INTRODUCTION

In 1989 I started fieldwork among the Peki Ewe in Ghana to gain an understanding of Christianity at the grassroots level. Soon after I began, I visited a prayer service attended by virtually all the Christian churches represented in the area. It was held in the chapel of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC), a mission church which was established as a result of the activities of nineteenth-century German Pietist missionaries from the Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft (NMG), in Peki Blengo. This All Churches Prayer brought together various denominations such as Catholics, Methodists and Presbyterians, as well as a great number of African independent and Pentecostal churches. I was struck by the fact that these various and competing churches appeared to be united by a common enemy: the Devil. A huge part of the service was focused on his evil manifestations. One pastor preached on how to do away with 'pagan' gods which he described as Satan's demons. In the middle of the service there were attempts to exorcise a schoolboy who appeared to be possessed by a local god worshipped in his family, and there were numerous songs and prayers to ward off the Devil.

In the All Churches Prayer I began to realise the immense importance of the image of the Devil in local appropriations of Christianity among the Ewe. The Devil was called upon to draw a boundary between Christianity and 'heathendom' – in other words Ewe religion from a Christian perspective – thus demonising Ewe gods and spirits. Yet, as I came to understand in the course of my stay, demonisation by no means implies that the former gods and spirits will disappear out of people's lives. As servants of Satan they are still regarded as real powers that have to be dealt with in a concrete way – rather than as outmoded 'superstitions', as modern Protestant theology would have it. Thus, through the image of the Devil, 'old' Ewe spiritual powers continue to exist. Put differently, the image of Satan offers a discourse with which to approach these powers as 'Christian' demons.

As a matter of fact, people alluded to evil spirits and the Devil so frequently that I was drawn to deal with this apparently pivotal topic in the lives of many Christians as a main focus of my research. Interestingly, talk about demons and the Devil occurred most often and openly in Pentecostal churches. These churches, which have become increasingly popular in Ghana since the mid-1980s,[1] also shape the religious arena in Peki to a large extent.

Indeed, those people who left the EPC for another church mostly attributed their move – or better still, their conversion, which transformed them from 'nominal' church members into 'born-again' Christians – to the fact that the EPC failed to deal with demons satisfactorily because its leaders would take neither the Holy Spirit nor the Devil and his demons seriously. Therefore, this church would be unable to ward off or cast out evil spirits in the name of God and achieve protection and healing. This critique also played a major role in the secession of two prayer groups from the EPC in 1961 and 1991 respectively, which gave rise to two new churches under the name of Agbelengor – The Lord's Pentecostal Church, and the EPC 'of Ghana'. These churches have developed an elaborate discourse on demons as well as a number of rituals to deal with them. Along with the EPC, these two churches came to form my main field of investigation, and this study is about these three organisations and the relationships among them. I propose that by examining the images of the Devil held in these churches, it is possible to gain insight into the intricate process of the appropriation of Christianity at the grassroots level, as well as the widespread desertion of the mission-derived churches for Pentecostalism.

Yet all this is not enough to account for the evolution of Ewe appropriations of Christianity. Despite the fact that by referring to the image of the Devil a boundary is drawn between Christianity and Ewe religion, both share essential features. The point is that in order to be communicated, the Christian message had to be translated into the local language. Christian Ewe discourse thus contains many 'heathen' terms which also account for the peculiarity of local Christian interpretations. Both the image of Satan and Christian Ewe vocabulary in general have a special relationship with Ewe religion. Whereas through diabolisation spiritual beings are represented as demons, translation necessarily involves a positive integration of non-Christian terms. Therefore, it is important to investigate how these paradoxical strategies of both vernacularisation and diabolisation have contributed to local appropriations of Christianity on the borderline of the old and the new religions.

In this study I attempt to go beyond the still current, artificial compartmentalisation of research on religion in Africa, which not only entails a research praxis in which the study of African Christianity and 'traditional religion' appear as two distinct fields, but also an exclusive focus within the former on either African independent churches [2] or, to a much lesser extent, mission churches.[3] Although I agree fully with the call of Beidelman (1974, 1982) and others (e.g. Bowie 1993; Fabian 1971a) to devote more attention to the study of missions, a plea which has resulted in a range of studies concentrating on the relationship between missionaries and anthropologists,[4] and on the interactions of missionaries and non-Western peoples,[5]

