Introduction: Enchantment Never Ends

Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment
of our intelligence by means of our language.
—Wittgenstein

Protagonists

Dressed in modest black robes with biretta headgear, pale Jesuit faces lurk from the ship's bridge approaching the Coast of New Granada in one famous eighteenth-century painting.[1] Below them, sticking out from the wooden hull, are two ranges of cannons; above them, the Virgin Mary sends a ray of light through a mirror into the boat's sails. Luminous divine will pours down from heaven while dry gunpowder is stored below, which is how the scenario was imagined to have been played in the Americas. A different arrival version takes place in the Japanese *namban byōbu*, (a folding screen). The Jesuits are portrayed in elongated black cloaks with white ruffs and big noses descending from the Portuguese ships, surrounded by a haze of golden clouds. Unlike Mary's radiant light, the golden fog was not intended as a visual supernatural trick. It is a perspectival trick used by the Japanese painter to separate the spaces and to demarcate the distance between European "barbarians" and the Japanese.[2]

Wonder, marvel, the supernatural—the staple of European medieval Christianity—accompanied Iberian colonial expansion across three non-Christian continents in the sixteenth century. Hand in hand with guns and soteriological and conquering zeal, the supernatural was an explosive and

1 The painting referred to here is in Bogotá, at the *Museo Nacional de Colombia* (National Museum of Colombia). Painted by an unknown eighteenth-century artist, it represents the Jesuits arriving by ship off the coast of New Granada.

2 Alexandra Curvelo, "The Disruptive Presence of the *Namban-jin* in Early Modern Japan," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 55, no. 2–3 (2012): 598.

Županov, Ines G. *Missionary Enchantment in South Asia* (*Sixteenth–Eighteenth Centuries*). *Catholic Histories and Fictions*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2025.
DOI 10.5117/9789048567751_INTRO

Amsterdam University Press

thaumaturgic cargo, sailing to-and-fro and often deployed, Catholic missionaries hoped, for the *greater glory of God*. Equally captivating, disturbing, and transformative were modes and objects of enchantment that the colonizers and missionaries identified in partibus infidelium among non-Christians.

Enchantment and re-enchantment are employed in the following pages to signal the clash and the rewiring of ethical and cosmological codes in early-modern global cultural encounters.[3] Enchantment is what gathered and kept—and still does—communities together and linked individuals. It is, neither more nor less, a thin, viscous string of marvelousness generating a sense of personal plenitude and a common destiny with other humans (and the world) beyond logical description. However, as if made of quicksilver, enchantment is always harnessed and manipulated by political, cultural, and religious institutions incapable of holding it still, and confined in theory and practice. It is an invisible electric charge or magnetic current in human interactions and sensuous experience of the world, a fast conduit of emotions. Also defined as sacred, the intersection of divine and human, it can be cultivated or denied but cannot be destroyed.[4] Enchantment is a bond or *religio,* rebinding natural and supernatural, individual and collective.[5] According to Hartmut Rosa, it is a resonant experience, a "vibrating wire" between the subject and the world.[6] Finally, early-modern European political and ecclesiastical regimes increasingly used and abused it to "exercise

3 On the different shades of meanings of the concepts of enchantment/disenchantment there is a flutter of scholarly opinions in the recent years. Their genealogy is long and winding, from Max Weber, Marcel Gauchet, Charles Taylor, Akeel Bilgrami, Hans Joas and others. See, Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, eds. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (London: Routledge, 1998); Marcel Gauchet, *The Disenchantment of the World: A Political History of Religion*, trans. Oscar Burge (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007); Akeel Bilgrami, "What Is Enchantment?" in *Varieties of Secularism in a Secular Age*, eds. M. Warner, J. VanAntwerpen, and C. Calhoun (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 145–65; Hans Joas, *Die Macht des Heiligen: Eine Alternative zur Geschichte von der Entzauberung* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2017).

4 Max Weber's description of the rise of modern science in the seventeenth century as creating a "disenchantment of the world" continues to inspire social sciences in spite of a plethora of differing opinions and arguments. See, Jane Bennett, *The Enchantment of Modern Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

5 Weberian-inspired social sciences defined enchantment as something that was eclipsed by modernity but nevertheless widened the uses of the term. It has been linked both to magic and to religion because of their common appeal to the supernatural, but the concept of "secular enchantment" is now also on the table and is defined as having, crucially, to do with "agency." See, Akeel Bilgrami, "Might There Be Secular Enchantment," in *The Philosophy of Reenchantment*, eds. Michiel Meijer and Herbert de Vriese (New York and London: Routledge, 2021), 55.

6 Hartmut Rosa, *Résonance: Une sociologie de la relation au monde*, trans. by Sacha Zilberfarb and Sarah Raquillet from German (Paris: La Découverte poche, 2021).

AUP Amsterdam University Press

hegemony over collective culture and behavior."[7] Since the sixteenth century, the ever-weakening bond with earth's bionetworks, increasingly perceived as material, inert, and exploitable "natural resources," is often encapsulated in the concept of disenchantment.

According to the anthropologist Marshal Sahlins, the colonial transmissions of the Axial ideologies, Christianity in particular, broke the relationship between spirits—"gods, ancestors, the indwelling souls of plants and animals and others"—and humans.[8] Somewhat reluctant imperial agents, Catholic missionaries in India in the early-modern period were lucid and eagerly enthusiastic about the process of destruction of the local "enchantment" managers: demons and their idolatrous priests. What missionaries had to offer, in their mind, was the truth about the meaning and end of the human world and its dependence on a supreme deity providing an eschatological solution/salvation for all. The triumphant transcendentalism that Karl Jaspers coined as a contrast to immanentism has served as an intellectual handloom for other modernization theories from Max Weber, Karl Marx, and Emile Durkheim to critical interpretation by anthropologists such as Marshal Sahlins.[9] Although missionary accounts and hagiographies may appear to confirm the grand theory, between the lines, myriads of other "small narratives" tell about the difficulty of enforcing monotheism.[10] This book tries to tease out, among other things, how the overarching transcendental fiction tried to contain and sanitize the puzzling and inconvenient small stories with *longue durée* ties to the enchanted worlds. My focus is on "practical" missionary enchantment, its sources, and added values, while contemporary philosophically and theologically minded theories of enchantment, disenchantment, and re-enchantment, fascinating as they are, will appear only in footnotes.[11]

7 Franco Motta and Eleonora Rai, "Jesuit Sanctity: Hypothesizing the Continuity of a Hagiographic Narrative of the Modern Age," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 9, no. 1 (2022): 3.

8 Marshal Sahlins with the assistance of Frederick B. Henry Jr., *The New Science of the Enchanted Universe: An Anthropology of Most Humanity* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2022), 2.

9 The theory of the "Axial Age," the radical transformation in cultural order that began some 2,500 years ago, proposed by Karl Jaspers in 1949, claims that divinity, which had an immanent presence—intellectually speaking—in the human world, moved away to a transcendental "other world." As a consequence, to create their institutions humans were left only to their devices.

10 On immanentism and transcendentalism, and the persistence of the economy of ritual efficacy even after conversion to Christianity, see Alan Strathern, *Unearthly Powers: Religious and Political Change in World History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

11 Charles Taylor, *Cosmic Connections: Poetry in the Age of Disenchantment* (Cambridge, MA and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2024). See also, Michiel Meijer and Herbert de Vriese, *The Philosophy of Reenchantment* (New York and London: Routledge, 2021).

