demonstrates that Spieth took his European scientific audience into consideration when he wrote his work. Lastly, the placing of women firmly in the domestic space in terms of cleanliness and hygiene would appear to be influenced by how hygiene was treated in Europe at the same time. As has already been discussed, middle-class women were charged with maintaining the order and cleanliness within the domestic space during the nineteenth century hygiene movement. Spieth's centering of Ho women on the domestic hygiene scene while other

⁴¹ McClintock (1995) has shown how the working and 'lower' classes were considered 'degenerate races' in metropolitan Europe. The standards identified as 'European' when in comparison with non-European peoples is usually based on the European bourgeois (male) perspective of the world.

actors were silenced would appear to be a metropolitan influence. Here, interestingly, the African and the European are similar. As Spieth himself said, “As it is with us, so in Ho family order and cleanliness depend on the qualities of the woman” (1906/2011, p. 282). Even though Spieth previously showed the differences between the European and the African in his writing, in this particular instance, he appears to build a bridge between them. A case was inadvertently being made for some form of similarity between the two peoples. Whether this is intentional or not cannot be ascertained. However, the keen interest in Spieth’s work by a personality like Professor Felix von Luschan, who did not believe in the inequality of the races based on colour or other criteria, may have influenced how Spieth wrote about the Ewe people. What we possibly see here is Spieth’s delicate balancing of his work to reflect the differing views of his target audience.

In addition to the colonial and scientific communities, Spieth also wrote with a Christian and Pietist audience in mind. In the Christian world, the concept of purity played an important role in Pietism, and Pietists insisted that their practical approach to the concept was what set them apart from the rest of society. For them, purity went beyond theology to encompass cultural practices and social norms, and these were demonstrated through Pietists’ “specific attitudes towards the body, healing and death” (Nasim, 2023, p. 80). In addition to the significant place of the inner state of converts and the insistence on a personal spiritual experience that was founded on the self-examination of the heart, Pietists also focused on the external evidence of such an experience. As people who submitted to God, Pietists had to recognize and repent of their sins - inner transformation - as well as live lives that showed this transformation. They had to let go of ‘worldly’ unChristian lifestyles that included “aggression, sexuality, passion, indulgence, insults and curses, pub visits, the consumption of spirits and gambling” (Nasim, 2023, p. 81). They also followed strict purity practices which included acceptable codes of dressing, cleanliness and order. As one Pietist pastor from Basel once preached in a sermon,

[w]e want to be Christians but consider the first precepts of cleanliness as if they do not apply to us. First, we must keep ourselves and our children in order and clean, and only then can we speak of Christianity. (Nasim, 2023, p. 143)

In fact, Spieth’s training at the Basel Mission insisted on these practices, and students were subjected to very strict and detailed rules around order, abstinence, purity, health, cleanliness and dressing. These regulations sought to draw the line between students who were deemed fit for missionary work and those who were not. The level of strictness can be observed by the fact that

only a third of missionary hopefuls ever completed their training at the school (Nasim, 2023, p. 84). The Pietist orientation of some among his readership as well as Spieth's personal experience and training would certainly explain his interest in and focus on the subject of order, cleanliness, personal hygiene and dressing among the people of Ho. It would also contribute to how he wrote about these topics.

Although the practices of the Bremen missionaries were not readily found in English, a very detailed study of the Basel missionaries of the West African coast (particularly Gold Coast now Ghana) by Nasim (2023) is helpful in shedding light on Pietist discourses and practices around cleanliness and order. A first point worthy of note is that, although religion and the secular may have seemed at odds with each other with the rise of scientific exploration, they both found common ground when it came to discussions around hygiene and cleanliness. Even though Pietism had a long history of ignoring or openly opposing scientific medicine before the late nineteenth century, by the turn of the century, it had openly embraced scientific medicine, and Christians started using it in their missionizing work in West Africa (ibid.). As scientific medicine gained prominence, some important German personalities within Pietist circles started to question why German missions lacked a medical element based on science. Theodor Christlieb, an eminent professor in Bonn whose area of interest focused on practical theology, produced an extensive study on Protestant missions across the globe (ibid.). In it, he argued for the inclusion of medical missions in line with Pietist beliefs. To him, physical healing and spiritual salvation were inseparable and Pietist missions needed to incorporate both in their work. His advocacy caused a shift in the Pietist approach to healing and his writings came to be used greatly in the Basel Missionary where Spieth attended (ibid.). In 1873, a year before Spieth joined the seminary, Rieff, the head theology teacher, stated that scientific education was not a "necessary evil" but a precious asset "provided that above all the heart is in the right place" (Nasim, 2023, p. 111). Scientific medicine came to be acknowledged by Pietist missionaries as useful if it served 'God's plan' and, gradually, scientific methods came to be incorporated in the Basel Mission's syllabus. Indeed, in later years, Pietist missionaries used scientific and medical forms of healing as proof of the superiority of the Christian God and as a tool for the conversion of 'heathen' peoples. Missionaries consequently became important actors in portraying and addressing filth abroad, thereby, reinforcing the need for their evangelizing efforts in Africa and elsewhere (Nasim, 2023).

In the late nineteenth century, hygiene became accepted as a Christian principle that merged the Pietist ideal of purity with science and medicine. It took on a moral character and maintained a key position within missionizing efforts. Cleanliness and godliness became inextricably linked (Nasim, 2023). Intimately connected to this idea was the internalization of digressions from purity and cleanliness and its close links to sin. Thus, as a late nineteenth century article put it, “cleanliness develops a sense of shame as soon as any impurity occurs. [...] Anyone who views their body as [*sic*] temple of God that may not to be [*sic*] stained, will not tolerate the stains on their soul” (Nasim, 2023, p. 143). The mission gospel had, at this point, considered hygiene a new sign of moral improvement and personal integrity; one which the ‘heathen’ West Africans were lacking and, therefore, needed proselytization (ibid., p. 139). The merging of scientific and religious discourses around cleanliness and hygiene, and the very real experiences of the multiple and sudden missionary deaths upon their arrival to West Africa, helped promote the discourse of the tropics as riddled with dirt, disease, immorality and disorder in missionary reports sent home. Many Basel missionaries on the West African coast, thus, produced knowledge that fed into the discourse of European superiority and African inferiority in this regard. Consequently,

missionaries disseminated knowledge about the colonial world to a general public at home that became increasingly interested in people and places abroad. European societies developed narratives about the rest of the world based on texts, images and objects moving through missionary networks, which allowed them to reframe their own identities, transforming notions of what it meant to be white, clean and civilised. (Nasim, 2023, p. 157)

The knowledge produced for the European Christian community sought to validate the work of the missionaries in West Africa and their continued need for financial and other support from Europe. Nasim (2023) has found that, in several cases, even when the Basel missionaries found information that contradicted the negative picture of disease and filth on the Gold Coast, some of them intentionally withheld the information or continued to produce the image of dirt and disease to justify the continued funding of their ‘civilizing mission’ on the Gold Coast.

The Christian and Pietist discourses and practices discussed above are important to Spieth’s work. That cleanliness and godliness were inextricably linked to each other would explain why the non-Christian Ewe could easily be written as dirty. Also, the moral character attributed to cleanliness and hygiene, and the linking of physical dirt to sin would further explain why Spieth

the missionary showed interest in the Ewe people's state of hygiene. Further, the Pietist language that linked the inner state of shame to one's outward state would explain why Spieth talked about the lack of shame and embarrassment among the Ewes of Ho. As has already been mentioned above, for the nineteenth century Pietists, "cleanliness develops a sense of shame as soon as any impurity occurs" (Nasim, 2023, p. 143). That Spieth mentioned the people of Ho not demonstrating any shame or embarrassment at their physical state shows the Pietist connection between their inner and outer selves and the consequent 'degeneration' in the moral and physical states of the Ewe people according to him. Lastly, as has already been mentioned, Spieth presented a largely negative account of the Ewe people's state of hygiene even when he did acknowledge some good practices among them. As Nasim (2023) has noted, some Basel missionaries on the Gold Coast intentionally produced and maintained negative reports of the colonial people they worked with even when the situation on the ground did not reflect it. This was strategically done to continue to obtain metropolitan support and funding of the missionaries' 'civilizing mission'. It is possible that Spieth followed in the footsteps of such missionaries to legitimize the presence of the Bremen mission among the people of Ho and to continue to obtain metropolitan support for its work in Africa. The influence of Spieth's Christian audience appears evident here and could explain why he wrote the way he did.

iii. The Naked African Body

Although Spieth addresses order and cleanliness in his writing, he dedicates a noticeable amount of space to discussing the 'state' of the Ewe body in the sections on clothing and bathing practices. Because of that, a brief discussion is necessary in this work. As was seen in the analysis in chapter 5, Spieth paints a particular picture of the Ewe body. It is 'uncovered' in many ways, and this 'uncovering' is largely gendered. Although both men and women are both uncovered to varying degrees in public spaces, Ewe women appear more uncovered than their male counterparts. The idea of the uncovering of indigenous populations around the world at the point of European contact is not novel. The 'naked savage' trope has long been associated with Europeans' encounters with other peoples since the early modern period. The 'naked' body of many indigenous populations was constantly under scrutiny and was an object of immense interest for early European travellers and colonizers. Nakedness, as a concept is, however, relative and dependent on the perceptions of a given culture (Comaroff, 1996). According to Vincent (2013), the European

perception of the time defined nakedness based on the notion of sufficiency - “[B]eing insufficiently covered or equipped was to be naked” (p. 165). This is an interesting point to note because even though Spieth does not specifically talk about the ‘nakedness’ of the people of Ho, he leans heavily on the idea of the ‘inadequacy’ of their clothing. Subsequently, we can draw on the above to demonstrate that Spieth’s writing does not deviate from the European ideas of nakedness and clothing. As was done in the previous section, this section will consider the colonial, Christian (Pietist) and health discourses and practices around nakedness and clothing in nineteenth century Europe and how these were applied to non-European peoples around the world.

To begin, the narrative of the ‘naked’ native was one of the tropes used to demonstrate and explain the difference between Europeans and other peoples around the world. The former was seen as ‘civilized’ while the latter was ‘uncivilized’ and ‘primitive’. The differentiation was important in helping fashion the European identity on the global stage (Stevens, 2003). Stevens has noted that “the naked body of the native comes to represent humanity before the accretions of culture” (2003, p. 139) while (European) clothes became “commodities and accoutrements of a civilized self” (Comaroff, 1996, p. 19). The notion of the primitiveness of non-European peoples was used as a tool to construct a racial hierarchy and served to validate and fuel Europeans’ conquests and colonization of other peoples. The ‘civilized’ European was placed at the top of the hierarchy while all others were placed in varying positions below them (McClintock, 1995). Although the ‘naked’ native trope was widely used in the early modern period, it usually prompted two interpretations - the ‘innocent’ native (the Edenic state) or the sinful-natured native (the native’s wretched bestiality) (Stevens, 2003, p. 130). Here, non-Europeans’ nakedness led travelling Europeans (who were also typically Christian) to perceive and report on them as either “insatiably licentious” or “wholly devoid of sin” (ibid., p. 132). For the Protestant missions in Africa, however, African nakedness was “neither savage innocence, nor even mere degeneracy. It spoke also of darkness, disorder, and pollution” (Comaroff, 1996, p. 22). The discussion on nakedness within the Protestant discourse of disorder and pollution is interesting when considering Spieth’s work. The consideration of nakedness as disorder and pollution by Protestant missionaries in Africa would explain why Spieth discusses Ho people’s clothing (or ‘lack’ thereof) under ‘order (disorder) and cleanliness (pollution)’. His disapproving tone about the amount of clothing worn by both men and women, and the baring of their exposed bodies in public bathing places, likely has its roots within the European and Protestant discourses on nakedness and clothing around that

time. Stevens (2003) goes on to add that the naked native body inspired lust in the clothed (European) which could also explain Spieth's challenges with Ewe people's state of 'undress'. To contextualize Stevens' statement, we must understand it within the Protestant and Pietist beliefs of the period. Lust was one of the key bodily pleasures that was prohibited by Pietists (Meyer, 1999). A popular picture which decorated the walls of many Württemberg Pietist homes, and which was also used in many missionaries' life stories, was titled *The Broad and the Narrow Path*. The picture was based on the Biblical book of Matthew chapter 7 from verse 13 to 14 which discussed the Pietist imagination of good and evil, God and the Devil. In the lithograph, the broad and narrow paths depicted scenes that showed where human beings would end upon death and God's judgement. The narrow path led to heaven while the broad path led to hell after death. The broad path depicted people engaged in worldly pleasures like sex, drinking, gambling, etc. (ibid.). Sensuality, in all its forms, was problematic for Pietist Christians and African sensuality proved even more problematic with the open state of the peoples' 'undress'. Comaroff (1996) states that Protestant missionaries in Africa were so preoccupied with the nakedness and resultant sensuousness of Africans that they found the need to address it in their numerous reports. She writes that,

the frequent eruption of corporeal images in staid mission prose confirms their preoccupation with the erotic. It also lends credence to the claim that, in order to extract power from the repressed body, modern Protestantism had constantly to evoke it... (1996, pp. 23-24)

Even in secular European discourse, the sexual 'perversions' of Africans was a theme that was constantly evoked. As McClintock (1995) has stated, "[B]y the nineteenth century, popular lore had firmly established Africa as the quintessential zone of sexual aberration and anomaly – 'the very picture, [...] of perverse negation'" (p. 22). This supposed sexual aberration in non-European societies was particularly linked to the female body. McClintock states that, "women figured as the epitome of sexual aberration and excess. Folklore saw them, even more than the men, as given to lascivious venery so promiscuous as to border on the bestial" (ibid.)⁴². As Said (1978/1979) explains, the representation of the Other by Europeans was a largely male enterprise that produced

⁴² For example, one 18th century traveller to Africa warned his readers about the challenges of travelling to Africa as a white man. "On that disorderly continent, women 'if they meet with a Man they immediately strip his lower Parts and throw themselves upon him'" (McClintock, 1995, p. 23).

knowledge based on the “male conception of the world” (p. 207). Since this “was an exclusively male province; ... it viewed itself and its subject matter with sexist blinders ... women are usually the creatures of a male power-fantasy. They express unlimited sensuality” (ibid.). These observations by McClintock and Said may explain why Spieth wrote about African ‘nakedness’ from a very gendered perspective. In any case, the perception of lust as linked to the devil and hell in Pietist discourse, and the (gendered) European discourse on African perversion could explain, at least in part, the strict code of dress required by the male-dominated Protestant missions in Africa. For the Protestant missionaries, the ‘brazen’ nakedness of the African body demonstrated their sinful passions and subsequent disorder and pollution, and it was only through a reconstruction of their corporeality that they could become vessels of God (Comaroff, 1996). European clothes were, thus, a sign of and tool for this transformation because for the Protestant missionaries in Africa, “clothedness was next to godliness: [and] it was easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for the ill-clad to enter the Kingdom of Heaven” (ibid., p. 21). In the more general European sense, clothes were seen as a sign of civilization among non-Europeans (Stevens, 2003). To achieve the acceptance of European clothing among Africans, however, the latter had to be “confined, turned inward, and invested with self-consciousness and shame” (Comaroff, 1996, p. 24) about their state of undress. For the Protestant missionaries, this aligned with the Pietist focus on the inner man – the state of the heart before God. It highlighted the interrelatedness of the inner and outer states of being within Pietist discourse and how the former influenced the latter and vice versa. In terms of clothing, one finds that “[A]t the core of the Protestant mission lay a tension between inner and outer verities, the life of the spirit and of the sensuous world. Dress epitomized this conflict” (ibid., pp. 21-22). This meant that a moralistic language about shame and modesty was produced in terms of African dressing (Comaroff, 1996). The focus on the inner state of being in dressing would explain why Spieth introduced the element of shame in Ho women’s clothing. He was appalled that they were “not ashamed to wear the narrow loin cloth to interact with their loved ones or even show themselves/appear in this manner on the village street” (Spieth, 1906, p. 230, my own translation). It would also explain why he took issue with the ‘great shamelessness’ with which the women bathed in public (Spieth, 1906, p. 233). For the Protestant missionaries in Africa, therefore, the introduction of Christianity served as the means of transformation of the inner and outer being when clothing the ‘naked’ African. As Gustav Warneck, a German Protestant missiologist during the period summarized,

[...] when Christianity has awakened the consciousness of sin, civilising impulses follow regarding clothing, housing and work for example, because then shamelessness, impurity, laziness and greed are recognised as vices that are incompatible with Christian life. (Nasim, 2023, p. 230)

In addition to the Christian and European discourses on clothing discussed above, it is possible that the functionality of clothing within the health discourse and practice of the time may have influenced how Spieth wrote. As Vincent (2013) demonstrates, appropriate and sufficient clothing covered, sustained and protected the body. In line with the humoral tradition, which was still quite active in the nineteenth century even with the advancement of parasitology, adequate clothing served as a strategy to promote the well-being of the wearer. Sufficient clothing promoted good health because it protected the wearer from environmental influences. “Garments were in fact the first line of defence against ill health” (Vincent, 2013, p. 166) and the right clothing could protect the wearer from “vermin and contagious airs” (ibid., p. 167). Even though the humoral theory had its roots in the early modern era, its influence was still very active in the nineteenth century. As Nasim (2023) has found, clothes became one of the central elements promoted as protection for the European body in the tropics and much literature was produced for missionaries, traders, and other Europeans on the West African and Gold coasts. As the German Basel mission doctor, Rudolf Fisch stated in his health manual “[I]t is clear that clothing for Europeans in hot zones is not only a matter of civility but also a concern for health in general” (Nasim, 2023, p. 387). The abundant literature on adequate clothing as one of the determinants of good health in the tropics during Spieth’s stay in West Africa may also be a contributory factor to why he focused on the (in)adequacy of Ho people’s clothing. The medical discourse during the era emphasized the use of clothing as protection. This was taken up by the missionaries as well.

The early evangelists assumed that the benefits of ‘decent dress’ would be self-evident to the Africans: while Moffat (1842:348) found it understandable that Tswana might at first oppose Christian doctrine, he thought it ‘natural’ that they would adopt Western attire ‘for their own comfort and convenience’. (Comaroff, 1996, p. 23)

For Spieth, therefore, adequate clothing, as was promoted for the Europeans in the tropics, was perhaps necessary but was ‘lacking’ among the Ewe. He was, nevertheless, gracious to Ho men by recognizing that they covered themselves more fully during cold mornings which fits into the prevailing medical discourse of the use of clothing as protection against the elements. One wonders if all these contributed to his writing about Ho men as generally cleaner and more rational than Ho women for “the manipulation of clothing to warm and cool the body [w]as a matter of common

sense” (Vincent, 2013, p. 166). Here, we see an intersection of health and gender discourses in action.

The above discussions have considered the intersection of colonial, Christian and health ideals and discourses in the discussion of nakedness and clothing in Africa. As Nasim (2023) has summarized, clothes “played a key role in negotiations on purity, health and cleanliness. They were central in fashioning Christian identity, an imperial market for tropical hygiene and the civilising mission” (p. 406).

iv. Marriage, family and gender

Although Spieth does not openly discuss marriage, family and gender in this writing, his allusions to the concepts require consideration, even if briefly. Spieth’s discussion on order and cleanliness centers mainly on the domestic space which revolves around marriage, the nuclear family and the gendered relations within both. It is, therefore, necessary to consider the discursive and social contexts that may have influenced his writing in this regard. Hausen (1981) identifies the patriarchal monogamous marriage and the patriarchal nuclear family as the prominent forms of marriage and family during late eighteenth and nineteenth century Germany. Both altered the place of gender within them. Seigel (2012) has painted a portrait of the “male bread-winner - female homemaker model [as] often associated with the nineteenth-century idealization of domestic relations” (p. 341). This alludes to the clear separation of spheres regarding the public and private domains. Seigel cites a popular German publication of 1848 which describes the separation as follows: “while the woman in the main lays the foundations for the ties that bind the family, the man is the link with the external world” (p. 306). The clear separation of these spheres has typically been associated with the emergence of bourgeois social and cultural relations. However, Seigel notes that most of the features of this system were already established before the late eighteenth century. The difference between the period before the late eighteenth century, and the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was that the gap between the two spheres was further widened. Seigel cites the work of Marion Gray, who studied German agricultural and rural life from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. In his study, Gray determined that men were regarded as ‘masters’ of their households who ruled over the women and children. Tasks were divided between men and women, with men caring for the fields while women cared for “household, kitchen, garden, and dairy” (Seigel, 2012, p. 309). Both gendered spheres made up

the family's economic production which consisted of what the family subsisted on and the surplus they sold. This family unit was known as the *ganze Haus* in Germany. For Mathieu (2020), the composition of the *ganze Haus* was different from the late eighteenth and nineteenth century nuclear family in that, the former took into consideration the 'entire house' which went beyond natural family members to include associates (*Genossen*) and employees ('*Ingesinde*' - lodging servants). This household was governed by the husband and father (*paterfamilia*) who organized the economic and social lives of his constituents who all contributed to the survival of the mostly peasant family. Abrams (2005) has noted that this early modern household provided women with a variety of roles ranging from production to reproduction, consumption and nurturing. It ascribed economic value to women's tasks and afforded them the opportunity to somewhat straddle between the public and private spaces. The seminal role of both men and women to the survival of the family or household unit meant that the marital relationship was the bedrock for the early modern family economy. Only married people could establish their own households and the financial and material contributions of both spouses was a long-standing condition before either of them was permitted to marry. This was so for the peasant, artisan and middle classes in the eighteenth century (*ibid.*).

Hausen (1981) suggests that the turn of the century introduced a change in how marriage was considered as well as how the family was composed. Marriage was no longer considered an institution meant for the purposes of economic production, reproduction and fulfilling religious duties. Rather, it was based on the spiritual union of men and women based on love alone. To her, marriage was based on the individual man and woman, and marriage and family as an institution disappeared. The *ganze Haus*, with all its actors, was replaced with a limited set of actors – husband, wife and children. Abrams (2005) adds that in reality, such a nuclear family was not always possible as other relatives like widowed parents and unmarried sisters may have been present in the household in some cases. However, the single-family model became the norm and other forms of family such as single parenthood or cohabitation were frowned on and considered unacceptable deviations. Changes in the economy also impacted the family significantly. Seigel (2012) notes that the nineteenth century brought with it several changes that relegated women to the background in terms of the economy. Important changes around "the growth of domesticity and domestic service, the impact of agricultural 'improvement' and the shift to centralised and mechanised manufacturing" (Simonton, 2005, p. 148) became apparent at the turn of the century.

During this time, women did not lose their employment with the new forms of production. Rather, men's work was drawn into and prioritized in the new economy where the work of the rest of the household was no longer needed (Seigel, 2012). Market farming was introduced as an effort to increase output to meet the growing population and urban expansion, and was greatly promoted by the German state governments. Better tools and techniques, fertilizers and the rational organization of land replaced the older domestic economic system guided by its morals and practices (ibid.). The older economic model of a "hierarchical estate with interdependent components" gave way to one in which the male undertaking of growing crops that could be sold in the market gained a new and more powerful kind of predominance over the activities assigned to women" (Seigel, 2012, p. 309). This had new meaning for the traditional understanding of the male and female spheres and the gap between the two was widened even further. Additionally, new forms of state employment in Germany around this time drew men into the more public sphere. Men's devotion to work outside the home meant that the family's personal and social well-being lay on the women. Consequently, women's work became largely centered around household management and "cooking, sewing, and cleaning comprised most of what wives and daughters did to sustain a family's material life" (ibid., p. 310).