I feel that the scope of the research has to be extended. The intricate and often conflicting relationships between mission churches and independent churches at the local level, as well as Christians' attitudes towards practitioners of what came to be reified as 'traditional religion' and vice versa also have to be taken into account. Indeed, the 'real story', which should form the main focus of anthropological investigation, is the 'concealed and mysterious' manner in which local Christianity evolves (Ranger 1987: 182). Gray has also noted the lack of knowledge about the 'myriad small, local Christian communities' and placed the examination of African local Christianity firmly on the research agenda (1990: 66). The focus on local communities does not of course imply any denial of the fact that these communities form part of a wider system. Peki is not approached as an isolated community, but rather as an arena where it becomes visible how people appropriate an initially foreign religion, such as Christianity, and how this appropriation speaks to concerns arising from their incorporation into wider political and socioeconomic processes.

This study refuses to take the accomplished domination of the colonised as a point of departure, and to focus merely on the suppression and alienation brought about by Western influences in general and Christianity in particular. It concentrates on the local appropriation of this religion in an African context by looking at the whole spectrum of Peki Ewe religious ideas and practices at the grassroots level. By doing so, I wish to unravel the ways in which African Christians have come to terms with, and possibly eluded or even subverted Western domination (see also Comaroff and Comaroff 1991). I hasten to add that it is of course not my intention to exonerate missionary Christianity from bringing about alienation and sustaining Western domination in Africa. The point I wish to make is that Christianity at the grassroots level cannot be reduced to the intentions and actions of Western colonial missionaries. African Christianity is not merely an extension of the missionary impact, but a continuously developing product which is shaped by a great number of experiences. Although the main focus is the situation as I experienced it during my fieldwork, in the course of fifteen months in three periods between 1988 and 1992, attention will also be devoted to the Peki Ewe's encounter with the missionaries of the German Pietist Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft (NMG) between 1847 and 1914, a seminal period in which the preconditions evolved for what occurs today.

CONVERSION AND THE TRANSLATED DEVIL

The investigation of local appropriations of Christianity leads directly to the debates on conversion. While Christian discourses of conversion focus on an intra-personal shift of religious allegiance and conviction, social scientists have for some time conceptualised conversion in terms of increasing rationalisation and disenchantment (*Entzauberung*). This view of

conversion draws upon Max Weber's (1978 [1922]) work on religious change and on the conditions and implications surrounding a turning away from 'traditional religions' in favour of 'world religions'. Weber's understanding of religious rationalisation has recently been succinctly summarised by Hefner. 'World religions' differ from 'traditional religions' by: '1) the creation and clarification of doctrines by intellectual systematizers, 2) the canonization and institutionalization of these doctrines by certain social carriers, and 3) the effective socialization of these cultural principles into the ideas and actions of believers' (1993: 18). These points refer to 'world religions' in general. A fourth point of importance in the context of this study relates to Weber's work on Protestantism (1984 [1920]) where he suggested that the internalisation of this variant of Christianity would eventually lead to a disenchanted, modern society.

Weber himself of course was aware that this is an ideal type description. One can sense a tension in his work between the ideal type course of religious development and the practical historical manifestation of religion in everyday life. Yet many students inspired by Weber, especially those introduced to Weber through Parsons, still fail to note this tension, and understand his work merely in terms of his ideal type abstraction (see, for instance, Hefner 1993). In this vein, Comaroff critically remarks that 'much of his [Weber's] contribution to mainstream sociology bore heavy evolutionary freight' (Comaroff 1994: 303). The following quotation dealing with Christianity is of particular interest in relation to this problem, because it reveals that Weber certainly noted that there was a gulf between the ideal type and actual reality of Protestantism:

> The path to monotheism has been traversed with varying degrees of consistency, but nowhere – not even during the Reformation – was the existence of spirits and demons permanently eliminated; rather, they were simply subordinated unconditionally to the one god, at least in theory. The decisive consideration was and remains: who is deemed to exert the stronger influence on the interests of the individual in his everyday life, the theoretically supreme god or the lower spirits and demons? If the spirits, then the religion of everyday life is decisively determined by them, regardless of the official god-concept of the ostensibly rationalized religion. (1978 [1922]: 415–16)

