Portable Texts
Bunyan, Translation, and Transnationality

On 31 October 1847, the *John Williams*, a ship of the London Missionary Society (LMS), left Gravesend for the Pacific Islands from whence it had come. Its cargo included five thousand Bibles and four thousand copies of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in Tahitian.[1] Like other such mission ships, the *John Williams* had been funded by the pennies and shillings of Sunday school subscriptions and had become a huge media spectacle. It was but one of the many international propaganda exercises at which mission organizations excelled.[2]

This picture of *The Pilgrim's Progress* as part of an international web is an appropriate one. Written in the wake of the English Revolution, the Puritan classic had spread across the Protestant Atlantic as its persecuted readers fled (or were transported) to Europe, North America, and the Caribbean. Its next major international fillip came courtesy of the Protestant mission movement, whose adherents, recruited from across the Atlantic, propagated their most beloved book wherever they went. By the late 1700s, it had reached India and by the early 1800s, Africa. Yet, some two hundred years later, this avowedly international image of *The Pilgrim's Progress* has been turned inside out. Once a book of the world, it has become a book of England. Today Bunyan is remembered as a supremely English icon, and his most famous work is still studied as the progenitor of the English novel. Roger Sharrock best exemplifies this pervasive trend of analysis in his introduction to the Penguin edition of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. He begins by acknowledging Bunyan's transnational presence, but this idea is then severed from the "real" Bunyan who is local, Puritan, and, above all, English.[3]

Sharrock's vision of Bunyan is avowedly national and it is this viewpoint that has dominated academic study of Bunyan.[4] The story of Bunyan as a transnational writer has attracted almost no serious scholarly research. With the signal exception of Tamsin Spargo's work, the career of Bunyan's work outside Britain has generally only been explored by antiquarian or evangelically related investigation.[5] There are some cases, like David Smith's *Bunyan in America*, where the influence of *The Pilgrim's Progress* outside Britain is seriously assessed.[6] Such studies, however, make no attempt to link that international circulation back to Britain or to inquire what it might imply for Bunyan's standing in England. The two topics—Bunyan in Britain and Bunyan "abroad"—remain sundered areas of inquiry.

In a situation where global integration has enfeebled national boundaries and where literary studies is increasingly postcolonial in orientation, this division today in the terrain of Bunyan scholarship is peculiar. Virtually every other major figure in the British canon, like Shakespeare, Milton, Austen, or Dickens, has been subject to reinterpretations that consider them in a transnational rather than simply a national domain. Similarly, readings of the novel as a form shaped in empire are now commonplace. As a writer translated into some two hundred languages worldwide, Bunyan's claims to such a reevaluation are even stronger and more pressing.[7] Yet, studies of Bunyan remain resolutely local.

This book attempts to reintegrate the divided terrain of scholarship on *The Pilgrim's Progress*, firstly, by reinserting Bunyan back into a transnational landscape and, secondly, by asking what the implications of such a move might be in theoretical and literary historical terms. This story is primarily explored in the context of Bunyan's circulation in Africa—the scene of eighty translations.[8] The narrative unfolds in three parts. The first section traces how *The Pilgrim's Progress* entered the continent as part of the evangelical Protestant mission movement. The second section examines how the book traveled into various African societies and how it was changed by the intellectual and literary traditions into which it migrated. The third section narrates how the African (and wider mission imperial) circulation of Bunyan changed his standing back in England.

This book, then, is an investigation of how a particular text was translated and circulated throughout much of the African continent (and indeed most of the Protestant world). Given its dissemination across so many different languages, societies, and intellectual contexts, *The Pilgrim's Progress* can be considered as an early example of a translingual

mass text (leaving aside, of course, the sacred books of world religions). In telling the story of its dissemination, this book asks how this one text came (or at least appeared) to be translatable across such a vast realm. Its theoretical agenda aligns three domains—translatability and its limits; the material and social practices of translation; and circulation. The argument woven around these items is set out below—first in summary and then in extended detail.

My argument commences with translatability, an a priori assumption in the Protestant mission world. Driven by universalistic theories of language and evangelical ardor, mission organizations held that any and every text with the "right" message was translatable. The mission domain consequently presents an instructive instance through which to approach issues of translatability. Their presuppositions of translatability understood as a linguistic feasibility produced a flurry of texts. Yet, what became of those texts? Did they prove intelligible or meaningful to their new audiences? Did they prove as translatable to their readers as they did to their producers and under what circumstances?

One long-standing route for answering such questions has been to consider factors internal to the translated text and to speculate on what orders of understanding its linguistic and stylistic choices do or do not enable. More recently, however, translation theorists have widened their frame of inquiry to pose prior questions about how ideas of equivalence or nonequivalence come into being. As Lydia Liu asks, "Can the achieved or contested reciprocity of languages be plotted as the outcome of a given economy of historical exchange?"[9] Attention to these economies of exchange with their "struggles over the commensurability or reciprocity of meanings as values" may generate crisper insights into problems of intellectual and cultural translatability. Such an analysis, as Liu points out, would involve capturing the "radical historicity" and contingency of how such climates of intelligibility (or nonintelligibility) are created.[10]

In investigating this set of issues, this book suggests two related lines of inquiry. The first examines the broad context of ideas and discourses that made translation thinkable to both Protestant missionaries and African converts. Evangelical enthusiasm certainly played a critical role in propagating translation; however, translation alone could never ensure intellectual portability. Instead, this book focuses on how shared ideas of literacy as miraculous agent and books as magical objects grew up as a field of discourse between missionary and convert. These ideas were driven, on the one hand, by mission evangelical theories of language

by which texts are empowered to seize and convert those they encounter, and, on the other, by African attempts to embed the new technology of print into a sacred domain where it became a vehicle for ancestral revelation. This field of discourse furnished an apparently shared set of motivations for undertaking translation, but one broad enough to provide a semblance of shared objectives while allowing for differing agendas to be pursued.

This book's second line of inquiry is to focus sustained attention on the material and social practices of translation itself. It argues that the social relationships, fields of power, methods of working, and technologies of production associated with translation are critical sites for understanding whether, and what kinds of, notions of equivalence might come into being. The basic unit of production in the mission arena was a "first-language" convert and a "second-language" missionary.[11] This intimate nexus became a crucial domain in which ideas of comparison and translatability were produced. This "production unit" consequently forms one of the themes of analysis in this book and brings into focus how texts were selected for translation, how the work of translation proceeded, how these translated texts were produced, and for whom and in what forums they were distributed. Once we take this as our analytical field, we are forced to describe much more precisely how, and in what form, texts are circulated; how they are translated, taught, and read; and how their meanings are determined, not prior to their circulation but in the social arenas of their dissemination.

The "methodological fetishism" of keeping our eye on the textual object is also extended to the question of circulation, and it directs our attention to the material routes of circulation along which texts were funneled. Both the actual and the imagined limits of circulation allow us to speculate on the forms of publicness that translated texts bring into being. What kinds of imaginaries, for example, coalesce when texts circulate across language boundaries? These forms of virtual solidarity can in turn throw light on the broader questions of how decisions around equivalence or nonequivalence are ceded or withheld.

The final segment of the argument concerns the limits of translatability. Under what circumstances did the text not prove portable? Under what conditions was it consciously rejected? Or, in what conjunctures did it simply evaporate? In addressing this cluster of questions, this book suggests that while these conditions are always contingent, they can usefully be thought of in relation to the role of African intellectual brokerage. It is such intellectual formations, and their internal debates between

leader and led, that play a critical role in whether translated texts find acceptance or whether they are cast aside as politically tainted, as meaningless, or as unintelligible. Such instances of conscious political rejection generally spell the end of a translated text's life, although its outline can linger, often as an irritant against which arguments are framed. In such instances, the text can find a short-lived and spectral translatability. Yet, not all instances of untranslatability derive from rejection. Often a translated text disappears, either through boredom or, in some instances, by evaporating into nearly identical narrative forms where the translated text ceases to be itself. In such instances, untranslatability is brought about not by too little commensurability, but rather by too much.