Closely linked to the changes in the marriage and family structure in Germany was the notion of 'the character of the sexes' (*Geschlechtscharakter*). This discourse arose in the latter part of the eighteenth century and continued well into the twentieth century even though it is no longer used today (Hausen, 1981). The notion was heavily used by political and cultural leaders who needed to justify women's exclusion from politics and the public space by keeping them in the "private world of home and family" (Seigel, 2012, p. 317). This was in reaction to growing demands for women's equality in the public space and the promotion of human rights as including women's rights (ibid.). The 'character of the sexes' was used to describe what was thought to be the "mental characteristics which were held to coincide with the physiological distinctions between the sexes" (Hausen, 1981, p. 51). The idea behind the 'character of the sexes' was meant to present the archetypical nature of men and women which, even though normative in nature, had links to the socio-economic realities of the times. The accounts that lent weight to the notion described men and women based on biological, social and mental qualities and, from that, opposing abilities were created between them. Hausen acknowledges that comparative statements about men and women had historically been produced before the late eighteenth century in patriarchal societies.

These were based on status and social position which determined one's virtues and duties (ibid.). The difference with the 'character of the sexes', however, was that it defined the comparisons based on biology and its links to one's destiny. As a result, men were seen as external and occupying the public space whereas women were defined as domestic. Men were active while women were passive. The former was rational and used his intellect whereas the latter was emotional and guided by intuition and feeling. Women were associated with the virtues of modesty and resignation and were full of grace and beauty (ibid.). This character representation was supported by the fields of science, psychology, anthropology and psychiatry in the nineteenth century in such a way that it became accepted as the proper standards for defining men and women till as late as the first half of the twentieth century. The 'character of women' made them better suited to raise children and to care for the home as they were 'inherently' protective, loving, sympathetic, good, devoted, emotional, receptive, understanding, tactful, and industrious⁴³ (Hausen, 1981). The opposing binaries created between men and women were seen by some to maintain the balance of human life. The male outside world was considered hostile while the feminized home was a safe haven because of the woman's 'inherent' loving and peaceful nature. The domestic woman played her role in maintaining that balance by keeping away from the hostile outside world and maintaining a peaceful, loving haven for the man's return (Hausen, 1981). This characterization of the separate spheres as contributing to maintaining human balance was meant to keep men and women in acceptably different spheres.

The growing discourse about men and women in nineteenth century Germany, and the associated socio-economic factors discussed above, created the model family based on the patriarchal monogamous marriage and the bourgeois patriarchal nuclear family (Hausen, 1981). The dominant male figure (*paterfamilia*) of the *ganze Haus* was replaced by the woman, and the household became a feminized space even though the husband/father was still legally the head of the home (Abrams, 2005, Sarti, 2020). The woman transitioned from "*Hausmutter*, working in partnership with her husband presiding over agricultural estates, to *Hausfrau* or housewife, the guardian of the private sphere" (Simonton, 2005, p. 149). These facts are important as they give readers an idea about why Spieth wrote about the people of Ho the way he did. Spieth's minimizing

⁴³ Hausen (1981, pp. 55-56) has a table that breaks down the specific character traits attributed to both men and women during this period.

of the role of men and other social actors in the domestic space, and his placing of women at the front and center, would appear to correspond with the social practices in Germany at the time. His use of the word *Hausfrau*, specifically, in the original German version of his work (1906, p. 235) would also appear to communicate his ideas of the place of the woman in the home. She was not a *Hausmutter*. Spieth also writes from a nuclear family perspective. Only wives, husbands and children are mentioned even though the presence of other social actors like unmarried people and slaves have been mentioned in other parts of Spieth's work. In addition, only capable and able wives are talked about in the domestic space. Others like people with limited ability and the elderly are not made visible even though they were also part of Ho society. Spieth also focuses on the monogamous marriage in his writing even though polygamy and concubinage were very common. In fact, the issue of polygamy caused significant disagreements between new Ewe Christians and ministers, and the Bremen missionaries; a fact which caused some Ewe Christians to leave the early Ewe church (Azamede, 2013 and Ustorf, 2002). Lastly, the nineteenth century discourse on the 'character of the sexes' would also appear to explain why Spieth attributes rationality to Ho men without offering the same opportunity to the women. The treatment of gender in the colonies is, however, more complex and nuanced than this. A more detailed analysis will be done at the end of this section. In any case, even though the discourses and social practices discussed here were mainly linked to the happenings in secular Europe at the time, they were not very different from the Pietist perspectives on the same issues.

Gleixner (2009) and van Osselaer and Maurits (2020) have discussed marriage and the family within Lutheran Protestantism⁴⁴ in the nineteenth century. Lutheranism, broadly, believed in the three estates established by God, i.e. church, state and household (van Osselaer and Maurits, 2020). Both Catholics and Protestants saw the family as instituted by God with spiritual roles to perform. Even though the household extended beyond the nuclear family in the early modern age, the nuclear family became one of the points of interest in the nineteenth century and many theologians attempted to showcase the "superiority of the Christian nuclear family" (van Osselaer and Maurits, 2020, p. 436). This last point was particularly important with the introduction of industrialization, the development of urban centres and the Church's fear of the negative impact of these on Christian families. The nineteenth century cult of domesticity portrayed the nuclear

⁴⁴ Pietism was a movement within Lutheranism and Lutheranism was a major branch of Protestantism.

family and home as safe havens from the dangerous outside world (van Osselaer and Maurits, 2020). This idea was heavily supported by Christian teachings of the period, along with the distinct divinely assigned sex-specific roles of men and women in achieving this based on their inherent characteristics. The Christian nuclear family was headed by a Christian father with an ‘angelic mother’ and children. Similar to the larger European society, women were typically placed within the more traditional roles of caring for the home while the man worked outside (ibid.). As Abrams has noted,

women belong to the family and not to political society, and nature created them for domestic cares and not for public function – [these] were a concrete articulation of the ideology of separate spheres that was repeated and reaffirmed across Protestant and Catholic Europe. (2005, p. 31)

The only difference between the secular European family and the Christian one was that some roles previously played by the church were passed on to the woman in the family as the family was seen as a miniature reflection of the church (van Osselaer and Maurits, 2020). Thus, in addition to her domestic duties, women (mothers) assumed the role of ensuring the religious upbringing of the children as well as the observance of Christian norms and practices in the home. The father took on the role of the pastor and oversaw the general spiritual well-being of the family (ibid.). In Pietism, with regard to marriage, the notion of the woman as the man’s ‘helpmate’ (*Gefährtin*) thrived, and, in nineteenth century Pietism, the guiding discourse was the inferiority of the woman in the gender hierarchy. Marriage was a spiritual partnership that insisted on the subordination of the wife to the husband (Gleixner, 2009). These nineteenth century portraits of the Christian marriage and family were influenced and produced by three developments that were embedded in the societal happenings at the time. They were the sacralization of marriage and the nuclear family household in Christian teachings at a time where the family home and family life were idealized and sacralized, the emphasis on the family as the bedrock of Christian society, and the ease in the production of religious objects for the Christian home with the introduction of printing (van Osselaer and Maurits, 2020). These developments caused an increase in family-targeted initiatives by the church, and the introduction of printing and manufacturing led to a proliferation of religious books, pamphlets and objects in the home that concretized what Christian marriage and family should look like (ibid.).

The way marriage, the family and gender were considered in nineteenth century Europe, and within Lutheranism and Pietism, appear to be reflected in Spieth's writing. Even though he acknowledged the widespread practice of polygamy and the presence of concubines, slaves and other social actors elsewhere in his work, Spieth did not give them much thought in his writing on cleanliness and order in the domestic space. He discussed the domestic space primarily from a monogamous and nuclear family perspective. This may have been done intentionally to draw similarities between the Ewe and Europeans because of the more moderate views held by some of his readership like Professor Luschan who did not acknowledge any differences between the 'races' based on colour or other criteria. It could also be that Spieth did not know how to treat the different actors in the Ewe domestic space because he did not fully understand Ewe marriage and family systems. This may be challenging to believe, however, as Zimmerman (2015) has shown that Germans on the African continent during the colonial era intentionally hoped to "introduce patriarchal domesticity into African countries" (p. 98) because the important role of women within the local economy "offended the domestic and economic sensibilities of many Europeans" (ibid.). The colonial agricultural economy that was introduced in Togoland "attacked the extended, polygamous households of Togo, seeking to create the patriarchal monogamous families advocated by colonial states and succeeding, at least, in undercutting the political and economic autonomy afforded by African households" (ibid., p. 100). In terms of gender, Spieth drew similarities with Europe in his account but demonstrated differences as well. As was briefly mentioned in subsection ii, that women were relegated to the domestic space was as a result of the European discourses around gender and the socio-economic happenings of the time. Spieth's placement of Ewe women primarily within the domestic space while decreasing the presence of Ewe men and other actors from the space reflected this. Writing about Ho men as more rational and somehow better in character was also a reflection of the discourse on gender at the time. In both cases, similarities are seen between Europeans and the Ewe in Spieth's writing. There was, nevertheless, a difference in the way Spieth wrote about Ewe women. Although the European perceptions of gender and the character of the sexes painted European bourgeois women's virtues in a somewhat favorable light (but still worse than European bourgeois men), the same cannot be said of non-European women. Whereas bourgeois European women were seen to possess the virtues of modesty, love, goodness, sympathy, understanding, self-denial, etc. (Hausen, 1981, p. 56), non-European women were not seen as such. In fact, other European women were also seen

as less than in one way or the other. As McClintock (1995) has discussed elsewhere, the middle-class European male was placed at the top of the evolutionary hierarchy after which the middle-class woman followed. All other women, including working class European women and other ‘races’, fell below them. Because of this, the same European bourgeois virtues were not accorded other women. In fact, differing levels of degeneracy were attributed to different groups below the European bourgeois man and woman (ibid.). Oyewumi (1997) has shown that in the colonial case, African women suffered double challenges from a racial and gendered perspective. For that reason, even though both African men and women were considered inferior to the European, their ‘levels of inferiority’ were different. In their ‘degenerate’ states, African men were a little better than their women counterparts. This was not only true from the European and colonial perspectives but from the missionary point of view as well. This may be observed in a separate statement Spieth made elsewhere in 1892 where he

complained about the generally low standards of the teachers’ wives: in his view they prevented their husbands from leading a Christian family life (MB 1892:11). It would seem that young men were usually open to change, but women generally remained attached to Ewe religion and the established way of life for much longer⁴⁵. (Meyer, 1999, p. 13)

This comment corroborates what has already been said and may explain why Spieth wrote about Ho men more favorably than he wrote about the women. From a Christian perspective, Spieth’s views on the ‘low standards’ of Ewe women and their ability to prevent their husbands from following the ways of God is worthy of discussion. Spieth’s views possibly fell within the Christian Edenic discourse on men and women. Starkey (2005) has discussed how, from much of the eighteenth century, Christianity painted women as “inferior beings, weak in the face of temptation and liable to tempt men” as such, “women must be protected and controlled” (p. 187). The Genesis story of the ‘fall of man’ has often been preached about in a way that has attributed temptation and distraction to women. Some interpretations of the ‘fall of man’ have proposed that the temptation was possibly a sexual one leading to the “origin of Christianity’s unease about human sexuality” (ibid., p. 189). Starkey (2005) continues,

⁴⁵ Meyer states that the Bremen mission was “a predominantly male enterprise and remained as such for a considerable time” (1999, p. 13), a fact which caused Christianity to be unattractive to Ewe women for a long time. Many chose to continue practicing the traditional culture and religion which provided better material and spiritual advantages whereas Ewe men converted to Christianity mainly for the economic benefits within the colonial economy (ibid.).

However complex its origins, the unease persisted and has been evident in the ways in which churches and churchmen have always interested themselves in the control of sexuality, particularly of female sexuality. It is common to all branches of European Christianity, from sixteenth-century Protestant reformers such as Luther in Germany and John Knox in Scotland, who believed that women should be controlled and kept under the authority of men, to twentieth-century popes who sought to regulate women's dress as well as their fertility. The need to control and regulate female sexual behaviour also intersected with the impulse to reform those women thought to be behaving inappropriately and to protect society from them. (p. 189)

Based on McClintock (1995), Oyewumi (1997) and Starkey (2005)'s observations, it is possible that Spieth's concentration on the 'low standards' of Ewe women and the general manner in which he wrote about the men as compared to the women, emanated from the prevailing European and Christian discourses of his time. He may have done this to pander to the expectations of his largely colonial and missionary target audience.

v. Final comments

As Fairclough (2004) has shown, texts are rooted in the prevailing discursive and social practices, therefore, texts cannot be read and understood outside of them. To fully understand a text, one needs to consider how the prevailing discourses and social practices of its time may have influenced and shaped it. In the case of Spieth's work, the European, colonial, Christian (Pietist) and health discourses and practices of his time appear to have influenced how he wrote about the Ewe people. One finds the evidence in this analysis contrary to Anyidoho and Adjei (2011)'s claim that,

Jakob Spieth is unique in the sense in which he is atypical of many pre-colonial, colonial and even post-colonial European anthropologists, ethnographers, philologists and historians who tend to filter Africa through the narrow, insular and often condescending prism of Eurocentric paradigms. (p. xviii)

Rather, Spieth's work neatly falls within the type of knowledge produced about Africa in the nineteenth century. Indeed, Spieth's work testifies to Said (1978/1979)'s assertion that no matter how different or 'progressive' a body of knowledge appeared around the European 'Other', it invariably fit into and was a reproduction of the existing body of knowledge produced by earlier writers. Spieth's work does not deviate from this and would appear to confirm Said's assertion.

TA ADRELIA (CHAPTER 7)

HEARING THE EWE SPEAK BACK: ƐƩƐ NU DODO WO, WO DZI KPƆKPƆ, ƐTSI LƐLƐ KPLƐ DZADZƐƐ WƆWƆ

Du sia du kple efe koklo koko
Every town has its own way of dressing a chicken
(19th-century Ho proverb)

i. ƐƩƐ⁴⁶ nu dodo wo (Ewe ‘clothing’)

Du sia du kple efe koklo koko (every town has its own way of dressing a chicken). This 19th-century Ho proverb aptly captures this chapter because it suggests that each society has its own way of doing things. The nineteenth-century Ho practices related to clothing, cleanliness of clothing, bathing, and personal hygiene are captured below.

This section is titled *ƐƩƐ nu dodo wo* (loosely translated as Ewe things that are worn) because it covers the entirety of things that the people wore as ‘clothing’. Clothing is put in quotation marks because this research found that the Ewe concept of covering the body went beyond clothes (fabric). Hence, it would be beneficial for this work to discuss the Ewe people’s body coverings to understand and appreciate their conception of the world fully. As has already been seen, Spieth’s work alluded to the ‘nakedness’ of the people of Ho by the way he spoke about the (un)covering of the body in public spaces. He wrote about *Die Kleidung* (the clothing) of the people of Ho and describes, in no uncertain terms, the *unbedeckt* (uncovered) nature of both men and women. The noun *Kleid* is translated as ‘dress’ in the 1891 English translation of Kluge (1883)’s German etymological dictionary. A look at the etymology of the word has traced it as a potential borrowing from the Dutch word *kleed* because of its non-existence in Old High German till the middle of the twelfth century. Potential derivatives from Anglo-Saxon and Old Icelandic trace the word to a root *klai*, which is thought to signify ‘to weave’ (Kluge, 1883/1891). The reason for this short exposition is to, hopefully, throw some light on the limitations of Spieth’s production on the people of Ho’s ways of covering the body. Spieth gives cloth the primary and only role of covering the body and, without (much of) it, the body is naked. The idea of nakedness has already been discussed in Chapter 6. According to the Ewe archaeologist who was consulted for this research,

⁴⁶ This spelling, and all other words written in Ewe in this chapter, makes use of the Standard Ewe orthography.

the covering of the body during pre-colonial and colonial⁴⁷ times was not limited to the wearing of cloth/fabric. In pre-colonial Ewe culture, this study found that three elements comprised ‘clothing’ (covering) – *avɔ/dɔ*⁴⁸ (fabric/cloth), *ɛ/ɛ sisi*⁴⁹ (body paintings), and *dzonu* (body adornments/beads). The absence or limited presence of *avɔ/dɔ*, therefore, did not amount to the total uncovering of the body, nor was it equated to nakedness as understood by Spieth.

***Avɔ/dɔ*⁵⁰ (fabric/cloth):** Ewe fabric consisted of woven pieces made out of cotton which was grown in the area. Once the cotton was harvested, it was spun into thread and woven into strips of cloth, which were then sewn together to form longer pieces of varying lengths. Both men and women contributed to the making of the cloth at different stages. Spieth attests to this elsewhere in his work. These cloths were then worn in varying ways by the people. Owing to the hot and humid climate of the region, pre-colonial Ewe people, as a matter of functionality, dressed lightly (in terms of cloth/fabric). The people left much of their bodies uncovered to allow for the free circulation of air and to reduce sweating and the absorption of sweat into their clothing. As is common knowledge, cotton is a breathable fabric made of natural fibres that allows the free circulation of air on the body, preventing the build-up of moisture and leading to the cooling of the body (James, 2020). It is mentioned as one of the most suitable fabrics to wear in hot and humid climates. The seemingly uncovered nature of the Ewe people in their dressing and the use of cotton fabrics among the people would, therefore, appear to be the people’s adequate adaptation to their

⁴⁷ It is important to state here that, before the coming of the German missionaries and German and British colonial rule, the Ewe had already been trading with other Europeans along the coast for centuries. They already had some form of European influence by the start of the colonial period. The arrival of missionaries and the establishment of German and British colonial rule, however, brought about more systemic and structural changes in the people’s way of life.

⁴⁸ In an attempt to limit the challenges that arise with memory work, this study cross-referenced words and concepts from the interviews with Westermann’s Ewe to German 1905 dictionary (Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch) and German to Ewe 1906 dictionary (Deutsche-Ewe Wörterbuch) to ascertain that the concepts mentioned in the interviews were in use during the time of Spieth’s writing. Westermann’s dictionary entries are in footnotes throughout this chapter. Spieth’s work was published in 1906. Spieth himself encouraged readers in his foreword to use Westermann’s dictionaries as a guide to his work. The presence of these words in Westermann’s dictionaries indicates that the missionaries were well aware of many Ewe concepts at the time of Spieth’s writing. Spieth’s choice to leave them out of his work may be indicative of the conclusions drawn in chapter 6 of this work, i.e. that he was writing from a deliberately colonial perspective for his target audience. Because of this, he may have distorted, simplified, or omitted key information that this work aims to include, thereby painting a relatively more accurate picture of life in nineteenth-century Ho.

⁴⁹ The ‘r’ used in this word is not the ‘r’ sound used in the English language. The closest sound in the International Phonetic Alphabet has been used in this work (Lateral tap/flap and Coronal).

⁵⁰ Entry, Kleid n. (2). Landes-) *avo, do*; (europ.) *awu*, Deutsche-Ewe Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1906, p. 106).

climate and environment. This ‘uncovering’ was also important because of the manual and taxing nature of the people’s daily activities, which included farming, hunting, weaving, drawing water and the like. The energy and physical exertion required for these activities, along with the tendency to sweat while undertaking them, necessitated the choice of clothing. In colder weather, however, more fabric was worn to protect individuals from the effects of the elements. During the pre-colonial period, the Ewe people also did not consider uncovering the body, as presented by Spieth, indecent. Indecency, in pre-colonial Ewe culture, was associated with the uncovering of the pubic area alone. This applied to both men and women as there was no gender differentiation in this regard. Once the pubic area was covered by the ‘pubic apron’, a person was deemed decent. This is corroborated by the pictures in Spieth’s work which never depicted a person in complete nudity. The uncovering of the chest area, especially for the women, was not problematic as the breasts were seen as playing a maternal function and not an erotic one. A woman’s breasts were perceived as a symbol of life because it was through them that children were nourished and sustained. The pre-contact Ewe worldview, therefore, did not attribute any negative sentiments to women’s uncovered breasts. It was not a cause for shame or discomfort among the people. Although the above account primarily focused on pre-colonial Ewe culture, it was essential to provide this background due to its implications for nineteenth-century Ho culture.

*Eno dede la, menyɛ nadeke onyo le mia mia gbɔ o. Eno nyɛ agbe. Ne wodzi wo la, edzebe nano no. Amedeke mekpɔ no enu eke omaa kpɔe o*⁵¹⁵².

Uncovered breasts were not problematic among us. [Women’s] breasts are considered life. When you are born, you are expected to suckle at the breast. Nobody saw them as something that could not be seen.

Excerpt from interview with Ewe scholar

⁵¹ All Ewe transcriptions in this chapter have been done by me and use the oral Ho dialect in which the words were spoken. These transcriptions are not the recognized standard written Ewe which was enforced by the German missionaries and is the written form today.

⁵² This quote was given by the Ewe archaeological and ethnographical scholar who studies pre-contact Ewe culture. It conflicts with the information provided by the Ho cultural expert who discussed 19th-century Ewe culture when Ewes had already been in contact with Europeans for a while. The latter insisted that women’s uncovered torsos were not acceptable among the Ewe in the 19th century which raises the question of whether and how contact might have influenced this practice.

Additionally, (in)decency was linked to both the visual and olfactory senses. When asked to define decency, the Ho elder stated the following:

Awu dzadzɛɛ, kɔkɔɛ nyɛnyɛ ... Blɛma la, maatoa do awu vuvu o. Amɛke la mɛkɔ o, ɛfo dii – indecent dressing ɛkemi. Enu kɛ xe naa do xe watɔ nku na amɛ, you are indecently dressed. Mɛkɔ o, mɛɛ dzadzɛɛ de o, anɔ amɛ dome o. Xe olɛ vɛvɛɛ ... taa omaa lɔ bɛ na gɛde amɛ dome o.

Clean clothes and being clean ...In the past, you were not permitted to wear torn clothes. Indecent dressing was someone who was not clean, someone who was dirty. [It was] something that one wore that was considered unsightly [literal translation – pokes the eye]. [Dressing like that meant] you were indecently dressed. You were not clean enough to be among others. If you smelled, you were not allowed to be among others.

Excerpt from interview with Ho elder

During the time of Spieth's writing in the nineteenth century, *avɔ/do tata* (cloth wearing) took different forms and was influenced by various factors, including the season, economic activity, and social status/role. Although Spieth's focus on clothing was supposedly within the domestic space, it is important to broaden this discussion slightly to include other spaces, as he did not really address these in his work. This leaves Spieth's readers the liberty of taking only that which he presented in his work as the accurate representation of all dress in nineteenth-century Ho. To begin with, the amount of fabric the people of Ho wore on a given day was primarily determined by the weather. The people enjoyed two major seasons – *pepii* (harmattan, popularly known as the dry season in Ghana) and *tsi dza ɲɔlii* (rainy season). *Pepii* occurred between November and March and was characterized by dry, dusty and hot days and very cold nights. *Tsi dza ɲɔlii* was divided into two: the minor rainy season and the major rainy season. The minor rainy season was characterized by light rainfall and occurred after the harmattan period between March and May. The major rainy season, on the other hand, occurred between May and June and was marked by heavy rainfall. The rains decreased from August to November when the harmattan returned. The Ewes of Ho wore more clothes/layers during cold weather to protect themselves against the elements. Spieth does not acknowledge or discuss the impact of seasonal changes on the clothing of the Ho people and only cursorily mentions the covering of both shoulders by Ho men during the cooler mornings. Given the length of the two seasons and their characteristics, covering the body played an equally important role in Ho life as uncovering the body. Additionally,

this was the case for the entire population and not just the men. Spieth’s account does not address this and provides a one-sided version (the more uncovered one during warmer weather, it appears) as the norm. Different pictures in his work, however, show the variety of clothing that both covers and uncovers the body, confirming the people’s adaptation to their environment. He does, however, rightly describe the way Ho men wore their cloth. The men tended to wear their cloth over their right shoulders, leaving their left shoulders bare. Depending on one’s economic activity, different types of clothing were worn. A specific type called *adewu*⁵³ was worn for hunting or farming. This *adewu*, which was also sometimes used in war, was prepared by cooking the fabric in specific herbs which darkened the material to mimic the look of blood. As we will see in the section on the care of clothing, many of the herbs used in clothing had medicinal and apotropaic functions. Ho Women, on the other hand, wrapped their cloth around their bodies. The way a woman wore her cloth was reflective of her social status as married (*esrɔ̃ tɔ*), elderly (*ametsitsi*), or unmarried (*tukpekpee*). Unmarried women wore a single piece of cloth around their chest, varying in length, and did not wear a *taku*⁵⁴ (headscarf). Married women were required to wear two pieces of cloth and a headscarf (*taku*). One cloth was wrapped around the waist downward with a second one from the chest area down. One person spoken to during the research mentioned that women were not allowed to go with their chests uncovered in the nineteenth century. Whether this statement is as a result of the challenges associated with memory work is uncertain, however, photographs in Spieth’s work and elsewhere show both forms of cloth-wearing among women. Women’s uncovered chests would not be surprising though, given the archaeological evidence of the people’s practice and worldview during pre-colonial times. The nineteenth century may have presented a period of adaptation from one form of clothing to another with elements of the pre-colonial period still present in the colonial era.