In this fascinating passage Weber points to the gap between official theological doctrine, with its monotheistic orientation, and people's actual religious praxis[6] with its emphasis on demons. Thus, the rationalisation implied in world religions on the level of doctrine does not necessarily imply the closure of the doctrine and the disenchantment of the world in the praxis of lay believers. It is exactly this tension – a tension which Weber only hinted at but did not work out – that I wish to explore in this study. It may be

located between the ideal type description of Protestantism, on the one hand, in terms of a belief in God that is professed by professional modern theologians and taken for granted by many social scientists, and on the other, the popular praxis of demonology or diabology which focuses on the works of Satan and his agents. Thus, rather than inferring the characteristics of Protestantism from the claims of its theologically trained proponents, this study investigates how a historical encounter between missionaries and Africans, which involved both the diabolisation of the indigenous religion and the translation of the Pietist message into its language, gave rise to a peculiar African version of missionary Pietism. I wish to emphasise that although I take the emergence of new meanings from the encounter between the Ewe and the missionaries as a point of departure, this is not a mere hermeneutic enterprise. As Pietist Protestantism is part and parcel of colonialism, the relationship between conversion to Christianity and, simultaneously, to modern forms of life stands central to this study. It is not about ideas surrounding demons as such, but about how these ideas relate to Christians' changing social and economic circumstances.

The popularity of images of the Devil and demons evokes the question of why it is that, in terms of Weber's remark quoted above, demons exert a stronger influence than God on people's interests in their daily lives? What do people need diabology for? Which factors are responsible for the obsession with evil and demons? How does it relate to changes in people's conception of self? Or, more generally, how is people's emphasis on demons related to changes brought about by colonialism and missionisation? In order to answer these questions I examine the relationship between conversion, modernity, (dis)enchantment and the image of Satan.

In this context special attention will be given to the ambivalences stemming from the mission's introduction of the modern conception of the individual person. As Weber noted, this modern conception is essential to both capitalism and Protestantism (see also Van der Veer 1996; Van Rooden 1996). For its Western protagonists, conversion to Christianity was to entail a new definition of personhood in terms of a moral individualism. This went beyond, and represented as old-fashioned, collective forms of identity based on lineage or clan, in favour of new identities centred on nationhood and the nuclear family. However, as this study will amply show, the introduction of the notion of the modern individual self was not taken for granted, but rather gave rise to struggles both within and between people, and in their course much reference was made to the Devil.

Through colonialisation and missionisation the Ewe became involved in global processes which had severe and wide-reaching implications for their economic, political, social, religious and personal circumstances. Both colonial agents and a great number of Africans represented these changes in terms of an increasing 'civilisation' and 'progress' that was to replace

'primitive society'. In terms of a more recent, but no less value-laden, discourse the changes accompanying Africa's incorporation into world economics, politics and culture were identified as 'modernising' forces. But against the expectations of the modernisation theorists that dominated social science discourse in the 1960s and 1970s, these modernising forces did not lead to a uniform culture following the model of Western society, but instead gave rise to plurality. Western society itself did not conform to the secularised image of it created by social scientists; even in the cradle of modernity one can discern a reversal of disenchantment (for example, Kepel 1994; Verrips 1993).

The current globalisation discourse has demonstrated the highly ideological content of the assumption that modernisation would bring about replicas of Western modernity all over the world. In practice, globalisation involves the comparative interaction of different forms of life (Robertson 1992) which results in creative processes that have been described as 'creolization' (Hannerz 1987) or 'pidginization' (Fabian 1986). Modernity cannot be defined solely from a Western point of view, since local encounters with harbingers of Western modernity such as colonial traders, administrators and missionaries gave rise to different developments. Therefore, I fully agree with Appiah's remark that 'the question what it is to *be* modern is one that Africans and Westerners may ask together. And ... neither of us will understand what modernity is until we understand each other' (1992: 107).[7] Rather than taking a well-defined concept of modernity as a point of departure, what has to be explored is how people have dealt and still deal locally with 'civilising', 'modernising' or 'globalising' forces, that is, forces entailing an increase in supra-local relations, societal differentiation, rationalisation and new notions of personhood. This study seeks to contribute to this project by investigating the relationhip between enchantment and modernity among Ewe Christians.

