



*Afrika Zamani*, Nos 20-21, 2012-2013, pp. 107-130

© Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa  
& Association of African Historians 2014 (ISSN 0850-3079)

## Colonial Encounters: A Danish Planter in German East Africa

Marianne Rostgaard\* & Jane L. Parpart\*\*

*This article is a slightly revised version of a paper for the 21<sup>st</sup> International Congress of Historical Sciences, Amsterdam 22-28 August 2010, presented in the workshop: Colonial Empires in Africa and Cultural Hybridity. It benefited from comments and discussion in the workshop, so thanks are due both to the convenor, the discussant and participants in the workshop.*

### Abstract

In 1888, Christian Lautherborn set out to establish a cotton plantation for the German East Africa Company in Pangani, Tanzania. Little did he know that he was heading out at a dramatic moment, and would soon (literally) be caught in the crossfire of a war between the coastal Africans, the Zanzibar government and German imperialist interventions. While in Tanzania, Lautherborn wrote a series of letters, some published in a local Danish newspaper and some written privately to family. A substantial number of Christian Lautherborn's letters home were printed in a newspaper, *Vendsyssel Tidende*, as 'Letters from our correspondent in German East Africa'. This article will take its point of departure in the analysis of differences between what may be termed the 'public' and the 'private' discourses in the letters. Parts of the letters may be read as a contribution to the formation of a colonial discourse in Denmark/Europe. Here one finds a number of familiar stereotypes about Africa and Africans. On the other hand, some of the letters, often eyewitness accounts of incidents that diverge from the common colonial discourse, suggest very different interpretations. The letters may thus be read both as a way of negotiating African experiences and European expectations and also as evidence of cultural adaptation and hybridity.

The article will therefore comment on discrepancies between common stereotypes present in the letters about the African's childishness, laziness etc. and Christian Lautherborn's actions as a plantation manager and member of colonial society. A careful reading of Lautherborn's letters also reveals a number of contradictions between what he says and what he does.

---

\* Department of Culture and Global Studies, Aalborg University, Denmark. Email: rostgard@cgs.aau.dk

\*\* Institute for Gender and Development Studies, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago. Now teaching at University of Massachusetts Boston, Conflict Revolution, Human Security and Global Governance. Email: jane.parpart@umb.edu

## Résumé

En 1888, Christian Lautherborn entrepris de créer une plantation de coton pour la société allemande d'Afrique orientale à Pangani en Tanzanie. Il ne savait pas qu'il allait ainsi s'empêtrer dans un bourbier, et qu'il se trouverait plus tard (littéralement) pris entre les feux croisés d'une guerre qui opposait les Africains de la région du littoral, le gouvernement de Zanzibar et les forces impérialistes allemandes. Pendant qu'il vivait en Tanzanie, Lautherborn a écrit une série de lettres, dont certaines ont été publiées dans un journal local danois et d'autres lettres privées adressées à sa famille. Un nombre important des lettres que Christian Lautherborn a postées dans son pays d'origine ont été publiées dans le journal *Vendsyssel Tidende* sous la rubrique « Lettres de notre correspondant en Afrique orientale allemande. » Cet article bâtit son argumentaire autour de l'analyse des différences entre ce qu'on peut appeler le discours « public » et « privé » qui transparaît dans les lettres. Une partie des lettres peut être perçue comme une contribution à la formation d'un discours colonial au Danemark/Europe. Ici, on trouve un certain nombre de stéréotypes familiers sur l'Afrique et les Africains. D'autre part, certaines des lettres, souvent des témoignages d'incidents qui s'écartent du discours colonial commun et proposent des interprétations très différentes. Les lettres peuvent donc être lues à la fois comme un moyen de négocier les expériences africaines et les attentes européennes et aussi comme une preuve de l'adaptation et de la mixité culturelle. L'article se propose donc de commenter les écarts entre les stéréotypes populaires qui ponctuent les lettres au sujet de l'enfantillage, de la paresse de l'Africain, etc. et les actions de Christian Lautherborn en tant que gérant de plantations et membre de la société coloniale. Une lecture attentive des lettres de Lautherborn révèle également un certain nombre de contradictions entre ce qu'il dit et ce qu'il fait.

The point of departure of this article is a collection of letters written by the Danish planter Christian Lautherborn to his family home in Denmark during the years he worked for Deutsch Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft (DOAG) in German East Africa (GEA, today's Tanzania). Christian Lautherborn (CL) was born in 1859. In 1879, he migrated to the United States (Texas), hoping to earn enough money to return home and buy a farm of his own. We do not know exactly what motivated him to take on the job as plantation manager for DOAG and migrate to East Africa in 1888, but it seems he had some money problems in Texas and thought working in Tanzania would enable him to achieve his initial goals. Before migrating to the US he had been an agricultural trainee on two Danish manors. Agricultural trainees normally entered a career as land managers, working for the owner of a manor. He thus had an educational background as a land manager and during his year in Texas he had learned to grow cotton, which is not grown in Denmark. He thus had a proper education for a plantation manager. He also had strong language skills, teaching himself English while in the United States. He probably knew German from home as most educated Danes in the nineteenth century could read and speak German, and during his first years in East

Africa he also learned to speak Swahili, giving him unusual access to the local communities in GEA.

Most of his letters were written to his sister, who was married to the editor of a local Danish newspaper, *Vendsyssel Tidende* (VT). His brother in law, the newspaper's progressive editor, took the opportunity and printed a substantial number of Christian Lautherborn's letters in VT under the heading 'From our correspondent in East Africa'. It may seem strange that an editor of a Danish provincial newspaper in the 1890s would want to print the letters. However, David Livingstone's and especially H.M. Stanley's newspaper articles and books had spurred an interest for travel accounts from Africa among Danish readers in the late nineteenth century. That interest probably explains why CL's brother-in-law took the opportunity to stage CL as 'our correspondent in East Africa'. The letters were printed with minor alterations. In this way CL's letters became part of the public discourse on colonialism and particularly on Africa at the end of the nineteenth century in Denmark. Denmark did not count among colonial powers at the end of the nineteenth century, but as Europeans, Danes took a general interest in other European nations' colonial/imperial projects. As already mentioned Stanley was a well-known figure in Danish popular magazines and newspapers at that time. Reading CL's letters (and the letters printed as newspaper articles) it is fairly easy to find a number of common nineteenth century European stereotypes about Africa and the Blacks. But there is more to the letters than stereotypes. Read carefully, they reveal the story of how CL adapted to his new life as a plantation manager in Africa, and how he negotiated what was expected of him as a European and a plantation manager with his own experiences, shaped often by a Danish lens, but also deeply influenced by his experiences of daily life in German East Africa. Indeed, the letters reveal a gradual adaptation to life in Africa. In the beginning he still spoke about returning home some day, but he stayed on for 18 years (until his death) and in some of his last letters he states that he will never return as he has found a home in Africa. Some of his first letters are written in an H.M. Stanley style, where he talks about all the dangers that lurk on 'the dark continent' with snakes, scorpions, wild men etc., but the dangers gradually disappear and in his last years, they give place to an almost idyllic picture of life on his plantation, albeit one that recognised the many challenges facing agricultural producers in the region.