Mia fɛ nudodo wo lɛ, ɛlɛ xamɛ xamɛ xamɛ. Pepii mɛ nudodo wo lɛ vovo na tsi dzamɛ nudodo wɛ. Ade dada fɛfɛ nudodo wo ɛlɛ vovo nɛ dzidzɔ kpɔkpɔ nudodo wɛ. Agblɛ dɛdɛ fɛ nudodo wɛ ...vovo to lɛ ɛmɛ... ofɛ wu wo lɛ vovoovo... Nɛ pepii do de, maagba do o. Aagba [awu?] dɛ dzimɛ, agbe

⁵³ This was also attributed to hunting although given a different meaning in Westermann’s dictionary. Entry, *adewú*, Trommel, die zum Gesang der Jagdlieder geschlagen wird (loose translation: a drum which is beaten to the singing of hunting songs) Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1905, p. 46).

⁵⁴ Entry, *tákù*, 1. Kopftuch, ein um den Kopf gebundenes Tuch mit aufwärts stehendem Knotenzipfel (loose translation: 1. Headscarf, a cloth tied around the head with the knot pointing upwards), Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1905, p. 451).

afi deke de anyi o... Gake ne pepii melee o xe afifia le wɔwɔ la, odie dade ayi anɔ takpoe me...Taa season ekemi le mia si – harmattan (pepii me) kple etsi dza nɔli xenyɛ rainy season... Deko ole abe winter and summer... Ezɔ avawɔ wu tse lee xenyɛ asafowo tɔ. Mieyɔ wo be adewu. Adewu la, odɛɛ kple ‘herb’ ... Ewɔ yibɔɔ abe evu nenɛ. Okɔ eya tse yie bofoyie, kɔyi adɛgbɛ, okɔyie awayie. Eya enye awudodo ele xame xame xame henɔ Uɛdukɔwo si afe yevuwo va.

We had different types of clothing. Clothes worn during the harmattan season were different from those worn during the rainy season. Hunting clothes were different from festive clothing. Farming clothing was also different... During the harmattan season, cloth alone was not worn (contextually, *gba do* here is the simplified way that does not cover the entire body). People clothed themselves from top to bottom without leaving any parts uncovered... However, when the harmattan season was no more and [the weather caused] one [to] sweat, one was less covered...So those are the two seasons we had – harmattan and the rainy season. They are just like winter and summer [in terms of noticeable temperature difference]. Additionally, there were war clothes for warriors. We call them *adewu*. The *adewu* was cooked with herbs. It became dark like blood. It was also taken to the farm, to hunt and to war. Those are the different clothes we had in Ewe townships before the arrival of the white man.

Excerpt from interview with Ho elder

In addition to the cloth worn to cover the body, the people of Ho had different undergarments that served different purposes. Spieth describes the narrow *Lendenband* (loincloth) he called *godotse*,⁵⁵ which men, women and children supposedly wore. This was, according to the interviews conducted in this research, the least covering of the undergarments and a gross generalization of the people of Ho’s clothing. The people had a variety of loincloths with different types assigned to different groups. These loincloths were also typically used as undergarments to be worn as the skin’s first layer before other clothes were worn, depending on the season, economic activity, and gender. The *godotse* (loosely translated as ‘underneath’ cloth) was specifically worn by women and children. If a person *do goo* (the verb and noun are inverted and placed together to make up *godo* in the noun *godotse*), it meant wearing something from *anyingba me* (from ‘underneath’ meaning beneath the clothes) or wearing something to cover the private parts. Women also *do goo*

⁵⁵ Entry, *godótse* = *godui* Lendenkleid (loose translation: loincloth), Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1905, p. 198).

when they had their monthly periods to prevent them from bleeding into their clothes. Men, however, did not wear *godotse*. They wore *kamegue*⁵⁶. This is because the *godotse* covered one's pubic area but left the backside and thighs uncovered. Ho standards were particular about the uncovering of adults' pubic areas and backsides. Because of this, women had to wear another cloth over the *godotse* in addition to the beads worn around the waist. Children, on the other hand, were not subjected to the same standards of uncovering and could freely run around only in their *godotse*. Girls wore beads in addition to the *godotse*. Adolescent boys (*nutsuvi we/dakakpoe we*) wore a different kind of undergarment called *avente*⁵⁷. This resembled the present-day underwear and had a string which held the fabric together around the waist. It also covered the pubic area and the back side. Adolescent boys could wear this alone and go about their day bare-chested because they would be considered fully clothed per the pre-colonial worldview. Adult men wore *kamegue*, which covered the pubic area and the buttocks. This provided broader coverage than the *godotse*. This, too, was a type of undergarment. It was forbidden for men to wear this in town or on the public streets (*gbome*). On the farm, however, men could wear only their *kamegue* to allow for less restriction and to accommodate the manual nature of farming⁵⁸. Hunters wore their own clothing, called *adewu*, on top of the *kamegue*, but could also remove this once they were actively hunting. They sometimes worked in their *kamegue* alone to facilitate easy movement in case there was a need to flee from danger. A different type of undergarment called *evo ventee* was also made purposely for men with *vo* (hernia or hydrocele). This was a larger cloth covering meant to hide the appearance of the hernia or hydrocele.

Awu wo dɛwɛ oyo wɛ bɛ kamegue. Kamegue ya odo a kɔyi agble na nyutsuwe...Devi wɛ la, devi tukui odo godotse. Odo a gode... Gake ametsitsi mɛdo a gode o. Adolescent age la, ... obɛ private parts wa nɔ dzɛdzɛ taa la, aado avente. Fifie meleyo bɛ pant. Kamegue de, nyutsu wɛ edoaa kamegue...Nutsuviwɛ, dekapoe vi wɛ la, odo a avente. Oyo adewo koraa bɛ evo ventee. Egɔmɛ

⁵⁶ Entry, *kamegúi*, (A.) ein fest um den Leib gebundenes Lendenkleid (loose translation: a loincloth tied tightly around the body), Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1905, p. 250)

⁵⁷ Entry, *aventé*, eine einer Badehose ähnliche Schambinde (loose translation: a swimming trunks-like chastity belt), Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1905, p. 524)

⁵⁸ Spieth mentioned that Ho men sometimes wore *godotse* on the farm, but this would have been untrue as men did not wear *godotse* at all. *Godotse* was more exposing because it left the backside uncovered making it unacceptable to wear alone and in public. It would appear that women could wear the *godotse* even though it was more revealing because under no circumstance could they wear it alone. Spieth's photographs attest to this. Even while bathing, women were fully covered waist down with another piece of cloth.

enye be elolo alegbegbe, abe taflatse ne edo voo, amewo mega kpoε o ... Godotse de, nyonyuwo edoa godotse, Deviziwo ya odo a godotse tse. Ametsitsi medoa godotse o. Elabena, godotse de, ne edoe de, tefe wo atsi ayi; ηlogoo we, atawo fetee woatsi ayi ... Nyonyu nya do a godotse gake waata do de dzi, ametsitsi waata do de dzi ... Gake deviwo waadasi le godotse wu anɔ tsatsaa kpli faa. ... Omedo kamegue va gbome yiε o, le Ho o. Ne wadoe tse la, waado adewu de dzi aloo ayi de gbeme abade awu a; be afifia le yi wɔɔ taa waade awu a le dzi anɔ kamegue me, abe ayaa tse aanɔ fofoo na we ... ne nde beyadzɔ kpataa la, awu a maadefu na wo.

There were some clothes called *kamegue*. It was what men wore to the farm... For children, little children, they wore *godotse*. They wore *gode*... However, adults did not wear *gode*. Adolescents, because their private parts would show, they wore *avente*. Today, we call it pant. Men wore *kamegue*, but adolescent boys wore *avente*. There were some types of *avente* called *εvo ventee*. It was big so that if one had a hernia or hydrocele, others would not see it... Women are the ones who wore *godotse*. Children also wore *godotse*, but adults [men] did not. That is because, with the *godotse*, parts of your private parts would be uncovered – your thighs and butt cheeks. Women wore *godotse*, but they wore a cloth over it... However, children were allowed to walk about freely only in the *godotse*... *Kamegue* [alone] was not worn around town in Ho. If it was worn, *adewu* was worn over it, or one could take it off if they went into the bush [presumably for an occupation like farming or hunting]. The outer clothing may be taken off because of the heat. In such cases, men could remain in their *kamegue* only to allow for aeration of the body. Also, if there was danger, the outer clothing did not become a hindrance [in case of escape].

Excerpt from interview with Ho elder

ε/ε sisi (body paintings): In addition to fabric, the pre-colonial Ewe people also considered body paintings and body adornments as ‘clothing’ because they also covered the body. Body paints consisted of many herbs, plant parts, plant juices, seeds, flowers and spices that were mixed with or without ε/ε – kaolin (a kind of soft clay) – and applied to the body. Some of these herbs and

spices included *ahaliwoe*⁵⁹⁶⁰ (anise), *pepre*⁶¹ (cloves⁶²) and *lifui*⁶³ (African nut tree). Although these mixtures played a significant role in ‘clothing’ the Ewe body, they were also important in personal hygiene practices. It is for reasons such as this that clothing and personal hygiene cannot be discussed in clearly delineated sections as Spieth did. The body paint mixtures were viewed as therapeutic and played a role in maintaining overall physical health. However, interviewees were unable to specify the exact roles they played in ensuring good health. A careful search, however, showed recent scientific studies that highlight the specific roles the components play in maintaining good health which align with Ho accounts. *Pepre*, for example, is known to contain the aromatic oil eugenol, which has “antibacterial, antifungal, and antiviral properties, including effectiveness against MRSA bacteria” (Britannica, 2025). MRSA bacteria, known fully as Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, are types of bacteria that are typically resistant to many antibiotics today and can be difficult to treat according to the United States Center for Disease Control (2024). The *Staphylococcus aureus* germ is known to inhabit the nose or skin. In severe cases of infection, the germ may cause swelling on the skin, pain, pus, and fever, with complications that can sometimes lead to pneumonia, bloodstream infections, sepsis, and death (ibid.). *Lifui*, “commonly known as tree of life, is a purple-flowering plant that is widely distributed in many parts of Africa. Different parts of the plant, including the leaves, flower, stems and roots are prevalently used in African traditional medicine” (Okagu et al., 2022, p. 51). It is also known as the African nut tree or the Fertility tree, although its scientific name is *Newbouldia laevis* (ibid.). Okagu et al. (2022), in their study, found that properties found in the bark of the tree “inhibited

⁵⁹ Since the greater part of interviews were conducted in Ewe, Ewe terms were used. Most of the terms’ English names were unknown by the participants but I was able to find a British colonial document (Dalziel, 1937) which had the Ewe names and their respective English translations or botanical names alongside. The English/botanical names have been placed in parenthesis in this work.

⁶⁰ Entry, *ahaliwoè*, Anis, zerrieben als Parfüm auf den Körper gestrichen, auch ins Brot gebacken (loose translation: Anise, ground as perfume, applied to the body, also baked into bread), Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1905, p. 214).

⁶¹ Entry, *pepri* = *adrike*, Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1905, p. 414). *Adrikè* Same der Gewürznelke (eingeführt), zerstoßen als Parfüm benutzt, zum Einreiben von Hals, Brust etc. - syn. *pepri* (loose translation: Seed of clove (introduced), crushed and used as a perfume, for rubbing on the throat, chest, etc. - syn. *pepri*), Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1905, p. 61).

⁶² Caryophyllata “In West Africa it is cultivated in the French equatorial region, particularly in Gabon, where its experimental introduction dates from 1887 [...] In Bornu a hair-wash (Kanuri *tap-tap*) used by women is made with cloves beaten up in water (Benton) (Dalziel, 1937, p. 68)

⁶³ Entry, *lifí*, *lifui*, *lifuití*, ein Baum, dessen aromatisch duftende Rinde u. Harz zerrieben und als Parfüm benutzt wird (loose translation: a tree whose aromatic bark and resin are ground and used as perfume), Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1905, p. 327).

the growth of [...] bacterial and fungal species” while the root “exhibited moderately antifungal (*C. albicans*⁶⁴) and antibacterial activities” (p. 65). They also helped maintain good body odour due to their aromatic effect and because the juices seeped into the skin’s pores to combat excessive sweat production. *Ahaliwoe* is translated by Westermann (1905) as anise. Although not identified in Dalziel (1937)’s work, Westermann identifies it in his 1905 Ewe to German dictionary and describes it as ground and applied to the body as perfume. Anise (*Pimpinella anisum L.*) is a plant which produces a sweet aroma based on the anethole oil from the seeds (Sun et al., 2019). Sun et al. (2019), in their study, show that “anise seeds and essential oil have antioxidant, antibacterial, antifungal, anticonvulsant, anti-inflammatory, analgesic, gastro-protective, antidiabetic, and antiviral activities” (p. 1).

Lifui de, evɛɛ lilili abɛ lɛke xe lavender vie nɛnɛ ... Eya tɛɛ otaa nɛ oletsɛ vɔ. Nɛ elɛtsɛ vɔ, gbɛdewotɔ nɛ meta wo fifiɛ wo la, ɛwo mɛle ɛmɛ o. Eye ozaa lɛ Ho koon afe yevuwo ova.

Lifui smells really nice like lavender... It was also smeared on the body after bathing. During the time of our forebears, if you did not use *lifui*, you were considered poorly. That (*lifui*) was really what was used in Ho before the white man came.

Pepre kple ahaliwoe, wo amɛvɛ ezɔɔ

Pepre and *ahaliwoe* are usually used together.

Excerpt from interview with Ho elder

The cited studies above fully support Ho accounts about the health properties of their herbal mixtures and show the ingenuity of the people in harnessing natural products for their health and survival. In addition to maintaining good health, the Ewe people used body paintings for apotropaic purposes, that is, for averting ill fortune and other evil influences. The use of body paints for the reasons mentioned above highlights a key difference in nineteenth-century European and African conceptions of the world. While discussing clothing, cleanliness and personal hygiene, Spieth focused solely on the physical state of being. Clothing and cleanliness were, according to his work, limited to the body and the physical sphere. For the pre-colonial and nineteenth-century Ewe people, however, clothing/covering did not only play the physical role of protecting the body

⁶⁴ “*Candida albicans* is a common commensal fungus that colonizes the oropharyngeal cavity, gastrointestinal and vaginal tract, and healthy individuals’ skin” (Talapko et al., 2021, p. 1).

from the elements. It was also not solely for health or aesthetic purposes. Clothing was also spiritual. It offered an individual protection from negative forces in the spirit world. This is because in pre-colonial and nineteenth-century Ewe cosmology, every individual was considered spiritual, and there was no separation or hierarchy between spirit and matter. Clothing/covering and cleanliness, thus, had both physical and spiritual functions. Conversely, Spieth discusses the majority of Ewe spiritual beliefs under the ‘religion’ of the people, thereby creating an artificial separation between spirit and matter. Because of this, it is more fitting to discuss the ‘world-sense’ of the Ewe people, rather than their worldview, as explained by Oyewumi (1997). Oyewumi suggests that many African cultures focused on aspects of the human experience that went beyond the visual/physical (the visual here meaning one’s worldview). Thus, ‘world-sense’ was a more fitting concept in describing and understanding African cultures because it captured the African experience beyond the visual sense to incorporate other senses.

Dzonu (body adornments)⁶⁵: The last form of ‘clothing’ used by the Ewes of Ho incorporated various kinds of body adornments, including bracelets, waist beads, earrings and other types of beads. The Ho people believed that the original beads, called *dzonu fufui*, were produced during the formation of rainbows when the latter expelled the former. These were then dug out of the earth. All others were said to be imitations of the original. Imitation beads were those made by mixing clay, stone, and glass, and then baking them to harden the mixture. They were strung together with silk cotton thread, washed and thoroughly dried to maintain them in good condition. Common beads in Ho in the nineteenth century that were naturally occurring included *trinidadua*, *gbloti*⁶⁶, *dzegba*⁶⁷, *hlɔkui*⁶⁸ *matomato*, *esue*⁶⁹, *afume*, *ɲɔli*⁷⁰, *essi* and *ewokpodoe*. Westermann

⁶⁵ Entry, Perle, *dzonu*. Arten (loose translation: types): *adzagba*, *gbloti*, *gedze*, *anitsriwa*, *sui*, Deutsche-Ewe Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1906, p. 137).

⁶⁶ Entry, *gbloti*, eine im Boden gefundene Perle (loose translation: a pearl found in the ground) Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1905, p. 180).

⁶⁷ Entry, *adzagba*, eine längliche, durchbohrte, in der Erde gefundene Perle von schmutzig roter Farbe, sehr teuer (loose translation: an elongated, pierced, pearl found in the earth, which is of dirty red color, very expensive) Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1905, p. 68).

⁶⁸ Entry, *ahlɔkui*, Same der *ahlɔ*, von Frauen als Arm- und Lendenschmuck getragen (als Zuaber) (loose translation: seed of the *ahlo*, worn by women as arm and loin jewelry (as a charm) Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1905, p. 225). Entry, *ahlɔ*, eine Pflanze; ihre Früchte gleichen unreifen Bananen (loose translation: a plant; its fruits resemble unripe bananas) Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1905, p. 224).

⁶⁹ Uncertain if this is the same as *sui* in Westermann (1905, p. 445). Different Ewe dialects produce different spellings, however, *sui* was also an ornament during Spieth’s time. Entry, *sui*, Koralle (loose translation: coral)

⁷⁰ Entry, *nɔli* 3. Eine Perle (loose translation: a pearl) Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1905, p. 404).

(1905) has noted the presence of some of these beads in his work. *Gbloti* and *adzagba* (possibly the same as *dzegba* which was mentioned in one of the interviews) were both described as ornaments that were mined from the earth. *Adzagba*, in particular, was noted as being expensive. This corroborates the Ho account of beads being dug from the earth. It also suggests that these were indigenous ornaments and not imports even though Shonsey (1995) has highlighted that the Ewe were known to import Venetian and other European glass beads from as early as the fifteenth century. *Ahlō̄kui* (*hlō̄kui*) appears to have been beads made out of the seeds of a tree, while *sui* (possibly *esue*, *essi*) is recorded to have been made out of coral according to Westermann (1905). Women and children typically wore beads, even though exceptions were made for some boys and men. This implies that, according to the Ewe account, women and girls were, in some ways, more covered than their male counterparts if covering was defined as more than just fabric. This makes Spieth's claims of the opposite problematic. It equally makes Spieth's claim that it was the German government which taught Ho women about body care and ornaments hard to believe. In the first place, Westermann (1905) provides evidence of the presence of these beads, many of which were naturally occurring, among the Ewe people in his work. Secondly, Shonsey (1995) shows that the Ewe people were importing glass beads from European traders from as early as the fifteenth century. From these two accounts, it is challenging to claim that the Ewe people were unaware of their own ornaments and those of others until the arrival of the German colonial administration which was established in Togoland in 1884. Women and girls were generally expected to wear beads around their waists, while girls also wore additional ones on their ankles. Sometimes, the beads were also worn on the knees, wrists, elbows and neck. The purpose of this, according to Ho culture, was to help shape the girl/woman's body. The well-shaped body was one of the female beauty standards among the people, and the beads were seen as helpful in guiding the female anatomy to achieve the desired body shape. Some of these beads were also worn as a form of protection against evil forces. Westermann (1905) notes the use of *hlō̄kui*, in particular, as jewelry and as a charm used by Ewe women. Some men also wore beads even though this was not the norm. The men who wore beads did so as a sign of their authority, i.e., as people in positions of authority, such as chiefs, royals, and priests. Male chiefs and other royals typically wore beads on the right wrist, while priests wore specific types of beads to distinguish between the deities they

Other notes: The *ō̄* orthography used in this work is the closest one in Microsoft Word to what was used in Westermann's dictionary. The original could not be found in Microsoft Word.

were associated with. It is worth noting that priests were both male and female in pre-colonial and colonial Ewe society. Priests associated with water spirits wore white or blue beads or a combination of both, while those associated with earthly spirits wore brown or reddish beads. Twin boys were also permitted to wear beads as a sign of their multiple birth. They wore brown and whitish beads. Aside from their aesthetic function and their indication of social status, beads were also seen as having a spiritual function as they were perceived as able to protect their wearers from ill fortune. Ewe society understood human beings as living within both physical and spiritual spaces. Because of this, clothing had to have both physical and spiritual utility. Finally, beads also served a practical purpose in health and development. They were used as a way to measure children's growth, thereby, ensuring proper physical development. As children grew, beads were unstrung and more added onto the strings to make them large enough for children to grow into. The subsequent unstringing and restringing as children outgrew them demonstrated their physical progress and developmental growth.

The above exposé on pre-colonial and colonial Ewe culture shows that the covering of the body extended beyond fabric, a concept Spieth failed to reflect in his work. The styles of fabrics and other coverings were also varied, demonstrating different social attributes. The clothing of the Ewe people, moreover, served different purposes, including practical (adaptation to climate and environment), health, aesthetic, and apotropaic (spiritual) functions. All these demonstrate that Spieth's account did not provide a comprehensive account of the Ewe people's culture and that he likely wrote in a way that reinforced European ideas and views about non-European peoples.

ii. Wo dzi kpɔkpɔ (Care of clothing)

Given that the *avɔ/dɔ* (fabrics) were made of cotton, there was a need for careful maintenance because of the way the fabric behaves. The Ho Ewes appear to have been well aware of this. As Sutar et al. (2024) have shown, natural cotton fabrics have an affinity for water and other liquids. They can “easily get wet with water, dampness, or other liquids as they contain a lot of hydroxyl groups” (p. 1). This can lead to

dirty stains after evaporation, making cotton garments uncomfortable and unappealing to wear [...]. Additionally, the absorption of water can cause unpleasant odors and pose health risks such as hypothermia. Furthermore, cotton fabric's condition can worsen due to moisture retention and dirt accumulation. The rainy season can also cause mud, dirt, and debris to accumulate on clothes, which can be easily absorbed by cotton fabric. This necessitates

frequent washing and drying to maintain good hygiene, which can be a time-consuming and hectic process. (Sutar et al., 2024, p. 1)

Nineteenth-century Ho Ewes seem to have understood this from the way they cared for their cotton clothes. A conscious effort to maintain cleanliness was made throughout the cloth's life cycle – from its creation to its use and maintenance. Special herbs like those mentioned earlier, for example, *pepre* and *lifui*, which had medicinal properties, were used in the dyeing of cloth after they were woven. These dyes were used to impart anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties, thereby maintaining the cloth's integrity in terms of health. Some herbs, such as *avenyã* (*Vernonia amygdalina* or *A. colorata*), were also used in dyeing cloth for spiritual purposes. The herbs were said to possess protective abilities, shielding their wearer from evil or spiritual harm. They were also used in rituals for reconciliation and to promote peace when enmity existed between people. This point is important to note because one interviewee mentioned that cleanliness among the Ewe extended beyond the physical to encompass the spiritual. Human beings were not only expected to be physically clean but spiritually clean also.