A U P Amsterdam University Press

Jesuit missionaries, the principal but not sole protagonists in this book, were celebrated and vilified for their capacity to deal with traumatic locations of social, cultural, and religious encounters opened by the Iberian colonial agents—settlers, conquistadors, and religious administrators—in places as far apart as Luanda, Goa, Manila, and Lima. The missionary *pharmakon*—a term with contradictory meanings of remedy, poison, and scapegoat—the missionaries proposed to heal the social and cultural tear that colonialism left on its trail was, repeatedly, an effort at re-enchantment.[12]

On the surface, Catholic pictorial and discursive forms of enchantment followed a relatively uniform program. The catechumens' and converts' world was inundated with the images of three divine persons on fluffy white clouds, flying cherubs, and corseted angles, the demons lurking from holes in the ground, and with the miraculous narratives of the life of Jesus, saints, martyrs, and the spectacular healing acts they were capable of providing for the faithful. These "Apostolic" deeds were meant to replace the non-Christian world of powerful, invisible beings, "metapersons," and substances that resisted precise classification except for being considered either demonic tricks or human falsifications.[13] They were presumed obsolete and expected to disappear gradually. As witnessed by subsequent idol extirpation expeditions and various forms of resistance, these local agents of enchantment never disappeared completely.[14]

The geographical and political context dictated missionary strategies of conversion and the quantity and quality of supernatural to be used, encouraged, and repurposed among the non-Christians, catechumens, and converts. While in the Americas, where settler colonialism redrew the political and cultural map of the continent and the epistemic distance between Europeans and Amerindians had been mostly redesigned by violence and forced conversion, the effort to bedazzle the "natives" was far less cautious than in Japan and elsewhere in Asia, where the supernatural Christian message had to be carefully packaged and made appealing to the minds and hearts of those whom Europeans came to convert without conquest.

12 Christian re-enchantment, therefore, became an active missionary panacea employed to substitute a cultural loss in the wake of colonial and mercantile brutality. It could take different forms from laxism, nominalism, syncretism, to accommodation.

13 "Metaperson," "metahuman," and "spirit" are Marshal Sahlins's terminology.

14 Kenneth Mills, *Idolatry and Its Enemies: Colonial Andean Religion and Extirpation, 1640–1750* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Christopher Heaney, *Empires of the Dead: Inca Mummies and the Peruvian Ancestors of American Anthropology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2023).

AUP Amsterdam University Press

Regulated by the performance of emotions, the marvel and wonder—the core of religious enchantment—could rapidly degenerate into horror. A wrong gesture or word in a ritual situation in which a shaman summoned forces of the uncanny could end in a crisis or massacre. In Goa, a Jesuit Rodolfo Acquaviva (1550–83) and his companions, the famous martyrs of Cuncolim, were killed when a possession ritual in which simmering grievances against the Portuguese settlers and ecclesiastics suddenly got out of hand. The Jesuits were simply at the wrong place at the wrong time. The gory scenes of the massacre received detailed descriptions in Jesuit accounts, histories, and even a Jesuit neo-Latin epic.[15] In a different scenario, when a rival tribe killed a Brazilian Jesuit, Francisco Pinto (1552–1608), a self-appointed Tupí *caraíba* (wandering prophet) believed to have supernatural and curative powers, the Potiguars among whom he lived at his time of death continued to worship his bones that were reputed for making rain. However, the two French Capuchins who were told the story by the witnesses in 1612 upon arriving at Maranhão did not believe it and condemned Pinto as a double imposter to the Europeans and the Indians.[16]

These two missionary events are compelling because they nuance the traditional narrative of Jesuit missionary historiography, highlighting the exclusive strategy of accommodation in Asia and the tabula rasa in the Americas.[17] They also support the argument that enchantment was a force the missionaries could not ignore. In the case of Cuncolim martyrs, the shaman's oracular proclamation—"Kill, kill these wizards who disturb the land, enemies of gods [*pagodes*] and destroy their temples [*templos*] and ceremonies"—confirmed missionary belief in the strong presence of malefic beings that inhabited Goan territory.[18] The blood of the martyrs was described, in the missionary letters, as having been scattered by the killers

15 Paul Gwynne, *Francesco Benci's* Quinque Martyres*: Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 2016). The martyrs were beatified in 1894.

16 Charlotte de Castelnau-L'Estoile, "The Uses of Shamanism: Evangelizing Strategies and Missionary Models in Seventeenth-Century Brazil," in *The Jesuits II: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773,* eds. O'Malley et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 626.

17 Anne B. McGinness, "The Historiography of the Jesuits in Brazil Prior to the Suppression," *Jesuit Historiography Online*, Brill, https://referenceworks.brill.com/display/entries/JHO/COM-209645.xml?rskey=049hFM&result=1, last modified July 2018.

18 Ines G. Županov, "Between Mogor and Salsete: Rodolfo Acquaviva's Error," in *Catholic Missionaries in Early Modern Asia: Patterns of Localization,* eds. Nadine Amsler, Andrea Baadea, Bernard Heyberger and Christian Windler (Abingdon: Taylor and Francis/Routledge, 2020), 60; Sebastião Gonçalves, SJ, "Da gloriosa morte de cinco religiosos," in *Documenta Indica* (hereafter *DI*), ed. Joseph Wicki, vol. 12 (Rome: IHSI, 1972), 982; Alessandro Valignano to Father Provincial, December 18, 1583, *DI*, vol. 12, 926. In the Spanish text *pagodes* are called *dioses*.

A U P Amsterdam University Press

all over the rural area of the five villages, in the rice fields, to avenge Jesuit earlier extirpating violence against divine spots such as an anthill and the killing of a (sacred) cow. Whether these descriptions faithfully reflect the acts of heathen godless cruelty and demonic barbarism or function as a Catholic discursive trap may not be easy to discern. Every pious Catholic reader knew by heart the adage that the blood of martyrs is a seed of Christians. The ritual sprinkling of Christian blood was believed to be the prelude to a big harvest of souls. It was, indeed. After an equally bloody retaliation, according to the optimistic eighteenth-century Italian Jesuit hagiographer Andrea Budrioli (1679–1769), thousands of local people converted to Christianity.[19] Jesuit martyrologies are commonly emplotted as a spiral of violence and miracles, following the narrative logic of the *flos sanctorum*. This medieval genre received new importance in the sixteenth century and became the most helpful material for upcoming Christian sanctification.[20]

Narratives

Under the banner of Christ, carried by different hands through different territories, the history of conquest, dispossession, mercantile success, profit, empowerment of some populations, and enslavement of others has been written continuously by European witnesses and historians.[21] The providential narrative plot is a frame loom against which Christian missionaries wove particular histories of cultural and social encounters in India and hagiographies of their mission heroes. These are the sources I read in detail in this book because they are braided with intense affects and enchanting events. Some were published by the protagonists or posthumously by their collaborators and admirers or are available in printed collections and editions, while others are still in manuscripts in the European and Indian archives. These are often self-referential and self-aggrandizing narratives and "dramatistic" rhetorical acts performed with open intention to move, persuade, entice,

19 Andrea Budrioli, *Segni maravigliosi co' quali si e compiaciuto Iddio di autorizzare il martirio de' vener. servi di Dio Ridolfo Acquaviva, Alfonso Paceco, Pietro Berna, Antonio Franceschi, e Francesco Arana della Compagnia di Gesu succeduto nell'Indie il di 15 luglio 1583* (Rome: Per Antonio de' Rossi, 1745), 40–41. See also, João Vicente Melo, ed., *The Writings of Antoni de Montserrat at the Mughal Court*, trans. Lena Wahlgren-Smith (Leiden: Brill, 2023).