The notion that people's encounter with modernity and the rise of demonic beliefs are interrelated is of course not entirely new. In recent years anthropologists have shown how political, social and economic changes often give rise to beliefs and practices centred on new occult forces (for example, Behrend 1993; Crain 1991; Edelman 1994; Geschiere 1994, 1997; Lan 1985; Lattas 1993; Luig, 1994; Pels 1992; Shaw 1996; Thoden van Velzen and Van Wetering 1988, 1989; Thoden van Velzen 1990; Van Wetering 1992; White 1993). Through the study of such beliefs and practices, anthropologists are able to assess social tensions as well as individual intra-psychical conflicts resulting from them. Yet up until now, students of conversion in Africa and elsewhere have paid scant attention to this phenomenon and have neglected Christian imaginations of the Devil (Gray 1990: 104; but see Cervantes 1994; Ingham 1986; and Taussig 1980 on Southern America; and Stewart 1991 on Greece). Those participating in

the discussion on conversion in Africa basically understand conversion as a turn towards the High God and, as a consequence, to a modern way of life (for example, Horton 1971, 1975). Although the centrality of God in the Christian doctrine cannot be denied, it is important to realise that the turn to the Christian God simultaneously implies acceptance of his dark counterpart as the head of the realm of darkness, that is, of deities associated with local traditions.

I propose that the image of the Devil, which the Pietist missionaries exported to the Ewe through translation and which currently receives so much attention in the Pentecostal churches, played and continues to play a central role in the process of conversion to Christianity and the appropriation of it. In contrast to Horton, according to whom 'lesser gods' lose their importance at the expense of the High God, and inspired by the authors studying the rise of demonology in the context of change mentioned above, this study will show that the involvement with globalising forces and modernity may even stimulate an emphasis on demons, and will go on to assess why this is the case.

Of course, I realise that an attempt to understand African appropriations of Christianity through a focus on the occult may be found problematic because it threatens to confirm existing stereotypes and to exoticise Africans. Yet the point is that the image of the Devil and demons is a product of the encounter between Africans and Western missionaries, a hybrid form which helped to constitute the reality in which both parties came to terms with each other. It is an image which, in ways similar to that of the witch, embodies 'all the contradictions of the experience of modernity itself, of its inescapable enticements, its self-consuming passions, its discriminatory tactics, its devastating social costs' (Comaroff and Comaroff 1993: xxix). This image lies at the base of the development of a particular imaginary language through which people constitute their world and are able to express concerns about what it means 'to be modern' (see also Geschiere 1997; Mbembe 1992). As this study will show, the images of the Devil and demons are means by which to address the attractive and destructive aspects of the Ewe's encounter with global economics, politics and culture. It therefore forms a link between the study of Christianity and of African religions, as well as between the 'anthropology of evil' (Parkin 1989) and colonial studies.

THE RESEARCH

In order to assemble the material for this study I carried out historical research in the archives of the NMG in Bremen (Germany)[8] and of the British Colonial Office in London, as well as conducting fieldwork among the Peki Ewe[9] in Ghana. The historical documents of the NMG form the basis for the first three chapters of this book. As well as the study of handwritten sources,

I read through the NMG's monthly magazine, the *Mittheilungen* (MT, 1840ff) or the *Monatsblatt* (MB, 1851ff), from 1847 until 1922, and the yearbooks of this period. All quotes from the MT and MB presented in this book were originally in German and are translated by myself. Letters and reports by native mission workers were originally written in either English, Ewe or German. Whenever I quote statements that were originally made in German or Ewe I indicate this; translations of German texts are mine, translations of Ewe texts are by Misonu Amu, or Gilbert K. Ananga and myself. Quotations from books by the missionaries Jacob Spieth and Diedrich Westermann were originally in German and are translated by myself.

During fieldwork, I spoke to a large number of members of the three churches as well as to representatives of Ewe religion, and attended a great number of services, prayer meetings and 'traditional' celebrations. I tape-recorded most of the sermons and interviews. The recordings in Ewe were transcribed by the native speaker and EPC catechist Manfred Adzah, and later translated by Gilbert Ananga and myself. In this way, despite my difficulty in understanding what was being said at the time, I could still gain insight into the discourses of Christianity and Ewe religion. To a large extent, my experience of doing fieldwork was one of learning the language of another discourse.

Working in this way led to the production of a large number of texts which formed the basis of the present study. Although I take full responsibility for the interpretation I present in this study, I think it is important to represent the voices of those to whom I spoke. By quoting recorded texts, I want to emphasise that this study is the product of an intersubjective encounter between myself and others (Fabian 1971b). By quoting extensively from texts produced in this encounter, readers are also invited to participate in the encounter and to judge whether they find my interpretations acceptable. If not stated otherwise, all statements quoted were originally made in English. Most short statements quoted were recorded during my main fieldwork in 1992; if a statement quoted was recorded in 1989 I indicate this.