The remainder of the introduction spells out this argument in more detail before turning to consider its implication for the literary historiography of Bunyan. The introduction concludes with comments on the geographical and historical scope of the book, its research procedures and sources, and an overview of chapters.

Translatability

The question of why *The Pilgrim's Progress* appeared so translatable or "universal" has long attracted speculation but produced little sustained research. This armchair surmise has produced two orders of answer: the first concerns itself with features internal to the text, the second with factors external to it, namely the imperial context in which it was disseminated. In the first line of argument, certain themes in the text are nominated as assuring its successes. For nineteenth-century Protestants, this secret ingredient was Bunyan's evangelical message; for those involved in English literature as a discipline, it was the book's enactment of a "universal" human nature. More recently, Christopher Hill has mooted that it is the text's political radicalism that attracts audiences in colonized societies.[12] The second line of argument moves outside the text and posits Bunyan's universality as being tied up with a relentless imperialism via whose structures a text like *The Pilgrim's Progress* is disseminated in order to "control non-Western, non-Christian subjects."[13]

Both lines of argument have limited validity. In some instances, the generic and episodic features of the text did play a part in winning popular audiences for the text. However, as the case studies in this book demonstrate, the sections of the text so foregrounded are different from

those nominated by casual speculation and can only be brought to light via a serious engagement with the African intellectual formations into which such segments were enfolded.

The arguments about imperialism as an enabler of the text likewise have some salience: empire furnished a crucial context for missions and hence conditions for the text to be propagated in translated form. Furthermore, in disseminating this, one of their key ideological documents, missionaries invested extraordinary amounts of determination, labor, capital, and technology. These mechanisms were reinforced by an array of distributive institutions: mission schools and bookshops; mission-run literary, debating, and dramatic societies; journals and newspapers; and literature bureaus (joint mission/colonial state institutions set up to promote "appropriate" vernacular literatures). As sections of this book demonstrate, this mission doggedness resulted in environments saturated with *The Pilgrim's Progress* in at least two and sometimes three languages. The investment in the text also occasioned a determination to make it "catch on" at all costs. As one mission publisher observed, "It sometimes takes three to five years for a new book to become known so that people ask for it."[14]

Yet, at the same time, this explanation of mission and imperial doggedness is partial in several regards. Most obviously, it conflates the colonial state, white-settler interest, and missions and treats these as identical. Hence, white-settler appropriations of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in English (in which the story was frequently fashioned as an imperial allegory) are construed as similar to the translated versions sponsored by mission organizations.[15] Most importantly, however, such interpretations assume that missionaries (backed by imperial compulsion) can determine the field of debate for the audiences they encounter, a proposition that scholarship on missions has consistently disproved.[16] Instead, as this latter research demonstrates, mission agendas are always curtailed by the circumstances into which they are inserted. In relation specifically to mission translation, this scholarship has started to sketch a picture of how such constraints played themselves out in the contradictory processes of vernacularizing Christianity and of fashioning theological equivalences across languages. Birgit Meyer, for example, examines the field of biblical translation that took shape between Ewe Protestant and North German Pietist in Ghana. She focuses on the symbiosis between the witchcraft beliefs of the former and the devil theology of the latter and how these interactions registered themselves in the translation choices made for key terms in the Scriptures, such as "devil," "holy spirit," and "God." The

semantic fields of these terms allowed Ewe-speakers and German missionaries to operate in an apparently shared field of understanding while continuing to attribute power to older beliefs like witchcraft by energetically disavowing them. Vicente Rafael's study of Spanish Jesuit interactions with Tagalog societies in seventeenth-century Philippines foregrounds ideas on language, signification, and translation as a primary domain for grasping the complicit contestations that characterize Christian colonialism. As he demonstrates, both Spaniard and Tagalog had "something else in mind" in the process of conversion—for the Jesuits, it was the universalization of a hierarchical Christian order; for Tagalog-speakers, it was an attempt to "manage" Christianity by keeping it at arm's length. For many Tagalog, the new religion was treated like a troublesome and unbidden spirit that required fitful appeasement. The result was "conversion in a state of distraction" and an almost absent-minded filtering and dismembering of Jesuit texts, producing a social order "premised not on consensus between ruler and ruled but on the fragmentation and hermeneutic displacement of the very basis of consensus: language."[17] Meyer and Rafael demonstrate that in two mission locations, the intellectual traditions of mission and convert jointly produced a semantic "haze," a field of strategic misreading that enabled a form of translation to became possible.

This book extends Meyer's and Rafael's lines of argument by examining the shared fields of discourse that Protestant mission and convert, in their early stages of interaction, bring into being around literacy as a miraculous technology and books as magical objects. For missions, this perception was driven by evangelical theories of language and conversion that entail magical notions of textual agency, since language is seen as a primary vehicle through which conversion (a form of magical transformation) occurs. For Africans, the perception was driven less by the novelty of the technology than by its embedding in existing understandings of the sacred. These allowed a new form of communication to be harnessed to speak to existing spiritual and ancestral worlds. It also allowed a bypassing of mission authorities since the technology was seen to come from God or the ancestors rather than the mission colonial world. Both traditions of interpretation, to some extent, construed the book as a magical object and, in this apparent agreement, could construct a discourse field that validated the propagation and translation of further texts, while simultaneously pursuing different agendas.

This intellectual convergence is captured as well in the term the "white man's fetish," which was used to describe books in general. The

book can hence be seen as similar in its operation to the workings of the "fetish" as outlined by Pietz.[18] As he demonstrates, the term emerged from the trading entrepôts on the West African coast and became a way of managing contradictory ideas of value and of making trade possible. The operations of the "white man's fetish" can be understood in an analogous way. The term became a way of managing contradictory orders of value, this time in relation to the spiritual realm, and generated a field of discourse and meaning through which translation became possible.

One claim of this book is that *The Pilgrim's Progress* functioned as a privileged "fetish." This capacity derived from three features. The first was the emotional and compulsive power with which Protestant missionaries invested the text. Particularly for Nonconformist missionaries, it was a book of extraordinary appeal that had long been scripted into their theology and their conversion narratives.[19] Because of its power, and because it summarized the key message of evangelical Protestantism, the book was widely treated as a substitute for the Scriptures themselves. This latter attribute gave the text its second "fetish"-like property, namely its ambiguity. As a near-Bible, it was both secular and sacred; serious and pleasurable; fictional yet also "true." Its form as an allegory extended these ambiguous possibilities: it could support divergent interpretations while still apparently remaining the same book. Thirdly, the book has a structure that lends itself relatively easily to translation. It is episodic and could be translated serially as a sequence of freestanding installments. The text has little realistic detail. Its topography is vague and biblical in orientation and presents few impediments to translation.

For Protestant missions, there was consequently both a will and a way to translate the text and to disseminate it widely. As an object that had wrought their own conversion, missionaries imagined the text doing likewise to others and dispelling the darkness of heathendom. For African Christians working under constrained and supervised circumstances, the text offered a number of opportunities for experimentation. Not only was it an arena of allegorical possibility but its illustrations and the dramatic reenactments of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which were routinely staged, provided a landscape in which converts could "try on" different characters and plot lines. For those in the mission domain wishing to produce their own writing in English or African languages or both, the story— one of the few semi-secular texts used by evangelical missionaries— offered a compendium of generic potentialities to explore and greater opportunities for intertextual rescripting than the Bible whose integrity was fiercely policed.[20] In these ways, Bunyan's text could become an ob-

ject authorizing transactions while also absorbing the contradictory meanings generated in the mission domain.