20 Jonathan E. Greenwood, "Floral Arrangements: Compilations of Saints' Lives in Early Modern Europe," *Journal of Early Modern History* 22, no. 3 (2018): 181–203.

21 Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, ed., *A Companion to Early Modern Catholic Global Missions* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2018).

AUP Amsterdam University Press

proselytize, or, at times, combat and castigate the enemies, demonic forces included.[22] They capture local histories, cultural performances, and beliefs, some of which were built on an indigenous encyclopedia of the supernatural that sustained the social life and survival of the communities.

The supernatural is not simply an object of description in this book, but also, I claim, employed as a missionary lever when the reasonable explanation or logical persuasion failed. It is good to remember that before the French Revolution, Reason had not yet ruled as an absolutist monarch.[23] Rational and irrational cooperated as smoothly as they could (and always do) in the three centuries of overseas expansion and "discovery," mercantilism, proselytizing, colonialism, and cultural resistance. Transcendental explanations and nonmaterial agents were summoned and employed to sanctify the order European missionaries wanted to establish.[24] I track some otherworldly voices in Portuguese, Spanish, French, Latin, and, when possible, Tamil and Persian. Demons and enemies of Christianity can be lucidly ventriloquist in catechetical and pastoral texts, translated into all mission languages. I take these seriously and read them "against the grain," in Ranajit Guha's famous expression.[25] However, their statements are rarely inventive since demonic characters are emplotted as creatures of the literal meaning and preordained purpose.

The supernatural is like a serpent biting its own "rational" tail. Thus, the Society of Jesus, peddling the supernatural between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, was also one of the most successful promoters of *ratio*, which primarily meant balanced organization, mainly used for acquiring and disseminating knowledge—but not just any kind of knowledge.[26] It had to be systematic, comprehensive, practical, compliant with the dogmas of the church, and, most of all, easily teachable. The Jesuits were so successful

22 Karl E. Scheibe and Frank J. Barrett, *The Storied Nature of Human Life: The Life and Work of Theodore R. Sarbin* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 174: "Rhetorical acts of the dramatistic kind are different in terms of their authorship. Unlike dramaturgical roles that are enacted to follow a self-made contemporaneous script, dramatistic roles are enacted according to cultural prescriptions."

23 Justin E. H. Smith, *Irrationality: The History of the Dark Side of Reason* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2019), 5. The confiscated Catholic churches were not yet renamed the "Temples of Reason."

24 Michael Saler, "Modernity and Enchantment: A Historiographic Review," *American Historical Review* 111, no. 3 (2006): 14.

25 Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, eds., *Selected Subaltern Studies* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988).

26 Claude Pavur, SJ, trans., *The Ratio Studiorum: The Official Plan for Jesuit Education* (Saint Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2005).

AUP Amsterdam University Press

in educating young men that their colleges mushroomed all over Europe and overseas and were imitated even by the Protestants. The discipline and esprit de corps are often given as the cement and mortar of these institutions. What held the Jesuit house—and the whole Christian world—together was a well-argued and discursively crafted narrative of otherworldly salvation. A well-told story did and still does have a universal appeal.

Shaped and rehearsed in Jesuit colleges, the spiritual, miraculous, and soteriological were bundled up and made portable to travel wherever Jesuit obedience and duty called. They were first forged and packaged in Jesuit literary production. The *Spiritual Exercises* and *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* provided the framework, while epistolary exchanges and auto/biographical texts furnished endless exemplary variations.[27]

Since Jesuit historiography for more than half a millennium proceeded and still does by way of recursive interpretive loops, after two decades of cutting-edge (twenty-first century) scholarship laboring to document and make visible Jesuit scientific interests and achievements, there seems to be now a return towards understanding the role of the irrational, magical, and mythical aspects in the missionary vocation and outlook.[28] The archives of the Jesuit mathematicians, astronomers, geographers, and those studying "natural sciences" have been identified and pored over by scholars who showed that Jesuits indeed sported many epistemological hats.[29] How the

27 Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, in *Personal Writings*, ed. and trans. Joseph A. Munitiz and Philip Endean (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 281–358; Ignatius of Loyola, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and Their Complementary Norms*, ed. John W. Padberg (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996); Robert Aleksander Maryks, ed., *A Companion to Ignatius of Loyola: Life, Writings, Spirituality, Influence* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014); Paul Nelles, "Jesuit Letters," in *Oxford Handbook of the Jesuits*, ed. Ines G. Županov (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 44–74; Paul Shore, "The Historiography of the Society of Jesus," in *Oxford Handbook of the Jesuits*, ed. Ines G. Županov (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 759–82.

28 On Jesuit distinctiveness, see Robert Aleksander Maryks, ed., *Exploring Jesuit Distinctiveness: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Ways of Proceeding within the Society of Jesus* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2016).

29 For two decades of interest in Jesuit scientific works, see Mordechai Feingold, ed., *Jesuit Science and the Republic of Letters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Luís Saraiva and Catherine Jami, *The Jesuits, the Padroado and the East Asian Science, 1552–1773* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2008); Florence C. Hsia, *Sojourners in a Strange Land: Jesuits and Their Scientific Missions in Late Imperial China* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Dhruv Raina, "Becoming All Things to All. French Jesuit Scientists and the Construction of the Antiquity of Sciences of India," in *L'Inde des Lumières: Discours, Histoire, Savoir* (*XVIIe–XIXe siècle*), eds. Marie Fourcade and Ines G. Županov, collection Purushartha (Paris: EHESS, 2013), 335–58; Agustín Udías, *Jesuit Contribution to Science: A History* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2015); Mark A. Waddell, *Jesuit Science and the End of Nature's Secrets* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015); Luís Miguel Carolino, "Astronomy, Cosmology, and Jesuit Discipline, 1540–1758," in *Oxford Handbook of the Jesuits*, ed.

AUP Amsterdam University Press

missionaries felt about it is a question that recently opened an "affective turn" in Jesuit history in step with developments in the humanities.[30]

Focus on an embodied emotional register built on discernment "of spirits" and use of the "passions" of the soul such as "love," "fear," and "desire," to mention the most common, combined with the power of the printing press—the new media through which these were expressed—led to mass production of apologetic and hagiographic works, "storied accounts" printed in multiple languages.[31] In addition to being media savvy "printing natives," in the words of Markus Friedrich, the Jesuits possessed and managed the most sophisticated early-modern communication network with long and varied tentacles spread globally, where ideas and methods could be applied, tested, invented, and improved in situ.[32] Famous for their corporate culture of knowledge production, which made them precursors of the encyclopedic and Enlightenment projects of the eighteenth century, individual Jesuits, however, never forgot—if they did, they left the order—that their primary task had always been apostolic ministry, which as per definition required a supernatural safety net.

Therefore, the supernatural that the Society of Jesus cultivated as part of its Christian DNA, particularly in the spiritual and pastoral literature, is a space of contact between the humanly visible world, mediated through sensory experience, and the invisible and omnipresent divine. Narrativizing is a cognitive meaning-making process because the storyline ensures continuity and individual and collective coherence.[33] For most ordinary Jesuits, the effort went into animating the inner perception of sacredness that each Christian had to search for and identify in one's soul through the external,

Ines G. Županov (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 670–707; Manonmani Restif-Filliozat, "The Jesuit Contribution to the Geographical Knowledge of India in the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 6, no. 1 (2019): 71–84.