Avenyã ati sesẽ ye. Oko wɔa kɔnyɛ. Nɛ xe amɛ kplɛ amɛ omɛlɛ nufoo bɛ olɛfu onɔwɛ ... ya oko avenyã kɔ wɔ yɛɛ...ɛwɔ a nutifafa tɛ... ode tsi mɛ anɔ wuwuu dɛ amɛ odome. Nɛ xe amɛgbɛgbɛlɛ kɔ nu xe va la, aatrɔ... nɛ dzo wɔ tɛɛ aatrɔɛ. Ɛya enyɛ avenyã. Ɛga lɛ Ho ɛgbɛ ɛgbɛ ɛgbɛ.

Avenyã is a hardwood tree. It was used in traditional ceremonies. When there was enmity between two people and they were not on speaking terms, *avenyã* was used. It brings about peace. It was put in water and sprinkled on people. If an evil person brought evil with them, it/they left. If it was witchcraft as well, it left. That is *avenyã*. It is still in Ho today.

Excerpt from interview with Ho elder

In addition to this, regular washing was done by the women to maintain cleanliness. Spieth attests to this in his work. A special kind of *adzalɛ* (soap) made in the region (now called black soap) was used. Spieth mentions the presence and the process of making this soap elsewhere in his work. Women typically specialized in soap-making. Soaps were made from cocoa *tsro* (pod) and *deti* (silk cotton), which were dried, pounded and roasted. The ash from the silk cotton tree is said to produce a form of caustic soda which is a known cleaning agent. Afterwards, *dzomi* (palm oil) and other aromatic herbs were mixed into it and boiled until it thickened. Once this happened, the mixture was scooped into smaller usable pieces and left to harden. It was then ready to be used as

soap. The soap was not only used as a cleaning agent but also served as a form of perfume due to its aromatic scent. Once clothes were washed and thoroughly dried, they were placed in special storage baskets designated for clothing called *kevi*⁷¹ (rushes, *Juncaceae*). The *kevi* were woven from grass harvested from waterbodies and infused with additional sweet-smelling herbs, such as *lifui*, to maintain their freshness. *Lifui* (*Newbouldia laevis*) was a sweet-smelling gum that was harvested from the African nut tree. It was burnt like incense and had a very aromatic smell. Other herbs were also used in the *kevi* as a repellent against insects and termites which can be hosts for pathogens. Cocoa leaves and *ahaliwoe* (anise) were, for example, added to clothes in the *kevi* to repel insects. The use of *ahaliwoe* (anise) as an insecticide has been noted by Sun et al. (2019). Beads were also carefully maintained by undoing and restringing them to ensure they remained in good condition at all times. They were also thoroughly washed and dried before storage.

Etsã de, adaka mena yi o, xe woanyanu fine akoe de me de, me na yi o. Eya taa miafe dakaa mieyie be kevi, kevi me. Olõ kevi kple ... nekpo ne eyi de anɔame, eto to de...keti emee le eto me, eya oko lõõ ekevi, kotoku ga fine, olõe. Ne owɔvo tse, oko ama vevẽẽ we ko de eme... Lifui de, evẽe lilili abe leke xe lavender vie nene...Taa ne onyanu a vo de, okoe di eme. Egbee de tse olee, woakoe de eme afe atu nu de nu elabena, nu dzudwoee maatoa do fimi o. Koko makpaa ... ati de olee de, ome na be adidee, nukemitowo gedee me o. Ele abe repellent nene.

In times past, there were no trunks in which washed clothes could be stored. Our storage units were called *kevi*. The *kevi* were woven with *keti*, which were often found near waterbodies. When you visited Anloland, you could find *keti* growing in waterbodies. They were used to weave big bags which, once finished, were infused with sweet-smelling herbs... *Lifui* smells nice like lavender... So when the washing of clothes was finished, it [the *lifui*] was put in the *kevi*. Other herbs were also added to the *kevi* before it was closed to prevent insects from entering it. Cocoa leaves and some other trees repel ants and other such insects. They are like repellents.

Dzonu, eya tse odzree do abe leke odree avo do nene. Kevi le si koon...Eya la, naakpo be omekoo enu wo abe acid nukemitowo, ome kloẽ o. Etsi ko okloe fine...be ni sesẽ, na eme ni ko fine. Eya de dii le me. Ne ekoo chemicals ko kloẽ, naakpo be aaba no colour 'change'. Maaga no original [colour].

⁷¹ Entry, *kévi*, 1. Sack oder Tasche, aus Binsen, *kpã* oder Palmblättern geflochten (loose translation: 1. Sack or bag, woven from rushes, *kpã* or palm leaves) Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1905, p. 258).

Beads were also cared for and maintained, just like clothing. They had their own designated *kevi*. For beads, acidic solutions were not used in washing them. Only water was used to clean them. The water washed away the dirt. If you used chemicals to wash the beads, it would change its colour and it would no longer be the original [colour].

Excerpt from interview with Ho elder

iii. Etsi lɛlɛ kplɛ dzadzɛɛ wɔwɔ (Bathing and personal hygiene)

Bathing was part of nineteenth-century Ho culture as was rightly stated by Spieth. This was at a time when the European bathing culture as we know it now was still in its early stages. As McClintock (1995) has noted,

[b]efore the late nineteenth century, clothes and bedding washing was done in most households only once or twice a year in great, communal binges, usually in public at streams or rivers. As for body washing, not much had changed since the days when Queen Elizabeth I was distinguished by the frequency with which she washed: ‘regularly every month whether she needed it or not’. (p. 210)

Even though Spieth mentioned that Ho men, women and children bathed, he hardly mentioned what the bathing practices entailed. Instead, he focused on the bathing places, the place of the body within public spaces and the perceived indecency of public bathing. This chapter will, therefore, shed more light on the bathing practices of the people, providing a fuller appreciation of their attention to cleanliness.

People washed their bodies with *adzalɛ̃/ɛvedzalɛ̃* (soap/Ewe soap), which has already been discussed in the previous section. The addition of herbs to soap mixtures was intended to contribute to maintaining proper health by eliminating germs and disease. The soap, for instance, was used as a treatment for *ɛwu tsetse* (a type of skin rash) and other infections. Andreas Riis, a Basel missionary on the Gold Coast (although not stationed among the Ewe, Riis was stationed among some of the Akan neighbours of the Ewe people), who fell gravely ill and whose sickness was incurable by the Danish government physician in 1832, fell on the help of an indigenous doctor who performed ablutions on him with a combination of African soap and lemon. Riis, in his personal letter to the missionary committee, explained that he was cured of his illness within four days of treatment from the indigenous doctor with this combination (Nasim, 2023, p. 284). This account lends credence to the efficacy of local herbs, mixtures, and soaps in maintaining good health on the West African coast, and this information was known among both missionaries and

colonial authorities. The *Évedzalē* (Ewe soap) was used in combination with *akutsa*⁷² (*Momordica bracteata*⁷³ or *Momordica angustisepala*⁷⁴), a kind of luffa-like ‘sponge’ beaten from a climbing plant which produces fibrous threads. It is known to be indigenous to the tropical and subtropical regions of Africa, Australia, and Asia, although it originates from the former (Thiaw et al., 2023). This ‘sponge’ was used in conjunction with soap to scrub away dirt from the skin ensuring cleanliness. Another type of sponge used for washing the body was that from the balsam apple tree known as *kakle* (*Momordica balsamina*) among the people of Ho. It is also known as southern balsam pear or African pumpkin (Ramalhete et. al, 2022, p. 617). This particular plant was used without soap because of its own natural properties. *Kakle* is a twine-like herb that presents as a creeping plant which, when rubbed together, lathers by itself without soap. Dalziel (1937) testifies to this by stating that “they form a slightly soapy solution in water sometimes used to wash hands and body, but not for clothes” (p. 62). The juice/lather from this plant was medicinal and used as a cleanser, also possessing curative properties for various ailments. Thiaw (2023) suggests that:

M. balsamina is recommended for addressing dermatological ailments like pimples, skin spots, and edema. It serves as a remedy for wounds, eczema, allergies, and skin infections while also functioning as a skin moisturizer. Its effectiveness in addressing dermatological issues may be associated with its scientifically proven anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties. (pp. 566-7)

Apart from its medicinal properties, *kakle* was also used for its apotropaic functions. It was believed to cleanse a person spiritually. This point is important as one expert mentioned that for the pre-colonial Ewe people, cleanliness was both a physical and spiritual undertaking. People were expected to be clean before both *Mawu* (God) and their fellow humans. The *kakle* plant, with its properties, was said to ward off evil spirits and was prescribed for curing sick people whose maladies stemmed from spiritual sources. It was also used around the necks of warriors and other heroes as a symbol of their bravery in war and other exploits. To date, the plant is still very common in Ho. Due to its spiritual properties, it was also used by prominent personalities, such as chiefs and warriors, for protection against evil forces.

⁷² Entry *akutsá*, 1. eine Liane. - 2. eine Art Schwamm, aus dem weich gestossenen oder zerkauten Holz dieser Liane hergestellt, zum Waschen, Abreiben benutzt (loose translation: 1. a vine. - 2. a kind of sponge, made from the softened or chewed wood of this vine, used for washing, rubbing), Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1905, p. 314).

⁷³ Dalziel (1937, p. 62)

⁷⁴ Synonym provided by the Royal Botanical Gardens
<https://powo.science.keew.org/taxon/urn:lsid:ipni.org:names:293402-1>

Amaa de olee...kakle ele abe eka nene. Abe ne edugui koraa aatso fu. Eyaa ne olee eya tse koo elame na ame... Ne onyee fifee la, eya ntɔ, adzalē deke melee o gake ne ne nya dugui ko etso fu le dokoe si... Spiritually tse la, ne edolele, obe oni ko kakle vee ni ole...Ne oyie kakle tsɔfe na nya be enu de ele sesē... spirits ome die o. Ena nya gbɔgbɔvɔ, ade gbɔgbɔvɔ tse le wuwe...Eya kie ole tse, abe dɔlele tse doo le ame lamē...Sigbe kie ne amede le aŋla ga de be wo nutefe la, obe ni ko kakle ko [de] kome ne. Eyata ne egbe egbe egbe ne xe ole konu ga wo, ole teduu, ne nanya kpɔ amede oko kakle de kome nee, amie gallant person ye. Ede ava gbɔ, enye ametsitsi, amegã de... fia amegãmegã, ava fia we.

There were some herbs...*kakle* is like twine and when you rub it together, it lathers. When that one was also used in bathing, it ensured cleanliness. When it is rubbed together, it lathers on its own without the addition of soap. Spiritually also, when a person was sick and they were asked to bring *kakle* to be used in bathing them, it meant that the situation was a serious one. [Bad] spirits don't like it. It [*kakle*] drives away bad spirits and cleanses a person of evil. The same *kakle* was used in bathing and through that, sicknesses left a person's body. In the same way, if a person had engaged in a brave deed, *kakle* was placed around their neck. So today, when there is a traditional ceremony going on or the Yam festival is being celebrated and you see someone with *kakle* around the neck, it means the person is a gallant person. They have been to war, are elderly, an important person or a warrior.

Excerpt from interview with Ho elder

After bathing, additional mixtures were applied to the body. *Amakè* (one such mixture of herbs, which Westermann identifies in his dictionary as a combination of *ahaliwoe*, *pepre*, *kotoklobo*, and others⁷⁵), which was very aromatic, was used. This research found that the mixture was used specifically by Ho women. Westermann (1905) corroborates this when he describes it as, “ein aus zerriebenen Kräutern und Gewürzen (*pepri*, *kotoklobo*, *ahaliwoe* etc.) bestehendes Parfüm, mit dem Frauen Hals und Brust einreiben” (p. 339. Loose translation: a perfume made from crushed herbs and spices, which women rub on their necks and chests). The medicinal uses of the individual components of the mixture have already been discussed above. Research participants stated that

⁷⁵ Entry, *amakè*, ein aus zerriebenen Kräutern und Gewürzen (*pepri*, *kotoklobo*, *ahaliwoe* etc.) bestehendes Parfüm, mit dem Frauen Hals und Brust einreiben (loose translation: a perfume made from ground herbs and spices (*pepri*, *kotoklobo*, *ahaliwoe*, etc.) with which women rub their necks and chests), Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1905, p. 339).

people who used this *amake* sometimes did not want to put on clothes after applying it because they did not want the clothes to take away the pleasant smell from their bodies. *Kotoklolo*⁷⁶ was a sweet-smelling tree that one interviewee translated as frankincense. *Kotoklolo* was, according to him, not produced in Ho itself but in the neighbouring towns which traded it with the people of Ho. It is no longer produced in the region today. Westermann (1905) identifies the *kotoklolo* plant and, again, confirms the use of the tree's bark as a perfume. Smelling good appears to have been a very important part of maintaining personal hygiene for Ho women. It is important to note that Ho women's use of this mixture and body ornaments defies Spieth's claim that it was the German government that taught Ho women about body care and ornaments. *Yokumi*⁷⁷ (shea nut butter) was used as a lotion among the people for many centuries and is still used today. There is no evidence that the people of Ho produced shea butter as the shea tree was prevalent in the savanna regions further north of Togoland. However, Lewicki (1974) has noted the trade of shea butter and nuts across the West African region since the fourteenth century. The people of Ho added *lifui* (African nut tree) and other spices, such as *ahaliwoe* (anise) and *pepre* (cloves), to *yokumi* (shea nut butter) to make the body lotion. *Yokumi* was made from *yoku*⁷⁸ (shea nut). It is a "fat produced from the kernels of the shea tree" (Ugwu-Dike and Nambudiri, 2020, p. 1). Ayanlowo et al. (2022)'s review of the existing literature on shea butter shows its importance in dermatology. According to them, shea butter helps in the following ways: it

has both emollient and occlusive properties which enables it to trap moisture in the epidermal layers of the skin. Shea butter has anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and antiaging properties; and absorbs UV radiation because of the triterpene alcohols, cinnamic acid esters, retinols and tocopherols components.

Shea butter is used as a regular emollient for the skin, scalp, and hair; and in the management of dry and inflamed skin of atopic dermatitis, xerosis, ichthyosis, and other dermatoses. It is also used for the prevention and thinning of stretch marks, for massages in children and adults, improving wound healing and as an anti-microbial. Shea butter has some sun-protection, skin rejuvenation and anti-aging properties. (Ayanlowo et al., 2022, p. 2)

⁷⁶ Entry, *kotoklóbó*, ein Baum mit stark riechende Holz; die Rinde wird zerrieben als Parfum benutzt (loose translation: a tree with strong-smelling wood; the bark is crushed and used as perfume) Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1905, p. 280).

⁷⁷ Entry, *yókúmi*, das aus den Früchten des Schi-Butterbaumes gewonnene Fett, die Schi-Butter (loose translation: the fat obtained from the fruits of the shea butter tree, the shea butter) Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1905, p. 579).

⁷⁸ Entry, *yòkú*, Frucht des Schi-Butterbaumes (loose translation: fruit of the shea butter tree), Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1905, p. 579).

Because of its unique properties, Honfo et al. (2014) note its high demand in the current international cosmetic industry. Dalziel notes that the preparation of shea butter was “entirely a women’s industry” in West Africa (1937, p. 351), showing the proximity of women to the product. In addition to *yɔkumi*, *mumoe*⁷⁹ (lime/lemon) juice was also used as a natural deodorizer. Dalziel identifies lime as “the most familiar citrus fruit of West Africa” (1937, p. 305) in his collection on the plants of West Africa. The presence and use of lemon as a cleansing agent in indigenous healing on the West African Gold Coast has already been discussed. El-Desoukey et al. (2021) have found that lemon works significantly against odour bacteria associated with sweating, while Lam Hoai et al. (2020) found that lemon juice was effective in treating Bromhidrosis, that is, excessive bad odour emanating from the apocrine glands.

Nɛ nyɔnyu letsi vɔ, aadze amake adzra dokoe do fine. Abe nɛ ekpɔ nyɔnyu de wanɔ vevɛɛ lilili.

When a [Ho] woman finished bathing, she smeared *amake* on her skin and dressed up nicely. So when you saw her, she smelled really nice.

Ami tata tse, mietaa yɔkumi. Yɔkumi tse mietaa afe okɔ ofe ami tata kɔ ve. Yɔku le miagbɔ xoxo.

Taa yɔwo ekɔ ami tata ve na mi a? Menye yɔwo ekwe ve ode.

For body lotions, we used shea butter. Shea butter is what we were using before they [Europeans] brought their lotions. Shea nuts have been with us for a very long time. So are they the ones who brought body lotions to us? No, they are not the ones.

Kotoklobo de, eya deko ɛɛ abe frankincense... Edza ati. Nɛ ekpa edza ti, etsi xe tso mɛ de...

Kotoklobo was just like frankincense... *Edza* tree. When you cut part of the bark of the tree, some fluid came out of it [that bit].

Excerpt of interview with Ho elder

Regarding the bathing practices themselves, this study found that Ho men and women were not allowed to bathe together. Both groups had separate spaces for bathing. Children, on the other hand, were at liberty to bathe outside without designated bathing spaces until girls reached puberty and experienced their first menstrual period. This identified her no longer as a child but as a

⁷⁹ Entry, *mūmoe* (accent on ‘o’ not available in current symbols used in Microsoft Word) Limone (loose translation: lemon, lime), Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1905, p. 362).

woman. Particular attention was paid to menstruating women who were allocated designated spaces for bathing. Once a woman got her period, she was no longer allowed in the house (hence the Ewe reference to menstruation as a description of this: *ne nyɔnyu tsi gbɔto* – literally: when a woman remains outside, figuratively: when she is menstruating) for fear of contaminating things in the house with the blood. She was also not allowed to cook. Designated areas downstream of waterbodies were specifically allocated for bathing to further prevent pollution of the main water sources used for drinking and other daily activities. This was not done to ostracize the women but to control the spread of contamination as much as possible reiterating the Ho people’s commitment to maintaining the highest standards of cleanliness. Other taboos around cleanliness included walking barefoot/not wearing shoes in water bodies meant for drinking and not allowing one’s cloth to touch the water once in it. Although these taboos were shrouded in mystery by attributing negative spiritual consequences to disobeying them, one interviewee noted that they were done to achieve adherence to the strict societal expectations of cleanliness.

Apart from bathing, the Ewes of Ho also took part in other personal hygiene practices. Spieth attests to the fact that the people of Ho had good oral hygiene. He mentions the use of chewing sticks to clean the teeth. It must be understood that not all sticks (*adufeti/atidudu*) were used to clean the teeth. Specific varieties were used, some of which were also known to have medicinal properties. *Gbɔti*^{80, 81} (bitter leaf plant, *Vernonia amygdalina*), *atiteti*⁸² (possibly *Milletia thonningii*), *atutoe*⁸³ (possibly velvet/black tamarind, *Dialium guineense* or *Hymenostegia afzelii*⁸⁴), *atroti*⁸⁵ (English name/botanical name not found) *gbloti*⁸⁶ root (English

⁸⁰ Entry, *gboti*, wilder Feigenbaum, *Ficus Vogelii* (loose translation: wild fig tree, *Ficus Vogelii*), Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1905, p. 186).

⁸¹ Literal translation is ‘goat tree’. Dalziel (1937) found that it was so-called because it was unhealthy for goats.

⁸² Entry, *atite*, eine Strauch mit länglichen Früchten (loose translation: a shrub with elongated fruits) Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1905, p. 469). The *ti* added to Ewe words usually means ‘tree’.

⁸³ Entry, *atitoeti*, s. *atitoe*. *Atitoe*, die Frucht des *atitoeti*, kleine, flache Beeren mit schwarzer, samtartiger Schale, säuerl. Geschmack (loose translation: the fruit of the *atitoeti*, small, flat berries with black, velvety skin, sour taste) Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1905, p. 469).

⁸⁴ Dalziel (1937) has noted the use of the twigs of *Hymenostegia afzelii* as chew sticks in West Africa in the early to mid twentieth century.

⁸⁵ Entry, *atroti*, ein kleiner Buschbaum mit hartem Holz (loose translation: a small bush tree with hard wood) Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1905, p. 491)

⁸⁶ Entry, *gbloti*, ein knorriger, krüppeliger Waldbaum mit breiter Krone (loose translation: a stunted forest tree with a broad crown) Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1905, p. 180)

name/botanical name not found), *angowa*⁸⁷ (guava, *Psidium guajava*, synonym *Psidium pomiferum*⁸⁸), *sokodua root* (English name/botanical name not found), *eyrati* (English name/botanical name not found) and *liliti* (neem, *Azadirachta indica*⁸⁹), for instance, were used. *Gboti* is acclaimed for its medicinal properties and its beneficial effects on dental hygiene. Akinyele et al. (2014) did a comparative study between the use of *Vernonia amygdalina* and commercial mouth washes to find out how effective they were against tooth decay and concluded that *Vernonia amygdalina* has antibacterial properties that fight

against bacteria causing tooth infection as compared to various brands of mouthwashes and commercial antibiotics. Quaternary compounds, like Cetylpyridinium chloride (CPC) should be among the active ingredients being used in the production of mouthwashes as it has a broad spectrum antimicrobial activity. Since the extract contains natural antimicrobial ingredients, the plant's stem in the form chewing stick is therefore recommended for usage by the local populace. The bioactive components can also be incorporated as ingredients in manufacturing mouthwashes. (Akinyele et al., 2014, p. 756)

Aside from its dental use, *gboti* was also used to treat coughs and asthma. As a result, some chewing sticks were used, not only for ensuring proper dental hygiene, but also as a form of medicinal therapy in treating tropical diseases. Additionally, *angowa* (guava) and *atutoe* (velvet/black tamarind) chew sticks have been found to possess antibacterial properties against *Streptococcus mutans*, one of the leading causes of dental caries in the world (Ojiuko et al., 2021). *Streptococcus mutans* are said to be resistant to many conventional antibacterial agents today (ibid.). Ojiuko et al. (2021), in their study, found evidence to

support the use of *Psidium guajava* (Guava) and Velvet tamarind (Icheku) twigs in oral hygiene since their potential anti-plaque effect is likely to complement the mechanical plaque-removing property of chewing-sticks and suggests that *Psidium guajava* (Guava) and Velvet tamarin (Icheku) twigs contain compounds that are active against *S. mutans*. (p. 88)

This evidence, once again, demonstrates the validity of indigenous knowledge in promoting good health through the use of natural materials found in the environment.

⁸⁷ Entry, *gòà*, auch *angòà* Frucht und Baum der Guayave: *Psidium pomiferum* (also *angòà* fruit and tree of the guayave) Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1905, p. 197)

⁸⁸ The World Flora Online. (n.d.). <https://www.worldfloraonline.org/taxon/wfo-0000284568>

⁸⁹ *Liliti* (neem tree) was mentioned in the interviews as one of the cleaning agents used in the nineteenth century, but this was not found in either Westermann (1905) or Dalziel (1937)'s work. A further search found that the neem tree was introduced to the Gold Coast in the 1920s (National Research Council, 1992) which implies that this was a post-Spieth occurrence. Because of that, it will not be discussed in detail in this research as it falls beyond the period under study.

Oral hygiene was not limited to the use of chewing sticks. Chewing ‘sponges’ were also used. *Eloko*⁹⁰ (dry zone mahogany, *Khaya senegalensis*) was very popular. These were harvested and beaten into a form of ‘sponge’ that was chewed in small pieces. *Aka* (charcoal) was also used to clean the teeth and to promote strong gums. Claims have been made in recent times about charcoal and its ability to remove stains and whiten teeth, remove acidic plaque, provide fresh breath, improve halitosis (bad breath), remineralize teeth, protect the mouth from infection, and promote overall dental health (Thakur et al., 2020). The same authors, however, conclude that there is currently “a lack of sufficient scientific evidence, which can authenticate the cosmetic, health benefits including antibacterial, antifungal, or antiviral activity, reduced caries, tooth whitening, oral detoxification, or safety claims of marketed charcoal-based oral and dental care products” (p. 207). Despite this, the authors acknowledge the use of charcoal in dental practices “as a rebirth of ancient medicine techniques” (p. 197). It has been actively promoted in the current oral health field by numerous companies and prominent personalities.