In relation to mission translation, this book attempts to draw attention to evangelicalism, a topic that has been widely studied but whose implications for translation have not been fully grasped. Historically, the phenomenon has been extensively discussed as a major factor in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century emergence of the Protestant mission movement. Likewise, its theological meaning as a doctrine of salvation by faith rather than by good works or the sacrament has been much debated. Also well understood are the phenomenological manifestations of evangelicalism that entail a particular style of conversion: a burdensome awareness of sin is followed by an overwhelmingly emotional experience of conversion.[21] Less understood, however, are evangelical ideas about language, text, and translation.

These are, of course, shaped by the compelling imperatives of proselytization. Not only was each Protestant obliged to preach the word and save souls but in some schools of thought this activity also served to hasten the second coming: when the word had been preached to all nations, Jesus was to return to earth. An individual's textual practice could consequently have millennial implications. Working in such pressing contexts, it became imperative to broadcast the word as widely as possible. Consequently, there was considerable technological and media inventiveness on the part of mission organizations that sought to render their messages as physical objects in order to extend their reach. These objects, in turn, could become proxy agents or prosthetic missionaries, "noiseless messengers" who could extend the missionary's range and penetrate into regions where missionaries themselves could not go.[22] The propaganda prerogatives attendant on foreign missions provided an additional incentive to making texts material. Audiences back home were often skeptical of, if not opposed to, foreign missions, whom they thought should stay put and attend to the "heathen" at home. Crusades of persuasion were hence required and one object often deployed in such campaigns was the translated text. Bibles, hymnbooks, tracts, and copies of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in foreign languages routinely formed part of missionary exhibitions and publicity. Home viewers generally knew the original of the translated texts well and could sustain the illusion that readers across the world imbibed the "same" message as they did.

Underlying these evangelical practices was a view of reading (and implicitly a theory of language) that invested texts with the capacity to seize and entirely transform those whom they addressed. This point is

worth stressing as several current understandings of mission translation have highlighted only its universalistic assumptions in terms of which any language is a transparent and inert medium through which God's truth could shine. In such analyses, missionaries are portrayed as naive in their translation practices.[23] By holding that equivalence and translatability were divinely ordained and hence possible, a universalistic view of language was undoubtedly important in fueling the frenzied translation activity of Protestant missions. However, in order for these translated texts to be effective in the world, one required a supplementary theory of textual compulsion that conferred agency on texts to capture those they encountered. Mission translation in effect mobilized both theories—those of transparency and those of capture—in order to function and to sustain the belief that texts could cross languages and cultures so as to bring the "same" form of belief and consciousness into being. Or, put another way, such textual theories sought to propagate a "transnationally translatable monoculture."[24] In part, of course, missionaries failed in this intention as the message they bore was rescripted by its recipients. Overall, however, the mission project in Africa had a fair degree of success in propagating itself, a process that depended, in part, as Lamin Sanneh has argued, on the strategies of translation that it evolved.[25]

Translation as Material and Social Practice

As an exercise in evangelization, mission translation is shaped by a cluster of constraints that confer on it certain distinctive attributes. Firstly, as the purpose of translation is to recruit followers, missionaries constantly experiment with different textual configurations to see what will communicate best with the audiences they encounter. Secondly, as most missionaries are second-language speakers, they are dependent on first-language converts with whom they work closely. Thirdly, mission translation is always an avowedly transnational and transcontinental activity shaped, on the one hand, "at home" by the parent body's denominational objectives and funding capacities, and, on the other, "abroad" by the interaction of mission and convert. Each of these constraints prompts certain characteristic ways of working, patterns of funding, sets of social relationships, and material textual forms that together create both limits and possibilities for how translated texts will be interpreted.

As the first and second points indicate, mission translation is a system heavily dependent on convert audiences and expertise. African Christian thinking can consequently imprint itself on the final translated products at a number of junctures. The first of these relates to the broad parameters in which Christianity itself came to be understood. As a wealth of research has demonstrated, the tenets of the religion found differing degrees of acceptance in the continent. The doctrine of original sin, for example, with its presupposition of an unwilled, universal condition of evil, was often sidestepped by African Christians in favor of a more social understanding of sin. Other concepts, notably that of a supreme being, already existed and hence found general acceptance. So, too, did the idea of God having a son. Despite this being a novel notion, it generated an extensive African Christology in which the figure of Christ is reworked, generally as an intermediary rather than a son.[26] As this book demonstrates, these templates, often shaped in the "labor process" of translation itself, furnish a critical context for considering any translated text in the mission world. They consequently provide important boundaries when considering the translatability of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, a text heavily steeped in Protestant doctrine.

A second node at which African Christian thinking could intervene was in determining the material shape, form, and content of the translated text. The exigencies of proselytization mean that texts have to be experimentally disseminated in bits and pieces and in a variety of media (image, illustration, photograph, postcard, magic lantern slide, pageant, sermon, hymn). Popular taste consequently registers itself in how these media are configured. As chapter 8 shows, the decision of which European illustrations to include in mission editions was at times influenced by converts. The conventions employed in Africanized illustrations likewise reflected the opinions of African Christians. Equally, the segments of the book that proved most durable were determined by convert opinion. In short, popular judgment has a decisive impact on whether translated forms become portable.

It is also important to underline that mission methods of producing translation seldom involved a solo translator. As we have seen, the basic working unit comprised a second-language missionary and first-language convert. Virtually all mission translation was hammered out in such pairs. These "couples" worked long hours, were locked in tense and often intimate relations of dependence, and produced a style of translation that was coauthored. Adding further complexity was the convention

of translation by committee, particularly in relation to anything biblical where doctrinal and theological questions had to be negotiated among the home organization, the members of the mission, the Bible Society, and mission colleagues from other denominations in the region.

This complexity of operation meant that any mission translation was shaped in a web of negotiation, disagreement, and contradiction. Mission translation is hence less about the "technologies of colonial domination" than about opening up fields of maneuver.[27] The possibilities for such maneuver were further enabled and limited by the complex linguistic landscape against which translation unfolded in Africa. Such arenas not infrequently involved more than one African language and more than one European language—a feature of the linguistic landscape routinely obscured by the idea that colonial encounters entailed two "sides" and hence, it is unquestioningly assumed, only two languages. Many precolonial African societies were "multilingual," a word that cannot fully capture the complex linguistic and dialect layering of a world where languages in the modern and strictly demarcated sense did not exist. Languages also overlay other forms of social status, such as royal and commoner, slave and free, indigene and latecomer. Into this complex linguistic landscape came missionaries, speaking different languages, and colonial forces of occupation, often speaking yet others. In these unequal arenas, missionaries claimed the right to "own" and codify African languages, turning them into the orthographical and grammatical subordinates of European languages. However, this domination did not prevent the linguistic domain from persisting as a critical political forum in which Africans continued their multiple battles against mission, colonial state, and their precolonial enemies. In such an environment, having one's language chosen for codification by missions could give one an edge over one's social betters (who sometimes spoke another language). It could also mean elevation into a "tribe," a form of social organization through which one could win recognition and some resources from the colonial state.[28] The cost, however, was a mission-made language not always fully recognizable to its speakers and a world of racially supervised literary and cultural production. Language politics in and around the mission provided a landscape of both possibility and constraint within which African Christians had to try and position themselves.