30 Raphaële Garrod and Yasmin Haskell, eds., *Changing Hearts: Performing Jesuit Emotions between Europe, Asia, and the Americas* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2019); Wietse de Boer and Christine Götller, eds., *Religion and Senses in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); Ulrike Strasser, *Missionary Men in the Early Modern World: German Jesuits and Pacific Journeys* (Amsterdam University Press, 2020), 81–108. Renate Dürr and Ulrike Strasser, "Wissensgenerierung als emotionale Praktik: Ethnographisches Schreiben und emotionalisiertes Lesen in Joseph Stöckleins S. J. Neuem Welt-Bott," *Historische Anthropologie* 28, no. 2 (2020): 354–78.

31 For the role of stories in the process of social reproduction, see Phillip L. Hammack and Andrew Pilecki, "Narrative as a Root Metaphor for Political Psychology," *Political Psychology* 33, no. 1 (2012): 75–103.

32 Marcus Friedrich, "Constructing a Saint's *Life* between Rome and the Provinces: Jesuit Hagiographical Literature on Peter Canisius," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 10, no. 3 (2023): 419–37.

33 Jerome Bruner, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).

AUP Amsterdam University Press

empirical organs and phenomena. The method of interior fortification underwired the identity, as Michel de Certeau argued half a century ago, against the danger of "effusion outwards" (*effusio ad exteriora*).[34] The inner struggle-cum-learning—a model for missionary self-enchantment—was and is a process that is never complete and cannot be won but can be usefully channeled in writing. Moderation was recommended, as is usual in Jesuit advice literature. However, the experience and will to probe the uncanny immoderately led some truly "enchanted" souls to madness, as was the extreme case of the Frenchman Jean-Joseph Surin (1600–65), or to prophetic episodes suffered by a Portuguese Jesuit in Kochi, Pedro de Basto (1570–1645).[35]

The texts written by or about Surin and Basto occupied the extreme spectrum of spiritual and prophetic discursive space. However, the two Jesuits still acted within the norms that were allowed by the members of the Society of Jesus. Cultivating spiritualist individuality, a Protestant hallmark, was accepted as long as it involved an overtly monitored dialogue with the divine. Both Surin and Basto engaged in moving and disturbing devotional conversations harnessed in the narratives that recorded them. These recorded dialogues were also a sign of democratization of devotional experience.[36] Confession and proselytism were thus tightly intertwined, as Jesuit writings amply confirm.[37]

34 Michel de Certeau, "*La réforme de l'intérieur au temps d'Aquaviva*," in *Les Jésuites, spritualité et activité: Jalon d'une histoire*, Bibliothèque de Spiritualité 9 (Paris/Rome: Beauchesne, 1974), 53–70.

35 Pedro Machado was born in Basto in northern Portugal as the second son of a noble family in 1570 and died in Kochi in 1645. He enlisted as a soldier and went to India in 1586. In 1599, Basto entered the Jesuit order in Goa and remained spiritual coadjutor, spending his time doing lowly domestic work, as if it were the ultimate spiritual mission. For more information, see chapters 4 and 5; Jean-Joseph Surin, *Into the Dark Night and Back: The Mystical Writings of Jean-Joseph Surin*, trans. Patricia Ranum, ed. Moshe Sluhovsky (Leiden: Brill, 2019); Jean-Joseph Surin *Guide Spirituel pour la perfection*, ed. Michel de Certeau (Paris: Desclée De Brouwer, 1963). See also, Michel de Certeau, *La Correspondance de Jean-Joseph Surin* (Paris: Desclée De Brouwer, 1966), where he examines Surin's role as the exorcist in the "theatre of devils" at Loudun between 1634 and 1637; Michel de Certeau, *La Possession de Loudun* (Paris: Julliard, 1978); Zoltan Biedermann, "Um outro Vieira? Pedro de Basto, Fernão de Queiroz e a profecia jesuítica na Índia portuguesa," in *António Vieira, Roma e o Universalismo das Monarquias Portuguesa e Espanhola*, eds. Pedro Cardim and Gaetano Sabatini (Lisbon: Centro de História de Além-Mar, 2011), 145–73. See also chapter 6.

36 Silvia Mostaccio, "Crucified Saints in the Early Seventeenth Century: Models and Devotional Practices from the Orthodox to the Liminal in Spanish Europe," in *Eloquent Images: Evangelisation, Conversion and Propaganda in the Global World of the Early Modern Period*, eds. Giuseppe Capriotti, Pierre-Antoine Fabre, and Sabina Pavone (Leuven University Press, 2022), 151–168.

37 The new "theology of the visible" promoted by the Jesuits, among others, was a rampart erected by the Counter-Reformation Tridentine Church against Protestant rejection of outwardly

AUP Amsterdam University Press

We can read about the Jesuit commitment to proselytizing in the emotional missives collected in the *indipetae*—letters requesting permission to go to the Indies as missionaries—kept in the Jesuit archives in Rome.[38] Desire, illusion, and hope, laced with visionary expectations, spill onto hundreds of pages written by young men dying to die on a mission.[39] The burning desire for martyrdom was not just the required topos in the *indipetae*. It was proof itself of the right intention and providential choice. One had to want to die in order for the mission in the Indies to be even permitted. Being selected was considered a sign of a special divine election. However, in principle, the recruitment was a complicated process, and Jesuit Roman heavyweights made decisions, at times, under pressure coming from different provincial superiors and other church and royal dignitaries.[40]

The phrase *ite et inflammate omnia* (go, set all on fire) that appeared on Jesuit emblems speaks of the contagious effervescence of the desire that worked through the language and images. The metaphor of fire and burning referenced the missionary's body as much as his evangelizing procedure. Fire was a self-attributed quality of the founder, Iñigo de Loyola (1491–1556), who assumed the name Ignatius from *ignis* (fire) in Paris in 1527 after he

spiritual expressions. Jesuits espoused "sanctity for all" who could and desired to experience it. Just as each exercitant taking spiritual exercises had to take an interior journey alone, he did so in dialogue with Christ (or the cross) with the help of the priest/director of the retreat. Selfish individual salvation, or for the few select noble and deserving souls, was insufficient for a Jesuit confessor and missionary. The Ignatian injunction of "helping souls" means that one can only save oneself by saving others, saving all.

38 Thousands of *indipetae* (petitions to go to the Indies) were addressed to the superior general of the Society of Jesus in Rome from 1580 to 1773. See Anna Rita Capoccia, "Le destin des *indipetae* au-delà du XVIe siècle," in *Missions religieuses modernes: «notre lieu est le monde»*, eds. Pierre-Antoine Fabre and Bernard Vincent (Rome : École Française de Rome, 2007), 89-110. There are 14,067 *indipetae* letters in the *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu*. Gian Carlo Roscioni, *Il desiderio delle Indie. Storie, sogni e fughe di giovani gesuiti italiani* (Torino: Einaudi, 2001); Paulo Roberto de Andrada Pacheco and Marina Massimi, "O conhecimento de si nas Litterae Indipetae," *Estudos de Psicologia* 10, no. 3 (2005): 345–54. On the Neapolitan *indipetae*, see also Jennifer D. Selwyn, *A Paradise Inhabited by Devils: The Jesuits' Civilizing Missions in Early Modern Naples* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2004). For *indipetae* digitalization project by the Institute of Advanced Studies in Boston, see Emanuele Colombo, "Lacrime e sangue. Martirio e missione nella Compagnia di Gesù in età moderna," *Annali di scienze religiose* 12 (2019), 92; Elisa Frei, "Muzio Vitelleschi Replies to *Litterae Indipetae*: Two Case Studies from the Austrian Province in the Seventeenth Century," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* LXC, fasc. 179 (2021-I), 63–87; Girolamo Imbruglia et al., *Cinque secoli di Litterae indipetae: Il desiderio delle missioni nella Compagnia di Gesù,* Bibliotheca Instituti Historici Societatis Iesu 82 (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2022); Elisa Frei, *Early Modern* Litterae Indipetae *for the East Indies* (Leiden: Brill, 2023).