Recently, Nukunya (1994), himself a native Ewe, has stressed the virtues of ethnography produced by native researchers. During colonialism, power relations between white and black were such that Western ethnographers could not expect to hear how things really were from informants. In the same way, postcolonial ethnographers could never be sure whether what they learned from their informants was true. In his view, despite being personally involved in his or her culture, the 'anthropologist at home' could not easily be misled by informants and could thereby produce more representative accounts. I agree with Nukunya that writing about a foreign culture is problematic. Perfect knowledge of, and personal experience with, the culture one studies is certainly a great advantage. However, I think that

the problem amounts to more than the production of a true account. In recent years a great deal of critical work has appeared which problematises the representation of the Other (for example, Clifford and Marcus 1986; Fabian 1983, 1991). There is a growing awareness among anthropologists that ethnographic accounts are products of an intercultural encounter between anthropologists and the people they study and are not simply mirror images of the Other. From this perspective, insider and outsider anthropologists face the same problem. Both have to be aware of the fact that their own bias and the concepts employed by them permeate their accounts.

I understand this study as the product of an intercultural encounter between me, a foreign anthropologist originating from the same country as the missionaries of the NMG, and the descendants of the people evangelised by them. This encounter boiled down to a praxis of translation. I agree with Asad (1986) that the metaphor of translation may blur the fact that in practice cultural translation implies the submission of the culture studied to the dominant discourse of academic anthropology. Translation has to be examined as 'a process of power' (ibid.: 148). But whereas Asad concludes that the translation metaphor is inappropriate for an understanding of what anthropology does and is, I would like to argue that this metaphor can still be fruitful. In fact, Asad's critique is directed towards translation understood in a positivist way, which assumes that the transmission of meaning across cultural boundaries is quite unproblematic, thereby reducing the Other to Western categories. I want to advocate an understanding of translation – and hence anthropology – as a creative process, which does not aim for the correct representation of the Other, but which instead is a product of intersubjective and intercultural dialogue (Fabian 1971b). Understood in this way, the translation metaphor is fruitful because it implies a turning away from a positivist anthropology which pretends to represent the Other as he or she 'really' is. I understand my own fieldwork, which included a lot of practical translation, as an encounter with people of another culture that changed my understanding of established terms (such as religion, the body and emotions, the family). The point is that, rather than taking translation for granted and subsuming new experiences under established categories (which, as will become clear below, is basically what the missionaries did), one should realise the creative meaning-transforming process which is at work whenever people of different cultures meet. This is why I still deem it fruitful to conceptualise anthropology as translation, but in the creative – I might even say 'syncretising' – sense.

This study is structured as follows. Chapter 1 provides a historical overview of political, socioeconomic and religious developments in Peki which forms the background to the chapters to follow. Chapter 2 is devoted to the

socioeconomic origins and the religious ideas and aspirations of the missionaries in their home base in nineteenth-century Württemberg. In order to determine which message they exported to the Ewe, special emphasis is given to their world view and their conceptualisation of the Devil and popular religion. In Chapter 3 the vernacularisation of the missionary message stands central. I try to show how the missionaries aspired to gain full control over the Ewe language and culture through linguistics and ethnography. Yet through vernacularisation, converts understood the missionary message in their own ways. Chapter 4 focuses on diabolisation and examines ideas about evil in the context of Ewe religion, how Ewe converts took over the image of the Devil communicated to them by the missionaries, how they used this image to draw a boundary between themselves and 'heathendom', and why some of them 'slid back' to Ewe religion. The remaining chapters concentrate on Christianity in Peki between the first secession in the EPC in Blengo in 1960 until the situation I encountered in the period of my fieldwork. Chapter 5 deals with the secessions of Agbelengor and the new EPC, and the old EPC's attempts to keep members within the church. Conflicts between proponents of Africanisation and Pentecostalisation are discussed in the light of the popularity of the image of the Devil and demonology. A detailed description of the doctrines and rituals which the three churches offer their members is provided in Chapter 6. In this context I discuss differences between the independent churches studied by anthropologists in the 1960s and 1970s and the more recent Pentecostal churches. Chapter 7 focuses on how church members experience human-spirit relationships. I present a number of cases of people possessed by 'evil spirits' and try to assess the attraction of Pentecostalism by focusing on the sequence of possession by demons, exorcism and possession by the Holy Spirit. The study is concluded by a brief reflection on the relationship between modernity, time and the image of the Devil.