The letters most obviously serve as a source for CL's reflections on his experiences as a plantation manager and reveal a number of details about life on the plantation seen through the eyes of a plantation manager under pressure to discover new ways to profit from East African agriculture. The letters also provide glimpses into the social life of Europeans in the region,

particularly the details of get-togethers and holidays. But the letters are also important sources for knowledge about Lautherborn's African workers, both those struggling to adapt to life as plantation labourers, as well as the construction workers and caravan labourers he worked with during his stint building houses in Bagamoyo. Glimpses of family life emerge as well. The letters thus offer new insights into the colonial project, and its impact on both colonisers and colonised.

Colonial imperialism is normally seen as a Western project defined by the ideas and practices of the colonial/imperial power in authority in a given situation. Yet we argue that if you look closely at individuals participating in the colonial project, this assumption is complicated by a number of factors. Power and its execution is a many-faceted process of empowerment and disempowerment in this complex arena. The article will comment on discrepancies between common stereotypes present in the letters about the behaviour of Africans on the plantation and in other sites and Christian Lautherborn's actions as a plantation manager and member of colonial society. A careful reading of Christian Lautherborn's letters reveals a number of contradictions between what he says and what he does. The contradictions between discourse and actions raise some important questions about established notions about the power of discourse, and suggest a need to adopt a more nuanced view of the relationship between discourse and agency. For such an undertaking the concept of performativity (Butler 1997) may prove useful, along with Homi Bhabha's notion of mimicry (Bhabha 1994). Both Butler and Bhabha focus on enactment in the form of 'speech acts' or daily behaviour based on social norms or habits (performative acts). Performativity may in this sense equal 'doing', implying that it is through 'doing' that social relations and processes are constructed.<sup>1</sup> We use the term performativity because it calls attention to how agency contributes to cultural constructions of social positions. Besides, it seemed to us to be a useful term because it also calls attention to the way the public interprets or perceives a 'speech act' or a 'doing'. Butler focuses on how what she terms regulative discourses coerce subjects to perform in certain ways, but she also stresses that performativity (the way people act or perform in a specific situation) has the potential to subvert a regulative discourse. Homi Bhabha mainly focuses on the ambivalence inherent in colonial encounters. Mimicry refers to the way the colonial subject mimics positions assigned by the colonial discourse. Mimicry at one and the same time represents a resemblance and a menace/challenge to these positions as the colonial subject is always only partially appropriated and represented in the colonial discourse. Both Butler and Bhabha raise important questions about the relationship between discourse and agency. The complicating factor taking CL's letters as a point of departure is that his

actions are so to speak performed on two different scenes and the enactment related to at least two different discourses or cultural contexts, one basically Western and the other a local/African context. We will in this article focus particularly on the way CL's actions (what he actually does) are interpreted, both by CL himself through the way he relates incidents in his letters home, and by his African workers. We argue that it is not the individual act in itself that is either 'Western' or 'African' to use a rude, binary set of classification, but the way the individual acts become interpreted. What is especially interesting is that the same act may be interpreted in different ways and thus serve as an enactment in different discourses or cultural contexts. We will argue that, especially in a colonial context, it is essential to look at action both as an alternative and supplement to analysis of metropolitan colonial discourses. Without stretching the argument too far we will also argue that it is particularly useful to examine colonial actors who, like CL, do not come from the colonial power they are working for, because they can bring a different cultural and political value system to the colonial experience that offers the possibility of a different interpretation of colonial authority and practice, both by colonial authorities and by the subjects they encounter.

Whether the term 'cultural hybridity' is a useful term or not is not the main point of discussion in this article, although it gives certain labeled cultural transformation i.e. a process which eventually created a new kind of culture and social life on African soil. What we want to escape is, like many others, exactly a rude, binary classification of cultural signs (including actions) as either/or and instead point out that the colonial encounter created a complicated, fluid hybrid culture, that contained elements of 'Western' and 'African' but that in many ways can be seen as a local colonial culture of its own.

### **Hybridity and Performativity – taking on the Role as Plantation Manager**

One of the stereotypes widely held about Africans in this period was that they were ignorant and superstitious. They were 'wild men' whereas the Europeans were civilised and therefore superior. This superiority was used in the European colonial/imperial discourse to justify the colonial project and the Europeans' role as natural masters. The following examples from CL's letters tell us about how he learned to cope with the limits of rational explanations and the utility (or not) of Western ways and Western knowledge as a tool of power. We explore the way his own understanding of the world and colonial management techniques changed over time, particularly his adoption of local symbols of power and power hierarchies. The three examples

all revolve around sorcerers, superstition, scientific explanations, medicine and curing illnesses.

CL started work setting up a plantation to grow cotton when he arrived in Pangani, a coastal town in Northern Tanzania, in 1888. The work was soon interrupted and came to a complete stand still when the coastal uprising in 1888-1890 broke out. He fled to the German garrison in town and was part of the group rescued by the Zanbari. After a period in Bagamoyo, where he rebuilt much of the town, CL returned to Pangani in February 1891 to start rebuilding the plantation. The incident with the lunar eclipse takes place in June 1891. The incident with the sick young woman takes place around September 1891, and the encounter with a sorcerer/medicine man, related in a newspaper article in September 1892, took place in the first half of 1892.

#### *The Lunar Eclipse*

CL writes about superstition and the belief in evil spirits among his workers. Among other incidents he relates a story about a lunar eclipse. CL noticed that his workers one evening made a lot of noise, beating on drums and cans in order to drive away the evil spirits that wanted to swallow the moon. After the eclipse had taken place CL tried to educate his labourers by telling them about the solar system; how the earth rotates around the sun and how this may result in a lunar eclipse, using three balls to explain – probably the way he himself had had the solar system explained at home.

I did not, however, get very far, because none of them would believe that the earth rotates. If it did all the houses would fall off, and people could not stand on a ball, even if it was very big, when it started to move. They laughed greatly over my joke, as they called it. I saw them talk about it with each other different times during the day. They always laughed heartily over it, as if I had tried to play a joke on them. But it was actually too much to ask that they would believe it; it sounds so incredible.<sup>2</sup>

So CL gives up on his project to educate his workers by presenting a natural scientific explanation to the lunar eclipse. The episode in the letter juxtaposes the superstition among the natives with the enlightened, knowledgeable, superior Whites. Thus while sympathetic to his workers' reaction/disbelief, his sense of superiority over the superstitious Blacks remains intact. The letter may be read, or most probably was read home in Denmark, as a funny story of how the workers on the plantation reacted. It may, however, also be read as a story, although rendered with humour, where CL looks with self-conscious irony at his own performance, which turned out not to have achieved the wished-for effect.