39 Colombo, "Lacrime e sangue," 94.

40 Colombo, "Lacrime e sangue," 94. Martyrdom was a part of Jesuit identity.

escaped the Inquisition (and perhaps its fires) in Alcalá and turned the page from acting as a spiritual firebrand towards being an institution builder.[41] In the illustrations of his biography, he is often depicted with a halo of light projecting flames above his head.[42] A Jesuit's burning heart made Francis Xavier (1506–52) tear at his soutane to cool it off. Conversely, as hagiographical spin has it, he asked for "more, more, more" fire.[43] Of course, the flaming radiance of the heart is nothing but an effect of the Holy Spirit, as can be seen on solar disks bearing the anagram IHS used as an emblem on various Jesuit iconographical projects and the mirrors reflecting light from above. In the late-seventeenth century, the same imagery was evoked by the famous Jesuit preacher António Vieira (1608–97) in Brazil. For Vieira, the "fire of tongues" was essential in the missionaries' cultural encounters and exchanges. It is, he wrote, "the ardent zeal and fervor that the heirs of the apostolic spirit have, always will have for knowing, studying, and learning the tongues of strangers, to preaching the Gospel, spreading the faith, and amplifying the Church with them."[44] Striking metaphors and images, supernatural interventions, and mythology building were lumps of enchantment that a skillful Jesuit had to simultaneously conjure up and pull down to pieces only to reassemble again when needed.

However, the magic of missionary persuasion was a mixed bag of theology, poetry, images, enthralling narratives, translations, and history wrapped up in illocutionary force that both worked and failed at times. They had fire, indeed, but not meant to burn to ashes. It was meant to transform emotions, ideas, and objects by selecting, adding, and welding them together using

41 Ignatius has a composite etymological origin: Latin words *ignis* (fire), *igneus* (fiery), and *igne natus* (born from fire). Steffen Zierholz, "Allegories of Light and Fire: Ignatian Effigies, Painted on Copper," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 9, no. 3 (2022): 357–78; Ignatius Querck, *Acta S. Ignatii de Lojola Societatis Jesu fundatoris* (Vienna: Leopold Voigt, 1698), 100: "Fire you are, fire you were, and for all eternity, Ignatius, fire you will be. Such is the name, the deeds prove so." Ignatius adopted his Latin name when studying in Paris, even though it was not etymologically related to his Basque birth name Íñigo. Hugo Rahner, "Inigo und Ignatius," in *Ignatius als Mensch und Theologe,* ed. Hugo Rahner (Freiburg: Herder, 1964), 31–42.

42 Maria João Pereira Coutinho et al., "Enlightening St. Ignatius through the Flame of Arts: A Singular Artistic and Iconographic Program in the Church of the Holy Spirit in Évora," in *Eloquent Images: Evangelisation, Conversion and Propaganda in the Global World of the Early Modern Period*, eds. Giuseppe Capriotti, Pierre-Antoine Fabre, and Sabina Pavone (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2022), 188.

43 Ines G. Županov, *Missionary Tropics: The Catholic Frontier in India* (*16th–17th Centuries*) (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 212.

44 Roland Green, *Five Words: Critical Semantics in the Age of Shakespeare and Cervantes* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2013), 72; Thomas M. Cohen, The *Fire of Tongues*: *António Vieira and the Missionary Church in Brazil and Portugal* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

A U P Amsterdam University Press

spiritual imagination and reasonable argumentation, philological precision, observation, and minute description. We can add to that the administrative passion for collecting, classifying, and preserving. The result is that the archives of Jesuit missions, experiences, and strategies are prodigious and relatively well-preserved despite the destruction and scattering of documents during the hiatus, in which the banned Society of Jesus barely survived in the late-eighteenth century.

In some Jesuit Europe-bound letters—many preserved in the *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu*—missionaries poured out their emotions of distress and grievances and vented desperation and anger against local life and even climate. These letters were often addressed to superiors and marked by the sign *soli*. It meant not for public reading. They are witnesses that the triumphant frames of reference and the certainty of the quick and easy solutions to imposing Christian enchantment and conversion started falling apart relatively early. The "pagan" supernatural refused to be vanquished without a fight. The monster, the devil himself, identified as a permanent meddler in human affairs from late antiquity, reappeared everywhere where missionaries thought they had culled him down. Moreover, the Protestants saw him sitting on the papal chair and sporting the triple tiara.[45] The Christians found him in the newly discovered and colonized territories, speaking from the mouths of the idols—such as the one Ludovico Varthema (1470–1517) called *deumo* and saw in Kochi in the late fifteenth century—fomenting attacks on the Portuguese Catholic settlers (*casados*) and priests who came with a "peaceful" intention to trade, travel, and Christianize.

Performance

Floating along the expanding European empires between Africa, Asia, and America, Catholic missionaries belonging to designated religious orders were also considered a counterbalance to a potentially deadly temptation of coveting treasures and gold that the mercantile and conquistador culture of the Iberians embraced with violent enthusiasm. So violent it was that Francis Xavier, the first missionary of the Society of Jesus, wrote from Kochi in 1548 a letter to Simão Rodrigues (1510–79), his colleague and the confessor of the Portuguese King João III (1502-57). He exhorted the Jesuit to advise the king to recite a biblical verse for the salvation of his soul,

45 Raf Gelders, "Genealogy of Colonial Discourse: Hindu Traditions and the Limits of European Representation," in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, no. 3 (2009): 573.

Amsterdam University Press

Mt 16:26: "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?"[46] The enchantment with earthly riches should be countered with the enchantment of the promise of the soul's eternal salvation. Xavier strongly recommended that the king meditate for a quarter of an hour daily to bleach the sins away—sins of violence, killing, and confiscation of property and territory perpetrated by his subjects in Asia.[47] The only word, Xavier insisted in another letter, the Portuguese *fidalgos* (nobles) and soldiers knew how to conjugate in all tenses was "*rapio, rapis*" (I seize, you seize).[48]