The case studies in this book seek to understand the translation process as wrought in such intricacies and complexities. One such instance, narrated in chapter 3, involves a minority language community, the Kele, on the Upper Congo and their interaction with the British Bap-

tists. Kele was one of at least a dozen languages in the vicinity and was chosen by missionaries in order to "protect" its speakers from the ravages of modernity. In the process of translating Bunyan, Kele Protestants played a role in conferring a particular shape and form on an abridged translation of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. In this version, the theological explanations regarding original sin with which the story is larded were generally left out. This configuration of the text bears the imprint of Kele Protestant opinion. Firstly, in bypassing the sections on original sin, readers could sidestep this Protestant doctrine that proved untranslatable across most of Africa. They could also "prime" the story to make it more amenable to interpretation by removing the distracting second-guessing of the author who violates his own allegorical procedures by explaining what episodes mean. Through the translation process, the story is "cleaned up" and made more amenable to Kele interpretation.

Adding to this complex translingual environment was a third characteristic of mission translation, namely its transnational and transcontinental orientation. This arose both from the globalizing ambitions of Protestantism as an evangelical religion and from the sprawling transcontinental infrastructure (of committees, printers, warehouses, transport routes, and so on) that mission organizations established to support translation. These imperatives tend to produce Protestant texts that carry both an international mode of address (implicitly addressed to all actual and potential believers throughout the world) and more local agendas shaped in the individual nodes of the international network.

In traveling through these various circuits, a text like *The Pilgrim's Progress* accumulated traces of its prior journeys. In some cases, such signs could be the language/s into or from which it was translated. In other cases, it could be an introduction giving something of the text's history. In yet others, the text's illustrations could betoken its prior paths: African and African American editions, for example, showed black characters and so indicated that the text had acquired new "personnel" on its travels.

These various traces and reminders in turn conferred on the text a capacity to enable imaginative international addressivity. Put another way, it allowed people to think, read, and write *as if* they were addressing a vast international Protestant public (even if in reality they only reached a limited actual or potential audience). *The Pilgrim's Progress*, as a virtual international text, functioned as a set of "backdrops" against which one could imaginatively project oneself into an international arena.

Such texts acquire a layering that is important to their perceived

translatability. The case studies in this book provide instances of this process by which different groups used this "doubleness" for a variety of political objectives. The novelist, Thomas Mofolo, for example, engages with *The Pilgrim's Progress* to rescript local ideas of masculinity by entering a broad debate on Protestantism, gender, and empire. The middle-class African mission elite frequently turned to Bunyan to articulate anticolonial and, at times, antimission ideologies not only to themselves, white settlers, and the colonial state but also to an international audience. In the case of the Kongo translation in northern Angola, African mission notables used the opportunity opened by photographic illustrations of *The Pilgrim's Progress* to project themselves (as characters in the images) and, implicitly, their local ethnic micropolitics into an international arena, thereby passing around and over the Portuguese colonial state.

A focus on translation, then, requires us to grapple with the organization and implications of intellectual labor across the empire. This approach proves useful in putting into practice recent revisionist readings of empire. These posit empire as an intellectually integrated zone, instead of a divided terrain of "center" and "periphery." The imperial arena is a complex force field in which circuits of influence travel in more than one direction. How to put such a vision into practice is, however, by no means self-evident. In essence, we are required to understand how events are made in different places at the same time. Such an approach necessitates a multi-sited methodology that can provide both breadth and depth. We are obliged to have a broad canvas, but, equally, each point on that canvas must have sufficient depth to plumb the local intellectual formations underlying that node. One also needs a method of telling the story that captures the movement in and between these various nodes. Given these difficulties, the temptation is often to adopt a proscenium approach where narration focuses primarily on one site. Ideas, influences, or intellectual currents from elsewhere feature, but only in walk-on parts. Such situations can be characterized by what Dipesh Chakrabarty terms "asymmetrical knowledge."[29] In this scenario, most scholars' knowledge weighs in at the metropolitan end of things with the local being read—if at all—only at the level of elite culture. The intellectual hinterlands informing this elite cultural production seldom come into focus. Attention to themes of translation can provide one route into solving these problems by forcing our attention on to intellectual production in varying sites and among an extensive cast of players. Such a framework also directs us to think about questions of textual circulation.

Circulation

With regard to questions of circulation, this book suggests that our task is twofold: firstly, we have to uncover empirically the complexity of circuits along which texts are marshaled and, secondly, we need to ask what the theoretical import of such journeys might be. In order to address the first point, we have to keep our eye on the text as a material object. This procedure is necessary in order to bring to light the intricate circuits along which texts are funneled rather than the routes we imagine or anticipate they might traverse. One such presupposition is that texts tread predictable paths, namely from "Europe" to "Africa," "north" to "south," "metropole" to "colony." With regard to *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the commonsense temptation is to imagine the text traveling this route, diffusing outwards from the imperial center to the furthest reaches of empire, with apparently little consequence for the context from which it emanated.

Instead of this "center"/"periphery" model, we place Bunyan's text in the broader space of the mission empire and trace its circuits within it. These routes along which the texts travel are varied. The text, for example, often travels "side-ways" between African languages. It loops back to the metropolis. It follows diasporic trajectories. In some cases, it travels between heaven and earth. This book attempts both to bring the empirical complexities of these textual journeys into view and to ask what their theoretical import may be. What difference might such empirical information make analytically? What significance might we divine from the routes along which texts migrate?

One answer to this question comes from Michael Warner's recent work on publics and counterpublics.[30] For him, questions of circulation, both real and imagined, lie at the very heart of how publics come into being, how they think about themselves, and hence how they script social imaginaries, in turn the template on behalf of which much social and political action is taken. For Warner, it is the limits and pathways of circulation that are critical. How these are imagined become the sinews around which publics take shape. A key methodological move in such an equation is to pay close attention to how texts dramatize the limits of their circulation. In Warner's words, "From the concrete experience of a world in which available forms circulate, one projects a public. . . . This performative ability depends, however, on that object's being not entirely fictitious—not postulated merely, but recognized as a real path for the circulation of discourse. That path is then treated as a social entity."[31]

One purpose of this book, in tracing the routes along which *The Pilgrim's Progress* was guided, is to bring into focus a variety of forms of publicness that these circuits make visible. Some of these are well known and have long been discussed in nationalist and diasporic analyses of Africa. These include the political congregations of the African mission elite, the crisscrossed diasporic networks of the black Atlantic, and the messianic worlds of popular African Christianity. The analysis offered here examines the role that one particular text performed in the discourse fields of these publics and how the text furnished intellectual and performative arenas in which these groups could workshop versions of themselves.