### ***The Sick Young Woman***

The workers on the plantation tell CL that they will abandon their work and depart, because the plantation is haunted by the devil.<sup>3</sup> CL starts out trying to explain to the workers that evil spirits do not exist and that there is a rational explanation for the young woman's illness. People on the plantation get sick like people everywhere else and for the same reasons. CL, however, knows that he will be in serious trouble if the workers leave the plantation that he is trying to rebuild. So, once more, CL tries out Western rational explanations, hoping they would do away with the belief in evil spirits by enlightening the people. He tries to reason with his workers, but fails. Not succeeding, he decides to resort to a different tactic.

I then went to the people and explained that the woman became sick not with the Devil's help, but like all other people become sick here and everywhere else. They said that in other places they become well again, but here they always die, because the Devil is involved. I told them that the woman was not dead yet and might become well again. 'Yes maybe' they said, 'but if she dies, which is more likely, will you then believe that the Devil is here?' I said no that I did not believe in the Devil. 'But if the young woman gets well, will you give up your belief in the Devil and stay with me?'. Yes, they all agreed. 'Let's go to work then', I said, 'and if the woman dies we can have a meeting tomorrow.'<sup>4</sup>

CL does all he can to cure the young woman. He knows she has malaria and he also knows the cure – so he gives orders to the women taking care of the patient. He does not try to explain, he simply tells the women what to do. The quotation shows that the question of curing the young woman has turned into a kind of power struggle between CL and the evil spirits. His workers have agreed to reconsider leaving the plantation if the young woman is cured, so there is really a great deal at stake for CL. He succeeds in curing the young woman (among others by giving her quinine pills) and she returns to health. The incident in fact turns out to be an empowering act. CL shows his workers that he is in command in a double sense, by taking over command of the women taking care of the sick woman and by succeeding in curing her.

### ***CL Taking on the Role as Medicine Man***

A medicine man is frightening the workers on the plantation. He has threatened to transform himself into a lion, if the workers do not give him substantial gifts. He is chased from the plantation/the local community firstly by the German officers (the commanding officer 'had had him caned'), but the frightened plantation workers are not sure that this will be powerful enough. Alerted by loud screaming, CL sees one of his workers trying to drag the medicine man away. In order to calm the workers down again/end the conflict, CL presents himself as an authority on witchcraft. Thus, at least on the

surface, Lautherborn concedes to the notion that you can transform people by magic, rather than trying to convince the workers that they are being ignorant or superstitious. He explains his performance carefully:

Now we were in a mess. I therefore took on the air of an expert and demanded to see what he had in the pots hanging around his waist. He handed the whole arsenate of trash and incense to me. It was just red clay, mashed insects etc. I examined it solemnly, and after my examination I declared in a firm voice that with these items nobody would be able to transform himself into a lion only a pig. After that I took the man aside and gave him the good piece of advice to disappear as fast as he could to prevent any further unpleasantness. There was no need to tell him twice. Never in my life have I seen a man run as fast as this sorcerer. I am sure he set a record any sportsman would envy him.<sup>5</sup>

CL in both cases places his authority at stake. The workers on the plantation may not have discerned or differentiated between using quinine pills to cure malaria and staging oneself as medicine man, but to a European audience that would make a huge difference. Both incidents described in the printed letters, however, depict CL as the hero of the story. In the first incident because he understands and knows things the blacks do not know. This is a story about how western medicine and scientific knowledge provides an expected superior command of the world. In the other story CL acts not as a European but within the African cosmology. He, at least on the surface, acts as if he also believes in magic, albeit he states that the medicine man will not be able to transform himself into a lion, but only a pig, in this way ridiculing/disempowering the medicine man and empowering himself, but still accepting the possibility of such a transformation. So CL does not use the authority of a white man and a white man's knowledge, but rather enters into the performance of Africans who understand power and sorcery in particular ways. He as a person thus gains authority, but European ways and supposedly superior knowledge did not necessarily at the same time gain authority over African ways. Indeed, by engaging with African dialogues about sorcery and power within their own discourse and set of practices, he is conforming to and reinforcing African notions of power and spirituality. The power he gains from his performance is that of a chieftain or medicine man, rather than a colonial authority.

Presented to the public at home in a regional newspaper, CL relates the story about the sorcerer with irony. He thus allows himself to tell his audience that he does not personally believe in magic, it is only the superstitious Africans who do. The way he relates the story in the newspaper allows it to become a tale of how the white people are in control and command. By



using irony and telling the story as a story of his own mastery of the situation, CL presents the superstitious Africans, as to a certain degree, manipulated by his actions. And, of course, they are manipulated. On the other hand the story (unintentionally) questions the notions of the all-powerful whites and their civilising mission, given that it seems they sometimes had to resort to and give in to African notions of power. The story thus raises questions about the idea of the civilising project and the kind of mark the colonial project is making on African and colonial society.

CL did not rely on the kind of power presented by the guns and authority of the German soldiers/army. If he had, he might as an example have reported the incident to the German authorities and they could first have tried to subdue the workers and afterwards have chased the medicine man away. One of the reasons why he did not pursue this tactic may be because he was more or less the only white man on the plantation (apart from a German assistant or two). So he was in fact dependent on the Africans and wanted to avoid any kind of trouble between the authorities and the workers that might have led to the workers taking the law into their own hands, thus disturbing what for CL was the most important, the work on the plantation.

However, the examples show that we have to look much more deeply into how cultural encounters and cultural hybridity interplayed with power relations in colonial arenas. Power is about getting your way. Coercion and imposition are part of the power game. Empowering yourself to become an authority is part of that game too. Yet power is also about controlling discourses, knowledge and world views. What is interesting about the examples above is the way CL empowers himself using both European and African notions of power. If we look at his actions one might even argue that he mainly empowers himself using African notions of power? In the first incident he cures the young woman (that means he is a powerful man because he makes the disease disappear, although his ability to do that is based on his Western knowledge of medicine). In the second incident, he demonstrates his power through a symbolic act based on African systems of knowledge and power, where he demonstrates his ability to use shamans' tools as well as convincing the medicine man to flee the plantation because he has been ridiculed – i.e. his power has been superseded by a more powerful presence. So he practices power and we will argue that he does it in a way that is just as much African as it is European.