Hair care among the pre-colonial Ewe people involved washing it with traditional soap, drying it, and stylizing it in various forms. Sometimes, the men locked their hair while the women braided it into different styles. These two acts helped ensure the free circulation of air so that sweat did not accumulate underneath the hair. By the nineteenth century, the Ewe people engaged in hair trimming as we know it now, with the making of knives. Men’s hair in the nineteenth century was typically trimmed short, even though some distinct hairstyles were used as markers of social status. Spieth addressed some of this elsewhere in his work. People associated with deities (*trɔsi*), slaves (*kluvi*), the chief’s staff (*ɛfia fɛ dɔwɔlawo*) and even widows (*ahosi*) all had different hairstyles to indicate their position in society. Women (other than widows), on the other hand, braided their hair or kept it trimmed low. Some of the women’s hairstyles in the nineteenth century included *dzekoɛ*, *atifufui*, *blatɔnyi* and *ɛgbɔdɔ*. Typically, silk cotton thread was employed in making these hairstyles. *Dzekoɛ* involved the parting of hair in small sections which were braided underneath and looked like small puffs of cotton. Silk cotton thread was used in the case of *atifufui* where the hair was parted into small sections and braided to look like sticks. This resemblance to sticks is evident in the name, which loosely translates to ‘dry stick’. *Blatɔnyi* is another style which uses

⁹⁰ Entry, *loko*, der Rotholzbaum, *Odum* (loose translation: the redwood tree, *Odum*), Ewe-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Westermann, 1905, p. 333).

the *atifufui* style but contorts the braided hair into different styles pressed down. All these styles were done to keep women and girls looking tidy.

Finally, the care of the hands was meticulously carried out by the Ewe people in the nineteenth century. Spieth notes this in his work. Among the Ho people, the left hand was used for all things pertaining to filth, whereas the right hand was constantly kept clean and was used in eating. The challenge in Spieth's account, however, is that he presented the subject as one of inequality. For the people of Ho, though, the use of a designated hand for taking care of filthy work while one was chosen for eating and other kinds of 'clean' work was a sure way to prevent cross-contamination in the same way tools and other materials were set aside for specific uses. It was, thus, not merely a 'mystical' act per se but an act meant for maintaining the utmost form of cleanliness which Spieth himself attests to as the norm among the people. This crossed over into the spiritual lives of the people as well. The left hand was, again, assigned the task of undertaking negative acts like murder, etc. During festivals, for example, when warriors (*brafo*) were engaged in dance while the *asafo* drums were being beaten, they greeted each other with the left hand to demonstrate their roles as warriors who engaged in killing. Because of that, people did not greet or point with their left hands as this was seen as having a negative meaning. The right hand, which is seen as symbolizing peace and all things good, was used. Spieth did not include the Ho 'world-sense' in his work and, thus, presented his account in a way that did not do justice to the people's way of life.

Otsue be de, emia nye nu gbegblẽ wɔla. Taflatse, ne mele nu go do tse la, emia miekɔ dzra mia dokoe do. Eya taa omatuan akɔ adunu o...Efia tsi omɛ na asi kplɛ emia o, omɛ do gbɛ na ame kplɛ emia o... Emia mɛ wɔ nu nyuie o.

It was taken that the left was the one used for all bad things. When one used the bathroom, the left was what was used to clean oneself. That is why it was not used in eating. One did not greet a chief with the left hand. One did not greet with the left hand... The left hand was seen as not used for good things.

Excerpt from interview with Ho elder

iv. Putting Spieth in conversation with the people of Ho

Having considered the pre-colonial and colonial Ewe understanding of clothing, care of clothing, bathing, and personal hygiene practices, it is essential to place the former in conversation with Spieth's presentation of the people to identify the convergences and divergences between the two accounts. It is evident that Spieth presented the Ho people's way of life differently from the people themselves. As has already been seen, this was possibly due to the influence of his European, colonial and missionary target audience. In terms of clothing, Spieth wrote in a restrictive manner, focusing on fabric, whereas the Ewe people considered 'clothing' to extend beyond fabric to include body paintings and body adornments. The difference in how 'clothing' (body coverings) was defined and described had implications for each group's perception and understanding of nakedness. For Spieth, a limited amount of fabric on the body suggested nakedness and indecency as understood from the Euro-Christian perspective. From the pre-colonial Ewe point of view, though, nakedness was limited to the covering of the pubic area. Consequently, both approached the idea of dressing differently. Spieth also wrote from the narrow Euro-Christian perspective of clothing as a symbol of morality. He focused less on the broader functionality of clothing and more on the 'lack' of moral values which (un)dressing symbolized. The single occasion where he considered the practical functionality of dressing was as a comment in relation to morality. The people (men) were only more covered up because they were forced to do so by the cool weather. Otherwise, it does not appear to him that the people had the 'natural' moral guide to do it themselves. Additionally, the subject of morality was particularly linked to (young) women's uncovered chest area; an idea which suggests a European understanding of a woman's uncovered bosom as serving an essentially erotic function and its place in male-female relations. The pre-colonial Ewe perspective, on the other hand, perceived the female bosom as having a maternal function, thereby preventing the same level of discomfort Spieth had about the subject among the people. The Ewes of Ho also considered clothing from different perspectives – as practical in terms of adapting to the climate and daily life, as a means of maintaining good health, as having an aesthetic role, and as performing an apotropaic role. It is essential to highlight the apotropaic nature of Ho people's clothing as this also draws attention to the Ho 'world-sense' which did not separate body and matter, the physical and the spiritual. Spieth's focus on only the physical aspect of clothing highlights the European discourses and practices of the time, influenced by the increased separation between the two. Lastly, Spieth wrote his account based on gross

generalizations. He focused on the narrowest loincloth among the people without highlighting the different types of undergarments used for different purposes by different groups within the population. It is easy to conclude that Spieth was unaware of these differences and wrote from a place of ignorance. However, by searching through the 1905 Ewe to German and 1906 German to Ewe dictionaries written by Diedrich Westermann, his contemporary among the people, it is evident that the Bremen missionaries were well aware of the differences in the types of clothing used by the people. Moreover, Spieth chose to focus on and, perhaps, even sensationalize the more revealing clothing, further buttressing his point about the state of ‘nakedness’ of the people for his colonial and Christian audience. Spieth again generalized by focusing on the type of clothing used during the warmer season without acknowledging the different seasons in the area and their implications for dressing. As a missionary who stayed among the people for over twenty years, it is hard to believe that he did not know the different seasons and their implications for how people clothed themselves. Like the different types of clothing, the 1905 Ewe to German dictionary clearly shows the Bremen missionaries’ knowledge of the different seasons in Togoland in the nineteenth century. These generalizations in Spieth’s writing appear to deliberately portray a particular type of picture about the people of Ho, aligning with the colonial accounts of non-Western peoples at that time. This alignment was likely done to meet the expectations of his colonial and Christian (Pietist) audience who possibly needed this justification as proof of the need for their ‘civilizing’ mission in Togoland.

In terms of the care of clothing, Spieth focuses on the use of soap as the primary agent in promoting cleanliness, and on the cleanliness of fabric as occurring only at one stage of its life cycle – at the point of use. Washing was also the primary method used to ensure the cleanliness of clothing. The importance of soap as a cleansing agent was elevated even though this study has shown, with scientific proof, that the use of other substances, particularly herbs and natural products, can also ensure cleanliness and good hygiene. This appears to validate McClintock's (1995) claim about the importance Europeans placed on soap as a symbol of ‘civilization’ during that period. In contrast, herbal and other indigenous medicines were ignorantly categorized as “heathen humbug” and “quackery” (Nasim, 2023, p. 284). At the same time, Spieth’s focus on soap as a cleaning agent drew him into the unintended debate of allocating civilization to the very people he attempted to portray as uncivilized. A close reading of his work, therefore, produces an inherent complexity in the idea of the ‘uncivilized’ African. The people of Ho, on the other hand,

used other cleansing agents, in addition to soap, to ensure cleanliness. Also, unlike Spieth, the people expanded on the idea of the care of fabric to incorporate the different stages of its life cycle – that is, from its making to its cleaning (for wearing) and in its maintenance outside of active wear. They also highlighted the care of non-fabric body coverings. This demonstrates the importance placed on the cleanliness of clothing among the people of Ho in a way that Spieth omitted to capture. The disparity in both accounts is again evident in the discussion on personal hygiene. Here, again, Spieth focused on soap as the sole cleansing agent, whereas the people used a variety of other natural materials for maintaining good hygiene. Lastly, the practical, health and therapeutic, aesthetic and apotropaic functions they played were overlooked by Spieth. That Spieth also specifically added that it was thanks to the work of the German government that Ho women learnt about body care and ornaments is laughable. This research has found that in addition to the normal body care routines of the general populace, Ho women had specific herbal mixtures (*amake*) and body ornaments (*dzonu*) they used to enhance their hygiene and appearance.

In writing about hair care, Spieth claims that Ho men cared more about the cleanliness of their hair than women did. He went on to focus on lice and dirt among Ho women with regard to hair care. At the time of his writing, Ho men cut their hair short in alignment with European perceptions of tidiness. The women, on the other hand, braided their hair into different styles for both functional and aesthetic reasons. Spieth did not mention this. The negative tone used in describing Ho women in Spieth's account is absent in the Ewe account, thereby giving Ho women a form of 'equality' in the latter account. Spieth ended the portion of his work under scrutiny by describing the care of hands and mouth. He rightly mentioned the difference in treatment of the hands. The left hand was used for handling dirt and unsanitary business, whereas the right hand was always clean and used in eating. It is important to highlight that, by focusing on the subject of inequality, Spieth missed out on a full understanding of Ho people's ways. Had he fully explored why this was done, he would have learned that this act was not in opposition to the high standard of cleanliness held by the people. Rather, it fully reinforced it. This research found that by designating a specific hand to unsanitary acts and the other for 'cleaner' activities, cross-contamination was meant to be prevented, or at least, reduced. It was, thus, not about inequality as Spieth stated, but about maintaining the highest standards of cleanliness. Finally, on oral hygiene, Spieth mentioned the sticks and cloth used for cleaning the teeth. He failed to mention the medicinal properties of some of the sticks used which interviewees stated had medicinal benefits. These benefits have,

today, been scientifically proven to prevent bacteria causing infections in the mouth and to improve overall oral health. Apart from that, other materials like charcoal were used for teeth whitening and to maintain overall good oral hygiene although the science behind it has not yet been proven.

In addition to the discussion on the differences in Spieth and the Ewe people's accounts, a few other broad observations may also be made. Spieth's account leans heavily on the visual sense to highlight his displeasure about the state of clothing and cleanliness. He focuses on the 'inadequacy' of covering from a visual perspective as well as the visual nature of appearing poorly clothed, in torn clothing, bathing in public spaces, among others. The Ho conception of the world, however, takes into consideration other senses in addition to the visual. It incorporates the senses of smell (the importance placed on aromatic mixtures) and touch (herbal lotions, body paints, etc.) in their attempt to cover their bodies and maintain cleanliness. For instance, when asked what the lack of propriety entailed among the nineteenth-century Ho people, it was remarkable that both experts interviewed emphasized not only how one looked but also how one smelled. Spieth never mentioned the olfactory sense as a sign of uncleanness. This appears to support Oyewumi (1997)'s claim that, in seeking to understand African cultures and worldviews, colonial Europeans largely limited themselves to the visual while ignoring the role of other senses in everyday life. Finally, Spieth spoke about cleanliness from only a physical perspective. He focused on the cleanliness of clothes and the body but said nothing about cleanliness as related to the spiritual. As one expert mentioned, cleanliness entailed being clean both before other humans and *Mawu* (God). Many of the herbs used on the body were not only meant to ensure cleanliness before mankind but to ensure cleanliness before God as well. As one Ewe scholar said, "*edzebe na no dzadzee de le Mawu gbo. Mawu le fine? Noviwɔ fetee tse Mawuwo nyo* (you have to be clean before God and where is God? Humankind are all as God)". The latter was also the reason for the apotropaic functions of herbal mixtures and medicines. This aspect of cleanliness was entirely absent from Spieth's work, again, highlighting the separation of spirit and matter within the European worldview.

This chapter has explored the clothing, care of clothing, bathing, and personal hygiene practices of the Ewe people in the nineteenth century. It has shown what present-day scientific studies have finally discovered as the great worth of Ho practices in ensuring cleanliness and personal hygiene. The portrayal of the people of Ho as the 'uncivilized savage' in Spieth's work

was, thus, a creation of the imperial and proselytizing imagination whose validity cannot be ascertained given the information provided in this work. In fact, the outcome of this research demonstrates that the people of Ho were well-advanced in their knowledge of cleanliness and personal hygiene and, thus, in a ‘civilized’ state as defined by the European standards of the era. It is imperative, therefore, for false colonial accounts like these to be replaced by the reality of formerly colonized peoples’ lives and cultures.

TA ENYILIA (CHAPTER 8)

WHEN TWO CULTURES MEET – THE EWE PEOPLE AND THE EURO-CHRISTIAN CIVILIZING PROJECT

Nyifutue gbana de ahl̩e ɲu
The gun that hunts cattle bursts on the antelope
(19th-century Ho proverb)

i. Acculturation – The meeting of two cultures

Acculturation occurs when two cultures meet. Sam and Berry (2010) define it as “the process of cultural and psychological change that results following meeting between cultures” (p. 472). The cultural changes identified by Sam and Berry (2010) include the transformation in the social institutions and collective activities of a people, while psychological changes refer to the transformations in the individuals’ daily behaviours (ibid.). When considering acculturation at the cultural level, Berry (2003) has identified two early formulations that were widely used in discussions on the topic. One described it as “those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups” (Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits, 1936, p. 149 in Berry, 2003, p. 18). The other formulation proposed by the Social Science Research Council described acculturation as:

Culture change that is initiated by the conjunction of two or more autonomous cultural systems. Acculturative change may be the consequence of direct cultural transmission; it may be derived from non-cultural causes, such as ecological or demographic modification induced by an impinging culture. (1954, p. 974)

Altogether, Liebkind (2003) finds that the acculturation process involves a change in the emotions, beliefs, behaviour, attitudes, values and identification patterns of people who have come into contact with another culture. Sam and Berry (2010) explain that almost everyone who lives in a ‘culturally plural society’ experiences some form of acculturation. The relatively recent interest in and study of acculturation does not limit it to a phenomenon of recent origin. According to Berry (2008), acculturation has been going on for millennia. It occurs in various ways and is observed at different levels of adaptation to a new culture. In the acculturation process, the two cultures occupy different positions – the dominant and non-dominant culture (Berry, 2008). Scholars have identified four different types of adaptation – integration, assimilation, separation and

marginalization – from the perspective of the non-dominant culture (Berry, 2008; Sam and Berry, 2010). A people's adherence to one form over another is largely determined by two key factors: the extent to which they want to maintain their culture and identity versus not preserving them, and the extent to which they want to engage with the other culture in their daily lives versus avoiding such associations (Berry, 2008). These strategies are based on the assumption of choice, that is, that the non-dominant group can choose how they interact with the dominant group. This also implies that the dominant group is open to a certain mutuality in the acculturation process. Thus, for Berry, integration involves maintaining one's own culture and identity while concurrently interacting with other cultures. Integration is based on the premise that the dominant culture is open and accommodating of cultural diversity, and has adapted its institutions to meet the needs of different groups in society. In this case, the larger society is viewed as a multicultural, and, therefore, integration is considered a positive form of acculturation. Assimilation, on the other hand, occurs when non-dominant groups do not maintain their own culture and identity, but instead seek close associations with other groups. Here, in some cases, they adopt the cultural values and norms of the new culture to the detriment of their own. Liebkind (2003) has noted the use of assimilation by some non-dominant cultures as a way of ensuring social mobility. In such situations, non-dominant groups use assimilation as a means of 'getting ahead' by obtaining access to resources that "better their economic conditions and social status" (p. 388). Here, again, the element of choice is assumed and the premise is that the dominant group is open to this. On the other hand, scholars have described instances where the dominant society forces assimilation on the non-dominant group, likening it to a 'melting pot' because the non-dominant group has little choice but to conform (Berry, 2008). They have no option but to leave behind their own culture and adopt the dominant culture's way of life. Some scholars in the 1970s referred to this as the 'pressure cooker' because the element of choice is missing for non-dominant groups (Berry, 2003). The third form of acculturation identified by some scholars is separation (Berry, 2008; Sam and Berry, 2010). This occurs when groups prefer to maintain their own culture and identity without engaging in interactions with other cultures. There is, again, an assumption of choice in this process. However, in cases where the dominant group forces separation on a non-dominant group, it is referred to as segregation (Berry, 2008). Finally, marginalization occurs when people are unable to maintain their own culture and identity, yet do not fully associate with other cultures.

This occurs “when there is little possibility of or interest in cultural maintenance and little interest in having relationships with others” (Berry, 2003). In this case,

Although marginalization can be a strategy that people choose as a way of dealing with their acculturative situation, it can also result from failed attempts at assimilation (involving cultural loss) combined with failed attempts at participating in the larger society. Such cases may be due in part to discriminatory attitudes and practices of the dominant group. (ibid., p. 24)

Exclusion or ethnocide occurs when a dominant group imposes marginalization on a non-dominant group (Berry, 2003). Sam and Berry (2010) note that, except for a few exceptions, integration has been seen as the most preferred form of acculturation, while marginalization has been the least preferred. This is because integration provides a group with access to double competence, in addition to double resources. In contrast, marginalization decreases the little competence available while the group simultaneously lacks support from other groups (ibid.). Whichever form acculturation takes, however, scholars see the phenomenon as a two-way process that results in “actions and reactions to the contact situation” (ibid., p. 473); it is a process that can instigate change in both cultures (Berry, 2008; Liebkind, 2003). The 19th-century Ho proverb *nyifutue gbana de ahl̄e ŋu* (the gun that hunts cattle bursts on the antelope, i.e. a weak person can also harm a strong person) recognizes this fact. This proverb suggests that, although it is believed that the strong have power over the weak, the latter can also have power over the former. In this way, both can influence each other despite their different strengths.

In the colonial encounter and its ensuing ‘civilizing’ mission, it appears that the European colonial and missionizing authorities, at the very least, hoped or expected the colonized Other to assimilate by rejecting their own cultures and identities and adopting European and Christian values and norms. From the above discussion, this would mean that the colonial authorities, since they attempted to impose this, would have applied a ‘melting pot’ or ‘pressure cooker’ strategy on the colonial subject. In many cases, however, some colonizer groups subjected many colonized peoples to outright segregation or ethnocide/exclusion. In these circumstances, some colonized peoples may have been able to retain some of their own cultures and identities, but at the same time, could not interact meaningfully with the colonizer on their own terms (segregation). In the most extreme cases, some colonized groups lost their cultures and identities while simultaneously losing access to the power and resources of the colonizer group (ethnocide/exclusion). For Albert Memmi, the colonizer went beyond attempting to assimilate the colonized since the act of

assimilation meant the elimination of the colonial relationship (White, 1996). Assimilation meant the possibility of social mobility for the colonized which was not a desired outcome of colonialism. In the colonial system, the colonized had no rights to citizenship and hardly experienced notions of nationality (ibid.). They were excluded from power and access to government. They were only taught the history of the colonizer which glorified the latter and continued to marginalize the former in various ways (ibid.). These different acts may be interpreted as ethnocide because they simultaneously stripped the colonized of their history, culture and identity while, at the same time, excluded them from the reins of power.

ii. Acculturation in Togoland

1. Clothing

It is easy to agree that European contact introduced new forms of clothing among the Ewe. The effects are still evident today. How this happened, however, was more complex than the missionaries anticipated. Meyer (1997) conducted an in-depth study on the lives of the Bremen missionaries among the Ewe people. Therefore, this research will draw on her work to discuss the way acculturation occurred at contact between the two groups. As was stated in chapter 4, missionary schools were the first means used by the Bremen missionaries to attract potential converts. Students were provided with free clothes and small allowances to draw them to the schools (Meyer, 1997). Although interest in Western education was gradual, the Ewe people began to see the benefits of attending mission schools in relation to the new colonial economy. Ewe men, in particular, had promising financial and economic prospects in the European trade and other positions in the colonial administration (Buhler, 1987). The increase in mission schools led to the rebuilding and expansion of mission posts among the Ewe. These mission posts came to be recognized as the ‘contact zones’ between African and European culture, the ‘heathen’ and Christianity (Meyer, 1997). Depending on the size of the post, there was either a missionary’s house, a chapel, and a school headed by a European, or a sub-station with only a school and a teacher. ‘Christian villages’ were built around the mission posts. These villages were typically located outside the established indigenous settlements and, preferably, atop a hill, hence their derived name *Kpodzi*,⁹¹ which literally means ‘on the hilltop’ (ibid., p. 317). The missionaries’

⁹¹ Today, the term has morphed to take on the broader meaning of a school campus, obviously from its roots in the mission schools. This shows the lasting European and missionary influence on the Ewe language.

choice of a hilltop was a symbolic decision, in addition to the practical choice of separating new converts from the influence of indigenous ways of life. Meyer suggests that the *Kpodzi* were meant to symbolically demonstrate that Christians were “ahead of the rest” and “could claim to lead their lives under the banner of ‘progress’” while non-Christians were characterized as being left behind, “thereby denying them ... coevalness” (ibid., p. 317). Life on the *Kpodzi* was, of course, guided by the stringent rules of the mission’s congregational order to show this ‘progress’ and ‘civilization’. All residents of the *Kpodzi* were baptized and had to follow the rules of the settlement:

They were to abstain from any religious ceremony performed by their non-Christian relatives - and since religion was entangled with all domains of life this request amounted to a far-reaching separation from their family in the ‘heathen’ village - and were to live up to what the mission defined as a Christian way of life. They lived in new types of houses, **wore different clothes, used Western medicines** (emphasis mine), sang to European tunes, held different feast-days, and instead of the traditional taboo days, the ‘rest’ days of the *trõwo*, they observed only the Christian Sunday. For the Christians, polygamous marriages were forbidden and preferably they were to intermarry. In order to create Christian families, the mission stimulated their students’ marriage and taught them about Christian marriage and family way of life. The mission stimulated men much more than women to take up paid labour. Young women could only work as ‘housegirls’ at the mission posts or as childcare attendants in the kindergarten, and after marriage they were expected to devote themselves fully to their families. (Meyer, 1997, pp. 317-318)

The point of interest in this work is the influence of the Bremen mission’s *Kpodzi* on Ewe clothing and the complexities involved in the acculturation process. It is easy to assume that the changes required by the missionaries in the Christian villages automatically meant the Ewe people’s cooptation of European Christianity in its entirety. This, however, was not the case, thereby revealing the complexities involved when two cultures meet. In any case, European material culture played a huge role in the acculturation process and became the defining factor in an Ewe person’s progression from ‘heathenness’ to ‘civilization’ (Meyer, 1997). Indigenous materiality was regarded as part of ‘devil’ worship and had to be done away with altogether. The *Kpodzi* settlements were stocked with European materials primarily provided through Christian trading stores that bought raw materials such as cotton and rubber from the indigenous people in exchange for European goods including textiles. Although the Bremen mission did not have its own trading stores like other Protestant missions on the Gold Coast (such as Basler among the Akan ethnic group), they worked very closely with one owned by the Bremen Pietist trader, C. R. Vietor. Both the mission and the trading company typically settled in the same areas, although the Bremen

missionaries constantly tried to distance themselves from the store. This was due to the role the trading company played in introducing material goods to the people which were, at once, a sign of 'civilization' but also a point of contention between the missionaries and the company. The primary focus of the trading company on materiality and overconsumption was strongly at odds with Pietist standards (Meyer, 1997). For the missionaries, the overconsumption of European goods by the Ewe people had the prospect of causing the same social unrest that industrialization had introduced in Europe from which Pietists were hoping to escape. In any case, clothing was among the Western goods sold by the trading company which played a considerable role in Christianizing the Ewe. The state and appearance of the body played a crucial role in the missionaries' definition of conversion. "Clothes were an inalienable marker of the new religion" (Meyer, 1997, p. 322). Meyer summarizes this below:

[...] in the first years the mission provided children with free clothes (short trousers and a shirt) in order to attract pupils, thereby representing European dress as an educated person's new skin. Also the congregational order required that converts dressed 'decently'. While women, who had hitherto dressed in a loincloth wrapped around their hips and a cover-cloth for the shoulders that was only worn if it was cold, were to cover their breasts with a blouse and their children were not to go 'sparsely dressed', men were expected to either cover themselves by the traditional cover-cloth, or, preferably, to wear a Western-style suit. At least teachers were expected to dress in this manner and indeed, black coat and tie became the trade-mark of this professional group. Teachers regarded themselves as the avant-garde within the Christian group and in many places they organized themselves in societies devoted to the 'development' and 'improvement' of social life ...The missionaries' wives trained young women to sew clothes for themselves and their children from imported Western materials. I did not find indications as to how the male attire was produced, but I suspect that it was made in Europe and then sold in stores. In this way the mission contributed to undermining the traditional co-operation of husbands and wives in the production of clothes. It had been the exclusive task of the women to spin thread and a man had to pay his wife for spinning the cotton he had grown for his own clothes. In turn, it had been the exclusive task of the men to weave strings of cloth (about 10 cm broad) and sew them together to form a large piece of cloth; the repair of torn clothes also depended on them. Yet in order to put on adequate clothes, people now depended on European imports, wax prints especially designed for Africa in the case of women, and suits, shirts and ties in the case of men. While formerly a person's clothes were a gift representing his or her involvement in a social relationship with spouse or parent, now clothes were commodities bought with individually earned money. European clothes became the symbol of the new time, which stood for the alliance of Christianity and 'civilization'. (Meyer, 1997, pp. 322-324)

The account given by Meyer above, which describes the acculturation process regarding clothing among the Ewe, was not as simple as described. While missionaries hoped the adornment of

oneself in Western attire would translate into an acceptance of Christian ideology – true Christianity from ‘within’, where the heart/soul was changed (the very definition of Pietist Christianity) – it did not. As *Kpodzi* Christians participated in missionary agriculture and the production of cash crops for export, they began to accumulate some wealth which they used to purchase European goods. People in the Christian villages were able to adopt new lifestyles, identities, and social statuses due to their consumption of these goods. This created a new generation of individuals who could attain status outside of the traditional elite and the familial and societal constraints associated with it. The desire for the new identity and the materiality associated with it were used in a manner that conflicted with the missionaries’ attitudes toward worldly things. Where the Bremen missionaries expected the Ewe converts to ‘put on their new skin’ as a sign of their ‘civilization’ but within the limits of Pietist ideology, they did not. The Pietist missionaries viewed the Ewe converts’ appetite for European goods as contrary to their beliefs which regarded over-consumption of material goods as a temptation capable of drawing converts onto the ‘broad path’ that led to hell. As Meyer (1997) states,

The Ewe’s openness to being linked to the world market both as producers and consumers suggests that they were not locked up in a ‘moral economy’ incompatible with the capitalist market economy. Rather, they strove to profit from the latter as much as possible and there were no moral qualms concerning this involvement as such, but only with regard to the distribution of wealth” (pp. 324-325).