Yet, at the same time, this analysis also insists, in opposition to much of the nationalist historiography on Africa, that such groups spoke not only to themselves or their oppressors but equally to a worldwide public, albeit a type that has largely fallen from view. As we have seen, Protestant texts are always transcontinental in their mode of address, speaking implicitly to all actual and potential believers, even if such believers cannot understand the language in which the text is written. In looking at how such texts dramatize the limits of their circulation, we can detect the cosmic arena in which African Protestants placed themselves. Such arenas provided novel horizons against which forms of selfhood could be rehearsed to produce new modes of publicness. One of these, mentioned earlier, was a public sphere that straddled heaven and earth. In this divine order, texts circulated between this world and the next and in some instances, were produced in heaven and made their way to earth. In such an ancestral economy, the dead are interpellated retrospectively, via the mechanisms of print culture, as "honorary" members of modernity. The technologies of modernity, in this case print and literacy, are likewise made ancestral and are seen to emanate not from colonially aligned missions but from the spiritual realms of "tradition." As one boundary of projected textual circulation, the ancestral world represents a novel cosmic imaginary marked in part by the languages in which the ancestors are deemed to be competent. In most cases, the dead read and write in a named African language, but in some cases, they appear to be polyglot, able to deal with documents in any language. As Rafael remarks, paradise can "mark the end of translation" and so provide the threshold for a new imaginative formation.[32]

Another type of public was signaled by texts that are translated "sideways" between African languages, rather than moving, as the commonsense view would expect, from a europhone to an afrophone lan-

guage. Such "lateral" moves were often registered in the introduction to editions that spelled out the African languages through which the text had already traversed and hence the African intellectual circuits and formations in which it had been inducted. In the few cases where *The Pilgrim's Progress* was translated solo by an African, the book became ensconced in the printed and oral literary culture of the language as well as in popular taste and perception. Such popularity had in part to do with the superior quality of translation, done by a first-language speaker, but also with the implied circulation of the text, which was seen to have been thoroughly "baptized" in the literary and intellectual traditions of the language. In some cases, the text even appears to enter its print version from a prior oral existence in an African language. The preface to the Zulu version of 1868, for example, states: "Here it is, then, the book of Christian. You have heard others talk of his existence, and that he has his own book . . ."[33]

In this quotation, the idea of the book occupies a para-literate zone in which texts become multimedia and multilingual portfolios. In such understandings, texts are configured across the printed and the spoken, image and text, and, at times, heaven and earth. This "portfolio" understanding of texts in turn inaugurates and forms part of an extensive field of African popular cultural production which plaits together intellectual traditions, media, genres, and languages in novel ways, as Karin Barber's seminal work has demonstrated. These formations in turn play a critical role in convening sub-elite reading, writing, and interpretive formations whose outlines are beginning to be traced by scholars like Barber and Stephanie Newell.[34] As much of this book demonstrates, *The Pilgrim's Progress* often functioned as a text around which models of reading, writing, and interpretive practices were negotiated. Its history can hence throw some light on the intricate ways in which African reading formations, both popular and otherwise, take shape. The history of Bunyan's text in Africa, often the model of what a book might or could be, likewise starts to throw some light on what a history of the book in Africa might look like. This book's contribution to that as-yet-unwritten story is to highlight the extraordinary possibilities that emerged from a situation in which print technology, for much of the nineteenth century at least, was mediated by the mission domain. As already indicated, this conjuncture of circumstances produced a realm of miraculous literacy in which the potentialities of the book (and hence how its history might be written) were grasped in novel and distinctive ways.

As a text that crossed so many languages and served so many

purposes, *The Pilgrim's Progress* came to function as a portmanteau text. In this guise, the book can be seen as an archive in which various intellectual positions could be billeted. As the case studies in this book illustrate, the text provided a shared landscape and set of reference points around and in which debates could be rehearsed. Whether these were about "progress," modernity, masculinity, the nature of heaven, the political possibilities of the diaspora, or the workings of a transcontinental Protestant arena, they were enfolded in readers' idea of the story. These interpretations were also supplemented by knowledge (which obviously varied from reader to reader) that one was encountering a text that had been "baptized" in a range of domains. As this book demonstrates, these were far-flung and as diverse as Jamaican slavery, the struggles of the Eastern Cape African elite in South Africa, and the dream-geographies of heaven. These temporalities likewise leave traces of themselves in the text and become part of its cumulative meaning. This archive in turn comes to play a significant role in African intellectual history when it is taken up as a sub-tradition in the African novel. As chapter 9 demonstrates, various African writers address themselves to Bunyan, not as an "imperial" writer but as a long-standing African presence with whom particular intellectual debates, particularly around modernity, have come to be associated.

These various circumstances, then, played a part in helping *The Pilgrim's Progress* to "get a life" in Africa. Yet, under what circumstances did the text not survive?

The Limits of Translatability

In assessing the limits of the text's portability, this book foregrounds the nature of the African intellectual brokerage that Bunyan's narrative encountered. As we have seen, African intellectual formations were central in ensuring the book's longevity. They were likewise critical in those scenarios where the text did not survive. The role that African intellectuals played in this regard was both witting (involving a political choice of rejection) and unwitting (where the text falls by the wayside not out of rejection but out of boredom or indifference).

An apt example of witting rejection concerns Simon Kimbangu, the leader of a prominent breakaway prophet movement that emerged as a "fall-out" of Baptist missions on the Lower Congo in the 1920s. Kim-

banguists adapted quite a few features of the Baptist tradition, including aspects of church organization and bureaucracy as well as catechisms, sermons, and hymns. The movement, however, evinced no systematic interest in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, despite the fact that it had been so intensively propagated by the BMS.[35] While the situation is difficult to judge precisely, this decision to bypass Bunyan may, in part, have been driven by Kimbangu himself, who at times used elements of *The Pilgrim's Progress* while disavowing its provenance. One such instance emerges from Kimbangu's belief that the hymnbook he wrote came from the other world. In order to travel there and back to locate his hymns, Kimbangu had to pass through a great body of water. Despite his dunking, however, the book of hymns remained dry, proving its divine origin. The Kongo version of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in circulation on the Lower Congo at the time, showed an illustration of the hero, Christian being helped from the Slough of Despond. He is soaking wet. The book in his hand is dry. Persecuted by both British Baptists and Belgian colonial officials, Kimbangu presumably "poached" from the text but disavowed the source, making a political decision to reject the book while still maintaining it as a ghostly reference point. This soon faded. In the extensive body of material on Kimbanguism, there is no indication that *The Pilgrim's Progress* made any imprint.

In this Kimbangu scenario, the text withers, largely because of an active decision of disavowal. However, translated texts can also disappear through indifference and boredom. Consider, for example, the wider fate of the Kongo version of the book. Within the mission world it took strong hold, while in Kimbangu's secessionist movement, it made only a fleeting impression. Beyond the mission hinterlands, the text made no discernible impact whatsoever. One way to think about this issue would be to consider *The Pilgrim's Progress* against the background of existing Kongo narrative traditions. From this perspective, the story would seem quite unexceptional. Tales of a man with a bag on his back traveling from this world to the next were commonplace. Featuring a trickster protagonist who in some variations is called Moni-Mambu, the one with affairs and concerns on his back, the narratives follow a pattern whereby the protagonist sets off from this world to the next.[36] There he has a series of encounters with the gods and ancestors, and using his wit and the objects stored in his bag, he is able to bring back some desired items, such as ideas, solutions to problems, hunting luck, or treasures. The overall pattern of the story is a movement from this world to the next and back again. Against this background, Bunyan's story is a bit of a yawn. A man

with a bag on his back sets off on a journey and has adventures along the way, often with creatures like Apollyon from the other world. What's the big deal? Not only is the story quite ordinary, but it is also incomplete. It starts off promisingly enough, but then stops abruptly halfway through just at the point where the protagonist reaches the next world and the story promises to get really interesting. As chapter 9 discusses, the early West African novelists Amos Tutuola and D. O. Fagunwa, who embed elements of Bunyan in their novels, could in effect be read as attempting to complete the story and reinsert it in a matrix of traveling to the next world and then coming back again.