When CL presents himself to the European public through the newspaper articles, he on the other hand represents himself as a white man, who is in command because he, contrary to the Africans, can grasp and see through the situation. It thereby becomes a story about white supremacy where the Africans are staged in their roles as 'wild' people (superstitious, acting in

counterproductive ways/they might kill the medicine man to be sure he does not harm them). What is most remarkable is perhaps that the performance or enactment (CL's performance as medicine man) can be read in two different contexts with two different results. Even more interestingly, CL in a seamless way seems to be able to move between the two worlds/publics in which his performance is presented to or played out, one being the local setting with all its complexities, the other as a story in a newspaper article at home.

There is another incident where CL takes advantage of local notions of power and status to get his way. In 1889, during the coastal uprising, he found himself serving as a non-commissioned officer. It was his job to train recruits in the hastily collected and very diverse army consisting of locals, but also Zulus and Somalis among others. CL remarks that the Somalis look different from other 'Negroes' – their head has a different shape and their bodies are slender, thus indirectly arguing that the Somalis are closer to Europeans and racially superior to other Africans according to European thinking about racial differences at the time. He remarks that the Somali women are some of the most beautiful women he has ever seen. CL then goes on to say, that the Somalis also consider themselves to be superior to other Negroes and that

they have, in all contexts, a sense of honour, which is very rare among the Blacks. I remember, for example, one morning a pair of them had come late to work, and I, in quite clear words, made them understand that they were to arrive on time just like the others. One of them cast his head back and looked amazed at me, and said: 'You speak to us just like to the other Negroes (he meant the men from the unyamwezi-caravan, whom I have written about before); we are Somalis and belong to a great tribe and are not slave people like the others, but used to good treatment and want that to be taken into consideration.' I answered that if he wanted to be better treated than the others, he would have to earn it. I did not care that he belonged to a great tribe. When he did not do his job, he would have to accept being treated like the other Negroes. He left without a word, but I have received more loving looks than the one he sent me upon departure. Consequently, however, they both came to work on time every day, since they did not want the other Negroes to believe they were treated the same way as them.<sup>6</sup>

Once more, according to CL's rendering of the event, he gets his way; he makes the Somalis behave as proper Western workers. However, the Somalis agree to his standard, not because they accept CL's north-western, Protestant reasoning about the importance of being punctual and earning better treatment through good work, but rather because they do not want to be ordered about and scolded in front of the other workers (soldiers). They want respectful

treatment, and are smart enough to figure out how to achieve that. None of the parties in fact give in to the norms of the other. They keep acting according to their own value systems. Even so the actions of the Somalis now correspond with CL's wishes and demands and he therefore treats them with what the Somalis think of as proper respect (not ordering them about and scolding them in front of the other workers, including local slaves).<sup>7</sup> The example is offered here as yet another illustration of how enactment (doing) makes it possible to move between and relate to two cultures (discourses) simultaneously because the same act can be interpreted differently and carried out with different intentions. As an example of cultural hybridity, we may perhaps qualify the notion of cultural hybridity and add that it should not only be used as a way of thinking about hybrid forms of culture (creolization), but also in terms of enactments that may function as a go-between or bridge two different cultures.

### **Cultural Hybridity as Creolization: Aadaptation of African Practices**

In CL's letters it is also possible to find examples of how he adopted or incorporated African ways of doing things when it comes to more mundane matters.

The first example is from 1891 when CL returned to the plantation near Pangani and started once more planting cotton.

He remarks that the fields could have been ploughed with 'four strong Danish horses', but that the Indian oxen he uses on the plantation to plough fields cannot pull the plough through the thick grass that has grown over the fields in the three years they have been lying fallow. CL therefore adopts a local method for dealing with this problem, first setting fire to the grass to clear the fields.

Thereafter I put 300 Nyamwezi<sup>8</sup> to work each equipped with a hoe, and they chopped all the grass roots away and loosened the earth. The next day the roots, when they were dry, were gathered up and burned. Bushes and trees were chopped down and the roots dug out and in a short time, I had a dry, clean piece of land. Now I set six Indian oxen to work with three heavy English harrows and harrowed all the land, after the Blacks had chopped away all the grass and bushes. In six weeks I had 65 acres of land as clear and smooth as a field at home and then began to plant cotton.

CL then goes on to relate how cotton is planted in Texas and how he found an 'African' way of doing that too.<sup>9</sup>

CL has also noticed that the locals used clay jars for storing water, and he finds out that it is a good way of cooling drinking water. He altogether takes

a keen interest in providing clean, cold drinking water. More examples could be offered e.g., CL's explanation of building techniques that also de+9 into a mix of local and European techniques. In short CL has a clear idea of what he wants and uses his eyes and ears to find local solutions. He is a practical man (hence the book's title) who first and foremost looks at the ends, not the means of achieving them. The way he farms thus ended up being a sum of his practical experiences from Denmark, the US and East Africa. In short, his agricultural techniques and practices are an example of practical, cultural hybridity, and this approach is the basis of much of his success (and he was a success as a plantation manager). Given his training, with its insistence on the superiority of Western scientific agricultural techniques, Lautherborn's adaptability and openness demonstrates the possibilities of moving beyond such assumptions when placed in foreign situations with an open mind, but also that the criteria of 'success' (in economic terms) takes precedence over cultural norms. Thus CL demonstrates the way the need to succeed in colonial production sometimes inspired a willingness to adapt to local conditions and to use local knowledge where it made a difference. Moreover, CL's behaviour suggests that over time, this process often inspired hybrid agricultural practices and ways of thinking and talking about agriculture in a colonial setting.

### ***Socialising/being Part of a Mixed Community***

CL's frame of reference when it comes to value judgements and discussion of morals and ethics seems, through all the years, to have been his family at home. In this sense he remains an expatriate. He discusses among other things religion, socialism and what a fair pay for work is, education etc. with his sister at home. His published letters are careful to express opinions on both the German and British presence in East Africa. A more open critique of the colonial powers is only found in the private letters whereas he in the published letters sometimes defends the German colonial projects that are frequently criticized in the Danish newspapers and contrasted to the British imperialists.<sup>10</sup> In these cases CL sides with his employers in DOAG and GEA. His private letters also reveal some class-based critiques in the sense that he juxtaposes himself as the sensible, hard-working middle-class manager vis-a-vis the colonial elite, including the upper management of DOAG, who are presented as people of aristocratic origin addicted to a more leisurely [lazy], aristocratic way of life.

Apart from a German assistant or two, CL was the only white man on the plantation. However, in his social life he was part of the white or European community in the area around Pangani. It consisted of German officers and civil servants in the German colonial administration and a diverse group of

other Europeans on the coast, along with a few people of colour. He entertained guests in the style of a Danish/European land manager or landowner,<sup>11</sup> and enjoyed doing so. He prided himself on his ability to provide guests with excellent food and drink as well as a good time, and sent home pictures demonstrating his hosting skills. We know that CL translated a Danish cookbook he obviously must have brought with him to East Africa into Swahili and taught his Black cook how to make the dishes in the Danish cookbook. Besides entertaining guests at European-style dinner parties, CL relates of outings and hunting-parties.<sup>12</sup> The European community on the coast was basically a male community. He relates, however, also about a Viennese family as friends, and he tells about playing tennis together with the family members, including an adopted African daughter who seems to have been readily accepted in the community (including on the tennis court).