The utopian and messianic waves, supported by the Christian theological armory worn uncomfortably by European dynasties, political elites, and ambitious individuals, galvanized the entrepreneurial and foolhardy spirit of "discovery" and enrichment. However, the perpetual anticipatory extension of Christian eschatology collided with other supernatural and cultural systems of meaning spun by polities and communities along the overseas colonial frontiers. From holding on to the generic concepts such as *gentilismo/gentilidade*, by the beginning of the seventeenth century, missionaries started distinguishing founders, sacred books, rituals, and temples of *seitas* (religious sects), such as *bramanismo*, that resembled Christian faith and church in specific if ambiguous ways. The decision to brand these perceived similarities as diabolic illusion and imitation (*a diabolo, qui est simia dei*) or atheism to accommodate it or to destroy it depended on the geographical location and political power/authority in the hands of the Europeans.[49] The stories of cultural encounters in the sixteenth century have been told in European literature and histories, ranging from cheering and condemning violent destruction, subjugation, and resistance. The Iberian Catholic and subsequent Protestant colonialism were not about a superior power of arms, technology, and intelligence. It was about a vision of the future, a utopian space of the Messiah's second coming, expected by the Portuguese king Manuel at the dawn of the sixteenth

46 "*Quid prodest homini si universum mundum lucretur, animae vero suae detrimentum patiatur?*" (Mt 16:26). Francis Xavier, *Epistolae S. Francisci Xaverii aliaque eius scripta (1535–52)*, eds. G. Schurhammer, SJ, and J. Wicki, SJ, vol. 1 (Rome: apud "Monumenta Historica Soc. Iesu," 1996) (hereafter *EX*), 421. See also Joseph Wicki, SJ, "*La Sagrada Escritura en las cartas e instrucciones de Francisco Xavier*," *Manresa* 24 (1552): 259–64.

47 *Mesa da consciencia* (Council of Conscience) was established to protect the king's soul from sin done in his name.

48 *EX*, vol. 1, 281–2.

49 "From the devil, who is the ape of God." See Ramón Mujica Pinilla, "Angels and Demons in the Conquest of Peru," in *Angels, Demons and the New World,* eds. Fernando Cervantes and Andrew Redden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

AUP Amsterdam University Press

century, and of providential British imperialism and "Fulfillment theology" in the nineteenth.[50] It was an irrational framework that promoted rational, material solutions such as, among others, extermination, displacement, and economic appropriation.

In the early-modern period, European colonialism could not provide a convincing political self-justification and ideological resources without conjuring up otherworldly intervention. More than all other agents in charge of keeping the political enchantment of a frail European settler and rapacious commercial enterprise credible and legitimate, missionaries in India wrote from and about the soft belly of tropical colonialism with contagious hope that Christian suffering would always turn into triumph. Their writings were spinning an enchanted romance of Christian salvation and colonial progress.

A myth of antique apostolic missionary "performers" in Asia, St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew, popularized in the writings of Eusebius of Caesarea (d. AD 339) and Saint Jerome (d. AD 420), gained popularity during the Iberian expansion, especially among the missionaries, and served to justify the early-modern proselytizing wave.[51] By the mid-seventeenth century, Antonio Ruiz de Montoya (1585–1652), stationed in Peru, argued that God would not have left the Americas without the light of the Gospel.[52] He even went as far as to claim that St. Thomas, whom the Jesuit Manuel da Nóbrega (1517–70) in Brazil identified in 1549 as *Pay Sumé* of the local legends, prophesied the arrival of the Jesuits to Paraguay.

The Jesuits presented themselves as "New Apostles." Ananya Chakravarty shows in her book *The Empire of Apostles* how the Jesuits forged a religious vision of the Portuguese global empire, while Bronwen McShea, in her *Apostles of Empire*, portrayed French Jesuit entanglement with the French

50 Gerald Studdert-Kennedy, *Providence and the Raj: Imperial Mission and Missionary Imperialis,* (New Delhi/Thousand Oaks/London: SAGE, 1998); Luís Filipe F. R. Thomaz, "*L'idée impériale manueline*," in *La Découverte, le Portugal et l'Europe,* ed. Jean Aubin (Paris: *Fondation Calouste Gulbenkian, Centre culturel portugais*, 1990), 35–103.

51 Adam Knobler, *Mythology and Diplomacy in the Age of Exploration* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2016), 57-69.

52 Antonio Ruiz de Montoya, *The Spiritual Conquest Accomplished by the Religious of the Society of Jesus in the Province of Paraguay, Paraná, Uruguay, and Tape*, trans. Clement. J. McNaspy, SJ, John P. Leonard, SJ, and Martin E. Palmer, SJ (Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1993), 81. See Hélène Clastres, *La terre sans mal: Le prophetisme tupí-guaraní* (Paris: Seuil, 1975); Barbara Ganson, "Antonio Ruiz de Montoya, Apostle of the Guaraní," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 3, no. 2 (2016): 209; Louis-André Vigneras, "Saint Thomas, Apostle of America," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 57, no. 1 (1977): 82–90; Manoel da Nóbrega, *Cartas do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa nacional, 1886), 5.

AUP Amsterdam University Press

empire building in Canada.[53] The remnants of the "true" faith were, thus, according to Christian missionary reports, strewn throughout the world but also variously comingled with demonic, supernatural forces acting through objects and human agents subjected to their power. To missionary dismay, the non-Christian sources of supernatural power had been enshrined in political institutions and supported by the local government apparatus. They resisted Christian reappropriation and destruction in Asia infinitely more successfully than in the Americas and Africa.[54] Historians advanced various reasons for the Iberian knockout of the Aztecs and Incas, from ecology and the lack of firearms to cognitive unpreparedness and bad luck.[55] Missionaries who followed in the wake of Iberian conquests came to pick up the pieces and dampen the political hubris of the winners. In the long run, cultural victory had never been complete; the violence simmered and, at times, had to be repeated.

For the sixteenth-century European missionaries, eastward spiritual expansion, on the contrary, was full of oneiric déjà vu expectations, followed by surprises and failures. The *pagodas*—idols or "pagan" gods—identified in India followed the missionaries further east to Japan and China.[56] The Brahmans and the bonzes, acting as the priests of the *pagodas*, kept adhering to their "false idols" even after hearing and "receiving" Christian preaching. That was a surprise and annoyance for the missionaries and was dealt with both iconoclastic verve and theological reflection. In addition, myriads of

53 Ananya Chakravarti, *The Empire of Apostles: Religion,* Accommodatio *and the Imagination of Empire in Modern Brazil and India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2018); Bronwen McShea, *Apostles of Empire: The Jesuits and New France* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019).

54 Asia was a very different time/landscape. It haunted the European imagination from late antiquity, populated with marvels and monsters. Comparison between various Jesuit missionary fields is a popular heuristic method in scholarship. See, for example, Abé Takao, "What Determined the Content of Missionary Reports? 'The Jesuit Relations' Compared with the Iberian Jesuit Accounts," *French Colonial History* 3 (2003): 69-84; Markus Friedrich, "'Government in India and Japan is different from government in Europe': Asian Jesuits on Infrastructure, Administrative Space, and the Possibilities for a Global Management of Power," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 4, no. 1 (2017): 1–27.

55 Tzvetan Todorov, *La conquête de l'Amérique, la question de l'autre* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1982); Inga Clendinnen, *Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1517–1570* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Sabine MacCormack, *Religion in the Andes: Vision and Imagination in Early Colonial Peru* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

56 *Pagoda* or *pagode* means an idol. It is etymologically connected to Bhagavati, a goddess. See Henrique Henriques, introduction to *The First European Tamil Grammar: A Critical Edition,* ed. Hans Josef Vermeer (Heidelberg: Groos, 1982). According to the Jesuit Athanasius Kircher's theory, idolatry originated in India and spread to China. See Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters*: *History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 56.