In such situations, translated texts disappear via generic erosion or evaporation. A related process of disintegration is what one might call textual "randomization." As we have seen, the text was broadcast in bits and pieces via different media—postcards, wallcharts, magic lantern slides, sermons, or choir services. This mode of dissemination put into circulation atomized bits of the text that could be reconfigured in different ways. The postcard version of the story (figure 7), which comprised two packs of six cards, for example, allowed one to shuffle the plot units as one saw fit. This rearrangement of the plot in turn accords closely with how story episodes behave in certain oral narrative traditions. Here stories are open-ended and there is little sense of climactic closure, so that plot episodes have no strictly preordained sequence. The way in which episodes are knitted together depends much on the moment of performance and the performer's assessment of the interests and composition of the audience.[37] Within such a system, any randomized episodes deriving from *The Pilgrim's Progress* could become narrative fodder absorbed into a new generic field. This tendency for the story to be "digested" is further aided by the folkloric elements of the story. These include folktale motifs and plot outlines, dramatic dialogue, two characters to a scene, proverbs, riddles, formulaic phrasings, and onomastic strategies. These features are present in African literary traditions into which particles of the story could be elided. In these circumstances, texts disintegrate, not through political resistance or rejection but rather under systems unaware of, or indifferent to, their supposedly "correct" and "original" meaning.

In these ways, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, despite being so energetically propagated, in some instances, became "extinct." The text had indeed reached the limits of its circulation. Yet, what did the limits of its circulation mean for Bunyan's text back in England? And might we use

the templates of translation and transnational circulation to revise the existing historiographies of Bunyan?

Rethinking Bunyan Historiography

One important objective of this book is to reformulate the divided terrain of Bunyan scholarship, currently split between a Bunyan "at home" and another, largely disavowed Bunyan "abroad." One way to reconfigure the field, as many others have done, is to refuse the division of "home" and "abroad," "metropolis" and "periphery." Instead, as Gyan Prakash suggests, we need a realignment that releases "histories and knowledges from their disciplining as area studies; as imperial and overseas histories . . . that seals metropolitan structures from the contagion of the record of their own formation elsewhere."[38]

The first move in such a realignment is to recognize Nonconformity, the heartland in which Bunyan was nurtured, as a transnational movement. Much existing Bunyan historiography has, of course, examined the role that Nonconformity played in Bunyan's rising national fortunes.[39] As Nonconformity became more respectable and powerful—so these studies suggest—*The Pilgrim's Progress*, as one of its most prized cultural possessions, appreciated commensurately. This work has, however, overlooked the international dimensions of evangelical Nonconformity. More recently there have been a number of attempts, most eminently in the work of Susan Thorne, to reconsider Nonconformity as a transnational phenomenon.[40] She demonstrates how Nonconformists, faced with social disabilities at home, harnessed the glamour of foreign missions as a means of raising their national profile and their political fortunes. Bunyan can usefully be inserted into this scenario. His dissemination via the Protestant mission movement presented an opportunity for Nonconformists to advertise to a "home" audience Bunyan's "universal" appeal to millions of readers throughout the world. In so doing, Nonconformists could display the virtues of their cultural preferences and "add value" to their cause. Bunyan could also strengthen support for foreign missions by providing a much-needed point of identification for "home" audiences, often unfamiliar with the obscure location of foreign missions. One vehicle for achieving this objective was through the circulation and display of translated texts. These, as we have seen, could be

exhibited both to publicize mission work and to give substance to the conviction that everyone in the mission domain read the "same" texts and believed the "same" ideas. By consciously invoking the outer limits of Bunyan's circulation, Nonconformists were able to constitute an evangelical Protestant public sphere that took this text as one of its major reference points.

However, with vertiginous de-Christianization, particularly after the First World War, evangelicalism lost ground as a public intellectual force. One institution that came to occupy the space it vacated was the emerging discipline of English literature, which sought to constitute the field of literature as a way to confer racial and cultural distinctiveness on Britons "at home" and in the empire. The idea of Bunyan as a writer who appealed to converts across lines of race was initially attractive and could bestow value on him as a writer who demonstrated the universal appeal of Englishness. However, as more aggressive racist ideas took hold, Bunyan came to be "tainted" by his association with those on the imaginative peripheries of empire. Particularly for those wishing to see Bunyan (and English literature more generally) as a marker of racial distinctiveness, such ambiguity presented an uneasy problem. One response from within the literary field to this "problem" was to vigorously foreground Bunyan's white Englishness while shifting the definition of his universality from a concrete to an abstract realm. Instead of universality meaning the literal circulation of Bunyan's texts to numerous far-flung societies, it came to denote a concern with an abstract "human nature." Such arguments could salvage the value-conferring properties of universality while disconnecting Bunyan from his potentially "contaminating" association with colonized people. In this way, Bunyan could be reclaimed as white and English, while *The Pilgrim's Progress* could become a book of England.

What in effect is expunged in this process of canonization is the knowledge of *The Pilgrim's Progress* as a translated and transcontinental text. This global existence of the book must be retrospectively erased in order for it to emerge as monolingual and national. This retrospective view also creates the impression that Bunyan is first a national writer who is then broadcast to the world to become international. The story told here reverses this order. In brief, it argues that evangelicalism made Bunyan international, while English literature made him national. He is hence a transnational writer who was belatedly made national. The story of Bunyan's influence has been narrated back to front. Closer attention to

questions of translation and circulation will help us put matters in the right order.

Given the imperatives set out above, this book, unsurprisingly, is broad in its scope. In terms of Africa, it takes in much of the sub-Saharan area of the continent. Its major focus is on southern and Central Africa, the zones of most intense Bunyan distribution. With regard to the first, southern Africa was the earliest and most intensively missionized area in Africa and it produced twenty-three translations of Bunyan in all. In a situation where British missionaries worked under British colonial rule (which was true for much of the subcontinent), the text became pervasive and far-reaching. Although the colonial state itself seldom took direct responsibility for African education—a task left to missions—its broad educational policies, which favored the promotion of British culture, often gave the text a helping hand. Somewhat counterintuitively, Central Africa, under French and Belgian rule, likewise produced twenty-three translations. These arose firstly from the presence of the BMS, which made the Congo River its primary mission field. Bunyan was strongly scripted into Baptist traditions. He was at times claimed as a founding father of the denomination and his theology had also played a key role in the Baptist evangelical revival, a major motor for the Baptist mission movement itself.[41] In all, the BMS was to produce nine translations, the highest tally for any mission society on the continent. A second group of ardent Bunyan fans in Central Africa were the fiercely evangelical faith missions, nondenominational organizations that had often broken from the bigger denominational societies whom they saw as over-bureaucratized and complacent. These groups swarmed into Central Africa, in their terms the most "untouched" part of the continent. Wherever they went they translated *The Pilgrim's Progress*, a book that exemplified their "theology" in forms accessible not only to their converts but to themselves (who generally had little, if any, serious theological training) and their supporters back home who likewise lived by a narrative and biblicist theology. Within the enclaves established by both the BMS and faith missions, the text had a powerful and deep influence. Beyond these small pools, however, the text had a feeble impact. British and other missions, notably Swedish and North American, separated by language, nationality, and denomination from the Catholic French and Belgian colonial authorities, had little influence on educational policy. As such, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, while influential in limited pockets, never gained the wide pur-

chase of a text disseminated via a school system, as it often was under British rule.

The study also "visits," if more briefly, East and West Africa with twelve (thirteen if one includes Madagascar, the large Indian Ocean island off the continent's East coast) and twenty-one translations respectively. The East African translations, while few in number, were far-reaching in their influence. As with southern Africa, where settler-dominated states, like Kenya, made their influence felt on mission schools, the text was propagated by public institutions including the quasi-governmental East African Literature Bureau. In the West African case, the book was disseminated in mission schools, then subsequently in colonial and post-independent, state-run educational institutions. Government-funded literature bureaus also played a role in spreading the text. The ways in which the text was woven into the intellectual histories of these regions is explored through an examination of two early Nigerian novelists (Fagunwa and Tutuola) and the Kenyan, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o.

For readers interested in the nitty-gritty of where, when, and by whom the text was spread, I attach two appendices. The first lists all known African translations of *The Pilgrim's Progress* by language, present-day nation(s) where the language is spoken, place of publication, publisher, mission society, and translator (where this is known: mission societies, as we have seen, favored anonymous translation-by-committee and so individual names did not always appear). The second discusses the social profile of Bunyan translators.