In writing this ethnography I have made use of passages from articles written earlier (Meyer 1992, 1994, 1995b, 1996).

EPILOGUE: MODERNITY, TIME AND THE DEVIL

Throughout this study we have gained insights into the ways in which the Peki Ewe experience the modernising and globalising processes into which they became incorporated through the activities of the NMG. It has become clear that they can neither be described as alienated victims overwhelmed by Western impact, nor as clones of their colonial masters. By converting to Christianity, many Ewe expressed their wish to change. They felt attracted to missionary Pietism because it offered the material and conceptual means by which to dissociate themselves from what became represented as 'backward', 'traditional' society. Ewe Christians distinguished themselves through their dress, their houses and furniture. They understood themselves to be 'civilised' people far ahead of the rest; and this symbolic distance was expressed, for instance, by the Christian village called *Kpodzi* ('on the hill'). Though converts shared the same time and space with their non-Christian fellows, they separated themselves by adopting a temporalising device. In their view, 'traditional' society was a matter of the past. Christianity, by contrast, was a matter of the future. By employing this device, Christians transposed themselves into a different time from that for non-Christians, thereby denying they all actually shared the same time and space.

Striving for future progress through a rupture with 'traditional' society is not only the defining feature of the Pietist understanding of conversion, but at the same time the pre-eminent characteristic of modernity (e.g., Luig and Behrend 1994; Habermas 1986; Tourraine 1995). Indeed, as Weber has shown in his work on the Protestant ethic (1984 [1920]), in modern society essential ideas of Reformed Protestantism have become secularised. The wish to move on and on towards future pleasures, both in heaven and preferably in this world as well, and continuously to improve one's living conditions rather than remain part of 'traditional' society, entailed Ewe Christians' pursuit of individualism and independence from the family. This orientation has remained a defining feature of Ewe Christianity throughout the twentieth century: education, the Christian religion and 'civilisation' were conceptualised as synonyms. The Pentecostal churches, which oppose the routinisation of Christianity and instigated a wave of 'second christianisation' (Schoffeleers 1985), promote individualism with

even greater emphasis than the mission churches. By emphasising salvation and individual spiritual and material progress in life, they clearly qualify as agents of modernisation. This stance is aptly captured in the popular Ghanian picture *Judgement Day* (see frontispiece), which depicts heaven as the ultimate fulfilment of modernity, and contrasts it with the Devil's hellfire.

But why then, to return to the central question posed in the Introduction, did demons have more influence on people's interests in their daily lives than the High God, and why do they continue to do so? What did and do they need the image of the Devil for? Clearly, orientation towards the future is only one side of the Christian project. The popularity of the image of the Devil and demons in past and present reveals the inability of Ewe Christians merely to look forward. While, in Christian Ewe discourse, God is associated with the future, the Devil is associated with the past. It is important to realise that Ewe Christians have recourse to 'time' as an epistemological category which enables them to draw a rift between 'us' and 'them', 'now' and 'then', 'modern' and 'traditional' and, of course, 'God' and the 'Devil'. The latter is considered Lord of all heathen gods and spirits, defined as matters of the 'past' and from which Christians should dissociate themselves. Though evidently this 'past' is the product of a temporalising device which denies Ewe religion's actual 'coevalness' (Fabian 1983) with Christianity, it is conceptualised as existing somewhere back in time, yet still threatening to manifest itself in Christian lives.

This use of time as a discursive strategy relates to actual experiences of conflicts in the present. Ewe Christians' actual life conditions are characterised by a simultaneous entanglement in 'old' and 'new' ways of life. Despite their wish to proceed, they were and still are linked to their families socially, economically and spatially. This relatedness can be expressed by possession through spirits believed to operate through blood ties. It appears that in the early days of Christianity among the Ewe, this link could only be re-experienced through 'backsliding'. Currently, it can also be experienced in the Pentecostal churches, which in contrast to mission churches, offer a discourse on evil spirits and allow for the occurrence of possession. In this way, albeit temporarily and in the confines of the framework of the deliverance ritual, converts can return to what they represent as their 'past' and from which they eventually want to dissociate themselves. This ritualised return to and subsequent rupture from the 'past' is a need evoked by people's wish to proceed, for, as we have seen, modernity for Ewe Christians is highly ambivalent because it entails a great number of conflicts both within and between people.