CL is definitely not uncritical of the other Europeans. Part of his criticism is related to lifestyle and especially that they do not grow vegetables, protect their water supplies from contamination or have a hen-house etc. When it comes to household matters, CL seems to have mixed a Danish farmer/landowner lifestyle with an African one. He among other things criticizes the other Europeans for buying their meat in the market (where the meat may be bad/is of unknown origin – he notes that the Africans do not eat meat like this, only the Europeans do). He also criticizes the local Europeans for drinking too much alcohol, for ignoring local knowledge about or just not bothering to dig good, deep wells and consequently adopting an unhealthy lifestyle.

Besides the official social life – dinners with German officers present etc. – CL also had what he terms personal friends. One was a French Father at the French mission station, who was a favourite drinking companion. In another letter he mentions, ‘My friend, a Portuguese and a Negro<sup>13</sup> was one of those types of people one seldom meets’.<sup>14</sup> CL then goes on to tell the story about how a boat turned over and his friend (the local postmaster) drowned. It may be a personal trait of CL’s that he also counted Africans and people of mixed origin among his friends. Being friends with the locals is mainly mentioned in passing – never highlighted and never told in detail as the event with the Europeans at the dinner party at his plantation - most probably because he, in his letters home, aimed to demonstrate his social successes, like the dinner party where he performed the role of land manager and shows off as the perfect host to the German superiors. Yet socialising with the locals clearly made up a lot of his life and was important to him both for company and for companionship. He mourned the loss of this friend the postmaster, lauded him as an exemplary man: ‘I do not believe that he

had many external advantages, but he was open and honest, courageous, truthful and loyal. These are traits one seldom meets', suggesting that local friendships were indeed an important part of his life, albeit one that he might not write home about in detail.

CL, of course also takes part in occasions or more formal festive get-togethers with the Africans. He tells in a letter of his return from a trip home (he went home for six months at the end of every four-year contract (1892, 1896, 1900 and 1903).

At the plantation I was received with jubilation by my Negroes, and I, naturally, had to go out with something good for them to eat – rice and a couple of goats. [...] The entire village of Bweni paid me a visit the other day with both of the chiefs with all of their wives and slaves, about 300 men in all I believe. They had brought music and performed a dance with singing in the middle of the garden. 'Bwana maleté is here again from Europe. He cleans his cotton with steam now. He himself is as strong as a steam engine, because he has eaten his mother's good food. She has not seen him for many years, and therefore, gave him the best she had. But it is good that he is strong, because he uses his strength to work and not to beat the Black people. We hope that he may be long among us.' When the dance was finished, I passed out a couple of cases of mineral water among them. Which they gladly drank. To the chiefs I gave the clothes I had brought, which pleased them greatly.<sup>15</sup>

Towards his workers and the local community around the plantation CL acts as a chief and is received as a chief. Over the years, he seems to become increasingly comfortable with this.

As examples of cultural hybridity we may conclude that on many levels CL acts according to local (i.e. East African) norms and customs. He entertains people from the local European community in a European manner, whereas the workers on the plantation and in the village of Bweni are treated according to African norms and practices. Yet there is an aspect of hybridity in both cases. The European community in Pangani adapted many local practices, including more mixed social groups, such as the Portuguese mailman (his friend, 'the Portuguese and a Negro') and the Viennese family. CL's dinner parties appear European, but benefit from local produce, knowledge and practices. His behaviour with the workers and local African chiefs adapts to African notions of hospitality and social obligations, but may also reflect some of the practices of Danish land managers, who were expected to provide workers with rewards, such as arranging a harvest festival and providing food and drink for the celebration. Danish land managers were also expected to deal with the Lord of the Manor and to entertain on a more formal scale (albeit not at the level experienced by CL in Tanzania). Consequently, although

the settings were very different, there are some likenesses too between being a land manager at home and plantation manager in East Africa, which no doubt influenced CL's adaptation to life in East Africa.

### **Hybridity and Mimicry – Africans' Relations/adaptations to the Colonial Presence**

CL's letters are written by a European and of course do not render the African experience with the Africans' own words and the way the Africans experienced their meeting with the Whites. On the other hand letters like CL's are one of the few sources where the African experience and their explanations of it are at least retold. The letters are particularly important because CL knew Swahili, which most workers spoke, and thus could both converse with them as well as overhear their private conversations. CL provides numerous examples of how the Africans he encountered tried to make sense of the Europeans and their doings – trying to figure out why the Europeans have come to East Africa and why they behave the way they do. As he explains in a letter:

In their language we are called Mzungu. This does not only mean European but also 'the incomprehensible'. The Negroes absolutely do not understand us. They often say 'What does he really want here, he does not trade in slaves, he doesn't keep a harem,<sup>16</sup> he is not a Moslem, he does not work like us, but everything has to go quickly, and, when it doesn't he becomes angry, but why? What he doesn't finish today, he can always finish tomorrow. Why so much worrying about one day?! After all we live so many days that we cannot count them. And why work so much? When we die we cannot take it with us. Planting for our children is stupid. It is much better that they work just like us. They then become much better people. When a person has enough to live without working he usually becomes a bad person. No, Europeans are strange people. But they are clever, much cleverer than the Arabs, that is certain.' That is the Negroes' idea about us.<sup>17</sup>

One wonders if this quote reflects some of his own queries about European work habits, although CL in many ways seems to have incorporated a protestant work ethic.

In a newspaper article titled 'Life of the people in East Africa', CL describes the evening entertainment among his workers:

The Blacks gather in homely cosiness and sit under the roofs of their huts and chat while the water pipe chuckles and the cigarettes send their blue smoke out in the quiet of the evening. What occupies them, besides the episodes of the day, are tales about their travels. Many have travelled widely around the 'dark continent' - more of them have even travelled across Africa.<sup>18</sup>

We may note, that in this passage CL in fact questions the European notion of being the discoverers of the interior of Africa; more Africans have done what Stanley became so famous for – namely to be the first (white) man to cross Africa from East to West, starting in Tanzania, ending in Congo.

CL goes on to tell about how some of the objects the Europeans use or have amaze the Blacks.

It was an object of special sensation when one day they had seen a European take out his false teeth. One of them told, the others listening breathlessly, that one of the whites were a sorcerer who could take out his teeth and hold them in his hand. He added that he would willingly give one month's pay to do the same (ibid.).