It appears that the Ewe Christians were drawn to Christianity primarily for their own material gain rather than for its spiritual and ideological aspects. This dynamic was not specific to the Ewe alone as it was also apparent among other non-Ewe Christians worldwide. The difference in the Ewe’s approach to Christianity was a significant source of conflict between them and the missionaries who complained about the

inner state of the Ewe Christians, who had eagerly taken up the material aspects of the mission but failed to supplement this with the Pietist world-view that required that the material advantages offered by the mission should be subordinated to a person’s inner development, (ibid., p. 328)

One missionary noted his frustration by stating that,

[t]heir ideal is and this is what they work for: *Beautiful clothes* [emphasis in original] and good food, or to speak with Augustine. [...] often in the midst of a spiritual talk somebody may ask: Master, how much is your hat, your dress-coat, your shoes? (ibid., p. 328)

To Meyer, church services even became a “sort of fashion parade” (p. 329). Clothing, at once, became a point of pride and contention for the Bremen missionaries – a fact which demonstrates the agency of the Ewe people in taking advantage of the aspects of Christianity that worked well for them while leaving the ideological parts behind. “For the missionary it was clear that most Ewe Christians still had a ‘highly materialistic orientation’ (*hochgradiger irdischer Sinn*), and this, as the Bible taught, was a typical trait of the ‘heathens’ in general” (ibid., p. 328). It appears Ewe Christians were not Christians in the true sense of the word. They were still ‘heathens’ dressed as Christians, a realization which caused much consternation for the Bremen missionaries. Today, much has changed, as many Ewe Christians have adopted Christian ideologies and incorporated some notions of ‘decency’ passed on by the missionaries. This has, however, almost always been mixed with indigenous ways of understanding the world. This is an interesting topic for further research. However, at the point of contact between the indigenous and Euro-Christian cultures, the conflict highlighted the tensions the acculturation process encompassed.

Meyer's (1997) account can be further understood when placed within the discussions on acculturation presented earlier in this chapter. From all indications, the *Kpodzi* settlements were meant to be ‘melting pots’/‘pressure cookers’ from the missionaries’ perspective. They were meant to be places where European and Christian ways of life were the dominant culture, with missionaries meting out disciplinary actions towards people who went against the strict rules of the settlements. There, in the settlements, the missionaries hoped that the Ewe people would abandon their traditional ways of life and fully adopt the Euro-Christian culture in their everyday lives. This included the physical, emotional and spiritual parts of their lives. The *Kpodzi* settlements were intended to instill change in the emotions, beliefs, behaviour, attitudes, and values of the Ewe people. The Ewe people, however, saw and approached the *Kpodzi* settlements differently. It appears, from our earlier understanding of acculturation, that the Ewe people saw the experience in the settlements as a way of integrating themselves into the dominant European and Christian culture. The Ewe people appeared ready to maintain aspects of their own culture and identity while, concurrently, interacting with the Euro-Christian culture. Although simplistic, it appears that they chose the best option in a situation where a complete distancing from colonial influence was not possible, especially when German colonial rule was fully established. It would also seem that, like Liebkind (2003) showed, the Ewe people used acculturation (integration) as a means of social mobility, considering that adopting Euro-Christian materiality helped them obtain

economic and social status in the colonial administration and economy. In the initial stages of contact, it seems the Ewe people chose physical change, which was to their benefit in different ways, while still safeguarding a lot of their own cultural beliefs and values. In this situation, the non-dominant culture (Ewe) in the *Kpodzi* settlements appears to have demonstrated a certain level of power in its relationship with the dominant culture (Euro-Christian missionaries), which shows the level of agency it had at the beginning of cultural contact. It also demonstrates the dynamism of African traditions and cultures over centuries. In many cases, Africans adopted what they wanted and rejected what they did not want. This was, perhaps, also made possible because of the internal conflict within the dominant culture itself. The secular European culture was at odds with the Christian European culture regarding materiality and the representations of ‘civilization’ among the people. As the missionaries would know, “a city or house divided against itself will not stand” (*New King James Version Bible*, 1982, Matthew 12:25b). Understanding the complexities of the colonial relationship as seen here is important because of the way colonial encounters have sometimes been written about which denied the agency of once colonized peoples and painted them as people who were overcome without much conflict or resistance.

Although the above has discussed the attitude of the Ewe people to the introduction of Euro-Christian clothing, it is equally important to discuss the components of the clothing itself. Meyer (1997) has already identified the introduction of suits, shirts, and ties for men, as well as special wax prints and other European materials for women and children’s clothing. The introduction of European clothes, which had previously been absent from indigenous culture, necessitated the introduction of new terms and concepts in the Ewe language that could accommodate these introductions. A few of them will be discussed here. Westermann (1906) notes the use of *awu* as the term used for European clothing (*Kleid*), whereas *avɔ* or *do* (already seen) were used for traditional cloth(ing). This implies the introduction of the word *awu* with the arrival of European clothing, although the etymology of the word was not explored in Westermann’s work. Other types of specific European clothing appear to have been derived from this. With the help of the Ewe cultural experts interviewed in this study, this research found the use of the derivative *dzime wui* to mean shirt. *Dzime* literally means ‘top’ and *wui* is from *awu*. The term is a description of a shirt which is clothing worn at the top part of the body. Long-sleeved shirts were called *awu abɔdidi* which, again, is descriptive. *Abɔ* means ‘arms’ in Ewe while *didi* means long – a combination which produces ‘long-armed’ shirt. Similarly, pants were referred to as *atawui* in

Westermann (1906). *Ata* is thigh, which, again, means that pants were a description based on clothing worn on the lower part of the body – from the thighs down. Whether the pants were shorts or long trousers was determined by the adjectives placed after the *ata* or thigh. *Atapkoe* would mean shorts as *kpoe* translates to ‘short’ in the Ewe language. *Atalegbe* would denote long pants as *legbe* is an indication of more length. Pockets on clothes appear to be a borrowing from a term that already existed before the arrival of Europeans. *Kotoku* was a term translated as ‘sack’ or ‘bag’. They were used as storage units for various purposes such as storing clothing and agricultural produce. With the introduction of European clothing that featured pockets, the concept of a ‘dress sack’ seems to have emerged. Hence, Westermann (1906) notes the use of *atawui kotoku* – pant ‘sacks’/‘bags’ – to represent pant pockets. Today, only *kotoku* may be used in sentences because the term, as related to clothing, has become established within the language. The specific meaning is derived from the context in which it is used. Additionally, gloves were called *asiwui* while socks were called *afɔwui*, again derived from the root word *awu*. *Asi* means hand in the Ewe language, hence *asiwui* refers to ‘hand clothing’ (gloves). *Afɔ*, on the other hand, means foot or leg; therefore, *afɔwui* was used for socks or foot clothing. Westermann (1906) translates neck ties (German: *Krawatte*) as *komeblanu*, which, in the Ewe language, means ‘a thing tied around the neck’. Eyeglasses are today called *gankui*, where *ga* means metal and *nku* means eyes. Eyeglasses then became a description of what they looked like to the Ewe people. With these words, it is evident that the Ewe language adapted to the introduction of European goods which were previously unknown to the people. They were mainly descriptive words which later became entrenched nouns in the language. Today, many of these words, which were created to adapt to European cultural contact, are no longer used in the Ewe language. The transfer of parts of Togoland to the British colonial government after World War 1 meant the adoption of many English terms into the Ewe language. Today, people hardly use the Ewe words discussed here. They resort to using the English versions available, such as shirts, trousers, shorts, socks, ties, etc. This demonstrates the linguistic adaptation of the language to different influences over time.

Apart from the introduction of European clothing, Meyer (1997) also highlights the use of special wax prints sold on the African market in the late nineteenth century in her work. This also deserves a short discussion. The origin of the ‘African’ print cloth, with its bright, colourful, and bold patterns now considered ‘traditional’ and authentically African, is deeply entwined in the colonial encounter. The so-called African wax-print cloth has its origins in Indian and Javanese

textiles, such as batik cloth, which is considered the “ancestor of the wax-print” (Sylvanus, 2007, p. 207). Although trade in European textiles on the West African coast began as early as the 15th century, it was in the 17th and 18th centuries that European merchants and companies keenly studied indigenous textile styles for themselves. They did this to capture and replicate West African styles in the making and sale of their goods. European textiles played a similar role to other European products such as alcohol and firearms which were used as currency and exchanged for other goods at the time. The Dutch and English proved to be formidable competitors in this textile trade on the West African coast (Sylvanus, 2007). Although Javanese batiks made an entrance on the West African coast in the seventeenth century, they gained popularity in the nineteenth century after freed Gold Coast slaves in the Dutch East Indies army returned home from Java wearing them. The Dutch attempted to introduce machine-produced copies of batiks to their colony in Indonesia before introducing them to Africa. However, the Indonesians rejected these because of their poor quality. The return of freed slaves to West Africa, local interest in their new clothing, and the desire of European merchants to find new markets for their rejected batiks made Africa a suitable market for batik trade. These fabrics were later influenced by and adapted to local tastes, aesthetics and iconographies (ibid.). The new fabric was seen as advantageous for West Africans because of its “lightness and softness and its chromatic resistance to the sun and frequent washing” (ibid., p. 207). All these led to the influx of the new ‘African’ wax-print cloth which took root on the Gold Coast at the end of the nineteenth century. In the process, they pushed many local textiles to the periphery.

Apart from traders, European missionaries highly popularized and distributed the new fabrics to the local populations as commodities that demonstrated the ‘civilized’ self. “It is in this context that missionaries ordered wax-prints in specific colors and patterns according to the area in question and the targeted ‘ethnic group’” (Sylvanus, 2007, p. 208). Colonial and missionary contact, therefore, played a significant role in shaping the clothing of the Ewe people in the nineteenth century. In this case, however, the process was less a matter of ‘natural’ acculturation, where European culture met African culture. It was more of an ‘invention of tradition’ as posited by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983/2012). Hobsbawm (1983/2012) suggests that many traditions today which appear to be old are, in reality, relatively recent in their establishment and, in some cases, invented. He uses the term ‘invented tradition’ to include “both ‘traditions’ actually invented, constructed and formally instituted and those emerging in a less easily traceable manner

within a brief and dateable period – a matter of a few years perhaps – and establishing themselves with great rapidity” (p. 1). This is an interesting perspective, as it raises the question of whether all traditions are not invented. In any case, Ranger (1983/2012) goes on to paint a picture of the invention of tradition in colonial Africa by Europeans during the late nineteenth century. Although Ranger cites examples from the colonial economy, political structures and customary laws in his work, his insights may apply to this research. Ranger (1983/2012) states that the introduced or ‘invented’ traditions brought into Africa were done to emphasize control over the people. Africans, on the other hand, used these same traditions to their advantage in many ways. They utilized the new traditions to assert their own authority and redefine their roles, thereby asserting their cultural identity. In the case of the newly invented ‘African’ wax-print cloth, it was a European creation rooted in Javanese culture which was adapted to African tastes for purely economic profit. It is worth noting, however, that the success of the new fabrics was not solely attributable to European innovation. The role of Africans in the process must also be mentioned. The adoption and success of the new fabrics must, first, be attributed to the freed slaves who returned from the Dutch colony in present-day Indonesia. Their importation of the original fabrics (a sign of their acculturation of the indigenous culture in the Dutch colony) to West Africa was the first step to drawing African interest in the new fabrics. The ingenuity of local traders, particularly women, also played a massive role in the success of the ‘African’ wax print. Traders gave new interpretations and meanings to the wax print fabrics, allowing for easy integration into the local market and thereby causing a reinterpretation of European designs within the local setting (Sylvanus, 2007). Names were given to cloth by the women traders when they reached the West African coast to “penetrate people’s life-spaces and local structures of identification” (ibid., p. 210). The names given to the fabrics reflected the daily realities of the West African consumer and served as a meeting point between European-created and African cultures. This demonstrates that the invention of the new clothing culture was not one-sided. Africans took an active part in the process. It is another clear example of the agency of African peoples in leveraging European introductions to their own advantage during the colonial period. This reflects Ranger (1983/2012)’s conclusions that Africans used the invented cultures to assert their own authority and to redefine their roles in, in this case, the colonial trade and clothing economy. Later in the twentieth century, some of the names of the wax prints revealed the extent to which West Africans had absorbed Judeo-Christian beliefs during that period. The example of the cloth named ‘If you leave, I leave’ represented by two birds

escaping a cage is seen as evidence of the Judeo-Christian outlook on marital fidelity (Sylvanus, 2007, p. 211). Here, the acculturation of Euro-Christian culture in clothing is finally evident. The journey of the 'African' wax print demonstrates how acculturation originally occurred in Asia, took a detour in Europe where it was reinvented before being introduced to Africa as now 'traditionally African'. In the process, a non-African, non-European cultural piece adopted African and Euro-Christian features.

The beginning of this chapter discussed the two-way nature of the acculturation process. Because of that, it is essential to consider the European adaptation of Ewe culture in the nineteenth century. While there were no readily available English documents of the Bremen missionaries' adaptation of clothing at the time of this research, it may be possible to glean some information from the Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft Archives in the Staatsarchiv of Bremen. The archives contain letters and records of the mission's work in the different stations in Togoland during the missionaries' stay among the people (Maier, 1981). Accessing the records requires a physical visit and excellent knowledge of the German language, both of which were unachievable during the time of this research. To gain an idea of what happened, however, the work done by Nasim (2023) on the Basel Mission's work among the neighbouring Akan (Akuapem) ethnic group in the nineteenth century has been used. Seeing that the Basel Mission trained and provided the Bremen Mission with missionaries (Spieth being one of them), it is possible to conclude that similar directives on clothing may have been applied to the Bremen missionaries on the West African coast. According to Nasim (2023), the Basel Mission recommended specific clothing for missionaries, explorers and colonial staff in an attempt to increase their survival in the West African tropics in the nineteenth century. This was done by other European groups as well (Johnson, 2008). The growing influence of tropical hygiene and medicine in the late nineteenth century promoted various medical theories and technical aids aimed at increasing the survival of Europeans in the tropics. Special clothing, including flannel binders, sunglasses, pith helmets, spine pads, and special fabric, was recommended as protective clothing for Basel missionaries on the Gold Coast (ibid.). "[... to stay healthy, safe and civilised, Europeans had to consume commodities such as medical books, hygienic accessories and protective clothes]" (ibid., p. 389). For the British colonial authorities who were also present among the Ewe and ruled them at some point during the same period, Johnson (2008) notes the importance placed on clothing within

tropical medicine. Clothing was critical to the survival of Europeans on the ‘deadly’ West African coast and was also a symbol of their difference from Africans. Nasim (2023) adds that

[T]ropical paraphernalia were symbolic expressions of the conviction that social, cultural and racial boundaries were essential to the protection, privilege and power of colonial protagonists. With their exclusive and ritualistic use by Europeans, they helped to define and sustain those boundaries, to remind Europeans and Africans alike of the distance between one another. (pp. 389-390)

In reality, however, Johnson (2008) notes the integration of West African clothing in the production of these ‘European’ clothes. Much of the idea of tropical clothing was based on the effort to mimic African skin and practice where Europeans felt their biological inferiority within the tropical space (ibid.). They attempted to overcome this perceived inferiority with their ‘intellectual superiority’ by manufacturing clothing that afforded them the same protection against tropical weather as the Africans. Local practices were “recast through western science and medicine” (ibid., p. 73). One example of such clothing was the flannel binder (also known as cholera belt), which was one of the Basel Mission’s requirements for European clothing on the Gold Coast. The description given by Johnson (2008) of the flannel binder appears to be the European adoption of the various pubic aprons/undergarments already discussed in chapter 7. John Murray noted in his *How to Live in Tropical Africa* manual the importance of Europeans covering and protecting their lower parts in tropical weather, after observing Africans. He stated that,

[T]he protection of the lower parts of the trunk is sadly overlooked by Europeans, who have much to learn in this matter from natives of hot countries ... who wear gauze or other light material between the legs attached to or forming part of the kummerbund’. This, he went on ‘should be a hint to Europeans, and teach them the necessity of protecting the genitals and rectum in hot countries’. (Johnson, 2008, p. 73)

The flannel belt was a response to recommendations such as this. Johnson (2008) summarizes that although European-manufactured clothing was intended to aid the survival of Europeans in the tropics, it drew some lessons from the indigenous peoples of the tropics by attempting to mimic the “qualities of the local skin” (p. 74). Because of that, Johnson notes that Europeans in the tropics “were no longer the same men and women that wore everyday clothing back home... in contrast to clothing worn by the city clerk in London, tropical attire provided ‘glimpses of a colonial other-life’” (2008, p. 74). From this example, acculturation (integration) in clothing appears to have truly been a two-way affair as suggested by Berry (2008) and Liebkind (2003).

Although the preceding paragraphs have discussed the change in clothing at the point of contact, it is essential to outline its effects in the present day briefly. This research found that the proliferation of new ‘African’ and cheaply manufactured fabrics, in addition to the introduction of European clothing, ultimately had a profound impact on the production of traditional Ewe cloth. The time-consuming and manual nature of traditional cloth production meant that it was an expensive venture which was reflected in the pricing of the pieces. Consequently, many traditional cloths (now *Eve kente* or *agabamevo*) have been restricted mainly to the wealthy or to a few pieces for the average person who uses them on special occasions such as marriage. Because of this, many Ewe people have been alienated from their pre-colonial culture and, consequently, lack the knowledge that comes with it. Ewe identity is, thus, represented in a different way by current generations. Again, because the wax-print cloth was sold in specific measurements (now at least six yards for women and ten for men), it has impacted how *Eve kente* or *agabamevo* is worn. As one of the interview participants pointed out, the insistence on more cloth to be worn by both men and women to conform to the church’s standards of ‘decency’ introduced new standards in Ewe clothing. Men wore bigger cloths over their shoulders which came to be associated with prestige and wealth. A new social identification based on clothing, previously absent, was introduced through this. Prior to this, Ewe men wore their cloth over their right shoulder, as Spieth rightly noted, but in a less elaborate way. With the presence of missionaries in the new wax-print industry and guided by Euro-Christian parameters of decency and the promise of economic gain, more cloth was used to cover the body which was not the case hitherto. The present-day ‘traditional’ two-piece *kaba* and *slit* worn by women, with a third piece meant for covering the head, was also an intersection between how some Ewe women were already wearing their cloth (married women wore two pieces) and the influence of the standards of decency enforced by the church. The *kaba* and *slit* is made up of a tailored long skirt and blouse sewn into different styles using wax-print or *kente* (traditional cloth). The third piece used as a head covering was also an intersection of Ewe culture and Christian propriety in church worship which required women to cover their heads before God. This new creation, which emerged as a blend of Ewe and Euro-Christian cultures, also led to the erosion of some pre-colonial social status signifiers in Ewe culture. The *kaba* and *slit* is, for instance, used today by married and unmarried women alike. This has eliminated the differentiation of women based on marital status as was the case before. Additionally, the old forms of undergarments, which were considered indecent by the European and colonial authorities,

were replaced with new ones. The *godotse* is now only used during special traditional occasions (*kɔnu*) to showcase Ewe traditions and culture. It is no longer used as an undergarment, but rather as a symbol of the remnants of a culture that once thrived before the influence of colonialism. People hardly use or make mention of *kamegue*, *aventee* or *vo ventee* anymore, and anyone who does is perceived as ‘ignorant’ or ‘not enlightened’. This is an indication of the degree to which the Euro-Christian civilizing discourse is being imbibed by the people themselves. This also suggests that younger generations are gradually becoming ignorant of these different kinds of traditional clothing, and the associated vocabulary is being lost from the Ewe language. Finally, the introduction of European and Judeo-Christian beliefs during the nineteenth century brought about other changes in pre-colonial Ewe culture. Today, body coverings still comprise fabrics and beads. The former have taken on the main role of clothing, playing both aesthetic and practical roles, while the latter mainly occupy an aesthetic role. The extent of the practical nature of the clothing is, itself, questionable when one observes Africans clothed in three-piece European suits in the sweltering heat. The apotropaic function of fabrics is largely absent today. For beads, the introduction of industrialization and the influx of cheaper materials such as glass and plastic have come at a cost to the traditional beadmaking sector today. Traditional Ewe beads are the result of a laborious process which is reflected in their pricing. The pricey nature of traditional beads makes them inaccessible to many Ewe people. Because of this, there is also decreased knowledge on the different types of beads by younger generations and a gradual loss of vocabulary in the language. The way beads are used today has also adapted to change. Women and children hardly use them these days as a form-shaper or for measuring growth. People who wear them for these purposes may be considered ‘backward’. Men, nowadays, also wear beads as fashion items even though only chiefs, priests and other traditional leaders were allowed to wear them in the past. Beads are now generally used by all parts of the population for aesthetic purposes rather than for apotropaic reasons. They are considered solely in physical terms without any attribution to spirituality. One begins to witness the adoption of Western cosmology and the differentiation between body and matter which was not the case prior to contact. The changes are, thus, not just physical but also epistemic. Body paintings are scarcely used in daily life today and have largely been relegated to the ceremonial sphere. They are only applied during traditional ceremonies which are periodic. This suggests that the people of Ho no longer derive the aesthetic, therapeutic, and apotropaic benefits from the paintings.