AUP Amsterdam University Press

popular "superstitions" concerning omens, oracles, dragons, nagas, and spirits populated the whole stretch of territory from South to Southeast Asia.[57] According to anthropologist Marshall Sahlins, the ubiquitous invisible spirits, the "metapersons," were tough to handle because even though they inhabited objects impermanently, they had agency and psychological power over individuals and communities.[58] In the seventeenth century, missionary texts and histories hastened to describe and interpret dispersed popular mythologies and beliefs to argue against them, phase them out and replace them.[59]

The performative imperative in the Jesuit missionary "mode of procedure" was closely linked with the presentation of their physical appearance. Invoking St. Paul's precept in 1 Corinthians 9:20—"To the Jews, I became as a Jew, to win Jews," the Jesuits adopted a controversial policy of accommodating to the temporal "customs" of other cultures and traditions. The uncertainty of how to distinguish interior and exterior signs of sanctity or idolatry left the missionaries vulnerable to accusations of apostasy and espousing the view of the "natives." The flexible external identity was responsible for Jesuit proselytizing success, ultimate political failure, and suppression of the order.[60]

The Jesuit missionaries famously identified China as a refined place lacking only Christian faith.[61] Francis Xavier, the first Jesuit missionary to travel from India to Japan before dying at the "door" of China on the island of Shangchuan, argued that the Chinese were *gente branca* (white

57 Superstition is an epistemically loaded term and "forever in the eye of the beholder." Peter Marshall, "Disenchantment and Re-Enchantment in Europe, 1250–1920," *The Historical Journal* 54, no. 2 (2011): 599–606.

58 David Graeber and Marshall Sahlins, *On Kings* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2017). See also, Sahlins, *The New Science of the Enchanted Universe,* 2. See also, Alan Strathern*, Unearthly Powers.*

59 Ines G. Županov, "The Pulpit Trap: Possession and Personhood in Colonial Goa," *RES: Anthropology and Esthetics* 65–66 (2014/2015): 298–315.

60 Role-playing, which the Jesuits adapted from the medieval and Renaissance theories of *adiaphora*, served them primarily in potentially hostile political situations in which they had no Iberian temporal support but identified their interlocutors as belonging to a "civilized" society. See Ines G. Županov, "Le repli du religieux: Les missionnaires jésuites du XVIIe siècle entre la théologie chrétienne et une éthique païenne," *Annales HSS* 51, no. 6 (1996): 1201–23.

61 Some Jesuit theories—from those or Matteo Ricci to the Figurists—placed the origin of idolatry in Egypt, but it was the Indian images and forms that were identified as the origins of Chinese and Japanese idols. See, Joan-Pau Rubiés, "From Idolatry to Religions: the Missionary Discourses on Hinduism and Buddhism and the Invention of Monotheistic Confucianism, 1550–1700," *Journal of Early Modern History* 24, no. 6 (2020): 499–536; Sophie Ling-Jia Wei, *Chinese Theology and Translation: The Christianity of the Jesuit Figurists and Their Christianized* Yijing (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2020).

AUP Amsterdam University Press

people) endowed with reason and civility.[62] His coreligionist Alessandro Valignano (1539–1606) agreed and reflected on the strategies to convert "white people," unlike black Indians, whom he despised. The Japanese white skin color, referred to already by Marco Polo, had been picked up and repeated by Jesuits and other merchants/travelers. Still, it took another century to transform this visual distinction into a normalized racial topos.[63] In the mid seventeenth-century Jesuit correspondence, "whiteness" was a practical signal that such people required persuasion and accommodation, not violence. It was not yet a biological category. A Jesuit António de Andrade (1580–1634) described Tibetans in Tsaparang in 1624 as white. The Koreans were also included in the group.[64] However, even without a concept of race, the Catholic Church authorities refused and stalled ordaining "black" Indian priests. The rule was not universal, not even written, but it was a common practice. Only Japanese were regularly ordained as priests in the sixteenth century and accepted to the Society of Jesus.

There was one exception. Pedro Luís Bramane was aware of the discrimination and complained to the general of the order, Everard Mercurian (1514–80), about being the only Indian admitted to the Society of Jesus.[65] Giuseppe Marcocci traced the development of racial discrimination, even of the local Christian elite such as Brahmans, in the "cross-fertilization" of two categories: *negros* and *gentíos*.[66] Their "black" and "gentile" heritage

62 J. F. Moran, *The Japanese and the Jesuits: Alessandro Valignano in Sixteenth-Century Japan* (London: Routledge, 1993), 97, 387. Balthazar Gago, a Jesuit from Lisbon who arrived in Japan a year after Xavier's departure, also depicted the Japanese as "white and well-proportioned and good looking people and so refined in human things (*vna gente blanca tan bien proporcionada y hermosa y tan polida en las cofas humanas*)," in "Carta do padre Baltazar Gago," Hirado, September 23, 1555, in *Cartas que los Padres y Hermanos de la Compañia de Iesus, que andan en los Reynos de Iapon escriuieron a los de la misma Compañía* (Alcalà: en casa de Iuan Iñiguez de Lequerica, 1579), 71.

63 Rotem Kowner, "Skin as a Metaphor: Early European Racial Views on Japan, 1548–1853," *Ethnohistory* 51, no. 4 (2004): 751–78. Eventually, from white, the Japanese would also turn "yellow" in the mid-eighteenth century when Europe and North America redefined and arrested the racial classification to fit their new world division, Rotem Kowner, *From White to Yellow: The Japanese in European Racial Thought, 1300–1735* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014).

64 Bruna Soalheiro, *A viagem da cruz ao teto do mundo: Encontros culturais e diálogo inter-religioso nas missões da Companhia de Jesus na Índia e no Tibete* (Rio de Janeiro: Paco Editorial, 2018). The Jesuit Gasper Vilela depicted Koreans as being "white in color" in 1571. Kowner, "Skin as a Metaphor," 753.

65 Županov, *Missionary Tropics*, 259–69.

66 Giuseppe Marcocci, "Blackness and Heathenism. Color, Theology, and Race in the Portuguese World, ca. 1450–1600," *Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura* 43, no. 2 (2016): 33–57.

disqualified them from the priesthood in Goa. They were forced to look for ecclesiastical patrons elsewhere before being allowed to join the Congregation of the Oratory of Saint Philip Neri in Lisbon.[67] The iconography of José Vaz (1651–1711), the first Oratorian (Brahman) missionary in Sri Lanka, represents him as almost white in all the texts and most of the portraits, but the stigma of the darkness of gentility remained. Performing "whiteness" or "blackness" became Oratorians' strategy for different social groups they attended in Sri Lanka. White-skinned Oratorians were selected to minister to the lowlands population under Dutch rule, and dark-skinned missionaries were sent to the Buddhist Kingdom of Kandy. The Oratorians impersonated European missionaries for the King of Kandy and Sri Lankan *coolys* for the Dutch.[68]

Consciously rehearsed crossdressing was a form of performative enchantment strategy the missionaries employed for conversion and salvation ever since the Roman Jesuit Roberto Nobili (1577–1656) took up Brahman *sannyāsi* costume after receiving advice from a "true" Brahman *sannyāsi* (ascetic). When José Vaz, a Goan Brahman and Oratorian missionary, dressed in a Portuguese priestly soutane at the Kandy court with the same intention of impressing King Vimaladharmasurya II (ruled 1687–1707), he repeated Nobili's gesture in reverse. According to the hagiographical accounts, the king tested Vaz's supernatural connections by asking him to pray for rain during drought. The Oratorian planted the cross on the public square opposite the palace until the rain poured down. In chapter 7, I argue that, whatever their hagiographies try to persuade us, the success of the Oratorian missions at the Kandy court is due to the political situation in which the missionaries were understood to be European "ambassadors" and enemies of the Dutch. Their performative enchantment strategies were frail, except as embroidered in their hagiographic accounts. On the other hand, when enchantment proved to be ineffective, the display of knowledge helped. Like all seventeenth-century missionary orders, the Goan Oratorians imitated Jesuits by taking knowledge production and promotion seriously.