It is a commonplace that Pentecostalism is especially appealing to people involved in modernisation processes and longing for upward social mobility. Much less clear is where Pentecostal churches' ability to create a discursive and ritual space with which to address and enact converts' ambivalent

experiences with modernity originates. Johannesen (1994) has shown that the God who is addressed and, as it were, constructed through Pentecostal prayer does not link his followers to any particular community, but only confirms their individuality. He argues that Pentecostalism can cross cultural boundaries and easily spread throughout the world because it has no cultural specificity. This argument is confirmed by the cases studied in this book. We saw that on the level of doctrine, there was virtually no difference between the EPC and the neutrally oriented churches that seceded from the former. Rather than offering new *content*, Pentecostalism offers converts above all a new, more adequate *form* through which to express their ideas. It is because this form as such is culturally unspecific that Pentecostalism could become a vehicle to express a grassroots Ewe appropriation of Pietist Protestantism. Yet – and here I wish to carry Johannesen's argument a step further – precisely because the most important thing Pentecostalism offers is a new form, it can easily become localised and thus express a highly culturally-specific version of Christianity. In the cases studied here, this cultural specificity is mainly produced through converts' emphasis on the image of the Devil, for it is Satan, not God, who provides a channel through which they may return to the local conditions that they (strive to) leave behind. Put differently, the evolution of a local, indigenised version of missionary Pietism depends a great deal on the image of the Devil, which enables converts to discursively and ritually return to what they conceive of as their 'past'. There is therefore some truth in Sundkler's statement that '[t]he syncretistic sect becomes the bridge over which Africans are brought back to heathendom' (1961: 297). Pentecostal churches do indeed provide a bridge between Ewe religion and Christianity. But it is not a one-way bridge leading people back to the 'old' ways so that they can, to use another metaphor employed by Sundkler, pour new wine into old wine skins. Rather, as we saw, Pentecostalism provides a bridge over which it is possible to move back and forth and thereby to thematise modernity's ambivalences.

These findings may throw some new light on the relationship between religion and modernity in general and the popularity of Pentecostalism in particular outside the confines of the cases studied here. There are clear indications that Pentecostalism is on the increase all over Africa (Gifford 1993; Marshall 1991, 1993; Marshall-Fratani 1998; Maxwell 1998; Schoffeleers 1985; Ter Haar 1992; Van Dijk 1992, 1997) and that, in contrast to groups trying to come to terms with African tradition and to reconcile new and old ideas in order to develop a genuinely African synthesis, Pentecostals' main cry is to 'Make a complete break with the past'. This cry should certainly not be mistaken as a plea to simply forget and proceed. After all, in the course of the deliverance ritual, people are held to realise that they are in the grip of 'the past', which is represented as fearful, out of control, and that they can only gain control over their individual lives – and,

indeed, become modern individuals – by re-enacting in a ritual context all the links connecting them with that 'past' (i.e. their actual connections with, for instance, their extended family). In contrast to mission-church Christianity, Pentecostalism does not only speak modernity's language of progress and development but, at the same time, offers the possibility of approaching in the safe context of deliverance what people seek to leave behind but which still disturbs them. Although here matters of immediate relevance to people's lives in the present are falsely recast as belonging to an occult 'past', for those striving to run away from this 'past', and from all the social ties and obligations entailed, it is at least possible to express the ambivalences which accompany their wish to progress and 'become modern'. It is therefore worthwhile to consider that Pentecostalism's popularity in Africa may to some extent be due to the fact that it offers a ritual space and an imaginary language to deal with the demons which are cast out in the process of modernity's constitution, but which continue to haunt people the more they try to progress.

Certainly people's concern with the demons of the 'past' urges us to move beyond a non-dialectical conceptualisation of modernity in terms of mere progress, involving a continuous rupture with the past which still informs much social science discourse. Rather than assuming that modernity goes hand in hand with disenchantment, it is important to realise that the images of the Devil and demons, and the discursive and experiential possibilities that ensue, are an immediate product of the encounter between Western missionaries and African converts, not a relict of 'traditional' society. Modernity and enchantment should certainly not be conceptualised in terms of an opposition in which the latter is represented as a sign of 'backwardness'. As both belong together, the emergence of occult images at particular times and places should alert us to the fact that their study may reveal crucial contradictions, about which dominant, 'progressive' discourses keep silent, but which are at the heart of modernity and teach us something about the ambiguity of progress.