The most interesting part, however, is the passage where CL writes about how the Africans re-enact events as part of the evening entertainment:

It is funny to sneak up on them and listen to what occupies them. They have a rare talent for apt comparisons and to catch the character of a man in a nickname. [...] It is even better, though, when the Blacks as is the custom here, dramatise their critique. Some of them will mock people who do not speak Swahili well. There are two parts. One plays the Negro, the other plays the European, who blabber away in a funny mix of bad Swahili and broken German. The audience rolls over, screaming with laughter.[...] One day a hot-tempered European forgot himself and hit one of the Blacks. In the evening he could see the whole scene re-enacted in the workers' circle as one of them, with agitated gestures, rushed himself at one of the others and they ended up rolling around the dirt. It all looked so funny that the hot-tempered man, who in fact is quite good-natured, started to laugh too, and from then on strained [sic] himself in order not to become part of the evening entertainment again. The critique may sometimes aim at one of the men from the Black community. [...] The object of the native's joking, though, is first and foremost the Europeans. One of the Blacks had been to Zanzibar and I saw him first perform the Frenchman, bowing, gesturing, strutting around talking; soon after he straddled like an English sailor [...] One day I heard one 'Hurrah' after the other. I snuck up on them and saw the re-enactment of a European dinner party the Europeans had held the day before. They sat in two long rows around the table; every moment one or the other stood up, gave a speech, then the others stood up and they toasted, touching their coconut shells with each other. Whereafter, giggling, they would shout their 'Hurrahs' just as strongly and as an animated European party could have done (ibid.).

According to CL's newspaper article, the re-enactment and mimicry is used for two things. It is a way of criticising unjust behaviour or any other kind of behaviour which is deemed socially unacceptable by the Black community, or it is an opportunity to mimic certain kinds of stereotypical behaviour



among the Europeans that the Africans find funny (or strange) – as in the mimicry of a European dinner party. Mimicry, according to Homi Bhabha,<sup>19</sup> is not just copying, but also subversive in that it becomes a way of dealing with and even criticizing acts by the colonial authorities as well as potentially a way of taking on some of that power. It disempowers the Europeans in the sense that they are ridiculed – or part of their behaviour is. The re-enactment and the mimicry in the example above, according to CL, even seem to have had that effect. It is a kind of reverse of the example with the Somali soldiers. The European (one of the assistants on the plantation) seems to have overheard/seen the performance by accident (?), but it is quite likely that the workers staged the performance for his benefit/education. It appears that CL and his assistant may have on occasion enjoyed this type of evening entertainment, not officially invited, and thus not officially present, but it seems unlikely that the workers on the plantation were unaware of this practice by the manager(s). It does not sound as if they were sneaking up on the Africans, but rather that the Africans deliberately used the opportunity (his presence) to criticise the assistant and even to change his behaviour. Indeed, they succeed as afterwards he at least strains himself to avoid their critique. It is interesting that the Black community on the plantation seems to have used the opportunity to come up with a critique that would probably have been unacceptable in any more direct form. Thus mimicry in this case provided a means for seemingly powerless Blacks to air their views on behaviour of whites that they regarded as unacceptable. So both in a more general sense and in a very specific way mimicry and enactment is used to empower the Blacks by criticising the Europeans and through mimicry to undermine the authority of the whites and thus make them less formidable. The mimicry is also used by the Africans to try to make sense of the Europeans and to understand what they are doing in Africa. It is also a mechanism for expressing admiration, especially towards some of the objects that the Europeans have brought with them, and the hard work of some Europeans including CL, while at the same time providing a platform for both critiquing some of their behaviour and also performing, taking on and translating what they see into something that makes sense in their own world. Thus they are not only making fun and criticizing some European practices, they are also performing and thus practicing new ways of organizing life.

CL's letters also contain examples of Africans adapting to and transforming European ways of doing things. In a letter dated November, 1891,<sup>20</sup> CL relates that the Blacks at first were afraid to drive with the oxen (ploughing the fields etc.), but gradually learned. Once the African drivers mastered the skill, they began to consider new ways to negotiate their wages.

When they realised they could do their work fairly well, they came to me and asked for an increase in their wages. They said that they now did their work much “better than the other”. ‘With the six oxen we clean more land than fifty men with their hoes, and we should therefore also earn more. If we did not clean with the oxen, you would have to give a lot of money to others to keep everything clean’. I thought, however, that it was the oxen that pulled the cultivator and did most of the work, while they had little work behind them. Actually I should pay them less, since they did not have it nearly so hard as the people who worked with the hoes. They did not agree with this, but thought it was probably better that everything remained as before (ibid.).

While CL’s rendition demonstrates his cleverness at deflecting their demands, the letter also reveals the adoption of new skills and expectations. Besides having learned how to drive with the oxen, the Africans have also learned that wages are something that can be bargained (although CL outsmarts them in this specific bargain). This knowledge has implications for future practice and demonstrates the on-going learning curve being taken on by many of his workers. This story highlights the way both Whites (CL) adjusted to African ways, and forms of cultural hybridity where CL mixes African ways with diverse European (including Danish) practices. We also have examples of Africans adjusting (and not adjusting) to a changing work environment.

One last example is another incident from the years when CL was a non-commissioned officer during the coastal uprising, not with Somalis, but with the Zulus, who, according to CL, were renowned for their courage and skills as warriors:

When they first arrived, they did not have a clue about what it meant to be a soldier or about civilisation either. Their clothing was little and loose, like our first parents after the Fall. Instead of a fig leaf, however, they hung a piece of skin, cut into a thin fringe and tied about the loins. They have big holes in their ears, which they use for hanging small necessities. In one ear they have their snuff in a dried leaf. In the other they have a toothbrush, not one like the one we civilised people use, but a short, green branch of a hardwood tree, of which one end is chewed into fine threads so that it resembles a painter’s brush. [...] When they put their uniforms on, it was a laugh to watch. The uniform consisted of short pants and short-sleeved shirts. It was undoubtedly the most difficult work in their lives. It took over an hour before they learned to put on the two pieces of clothing. Some used the shirts as pants, others the pants as shirts. [...] The woolly mop, which have been, for so many years sticking out to all sides, would not in a few minutes fall in place for a cap. The stiff braids were pulled into the sides of the cap and the cap put on, but the slightest movement freed them from their captivity, and they flew up in the air. [...] The next day they sat on the

streets and cut the braids off of each other, so that they could get the cap on. They said they wanted to look like the other soldiers. [...] They now shoot no worse than the other Black soldiers. They become more civilised every day. Now, when they walk by, instead of snuff and a toothbrush, they have a cigar in one ear and a bullet in the other. They say it takes a longer time to get the bullet from the bag than from the ear. They also say that if Bushiri<sup>21</sup> comes, they will be prepared. Furthermore they are brave and proud. They say: We are wild men and have never known about soldiering, but it will not be long before we can do as much as the others', and they do all they can and will, with time, become good soldiers.