2. Cleanliness and personal hygiene

When considering the influence of European culture on personal hygiene and cleanliness in Ewe culture, the key response from participants was related to the introduction of European soaps which pushed traditional soaps to the periphery. It is, therefore, important to consider this further. European soap became a significant aspect of the civilizing mission during the colonial era due to the colonial trope that perceived non-Europeans as dirty. As McClintock (1995) demonstrates, the advertising of the commodity during this period was succinctly summarized by Unilever Company's slogan "Soap is civilization" (p. 207). Soap, along with clothing, toiletries, hand mirrors, and umbrellas became the major commodities related to personal hygiene traded by the Protestant mission trade posts on the Gold Coast (Nasim, 2023). They were all necessary tools recognized by the missionaries "for remaking the body and the self in the Protestant image" (ibid., p. 395). For the missionaries in Africa, cleanliness was a matter of discipline, which they supervised closely, resulting in rapid sale of soap and other cleansing agents (Comaroff, 1996). Soap, in particular, was not only seen as a cleaning agent but also a symbol of "the superiority of industrial production over natural products, Christianity over African beliefs and whiteness over blackness" (ibid.). The history of the rise of soap in colonial and missionary projects during the nineteenth century is worthy of note. Although soap was a scarce commodity in early nineteenth-century Europe, it became a key addition to life a few decades later. McClintock (1995) notes that the washing of clothing was done once or twice a year before the nineteenth century, while bathing was done about once every month. To her, washing was a rather cursory activity. Soap was considered a luxury item which was affordable only by the upper class before the mid-century era. By the late nineteenth century, it became a core part of the middle-class identity that bought into the idea of 'cleanliness as next to Godliness' (Ramamurthy, 2003). It was less of a concern for the working classes where cleanliness was not always possible, but the use of soap throughout all sections of society continued to increase during this time. This was not only due to moral factors but also to the real challenges posed by the growing number of illnesses affecting the working class, as well as the increase in dirt and new chemicals from industrial production (ibid.). The rise in the industrial production of soap led to aggressive advertising among competing manufacturers. The rise in the use and manufacture of soap was linked, not just to the advent of industrialization, but also to the import of cheap vegetable oils like palm oil, palm kernel oil, coconut oil and cottonseed oil from West Africa, Fiji, New Guinea and other places (Ramamurthy, 2003;

McClintock, 1995). In Togoland, oil palm and coconut featured prominently in the crops produced. These crops, and the oils obtained from them, were already being cultivated in the region before the arrival of the Germans who recognized their profitability and further invested in them (Amenumey, 1969). In 1895, for example, eighty-nine percent of the region's total exports consisted of 2,500 tons of palm oil and 9,000 tons of palm kernels (ibid.). In Europe, the shift from tallow to vegetable oils in soapmaking, along with advancements in soapmaking technology, enabled the production of soft body soaps, increased soap production, and made soap more accessible to the population (Ramamurthy, 2003; McClintock, 1995). The increase in production and the stiff competition from Germany and the United States all contributed to the rise in the aggressive advertising of British products both nationally and abroad (McClintock, 1995). Class notions in the metropole largely shaped soap advertising in Europe whereas it adopted a racial outlook in the colonies (Ramamurthy, 2003). Soap was intended to wash away class and racial degeneration from the skin of humanity and to restore it to a superior level of progress, moral, and spiritual salvation (McClintock, 1995). In the colonies, soap was promoted and used as a civilizing tool meant for “washing and clothing the savage” (ibid., p. 208). The ads promoted by leading soap manufacturers like Pears and other companies during the period relied heavily on “representations of black ‘cleansing’” (Ramamurthy, 2003, p. 26) but not without some criticism from within imperialist circles themselves (ibid.). One such advertisement for Pears, for instance, showed a picture of a white boy using soap as a tool to ‘clean’ the blackness (dirt) off his ‘lesser’ man. Images like these reinforced the idea of racial differentiation while simultaneously promoting the economic value of Europe’s expanding role in international trade (McClintock, 1995). Another advertisement with the inscription “Pear soap is the best,” with Africans “awestruck” by it, promoted the idea that European soap was superior to all others (ibid., p. 225). Such ads promoted the illusion of better-performing European products within Africa, an idea which persists today.

The introduction of European soap to Togoland and the larger Gold Coast, and its elevation as a symbol of cleanliness and civilization by both missionary and colonial agents, was not a simple act of acculturation. Like in the clothing industry, this was steeped in capitalism and commercial gain. The targeted ads were part of a strategy, an invented culture, in which Europeans attempted to introduce new tastes and standards to Africa utilizing colonial ideology. The way Africans received this new culture in the contact zones is an interesting phenomenon. Although the German missionaries also promoted soap as a sign of the ‘civilized’ self, it appears the Africans did not

place as much significance on it as on some of the other symbols such as clothing, shoes, hats, and the like. As one Bremen missionary said, beautiful clothes and good food appear to have been the primary preoccupations of the Ewe people in the Christian villages. Although this research did not readily find the reaction of Ewe people to the introduction of soap, the actions of their neighbours in the Basel mission Christian villages may be telling. It appears that in these settlements, both the missionaries and Africans blurred the lines on what was generally (colonially) prescribed as acceptable and what was not. Nasim (2023) describes how Protestant missionaries on the Gold Coast actively promoted the use of European soaps by importing them to their stations. However, both Europeans and Africans regularly used the traditional ‘black soap’ which has already been described in Chapter 7. She notes that this practice continued well into the twentieth century. The medicinal benefits of the soap have already been demonstrated in Chapter 7. Nasim (2023) notes the incorporation of other African medicines into Europeans’ lifestyles on the Gold Coast as a means of survival and improved health. Much like the integration of indigenous practices in their clothing, missionaries were more open to and supportive of African natural remedies in ensuring good health as many saw the benefit in their daily lives. Many of these medicinal plants were exported back to the metropole where they influenced Western medicine and medical theories (ibid.). Some pharmaceutical and medical companies that emerged in Basel and other parts of Europe in the nineteenth century were reported to have utilized active ingredients from numerous plant species in the tropics to manufacture their drugs. Here, again, missionaries’ integration of African culture can be seen where indigenous practices were adopted and a so-called modern spin put on them⁹² (ibid.). Other African standards of hygiene were also introduced into Christian villages and other mission areas which served as the crossroads between Europe and Africa. Nasim (2023) states that although missionaries promoted their own concepts of purity and cleanliness, many Africans did not automatically follow them. Instead, they created “new values and behaviours of hygiene by merging the Basel missionaries’ views of purity with their own concepts of cleanliness” (p. 262). The account below gives a good example of this:

On Saturday mornings, the school, veranda etc. are rigorously swept and the floor is coated with prepared cow dung, following the local method; this keeps the floor solid and prevents the white ants from digging it up. Thereupon, all Africans bathe in their bathroom by the well while rubbing themselves with a soapy mimosa fruit and then shower with water; the

⁹² Dr. Friedrich Hey, a former medical missionary with the Basel mission, for example, took back several such practices to Germany from the Gold Coast where he profited greatly from the sales (Nasim, 2023).

same also happens every Wednesday night; but on Saturdays the hair is washed as well, which is always a long business. [...] Lastly they receive fresh clothes for Sunday. (ibid.)

This example demonstrates, again, that whereas the Christian villages appear to have been spaces where Africans were meant to assimilate to Euro-Christian ideals, in reality, they became sites of adaptation and integration where both European and African ideals existed in tandem. The two-way nature of the acculturation process is evident once more here.

Today, the Ghanaian market has been flooded with different soaps, some locally produced, but typically as a replication of the European soaps introduced to Africa. This research found that, for an extended period, locally made soaps were not widely used and were often looked down upon. The local black soaps are, however, making a return with many being exported to other countries as well. Other industrialized cleaning products like bleach are also used in cleaning. Traditional natural sponges have also been replaced with synthetic materials. Today, the natural *akutsa* is hardly used in bathing. It is only used when a person is sick and is considered a traditional healing accoutrement for those who still practice traditional medicine. The term *akutsa* is, however, still used today. Although it is typically used to describe natural sponges, the term has also evolved to designate man-made sponges. The meaning of the term has, thus, changed between the nineteenth century and today. The other traditional sponge, *kakle*, is no longer used for bathing. It has been relegated to the ceremonial space where it is used in traditional ceremonies (*kɔnu*). This also has implications for the existing Ewe vocabulary. Such terms are now unknown to the current generation, implying a loss of knowledge about these materials and concepts.

iii. Conclusion

This section has examined the realities of contact between Europeans and Africans in relation to clothing, cleanliness and personal hygiene in the late nineteenth century. Although scholars have proposed that changes occur in the social and psychological lives of two cultures when they meet, it appears that in the European-African encounter, much of it was founded on economic and financial gain. Acculturation, in many cases, was not a result of the natural encounters between the people but the invention of traditions for profit. In some cases, though, natural acculturation took place where different aspects of culture (material, particularly) were exchanged between both groups. It is important to highlight the duality of the process as a lot of

contemporary debates on colonialism appear to focus more on the imports from Europe to Africa and not the other way round.

TA ASIEKELIA (CHAPTER 9)

CONCLUSION

Asi megbea wɔ du ŋu o
Whoever wants to have a meal must use his or her hand
(19th-century Ho proverb)

i. Research objectives and thesis statement

This research has attempted to contribute to decolonial scholarship by reviewing and rewriting some of the negative colonial accounts of the past. It has deconstructed some colonial accounts of Ghana and reconstructed them based on the people's own conception of the world. As is widely known, colonial accounts of formerly colonized peoples tend to be biased and written from a point of gross misunderstanding at the least and intentional partiality at the most. The latter was primarily done to justify the colonial 'civilizing' project and, in some cases, the outright genocide of the non-European Other, by producing them as a stark contrast to the 'civilized' European. Because of this, many formally recognized and printed accounts of formerly colonized peoples need to be critically analyzed and different accounts that provide more accurate reflections of the cultural practices of the peoples produced. To deconstruct and reconstruct some of the colonial accounts of Ghana, therefore, this research sought to answer the following questions:

- a) How did the written accounts of colonizer groups discursively produce and portray colonial difference and the colonial Ewe subject?
- b) How did the productions differ from the actual lives and accounts of the Ewe people in their language?
- c) How have Ewe cultural practices adapted to European cultural and linguistic influence?

To achieve the objectives of this research, this study examined some nineteenth-century German accounts of the Ewe people of present-day Ghana. Specifically, the study deconstructed Jakob Andreas Spieth's account of the people of Ho by critically analyzing the ways in which Spieth's Pietist Christian and European male perspective influenced his writing on the Ewe people. Additionally, the study examined how Spieth's audience, also comprising Pietist Christians and European colonialist males, may have influenced his portrayal of the people in his work. The study then reconstructed nineteenth-century knowledge about the Ewes of Ho from the people's own understanding of their cultural practices. Finally, the research considered how European cultures

and languages may have influenced the people of Ho's own culture and language. To narrow the scope of the project, this study focused on the cultural practices associated with clothing, cleanliness of clothing, bathing and personal hygiene. The seemingly mundane nature of these practices makes them worthy of further investigation because they are often the very spaces that are overlooked in scholarly work. The dearth of scholarship on the Ho sub-group of the Ewe also made this project a crucial one. This study is, therefore, very important in contributing to the gaps in the existing literature.

The answers obtained to the research questions above suggest that Spieth's ethnography on the Ewe people was largely misleading. Like many scholars of his time, Spieth reproduced the colonial discourse and episteme of his time, possibly to cater to his target audience, which was the colonial European, Christian, male. Using Critical Discourse Analysis, this research reveals the connections between Spieth's texts and the relevant discourses, structures, practices, and events of the nineteenth century. The study determines that Spieth wrote about the Ewe people from a position of colonial power. Using a sociological approach and incorporating interviews with Ewe cultural experts in my research, I demonstrate that the actual practices and beliefs of the Ewe people in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reveal their expansive knowledge and ingenuity which enabled them to survive and thrive in their environment. Thirdly, this study argues that whereas Spieth wrote from a 'worldview' perspective, the Ewe people's interaction with the world was based on a 'world-sense' perspective. This means that whereas Spieth focused primarily on the visual in his work, as was common among the Europeans of his time, the Ewe people incorporated multiple other senses in their understanding of the world around them. Closely linked to this was Spieth's focus on the physical aspects of life and culture, which aligned with the European understanding of the world at a time when the physical and spiritual were placed in opposing binaries. This study, however, found that the Ewe understood life and the world as an intertwining of both the physical and the spiritual; hence, their approach to life was from a dual perspective. This made Spieth's production on the cultural practices of the Ewe people of the nineteenth century very limited and incomplete. Finally, the research demonstrates that although Spieth produced an account of the Ewe people that somewhat portrayed the colonial encounter and its influence as unidirectional, the reality proved otherwise. The colonial encounter had a profound impact on the cultures of both the colonizer and the colonized in distinct ways. Consequently, although Spieth essentially portrayed the Ewe as without agency in his work, their actions were

proof that the people were clearly agentic and made some calculated choices that were to their benefit even in the colonial encounter.

ii. Summary of findings

Since the first part of this work considered how discourse was used in the portrayal of colonial difference in Spieth's account, it was important to employ Critical Discourse Analysis in analyzing his work. Critical Discourse Analysis was helpful because it demonstrated how Spieth wrote about the Ewe people from a position of colonial power. Using Fairclough's approach to Critical Discourse Analysis, this study found that Spieth produced a highly negative account of the people of Ho in his work. This very much aligned with other colonial productions of the time. Fairclough's approach to CDA considers how the existing discourses and social events may influence a text at the time of its production. In Spieth's case, this study found that the manner in which Spieth wrote about the clothing, care of clothing, bathing and personal hygiene practices of the nineteenth-century Ewe reinforced the colonial European and Christian discourses and practices of the nineteenth century. These discourses were relevant to Spieth's work due to his background and the significant influence of his target audience, who were predominantly European, colonial, Christian, and male.

In Spieth's discussion of nineteenth-century Ho life, he portrayed the people's clothing as 'inadequate', thereby subscribing to and reproducing the discourse of the 'naked savage' in need of European 'civilization'. Even though Spieth did not directly mention nakedness or the 'naked savage' in his work, the manner in which he wrote demonstrated the nineteenth-century European discourse on clothing, which described its 'inadequacy' as tantamount to nakedness. Beyond the perceived inadequacy of dressing, Spieth also presented a largely gendered account regarding the matter. Spieth presented the young women of Ho as more problematic in their clothing because they were depicted as more uncovered than their male counterparts. As such, their 'nakedness' was the subject of Spieth's focus, even though a careful look at his pictorial evidence shows the selectiveness in his written descriptions. Spieth presented a biased account of Ho women in his writing, even though he acknowledged the perceived inadequacy of both men and women's clothing. Linked to this was the perceived 'immorality' of the women of Ho because of their state of (un)dress. That Spieth mentioned the lack of 'shame' among the women because of their state of dress was a reflection of the Christian Pietist discourse of the nineteenth century. Shame was an

expected response to sin and worldly pleasures according to nineteenth-century Pietist teachings. The taken-for-granted notion in Spieth's writing that the women had no shame about their dressing was a reflection of the Pietist response to nakedness. The same lack of shame was not accorded to Ho men in Spieth's writing even though he stated that they were equally under-clothed. The presentation of Ho women in this way reinforces the hierarchy that was present in colonial societies, where the colonialists portrayed indigenous men as better in character and 'quality' than the women. This portrayal was also an indication of the times in Christian Europe where women were seen as having a different (and inferior) character to that of men. A last point of note is that Spieth only focused on the 'problematic' nature of dressing among the adult Ewe population, even though pictures in his work suggest that Ewe children were equally 'under-clothed'. He remained mute on children's dressing, highlighting the perhaps unproblematic nature of children's nakedness possibly as related to sexuality, as compared to that of adults, to his target audience.

Concerning the cleanliness of clothing, Spieth again painted a hugely negative picture of the people of Ho by elaborating on dirt and uncleanliness even though he cursorily mentioned that the cleanliness of clothing was the norm in his introduction. By emphasizing the negative exception rather than the norm of cleanliness, he reinforced the trope of the dirty 'uncivilized' Other. Spieth's portrayal of the people of Ho as dirty was further demonstrated in his discussion on personal hygiene. Here, he directly called out the supposed lack of cleanliness among the people. Most importantly, he again gendered this state of being. Without fully elaborating, Spieth declared the men as cleaner than the women without explaining why. He focused the large part of his distaste of the state of personal hygiene on Ho women and went to great lengths to demonstrate this without showing any concrete evidence as to how they were worse than their male counterparts. This, again, fit into the Euro-Christian discourse of the nineteenth century which saw women as inferior to and worse than their male counterparts. It also reinforced the nineteenth-century colonial idea that places far removed from Europe, particularly the tropics, were hubs of dirt and filth. Under personal hygiene, Spieth, lastly, discussed the bathing practices of the people and appeared to have challenges with the open nature of bathing. He made no mention of the actual bathing practices of the people and what they entailed. He was particularly scathing about the women's public bathing practices which he identified as indecent. Here, Spieth appeared to transfer a European and Christian understanding of the place of the naked (female) body in public spaces by portraying the act of bathing as a private affair. Spieth credited the German government for putting a stop to

women's public bathing practices and for teaching Ho women superior body care practices. Even with this, Spieth continued to paint Ho women as flawed in character because they supposedly used access to the 'superior' German knowledge to cause harm to each other. In all of this, no mention was made of the naked male body in public spaces. Neither were the bathing practices of Ho men, in particular, explored nor were their personal hygiene practices discussed. It thus questions Spieth's conclusion that the men observed better personal hygiene practices than the women when no evidence was given to support this. Lastly, Spieth's discussion of 'decency/indecency' from a predominantly Christian and European perspective failed to provide information on the people based on how they understood and lived their practices. Here too, the gendered and biased nature of Spieth's focus was very evident. All in all, although Spieth proposed a discussion of the clothing, care of clothing, bathing, and personal hygiene practices of the Ewes of Ho in the nineteenth century, he inadvertently embarked on a crusade to reiterate the colonial, European, and Pietist Christian discourses of the nineteenth century. By doing so, Spieth presented materials that sought to justify the 'civilizing mission' of the European church and colonial authorities on the West African coast in the nineteenth century.

In contrast, a careful study of the clothing, care of clothing, bathing, and personal hygiene practices of the Ho people, as informed by their understanding of the world, sheds light on nineteenth-century Ewe cosmology and the indigenous way of life. Firstly, although Spieth limited his discussion on clothing to fabric, the Ewe people themselves understood 'clothing' (body covering) in a different way. 'Clothing' went beyond fabric and cloth to encompass body paintings and body adornments. These had varying purposes other than the physical and moral functions that Spieth limited his writing to. Ewe body coverings had practical, aesthetic, health, therapeutic, and apotropaic functions. This is important because the Ewe people did not separate body and matter, the physical and the spiritual. Cultural practices, thus, incorporated these different aspects into everyday life. Fabric/cloth had the practical function of protecting the people from the elements, but it was also used sparingly to adapt to the hot and humid climate of the region. Fabrics were dyed in colourful hues to satisfy aesthetic standards, but at the same time, had medicinal properties infused in them to facilitate and maintain good health. The health benefits of these herbs have, today, been extensively studied by scholars worldwide. These same herbs were also said to have spiritual functions by protecting wearers from harm and ill-fortune. The herbs were mixed with body paints for the same reasons mentioned above. Body adornments, such as beads, were

similarly worn to beautify the body while warding off evil from the wearer. Women and children typically wore beads, although others, such as men in authority, twins, and priests/priestesses, also wore them to demonstrate their social status. The beads served different functions, including for aesthetic and health purposes. Another important point worthy of note, which is relevant to the discussion on clothing among the Ewe, is the topic of decency. Spieth wrote from a Euro-Christian perspective which saw indecency as ‘scanty’ dressing. According to the Ewe perspective, however, decency was limited to the covering of one’s pubic area. The uncovering of other parts of the body was unproblematic for the people and, hence, the moral rules Spieth applied to the people did not hold for them. Specifically, Spieth’s problem with the young women’s uncovered torsos was not translatable to the people because of the function attributed to them. Women’s breasts were seen as having a maternal function and not an erotic one. Because of this, their uncovered nature was not viewed in the same moral light as Spieth’s and, therefore, remained unproblematic to the people.

In addition to covering the body, this study also considered the bathing and personal hygiene practices of the people of Ho. It attempted to elaborate on the norm of cleanliness by describing and explaining the practices of the people. This was in contrast to Spieth who admitted the general state of cleanliness among the people but chose to focus on the exception of dirt. This study found that the Ewes of Ho went to great lengths to maintain cleanliness and personal hygiene by relying on the use of various medicinal herbs, fruits, and plant parts which have today been shown to possess antibacterial, antifungal, and antiviral properties. Bathing was also done using a traditional natural sponge in addition to soap or simply with a natural-lathering sponge. After bathing, body lotions made from shea butter were applied to the body for their dermatological benefits. The women, in particular, had specific herbal mixtures they used to enhance their personal hygiene as well as different types of beads to enhance their beauty. This refutes Spieth’s claim that it was the German government which taught the women the care of the body and the knowledge of ornaments. The hair and other parts of the body were also carefully maintained. Before the colonial period, both men and women washed and styled their hair in different patterns. During the time of Spieth’s writing, and with the abundance of European-style combs, men tended to trim their hair short while women continued to braid their hair in various styles. This was done to maintain a tidy look as well as to help the free circulation of air in the hair to prevent sweat accumulation. Oral hygiene was also important among the people, and the use of different chewsticks and sponges

helped maintain good oral health and hygiene. Some of these chewsticks and sponges have been studied more recently and their properties found to have anti-bacterial and anti-plaque functions. As has been demonstrated already, the maintenance of cleanliness and personal hygiene occupied a significant place among the people of Ho. This was so important that taboos were put in place to ensure societal adherence to the set standards. Taboos were, thus, neither just a product of the people's spiritual beliefs nor a thing of mystical value. By encapsulating expected social behaviour within the spiritual, the people of Ho again demonstrated the role of both the physical and spiritual in ensuring proper social harmony. Any attempt to describe the culture of the people must, therefore, take into serious consideration the cosmology of the people which Spieth failed (or refused) to do.

As has already been demonstrated, Spieth's account failed to provide a comprehensive overview of the people of Ho's cultural practices, particularly in relation to clothing, care of clothing, bathing, and personal hygiene. The variances in the two accounts display key differences in the Ewe and Euro-Christian understandings of the world as has already been highlighted in chapter seven. (7). In addition to this, Spieth's account leans heavily on the visual sense to highlight his displeasure about the state of clothing and cleanliness. He focuses on the 'inadequacy' of covering from a visual perspective, as well as the visual nature of appearing poorly clothed, in torn clothing, bathing in public spaces, among others. The Ho perspective, however, takes into consideration other senses in addition to the visual. The people incorporated the senses of smell (the importance placed on aromatic mixtures) and touch (herbal lotions, body paints, etc.) in their attempt to cover their bodies and maintain cleanliness. Spieth never mentioned the olfactory sense as a sign of uncleanness. This appears to support Oyewumi (1997)'s claim that, in seeking to understand and write about African cultures, colonial Europeans primarily limited themselves to the visual while overlooking the role of other senses in everyday life. Hence, Oyewumi uses the term 'world-sense' instead of 'worldview' to discuss African cultures. Additionally, Spieth spoke about cleanliness from only a physical perspective. He focused on the cleanliness of clothes and the body but said nothing about cleanliness as related to the spiritual. As has already been seen, cleanliness entailed being clean before both *Mawu* (God) and other humans. Many of the herbs used on the body were not only meant to ensure cleanliness before mankind but to ensure cleanliness before God as well. The latter was also the reason for the apotropaic functions of herbal

mixtures and medicines. This aspect of cleanliness was absent from Spieth's work, again, providing a limited account of nineteenth-century Ewe life.