The details of exactly where, when, and by whom mission translations of *The Pilgrim's Progress* were done are difficult to document with any exactitude. The book was produced in different places, and such transnational texts do not leave neat records in any one place, making it difficult to establish a comprehensive picture. Mainstream Bunyan scholarship has, moreover, never shown an interest in this area so little attention has been devoted to it. Available figures do indicate that overall there have been about two hundred translations of *The Pilgrim's Progress* (about twenty of these into European languages).[42] The geographical distribution of these figures accords with the spread of the Protestant mission endeavor.[43] Their most successful field was non-Islamic Africa, where Protestants made considerable headway, unimpeded by transethnic forms of organized religion and, particularly in southern and East Africa, assisted by colonial conquest. These inroads are apparent in the eighty translations that finally emerged from the continent. The next highest translation tally is in South Asia, where some twenty-four translations

were done. This number is bigger than one might expect for a region where Protestantism made only a limited impact on Hinduism and Islam. Yet, as the most favored site of the British Empire, India held prestige in mission eyes and considerable resources were invested into work in this region, accounting in turn for the relatively high number of translations. Like India, China (five translations), Southeast Asia (nine), and the Middle East (eight) were dominated by transpolity religions that largely kept Protestantism at bay. Oceania (another area of considerable Protestant advance) produced eleven translations, while in North America, where Christianity made little headway amongst indigenous societies, there were three translations—into "Cree," "Dakota," and "Eskimo."

The key import of the first appendix is the extent to which it reflects the diversity of Bunyan translators, most notably by nationality, but also by race, class, and gender (a discussion of this point is included in the second appendix). With regard to nationality, mission societies came not only from Britain but from eight countries in all: the United States, Britain, Switzerland, France, Germany, Finland, Sweden, and South Africa. As the personnel of these missions was at times drawn from beyond the boundaries of the country in which the society was based, the nationalities of translators were more diverse than this list reflects. Joseph Jackson Fuller (figure 4), for example, who worked with the BMS, came from Jamaica. Other translators, while not themselves missionaries, included Charles Chinula in Nyasaland (currently Malawi in south Central Africa), who did the Tumbuka translation, and Moses Mubitana, who undertook the Ila translation in Northern Rhodesia (today Zambia in south Central Africa) on a LMS station.[44] Perhaps the most influential translation of all (in the southern African language Xhosa) was by the African Scottish-trained Presbyterian missionary, Tiyo Soga.

This diversity of translators reminds us again of the complexities involved in understanding the "textual zones" that inform any Bunyan translation. Clearly, this is not simply a story of the circuits between Britain and Africa but rather a story of the continent in, and as part of, the Protestant Atlantic. In this study, I have consequently attempted to highlight the complexities of movement within this zone. Inevitably, the focus has been mainly anglophone, partly because British mission societies did dominate the field of Bunyan translation, completing thirty-nine of the sixty-one translations to which we can attach specific missions.[45] Of the remaining tally, the U.S. mission societies produced seven, European Protestants thirteen, and South African mission organizations two. The book does touch briefly on mission translations emerging from
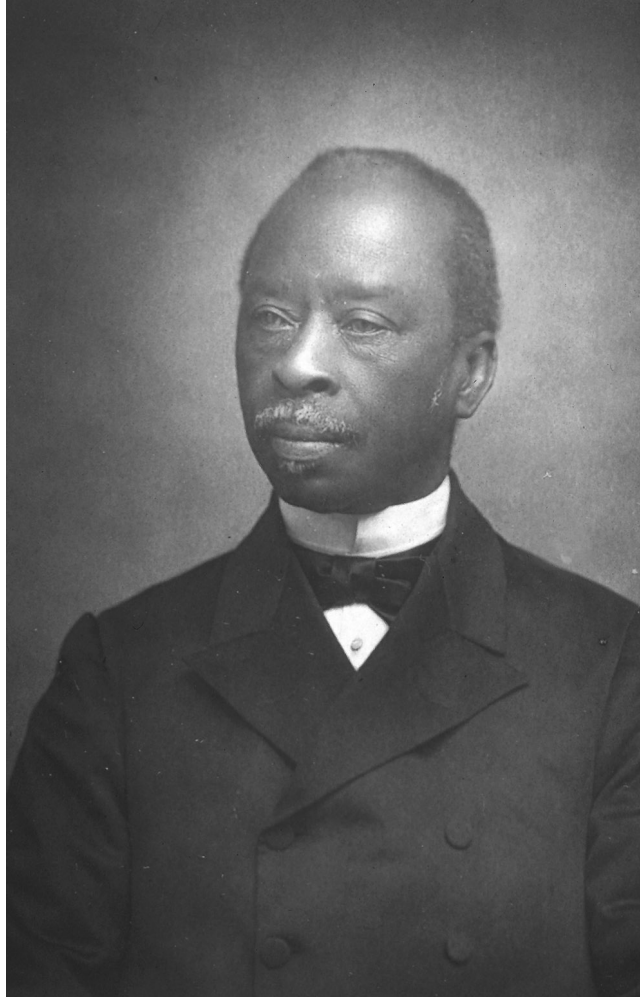
Figure 4. Joseph Jackson Fuller. Source: BMS Archives.
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other nationalities, such as the Sotho version sponsored by the Paris
Evangelical Mission Society (PEMS). The Bunyan traditions emerging
from northern European Protestant countries—where the book traveled
from Holland (where it was translated in 1681) to Germany (translated
in 1703 from the Dutch) to Sweden (translated in 1727 from the Ger-
man)—are not broached here.[46] Neither are the U.S. mission-sponsored
translations. Their inclusion would obviously have added to the book
and would have underlined further the intricacies involved in any Bun-

yan translation. I hope that this book may encourage others to follow up these routes.

With regard to the timing of translations, establishing precise information is not always possible. However, from the available dates, one can divide translation activity into three clear "stages." The first involves a small but steady increase of nineteenth-century translations, which total seventeen in all. The second period runs from the 1900s to the 1940s, during which the bulk of translations (forty-seven) was done. The final stage, the 1950s and 1960s, witnesses a decline in translations (sixteen) as the continent moved toward independence. In their broad outline, these figures conform to the trajectory of Protestant missions in Africa. While the nineteenth century, in financial terms, was the heyday of mission activity, personnel numbers were restricted and the amount of translation work that could be done was limited. This profile changed markedly in the interwar years. Mission personnel increased and there were consequently more "hands" available to do translations.[47] During this time, overall funding did, however, decline. Yet, as regards mission translation and educational work, new sources of subsidy became available. These included government grants for mission-sponsored education in colonial territories[48] and the growth of several organizations promoting "Christian Literature," which made earmarked funding available for precisely such projects as translations of *The Pilgrim's Progress.*[49] The growth of a school market also pushed up the number of translations (particularly in the 1950s and 1960s when several editions by multinational publishers appeared). In the wake of the Second World War, many missions started turning themselves into local churches, a movement that gained considerable momentum as the continent moved to independence.[50] The number of translations consequently dropped off, although one or two evangelically inspired translations continued to appear after independence, while in many parts of the continent, the story itself remained in print and, by some accounts, migrated into other formats, such as video and photocomic.[51]