Apart from the equations of soldiering and civilisation, which both sides seemed to take with little question, this is an interesting example of adaptation and cultural hybridity. Once more it is also a passage that back in Denmark/Europe could be read as a confirmation of European stereotypes – the Zulus do not know how to put on European clothes, which of course show how uncivilised they are. On the other hand the letter challenges such an interpretation by acknowledging that the Zulu soldiers are quite conscious of the possibilities for taking on Western practices of soldiering. Moreover, CL admires and applauds their success in adapting to Western practices, as well as their own innovations, such as carrying the bullets in their ears.

The workers on CL's plantation were, as mentioned, mainly Nyamwezi - caravan people from central Tanzania. The caravans carrying goods from the interior out to the coast and vice versa were organised by the chiefs who spent the time on the coast trading, while the ordinary caravan people in the meantime looked for casual work to keep them fed before they returned with the caravan to the interior. CL started employing some of the caravan people as casual workers and ended up with the Nyamwezi being employed the year round on the plantation, moving their families out to the coast as well. This demonstrates the ability of local people to evaluate plantation managers and to take up options that they believe will be in their best interest. CL had started employing the Nyamwezi when he participated in the rebuilding of Bagamoyo in 1890 after the coastal uprising. In March 1891, when he was ordered to return to his plantation, he asked if any of the workers wished to go with him. Many more than needed volunteered.<sup>22</sup> CL in his letters never goes into detail about this, but it seems that the Nyamwezi on the plantation chose to work with him rather than the constant travel and dangers of caravan labour. CL and other Europeans on the coast had to attract people to their plantations – there was no forced labour in GEA. And many German plantation managers had constant problems obtaining sufficient labour. It is a testament to CL's management style that he rarely suffered a labour shortage. While the Germans accused him of being soft on his workers,

his labour practices worked and his workforce, including the Nyamwezi, adjusted both to becoming settled instead of constant travelling and to wage labour. He describes their lives on the plantation:

At the market place people buy maize, mtama, sweet potatoes, muhogo, mamaensje, mboya, peas, beans and dessert is a huge amount of fruit. At sundown one sees them sitting in small groups around a huge plate of cooked vegetables. When they are finished with that they will begin on the fruit. They dance in the evening and the night until midnight, when all lay their heads down on their beds.

Yes! It is going well on the plantation now.<sup>23</sup>

This description of Saturdays and thus a weekend, apart from the dancing stopping precisely at midnight (it must have been something CL had ordered and made his workers conform to), could be a description of life in many African villages.

### Conclusion

Two conclusions may be drawn from CL's letters. The Europeans (the Whites) were not as all powerful as they have often been seen. They had to find ways to transcend their own understanding of what was 'European' and what was 'African' in their daily work in order to survive in an African context. They used this hybridity on the one hand to further their own aims (the colonial project), but could only do so if what they were trying to achieve also fitted in with parts of the Africans' own agendas. Thus, the colonial experience seen through CL's letters reveals a more complex set of power relations than normally assumed.

We tend to look at the ideologies and the grand colonial schemes, and let there be no doubt that the grand scheme of the colonial project was a European imposition on local life. On the other hand the Europeans had to adapt to local circumstances and in their actions find ways to do things that often mixed European and African practices. In fact the letters demonstrate the many ways colonial life was characterised by a process of mutual adaptation, albeit of course in a situation with asymmetrical power relations.

If we look at the connections between the public at home and the metropolitan colonial discourse and local colonial life, a connection which we believe is of importance, then the stories related to the public at home seem to confirm the Western/European outlook on the world with its binaries of civilised-wild/primitive; but when it comes to doing the examples in the letters demonstrate how frequently the Europeans had to adapt in order to make themselves heard/understood by the Africans. The stories are told to the public at home in a way that will not destabilize accepted colonial/imperial

ideology, but they do actually disturb assumptions about the way the Africans and Europeans act in the colonial context. This is, however, never admitted in the letters home.

African hybridity demonstrates the many ways Africans sought to come to terms with and transform the colonial/imperial project to fit their agendas. Especially the mimicry (the evening entertainment) reveals very interesting cracks in the supposedly set hierarchies of colonial power. The evening entertainment and other stories of subversion and mimicry provide insight into the many ways the colonial project was interpreted and questioned by colonial 'subjects'. The letters demonstrate the way the colonial project's political agenda and official discourse rarely fully covers the social realities on the ground. They reveal the limits of colonial power faced with distances and the complexities of different localities, cultural practices and resistances.

Ilan Kapoor's reading of Homi Bhabha (2008) may be illuminating in this context. According to Kapoor, Bhabha's notions of hybridity and mimicry should not be interpreted as explicit political strategies. Still according to Kapoor, Bhabha seeks to de-couple enactment/agency and intentions stating that an act should not only be read as the sign of an explicit intention (where we try to deduct an intention from the act) and thus as firmly linked to a regulative discourse. Instead Bhabha, according to Kapoor, suggests that we simply read an act as an act, nothing more, nothing less. First and foremost the act will always in itself transform/create a situation that may destabilize the colonial power structure (or sustain it) depending on its interpretation. In short what we should avoid is to read examples of hybridization and mimicry into a scheme of resistance/subjugation and instead look at the act in itself and what it creates. The act/any kind of enactment is in itself an act of transformation/creation that may subvert or change a project without necessarily being intended to do so. These reflections seem very relevant to the letters of Christian Lautherborn.

Kapoor also discusses the power of discourse, based on a reading of Bhabha. Kapoor states that a reading of Bhabha may suggest that even though each and every agent has to stay within a certain discourse or scheme (the colonial project) – Kapoor cites Bhabha for stating that it is not possible to act from a position 'outside' the 'scheme' or 'discourse' – but even so the colonial project may be undermined from within, by mimicry and the way an act is interpreted and reacted to. This adds a quite new facet to discourse theory and the notion that it is not possible to 'escape' discourse. Kapoor, citing Bhabha, will agree to that, but with the important qualification of the possible empowerment/disempowerment of enactment and mimicry. Another point in introducing Kapoor is that besides the dichotomy resistance/subjugation, concepts related to politics, and pointed out by Kapoor as a

possible analytical pitfall that may trivialize the analysis of the colonial past, we may also, if we follow Kapoor, escape another common analytical pitfall, to install a dichotomy between tradition and modernity' The description of how the Africans act in the quotes above demonstrates how elements of tradition and modernity mixed in an immediate, spontaneous manner.