The coming of the Bremen missionaries, and the later introduction of German and British colonial rule among the Ewe people, led to significant changes in nineteenth-century Togoland. The change experienced by two cultures when they meet has been described as acculturation. In terms of clothing, care of clothing, bathing and personal hygiene, many changes were observed among the Ewe people which have had enduring effects to date. The creation of *Kpodzi* settlements around existing Ewe communities by Bremen missionaries was done to provide Ewe Christian converts with the necessary environment to facilitate their adherence to Euro-Christian norms and Christian life. The *Kpodzi* settlements were governed by strict rules intended to guide new Christians in their inner faith as well as the physical attainment of European 'civilization'. What the missionaries expected to be an easy process was, however, more complex than they had hoped. It appeared the Ewe people were more attracted to the physical and material aspects of the new life than Christian doctrine. European material culture acquired on the *Kpodzi* created opportunities for attaining a new social status within the colonial economy. Access to European education and materiality provided Ewe converts with economic and financial benefits which placed them in a favourable position in the colonial economy. The overindulgence in material things was, however, contrary to the Pietist understanding of the world which insisted that material things were to be used sparingly in the fulfillment of human needs. The Ewe people appear to have taken a stance contrary to Pietist beliefs, leaving the missionaries very disappointed with their evangelizing mission. Whereas the converts showed outward signs of achieving the 'civilized' state by dressing in European clothing and consuming European goods, their inner state remained 'heathen' much to the dismay of the Bremen missionaries. This leads to a questioning of how far the Ewe converts were converted in the true sense of the word. It also demonstrates the agency of the Ewe people, who, to some extent, determined the aspects of Christian culture they adopted and the ones they chose to leave behind. In addition to European clothing, the introduction of the 'African' wax print in the late nineteenth century had a significant influence on the Ewe's dressing. In this case, it appears to have been less of an acculturation of culture and more of an 'invention' of culture. Newly created wax prints, influenced by Javanese batiks, were introduced to the West African coast after Europeans observed Africans' interest in them. Europeans, however, could not lay full claim to its success on the West African coast as it took the involvement of Africans to

make it successful. The ingenuity of African traders, particularly women, in naming the prints as reflections of people's everyday lives made them more relatable and easily consumable by the target market. With time, the reflection of Judeo-Christian concepts in the names of wax prints demonstrated the gradual adoption of the Christian worldview over the years. It shows that although the missionaries were initially disappointed by the Ewe people's response to spiritual matters, some of them later accepted them, thereby demonstrating a quasi 'full conversion' as hoped for by the missionaries. This full conversion, however, is debatable as there is evidence of the blending of African and Christian beliefs in the practice of Christianity in Africa.

As acculturation is a two-way affair, this research also considered the ways in which European culture adapted to nineteenth-century African culture. Here, one sees how the clothing of Europeans on the Gold Coast was influenced by the indigenous pubic aprons/undergarments. Contemporary thinking of the era suggested that Europeans were ill-equipped biologically to survive in the tropics. To remedy this, Europeans borrowed aspects of African clothing to mirror what they considered a reflection of African skin and practices. It was through these efforts that the flannel binder (also known as a cholera belt) was created and prescribed, along with other necessary items, for successful living in the tropics. Regarding cleanliness and personal hygiene, this study found that the discovery of West African vegetable oils had a significant influence on soap production in Europe at the turn of the century. Before the late nineteenth century, soap was made from animal tallow and was a rare commodity reserved for the upper classes in Europe. With the introduction of industrialization, coupled with the adoption of newer methods for making soap inspired by West African vegetable oils, the manufacture of soap increased to such a level that the commodity became more accessible to different parts of the European population. Soap was then reintroduced to and advertised on the West African coast as a sign of civilization. This is interesting because soap was already being produced and used in West Africa before the arrival of Europeans. It would appear, however, that despite the advertising of European soap on the Gold Coast by both European companies and German Protestant missionary trading stores, in shared spaces with Africans, the same advocates indulged in indigenous ways of maintaining cleanliness. This research found that in the Christian villages (*Kpodzi*), which marked the contact zones between European and African cultures, clear distinctions were not always made between European 'superior' goods and African ones. In the case of maintaining cleanliness and personal hygiene, the lines between the two cultures were often blurred in the Christian villages. Both missionaries

and Africans used the traditional ‘black’ soap in bathing, with some missionaries acknowledging its healing properties. African cleaning practices were also used in maintaining the *Kpodzi* compounds. Both missionaries and Africans living in these sites also oscillated between the use of Western and African medicines based on their efficacy. The Christian villages themselves were sites that fully portrayed the integration of African and European cultures. Although they were intended to be quasi-Euro-Christian areas that instilled in converts the utmost tenets of the ‘civilized’ European and Christian life, they became sites where Africans introduced aspects of their culture while adopting parts of Euro-Christian culture. This shows that the assimilation that the missionaries had hoped for was not as straightforward as planned. Through their actions, Africans living in the Christian settlements demonstrated some agency by deciding, to some extent, what they wanted to include in their new lives as converts.

iii. Considerations for further research

Although this study has attempted to produce a more accurate understanding of nineteenth-century Ho cultural practices, it is by no means exhaustive. The heterogeneous nature of all societies inherently means the multiplicity of accounts. Hence, this study is just one of many accounts and cannot be read as the one ‘true’ account of the people of Ho. Because of this, it is important to continue engaging the different voices in Ho society in an effort to produce more accurate accounts of the people on the subject. One such area is on the topic of gender in nineteenth-century Ho society. Spieth’s account was heavily gendered and biased as noted earlier. However, since gender was not the primary focus of this research, it did not focus on it even though some aspects of it were addressed. It would, however, be interesting to understand the concept of gender and how it was seen in relation to clothing, care of clothing, bathing and personal hygiene practices. A gendered lens may produce fascinating insights that could be missing when considering Ho society as a homogenous whole as this study has done. A discussion on gender may also produce knowledge about the intersections between the former and other areas, which would shed further light on the topic. Further research is therefore needed to gain a fuller understanding of nineteenth-century Ho society. Additionally, since this research was constrained by the type of information readily available in English, its scope was limited. It would be interesting to take a deeper look into the lives of the Bremen missionaries in Togoland as revealed in firsthand accounts found in letters (both private and public), records, and other documents at

the Staatsarchiv in Bremen. These period-relevant documents could shed more light on events that occurred in Togoland, as well as some of the missionaries' own reactions to them. A native German speaker with a socio-historical understanding of the events of the era would be very useful in conducting this type of work.

iv. Relevance of study

As has already been stated, written and formal accounts of many previously colonized peoples were typically created by colonizer groups who sought to document their experiences with other peoples at the time of contact. Said (1978/79) has demonstrated how these accounts have typically misrepresented the non-European Other by painting them as the stark contrast to the European. In recent years, decolonial scholars have sought to rectify these misrepresentations by revisiting and reinterpreting these accounts, thereby ‘rerighting’ (as used by Tuhiwai Smith, 2021) the place of indigenous peoples within them. This study has attempted to contribute to this area of decolonial scholarship by highlighting the voices of formerly colonized peoples to determine how they are written about, explained and understood. It has also attempted to highlight the agency of formerly colonized peoples by taking back the power to speak for themselves through their own languages and cultures. The focus on missionary accounts in this work was imperative as missionaries played a crucial role in non-Western societies, serving as ethnographers and translators of their cultures in pre-colonial and colonial times (Cinnamon, 2006). The study’s focus on the Ewedome sub-group of the Ewe people of Ghana was important given the limited attention given to the region in scholarly works. Following the legacy of colonialism which elevated certain cultures, particularly the culture and language of the southern Ewe Anlo sub-group, over others, it was essential to contribute to the undoing of this legacy by focusing on other Ewe sub-groups. The choice of the Ho of Ewedome in this work has attempted to bridge the gap in studies about the region and its people and has hopefully contributed to centring them within Ghanaian studies. It is hoped that this study has contributed to reducing the “entrenched marginality of the region within Ghanaian studies,” as observed by Nugent (2002, p. 50, cited in Yayoh, 2015, p. 129). Additionally, the focus on and use of non-standardized Ewe in written form seeks to contribute to undoing the injustices of colonial policies that privileged one dialect of the Ewe language (Anlo) to the detriment of others. This study has, thus, allowed for a written recognition of a dialect that has been marginalized in written literature and within the written history of the Ewes. Furthermore,

the study's focus on clothing, care of clothing, bathing, and personal hygiene was an attempt to highlight the mundane aspects of everyday life in pre-colonial and colonial Ewe accounts. Sociological research, up until the present, has typically focused on larger societal phenomena including religion, politics and governance, ethnicity and nationhood, language, history, and ethnography, among others. Many of these studies have also considered the Ewe people as a unit without demonstrating the differences between sub-groups. In instances of targeted scholarship on the different sub-groups, accounts primarily focused on the southern Anlo Ewe or other sub-groups. Furthermore, the use of Critical Discourse Analysis as a methodology was not evident in these works. All these factors made this research very important and worth exploring. It is hoped that this study has contributed to reducing the knowledge gap on the Ewes of Ho and will serve as a starting point for future research in this and other related areas.

v. Conclusion

Despite the contributions of this work to decolonial scholarship, much remains to be done to fully undo the effects of colonization on formerly colonized territories. The question of the absolute undoing of the effects of colonization is, however, debatable in an increasingly globalized world system where societies depend on each other for their survival based on power differentials that continue to ensure the influence of some over others. Nevertheless, the type of work done in this study is a step in the right direction in ensuring a better balance of power between former colonizer and colonized groups, especially in the area of knowledge production. More work needs to be done in decolonizing various colonizer accounts of the 'Other' by rewriting and replacing these 'official' histories with indigenous accounts. This entails a great deal of labour, but as the 19th-century Ho proverb perfectly summarizes, *asi megbea wɔ̃ dũ ηu*. Explained contextually, this means without hard work, one does not get results. Through all the decolonial efforts taking place, it is hoped that indigenous peoples around the world are finally reclaiming the power to tell and center their stories in academia and beyond.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Summary of questions to ask under Fairclough's (1994) three-dimensional approach to discourse analysis used in this research (pp. 191-194)

❖ Social events

What social event, and what chain of social events, is the text a part of?

What social practice or network of social practices can the events be referred to, be seen as framed within?

Is the text part of a chain or network of texts?

❖ Genre

Is the text situated within a genre chain?

Is the text characterized by a mix of genres?

What genres does the text draw upon, and what are their characteristics (in terms of Activity, Social Relations, Communication Technologies)?

❖ Difference

Which (combination) of the following scenarios characterize the orientation to difference in the text?

a) an openness to, acceptance of, recognition of difference; an exploration of difference, as in 'dialogue' in the richest sense of the term

b) an accentuation of difference, conflict, polemic, a struggle over meaning, norms, power

c) an attempt to resolve or overcome difference

d) a bracketing of difference, a focus on commonality, solidarity

e) consensus, a normalization and acceptance of differences of power which brackets or suppresses differences of meaning and over norms

❖ Intertextuality

Of relevant other texts/voices, which are included, which are significantly excluded?

Where other voices are included? Are they attributed, and if so, specifically or non-specifically?

Are attributed voices directly reported (quoted), or indirectly reported?

How are other voices textured in relation to the authorial voice, and in relation to each other?

❖ Assumptions

What existential, propositional, or value assumptions are made?

Is there a case for seeing any assumptions as ideological?

❖ Semantic/grammatical relations between sentences and clauses

What are the predominant semantic relations between sentences and clauses (causal – reason, consequence, purpose; conditional; temporal; additive; elaborative; contrastive/concessive?)

Are there higher-level semantic relations over larger stretches of the text (e.g. problem–solution)?

Are grammatical relations between clauses predominantly paratactic, hypotactic, or embedded?

Are particularly significant relations of equivalence and difference set up in the text?

❖ **Exchanges, speech functions and grammatical mood**

What are the predominant types of exchange (activity exchange, or knowledge exchange) and speech functions (statement, question, demand, offer)?

What types of statement are there (statements of fact, predictions, hypotheticals, evaluations)?

Are there ‘metaphorical’ relations between exchanges, speech functions, or types of statement (e.g. demands which appear as statements, evaluations which appear as factual statements)?

What is the predominant grammatical mood (declarative, interrogative, imperative)?

❖ **Discourses**

What discourses are drawn upon in the text, and how are they textured together? Is there a significant mixing of discourses?

What are the features that characterize the discourses which are drawn upon (semantic relations between words, collocations, metaphors, assumptions, grammatical features)?

❖ **Representation of social events**

What elements of represented social events are included or excluded, and which included elements are most salient?

How abstractly or concretely are social events represented?

How are processes represented? What are the predominant process types (material, mental, verbal, relational, existential)?

Are there instances of grammatical metaphor in the representation of processes?

How are social actors represented (activated/passivated, personal/ impersonal, named/classified, specific/generic)?

How are time, space, and the relation between ‘space–times’ represented?

❖ **Styles**

What styles are drawn upon in the text, and how are they textured together?

Is there a significant mixing of styles?

What are the features that characterize the styles that are drawn upon (‘body language’, pronunciation and other phonological features, vocabulary, metaphor, modality or evaluation)?

❖ **Modality**

What do authors commit themselves to in terms of truth (epistemic modalities)? Or in terms of obligation and necessity (deontic modalities)?

To what extent are modalities categorical (assertion, denial etc.), to what extent are they modalized (with explicit markers of modality)?

What levels of commitment are there (high, median, low) where modalities are modalized?

What are the markers of modalization (modal verbs, modal adverbs, etc.)?

❖ **Evaluation**

To what values (in terms of what is desirable or undesirable) do authors commit themselves?

How are values realized – as evaluative statements, statements with deontic modalities, statements with affective mental processes, or assumed values?

Such a breeder of clothes lice is sometimes told by another person: “You have a louse in your cloth”. On the other hand, if he has a quarrel with the neighbour, he uses this observation as an insult and says: “You are no human being, but an animal”.

Women often wear torn clothes to annoy their husbands, because they like to give the impression that their husbands neglect them. If a woman goes about in tattered clothes, that is a disgrace to the husband. In this case, he will be spoken of in the female world as lazy and negligent of duty. One says: “If he were a right husband, he would also mend the dresses for his wife”.

(Spieth, 2011, pp. 282, 284)

c. Bathing Places

Each house has a bathing place. However, a serious lack of cultural sensitivity immediately makes itself felt. In many farmsteads the bathing place is cut off from the view of the outside world with a thick fence. However, this is an exception. Usually, the bathing person withdraws to the back of the house. Often both old and young bathe in the middle of the farmstead without any protection against the outside world. Until now, the water places were at the spots where public paths cross the river. Before women fetch their water, they like to bathe in freedom and do not feel embarrassment. A lot of cultural harm is caused by these public bathing places, and the credit goes to the German government for prohibiting these indecent facilities. From there women are taught about true body beauty and ornaments of others. However, they use their knowledge to insult and cause each other pain. The jealousy of the poor against the rich increases through that, and one says to another: “Do you think that because of your clothes and jewellery you are better than I?” The other way round, the rich insults the poor: “Have I perhaps borrowed something from you? Have you perhaps given me clothes and jewels?” With such quarrels it even comes to an oath. The offended person swears and says: “This person insults me due to my clothes. Well, let us see, which of us both is the more beautiful and the more ugly!” The oath is sworn and both of them appear before a court, made up of a spokesman as well as the man before whom the oath has been sworn. They must both pass their judgment regarding which of the women is more beautiful.

(Spieth, 2011, p. 284)

d. Personal Hygiene

Personal hygiene leaves much to be desired. Men, women and children often bathe. The man cares more about the cleanliness of the hair than the woman. Women often remove vermin in their huts as well as on the open roads. One can often observe that women wearing a head scarf, instead of scratching their hair, hit the spot with the knuckle of their left hand. The cause is lack of sufficient care of the hair. Sweat, dust and things like these often remain in the hair not only for days, but rather for months. If a woman tidies the hair thoroughly, it takes two to three months before they repeat it. Of course, in the meantime the hair might have become an actual breeding place for vermin.

Other women also get the vermin from neighbours who do not tidy their hair. If a louse falls from the hair of one woman and gets into the hair of another, all the conditions under which the breeding can thrive are present. If the vermin torments her too much, she cuts the hair very short. Anyone who pays attention to her hygiene bathes twice a day. On the other hand, if someone goes into mourning, he does not bathe for several days neither does he eat.

*A lot of attention is paid to the cleanliness of the hands. However, these same hands experience unequal care. The right hand or “hand for eating” should not touch any unclean thing. All works that offend against the sense of cleanliness are seen to with the left hand. Because of that it is called *mīṣi* or *asinyagē*, meaning the hand that must see to the ugly thing. Before and after meals the right hand is washed painstakingly because it must bring the meal to the mouth. One seldom finds dirt under the finger nails of the right hand.*

The care of the mouth is scrupulously seen to by many people. This lies in the fact that after meals the mouth is rinsed with water. In addition to that the teeth are cleaned with a short stick.⁸⁶⁸⁴ Others, who are less meticulous, clean the teeth with the fingers or with wet bathing cloth.

(Spieth, 2011, pp. 284-286)

Appendix C: Interview Guide

Introductory Questions

1. Can you please tell me your name?
2. Do you play any specific role within the Ho community? Example: elder, sub-chief, chief, longtime resident of Ho, academic, etc.
3. How did you come about such great knowledge on the culture and language of the Ho people?

Research Questions 2 and 3

1. **Clothing:** Different types of clothing were worn by men, women and children in 19th century Ho. Attached are some pictures taken by Spieth during that time.
 - a. What were the practical reasons behind the choice of clothing/clothing style/clothing material? Example: climate, how everyday activities were done, etc.?
 - b. What were the key differences between men, women and children's clothes and what did the differences signify culturally?
 - c. Did these types of clothing convey any other specific cultural or symbolic meanings? Example: did they differentiate between marital status, age, religious role in the community, other social identity?
 - d. How did Ho people define indecency in dressing in the 19th century?
 - e. Were there any other standards applied to dressing that determined what a properly dressed person looked like in 19th century Ho?
 - f. How have questions a to e adapted to European linguistic influence? Example: has the Ewe language adopted certain European words regarding the above? What do the concepts mean currently?
 - g. How have questions a to e adapted to European cultural influence? How have a to e changed because of European influence?
2. **Care of clothing:** Ho people had their own practices in the 19th century to ensure cleanliness of clothing. Spieth admits that cleanliness of clothing was found in almost all Ho communities.
 - a. How did Ho people care for their clothing to ensure cleanliness?

- b. What role did soap (black) and other materials play in this process? Also, were there any specific properties of the soap and other materials that made them effective in keeping clean clothes?
- c. Were there any symbolic/cultural practices associated with the process of keeping clean clothes? What role did these practices play?
- d. What were the Ho standards of dirt and uncleanliness in clothing?
- e. How have questions a to d adapted to European linguistic influence? Example: has the Ewe language adopted certain European words regarding the above? What do the concepts mean currently?
- f. How have questions a to d adapted to European cultural influence? How have a to d changed because of European influence?

3. Bathing practices: Spieth focuses on what he considered the ‘indecent’ public bathing practices of Ho people but says little about the actual bathing practices.

- a. What were the bathing practices of the Ho people in the 19th century? Did these differ based on any social identifiers – example gender, age, position in society, etc.?
- b. What role did soap (black) and other materials play in this process? Also, were there any specific properties of the soap/other materials e.g. herbs, plants that made them effective in ensuring cleanliness?
- c. Were there any symbolic/cultural practices associated with the bathing process? What role did these practices play?
- d. How did Ho people view public bathing? (Spieth found it indecent but the norm)
- e. How was (in)decency in bathing understood from the Ho worldview?
- f. What were the beauty and body care routines of Ho women? This is important as Spieth credits the German government for teaching Ho women bodily care and beauty practices implying that the women had no idea of these prior to European arrival.
- g. How have questions a to f adapted to European linguistic influence? Example: has the Ewe language adopted certain European words regarding the above? What do the concepts mean currently?
- h. How have questions a to f adapted to European cultural influence? How have a to f changed because of European influence?

- 4. Personal hygiene:** Spieth portrayed a largely negative account of the state of personal hygiene in Ho. He briefly addressed the care of the hair, hands and mouth.
- a. What were the personal hygiene practices of the Ho people with regard to the care of the hair, hands and mouth?
 - b. What role did any materials (example chewing sticks, chewing sponges, etc.) play in this process? Also, were there any specific properties of the materials that made them effective in ensuring cleanliness?
 - c. Were there any symbolic/cultural practices associated with the processes? What role did these practices play?
 - d. What were the personal hygiene practises of the Ho people outside of the care of the hair, hands and mouth?
 - e. Were there any symbolic/cultural practices associated with these processes? What role did these practices serve?
 - f. How have questions a to e adapted to European linguistic influence? Example: has the Ewe language adopted certain European words regarding the above? What do the concepts mean currently?
 - g. How have questions a to e adapted to European cultural influence? How have a to e changed because of European influence?

Appendix D: Ethics Approval Certificate



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Certificate #: STU 2024-070

Approval Period: 07/09/24-07/09/25

ETHICS APPROVAL

To: **Trixie Akpedonu**
Graduate Student of Sociology
takpe@yorku.ca

From: Alison M. Collins-Mrakas, Director, Research Ethics
(on behalf of Gillian Parekh, Chair, Human Participants Review Committee)

Date: Tuesday, July 9, 2024

Title: **Hearing the Subaltern Speal - A Decolonial Analysis of Jakob Spieth's Account of the Ewe People**

Risk Level: Minimal Risk More than Minimal Risk

Level of Review: Delegated Review Full Committee Review

I am writing to inform you that this research project, "**Hearing the Subaltern Speal - A Decolonial Analysis of Jakob Spieth's Account of the Ewe People**" has received ethics review and approval by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines.

Note that approval is granted for one year. Ongoing research – research that extends beyond one year – must be renewed prior to the expiry date.

Any changes to the approved protocol must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process by submission of an amendment application to the HPRC prior to its implementation.

Any adverse or unanticipated events in the research should be reported to the Office of Research ethics (ore@yorku.ca) as soon as possible.

For further information on researcher responsibilities as it pertains to this approved research ethics protocol, please refer to the attached document, "**RESEARCH ETHICS: PROCEDURES to ENSURE ONGOING COMPLIANCE**".

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at acollins@yorku.ca.

Yours sincerely,

Alison M. Collins-Mrakas M.Sc., LLM
Director, Office of Research Ethics

RESEARCH ETHICS: PROCEDURES to ENSURE ONGOING COMPLIANCE

Upon receipt of an ethics approval certificate, researchers are reminded that they are required to ensure that the following measures are undertaken so as to ensure on-going compliance with Senate and TCPS ethics guidelines:

1. **RENEWALS:** Research Ethics Approval certificates are subject to annual renewal. Failure to renew an ethics approval certificate or (to notify ORE that no further research involving human participants will be undertaken) will result in the closure of the protocol. No further research activities may be undertaken until such time as a new protocol has been reviewed and approved. Further, it may result in suspension of research cost fund and access to research funds may be suspended/withheld;
2. **AMENDMENTS:** Amendments must be reviewed and approved PRIOR to undertaking/making the proposed amendments to an approved ethics protocol;
3. **END OF PROJECT:** ORE must be notified when a project is complete;
4. **ADVERSE EVENTS:** Adverse events must be reported to ORE as soon as possible;
5. **POST APPROVAL MONITORING:**
 - a. More than minimal risk research may be subject to post approval monitoring as per TCPS guidelines;
 - b. A spot sample of minimal risk research may similarly be subject to Post Approval Monitoring as per TCPS guidelines.

FORMS: As per the above, the following forms relating to on-going research ethics compliance are available on the Research website:

- a. Renewal
- b. Amendment
- c. End of Project
- d. Adverse Event