One question many readers will ask is how one researches a book involving eighty different translations (of which I have a reading knowledge of only Sotho and Afrikaans). In order to take account of this linguistic limitation, I have attempted to be as empirically exhaustive as possible and have been guided by a method of keeping one's eye on the book as a material object. I have consequently attempted to locate as many of the physical books as possible. In England, the Bunyan Meeting House Museum, the Bedford Bunyan Collection, the British Library, and

the SOAS library all hold copies of translated editions. In South Africa, I located further copies in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban, and Cape Town. These books can teach one a surprising amount. In some cases, editions have short English forewords; in other cases, I have had forewords translated. The physical book also reveals whether the text has been abridged, what illustrations were used, and in some instances, the name of the translator. This information was supplemented with detailed research in mission archives in South Africa, England, and Scotland. Careful trawling through these sources revealed a considerable amount about the translated Bunyan texts. There were reports on how translations were done and how the book appeared—often, for example, it was first serialized before appearing as a whole volume. There was also information on how, where, and why the book was used. By drawing together this data, one can gain a fairly detailed sense of how the book was translated, circulated, and interpreted in various contexts. With regard to African uses and interpretations of the text, I have relied primarily on a wide selection of discourses by Africans, whether these be novels, sermons, tracts, letters, hymns, or diaries, mostly in English, in some cases in Sotho, in one case translated from Yoruba, and in another from Kikuyu. A careful consideration of these writings, placed in a broader context of African intellectual and religious traditions, has revealed how Bunyan was read and interpreted.

The book itself has three sections. The first section—Bunyan in the Protestant Atlantic—seeks to sketch the nature of the evangelical mission imperial domain, as it was in this zone that Bunyan translations were shaped. This section unfolds in four chapters. Chapter 1 establishes some broad characteristics of this mission imperial world. This task is accomplished by focusing on one particular mission circuit, namely the links between a Baptist congregation in Camden Road, London, and one mission station, San Salvador, situated in the heart of the Kongo Kingdom in what is now northern Angola (situated slightly below the equator on the continent's Atlantic seaboard). In examining this interaction, I focus on how Camden Roaders constructed a vision of the "Congo" and how these images were in part shaped by the social, intellectual, and cultural structures of the Kongo Kingdom that the Baptists encountered. Chapter 2 examines how Bunyan enters this field and in turn is "beamed" back for use in mission publicity. In telling this story, I first examine how *The Pilgrim's Progress* was deeply woven into Nonconformist life and how these missionaries attempted to reconstitute the text wherever they went. The chapter narrates how Nonconformists back in Britain were quick to

pick up Bunyan's successes and publicize these to a home audience. The chapter also explores the convergence of textual practice that arose between evangelical views of *The Pilgrim's Progress* and those of African converts, both of whom saw the text as a quasi-magical charm or object capable of precipitating extraordinary transformations in its users and readers. For both mission and convert, the text became a type of "fetish," whose correct use could compel events in this world and the next. Chapter 3 moves on to consider how missionaries translated the text. In doing so, I understand translation not as a bounded event but as a process that unfolds across time and space. Once seen in this way, we can better understand how various interests in the mission domain—be they mission, convert, or home committee—help to determine the final shape and form of the translation. We examine two case studies: one to probe translation across time, the second across space. The first case study looks at the Kele translation in the Upper Congo. This translation stretched across several decades, and its final form was that of a series of highly abridged episodes. By considering the "biography" of the translation, the case study demonstrates how mission and convert interests registered themselves in the shape that the text ultimately took. The second case study looks at a Cameroonian translation undertaken by the Jamaican missionary, Joseph Jackson Fuller. In considering this story, we trace the various versions of the story that Fuller inherited from three sources—the black Baptist tradition (which had traveled from the American South to Jamaica), the British Baptists, and slave Christianities. We also consider how Fuller used these knowledges of the story in his precarious tightrope existence as a black missionary in a white-dominated world. Chapter 4 extends this analysis of Bunyan in the mission imperial domain by comparing and contrasting different interpretive strategies used by various readers. Seen from afar, the reading strategies of Protestants, whether in Africa or Europe, were similar and involved a didactic application of the text, often to one's own circumstances. However, through looking in detail at the interpretive methods used by Protestants, we trace the "African" contribution to this reading technique. This "African" method drew on the quasi-allegorical methods inherent in riddle and "folktale" and adapted these for reading Bunyan.

 The Pilgrim's Progress traveled into the mission domain in complex and varied ways and established itself as a discursive arena or public sphere in which different audiences and readers could participate. The second section—Bunyan, the Public Sphere, and Africa—examines how African intellectuals and audiences entered their claims in this domain.

The first chapter in this section focuses on the African mission elite and how they re-allegorized Bunyan as a way of addressing their particular political concerns. The chapter is arranged around a case study of the African mission elite in the Eastern Cape in present-day South Africa and one of their prestigious institutions, Lovedale Mission Institution, a Scottish-run outfit saturated with Bunyan. We examine both the kinds of reading strategies that pupils brought with them to the school and the ways in which Bunyan was taught. The chapter then proceeds to examine in detail how *The Pilgrim's Progress* was deployed in the public pronouncements of the elite. In chapter 6 we turn to discuss more popular appropriations of the text and analyze how aspects of the story were taken up and changed by African Christians operating in a para-literate environment where documents were both a source of religious authority and a form of colonial control. Put another way, documents were both "passports to heaven" and "passes." *The Pilgrim's Progress* offers a very similar vision. The hero Christian carries various documents during the course of the story. One of these is his "pass," namely a permissory document that he, as a masterless man, has to carry. It is also a sign of his election and hence his "passport to heaven." When Christian and his companion, Hopeful, arrive at the gates of heaven, they are required to hand in these documents. Popular African Christian interpretations of the text often lighted on this set of scenes, which migrated into other forms like dreams, conversion narratives, and popular poetry.

In chapters 7 and 8 we examine how aspects of *The Pilgrim's Progress* were used as forums where issues could be discussed and debated in the mission imperial domain. Chapter 7 looks at the character Great-heart, the chivalric knight who accompanies Christiana and her party to heaven in the second part of the book. We analyze how this single, celibate figure became a site in which debates about gender relations in the mission domain could be discussed and experimented with. The vehicle for this analysis is two novels—one, an early nineteenth-century bestseller by Ethel M. Dell called *Greatheart* and the second, a Sotho novel by Thomas Mofolo called *Moeti oa Bochabela* (*The Traveller to the East*, 1906).

Chapter 8 turns to the illustrations of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which, as with most European versions, became a standard feature of nearly all African editions. We focus mainly on twentieth-century editions, which generally adopted Africanized illustrations. We examine two sets of pictures: the first a sequence of line drawings, the second a "gallery" of photographic illustrations for the Kongo edition produced at San

Salvador, the BMS station in northern Angola. We examine how these pictures are enabled by the audiences they address and on whose generic competencies they draw. We also examine the use of mission photography and how it, along with the political interests of leading Africans at San Salvador, produced a form unthinkable in Europe, namely photographic illustrations for a fictional text. Chapter 9 turns to analyze how various African novelists have engaged with these Africanized traditions of reading Bunyan as well as with each other's uses of the text.

The final section—Post-Bunyan—takes the story back to Britain. In chapter 10 we examine the story of how Bunyan became English. We trace how he was taken up by the emerging discipline of English literature and how this grouping sidelined older evangelical and international views of Bunyan, which had initially "added value" to Bunyan by portraying him as universal. In the longer run, however, these views threatened to "contaminate" him by over-associating him with colonized societies. The project of the emerging discipline of English literature was to establish a racialized view of literature that could confer cultural distinctiveness on Britons. Bunyan, sprawled across the globe, did not fit into this framework, and so had to be "reeled" back in order to construct him as white and English.

The conclusion asks what would happen if we lift the "tollgate" separating a "national" and an "international" Bunyan and traces the implications of this move both for postcolonial studies and mainstream Bunyan scholarship.