We would like to take the argument a little further. What we find intriguing, based on a reading of CL's letters, is the fact that an act seems to be able to be read into different discourses/cultural settings. The incident with the Somali soldiers and also the incident with the sorcerer that was chased away open up the possibility that a specific act can be understood in different ways, allowing the parties involved to achieve their sometimes contradictory goals at the same time, at least temporarily. If we go along with the argument based on Kapoor's reading of Bhabha, we may add that it is true that it was not possible to take on a position from outside the colonial project; but it is important to acknowledge that when it comes to power games it is possible to think outside the binary of resistance/subjugation and traditional/modern. In this sense the colonial system was not necessarily one all-encompassing endeavour. If it is possible for an act to be meaningful at one and the same time within two different contexts, cultural hybridity may also consist in different agents being able to transgress and simultaneously move/act within different contexts at one and the same time, because an act may be interpreted in different ways, which allows for this kind of openness or situatedness. It points in a very specific way to the fact that the colonial project was much more fragile and porous than often thought. Hence the destabilization of the colonial project – or perhaps more accurately: it was never stabilized.

Christian Lautherborn's letters are in some ways unique, but we are convinced that if we start looking for letters like these, more will be found in archives and libraries throughout Europe. We may for too long have relied too heavily on official sources for colonial history and focused too much on political history, whereas the social and cultural aspects of colonial history to a certain degree may have been neglected. CL was part of a colonial project, he knew so and in between he also defended it in letters home. On the other hand his success was dependent on his skills in cultural hybridization. This was not a new experience for the Africans, particularly the people on the coast of East Africa and the workers on the plantation, who had long understood the Arabs on the coast as cultural hybrids, and most likely interpreted the Europeans as a new kind of 'Arab'. The Arabs had been on the coast as masters for a long time and the coastal area had a long history of cultural hybridization adopting to shifting circumstances. This, no doubt influenced the way the different coastal peoples understood and interacted with their latest colonial 'masters'.

The story of Christian Lautherborn and his cotton plantation is one among many little pieces that may contribute to a colonial history where we, to cite Frederick Cooper, acknowledge that the colonial state and various colonial projects were 'less clear in their objectives and less capable of realizing them in practice' (2008). Our examination into the daily processes where colonial power relations were performed and enacted, and the many hybrid forms of power relations that came into being, affirms Cooper's point. Further work with sources such as the letters of Christian Lautherborn is needed in order both to understand the colonial realities and write a more nuanced and balanced story of the colonial period.

### Notes

1. We are aware that this usage of the concept 'performativity' may not strictly be within the confinements of Judith Butler's theory of 'performativity' and that we may have transgressed the borderline into symbolic interactionist sociological analysis and Erving Goffman's concept of performance which anyway is one of Judith Butler's inspirations.
2. Letter 13/11/1891 (also printed in VT), *The Practical Imperialist*, Parpart and Rostgaard (2006) pp. 147-148.
3. CL sometimes uses the phrase 'the devil' instead of evil spirits in letters home, the devil was a recognized reality in Denmark, but not evil spirits. In another letter to his sister and brother-in-law, who both belonged to Danish, middle-class, progressive circles, CL equates more orthodox varieties of Christianity (with a belief in the devil) with African belief in evil spirits. Both beliefs/religions were according to CL equally superstitious.
4. Letter 13/11/1891, newspaper article 26/01/1892, in *The Practical Imperialist*, p. 144.
5. Newspaper article 29/09/1892, *The Practical Imperialist*, p. 154.
6. Letter, July 24, 1889 (not printed as newspaper article) *The Practical Imperialist*, pp. 87-88.
7. It was illegal for colonial producers to have slaves in the 1880s, but local Arabs and Indian plantation owners on the East African coast still had slaves.
8. The workers on CL's plantation were mainly Nyamwezi. The Nyamwezi had for many years before the German's came to East Africa earned their living as caravan people/tradesmen carrying goods (mainly elephant tusks/ivory) from the interior out to the coast once a year.
9. Letter 13/11/1891 (printed as newspaper article) *The Practical Imperialist*, pp. 141-142.
10. The two Schleswigian wars between Denmark and Germany in the 19th century had cast Germans as the eternal villains in Danish public debate, whereas the British normally were classified as friends (Britain had as a great power come to the rescue of Denmark in the first Schleswigian war) and the British were consequently benevolent people.
11. See e.g. Letter October, 8, 1891. *The Practical Imperialist* pp. 137-38.
12. *The Practical Imperialist*, p. 197 as an example.

13. Most probably a man of mixed origin, people of mixed origin was not uncommon on the coast of East Africa.
14. Letter, June 27 1897 (not printed as newspaper article), *The Practical Imperialist*, p. 192.
15. Letter, November 25 1892 (printed as newspaper article), *The practical Imperialist*, p. 156.
16. CL/the Africans are here comparing the Europeans to the Arabs that had been on the coast for many years and that the Africans therefore were accustomed to.
17. Letter, July 24 1889 (not printed as newspaper article), *The Practical Imperialist*, pp. 89-90.
18. *Vendsyssel Tidende*, September 16, 1892. Probably from the outset written as a newspaper article (and not a letter CL's brother in law converted into a newspaper article) during CL's home-leave in summer/fall 1892.
19. Homi K. Bhabha, 'On mimicry and man: The ambivalence of colonial discourse' in Bhabha (1994).
20. Also printed as newspaper article, *The Practical Imperialist* pp. 146-147.
21. Bushiri bin Salim was one of the leaders of the coastal uprising against the German imperialists in 1888-1890. Bushiri belonged to the Shirazi elite on the East African coast. The Shirazi elite were people of mixed African and Arab decent, *The Practical Imperialist*, "Chapter Two, The African Context", pp. 28 – 31.
22. Letter March 1, 1891 (also printed as newspaper article), *The Practical Imperialist* p. 123, ' [...]that I only would use 50 men to build the new buildings [the plantation buildings]. The others I could not use, because they required too high a wage. Then one of the workers stepped forward and said: 'Master you have been our father for over two years, and, when you leave, your children will go with you. When you say you cannot give us so high a wage as before we will work for less. If you won't take us with you, we will go to you; we know where you are going.'
23. *The Practical Imperialist*, p. 219, Letter August 27, 1904 (not printed as newspaper article).

## References

- Bhabha, H.K., 1994, 'Of mimicry and man: The ambivalence of colonial discourse', in Homi, K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, Routledge.
- Butler, J., 1997, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*, New York and London: Routledge.
- Cooper, F., 2008, 'Possibility and constraint: African Independence in Historical Perspective', *Journal of African History*, 49, pp. 167-96.
- Kapoor, I., 2008, 'Bend it like Bhabha. Hybridity and political strategy', in Ilan Kapoor, *The Postcolonial Politics of Development*, New York and London: Routledge.
- Parpart, J.L. and Rostgaard M., 2006, *The Practical Imperialist. Letters from a Danish Planter in German East Africa 1888 – 1906*, Sources for African History, Vol. 4, Brill Academic Publishers.