Acquisition of information about the creative work of God and the miracle of creation is the foundation of the Jesuit intellectual labor. Combined with

67 In 1706, the Congregation of the Oratory of the Holy Cross of Miracles received papal and royal approbation and was established in Goa. Carmo da Silva, "Goan Oratorians," in *Goa and Portugal: History and Development,* eds. Charles J. Borges, Óscar G. Pereira, and Hannes Stubbe (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2000), 275–81. When Catholic Goan Brahmans requested admission to the Society of Jesus in the late seventeenth century—a hundred years after the conversion of their community—the Jesuits responded with silence. See chapter 7.
68 *Cooly* was a name for an unskilled laborer.

Amsterdam University Press

corporate discipline and the focus on teaching, travel, and writing, Jesuit knowledge production in the early-modern period was prodigious. Although much information—from botanical descriptions, astronomical observations, and geographical mapmaking, to ethnographic accounts and "advanced" scientific research—stimulated the emergence of the Enlightenment view of the world, the Jesuit spiritual anchorage prevented them from renouncing the existence of miracles and enchantment beyond the pale of rational argument.[69] The tension between the tasks of empirical description for the sake of making knowledge, on the one hand, and of conversion, on the other, is most visible in the late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century missionary accounts. How to combine textual sources, some considered "ancient," retelling lives of prophets and wise men who were not mentioned in the Bible, and vernacular religious and spiritual practices observed all over Asia, mostly initially dismissed as "pagan," with the universalized and comparative framework of Christianity was a colossal task. Jesuit missionaries had to become "historians" of the people they came to convert because transplanting Christianity required local grounding in indigenous prophetic, enchanted mythologies and antique practices. While during the first encounter, some missionaries in South India saw a diabolical machine of *bramanismo* at work in their missionary field, at a second glance, local customs and rites appeared to them as nothing but a form of civility.[70] In chapter 6, I follow a fragmentary epistolary debate between two Jesuit theologians describing a "religion"—Buddhism in this case—that had no name in the European classification of the seventeenth century when even the concept of religion had not yet been epistemically formalized. The Jesuit passion for intellectual description and analysis and the duty of pious refutation often created hybrid intellectual products overlooked and rejected by Enlightenment scholarship. Spiritual subjectivity is a form of self-enchantment and a blind spot in missionary intellectual projects geared to objectify and represent social reality.[71]

69 Jeffrey D. Burson, "Introduction: The Culture of Jesuit Erudition in an Age of Enlightenment," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 6, no. 3 (2019): 387–415.

70 Gonçalo Fernandes Trancoso described the diabolic paganism in South India as a "machine of Brahmanism (*máquina do Bramanismo*)," in an account opposed to Roberto Nobili's view of Brahmanical customs as pure civility. Ines G. Županov, *Disputed Mission: Jesuit Experiments and Brahmanical Knowledge in Seventeenth-Century India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), 35.

71 Charles Taylor sees the enchanted self as "porous," in which the boundary between man and world is blurred, contrary to the "buffered" self that turns on itself as the locus of feeling and thinking. Similarly, Akeel Bilgrami argues that meanings ("values") arise in the crossing point between agency and external normative callings that make demands on us. If depending

Jesuit demonology in the eighteenth century morphed into anthropology avant la lettre in the missionary accounts from South India published and publicized in the *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*. Responding to hostile anti-Jesuit and anti-Catholic intellectual enemies in Europe, Jesuit missionary descriptions of "demon possession" oscillated between enchantment and disenchantment, subjective and objectivizing accounts. They rejected the power of "pagan" demons and privileged the thesis of priestly fraud while at the same time allowing for Christianized supernatural events and intercessions. In chapter 8, I argue that the French Jesuits in India sharpened their arguments to support Catholic theologians and European intellectuals opposed to Protestant and Libertine theses that refused any supernatural explanations by providing ethnographic descriptions of their lived experiences in India.

Itinerary

This book closely follows one among many treads spun in accounts, treatises, and histories written by Catholic missionaries embracing or touching on wonder, supernatural, and religious and secular enchantment in the Indian subcontinent between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. While Jesuits famously studied everything, from contemplating their interior will and desire while taking spiritual exercises to studying the stars and the cosmos under foreign skies—on the ships or from the observatories in Beijing and Agra—what they did even better was studying (and fashioning) their history.

In the first part—"Hagiographies"—consisting of three connected and somewhat overlapping chapters, I aim to understand how Jesuits' extraordinary literary production about and in the missions responded to European demand for enchantment from the sixteenth century onward in historical writing. Marvel and wonder were framed as the bloodline of the permanent sanctification against all odds and demonic obstacles in geographical spaces worldwide and the interior of every missionary body. The *Vida* (life) of Francis Xavier, published by João de Lucena (1549–1600) in 1600 in Portuguese, is at the center of chapter 1 because it furnished a blueprint for all subsequent missionary biographies. It is a witness of a special kind of missionary cosmopolitanism, which kept feeding the

on their location in the social and cultural order, Jesuit missionaries were ready to both affirm and deny the existence and efficiency of the demons, enchantment and disenchantment were at times instrumentalized as practical, narrative strategies.

Amsterdam University Press

religious fervor of the Catholic Reformation in the context of global European expansion, maintained through retellings of the exemplary sanctified lives of individual heroes. The chain or lineage of biographies told a story of providential forces steering historical events from behind the enchanted wall of the Catholic faith.

Emotions of love and fear expressed in Jesuit missionary writing can help identify an "all-purpose toolkit" employed to record and measure the success or failure of conversion. Fear and awe are also, at times, divine signs and a warning to amend one's way and avoid sins. They are analyzed in chapter 2 in the missionary texts produced for the European audience and in the catechetical literature that targeted converts and non-Christians. A confession manual in Tamil, *Confessionairo*, printed in 1580, and the Persian *Mir'āt al-quds* (*The Mirror of Holiness*), a gift to the Mughal emperor Akbar (1542–1605) in 1602, provide a modest heuristic opening to understand how the Jesuits finessed translation and applied a particular emotional regime for the pastoral care of the new converts and for proselytizing.[72]

When Discalced Carmelites started prospecting for missions in Asia, sent by the Propaganda Fide against the wishes of the Portuguese royal Padroado (patronage) of missions, they framed their accounts in the genre of *viaggi* (travels).[73] Chapter 3 addresses how they navigated a delicate equilibrium between the Portuguese ecclesiastical grip over missions, the Padroado, supported by the *Estado da Índia* (State of India), and the papacy's unstoppable effort to start participating directly in the missionary program overseas. While the Jesuits, representing the Padroado, churned histories and biographies of their own, the Discalced Carmelites distanced themselves from missionary tasks—to avoid provoking Portuguese authorities—by calling their texts "travels." However, they worked their discursive magic and showcased their missionary prowess by focusing on a select target community—St. Thomas Christians in Kerala—whose antiquity and successful resistance to Padroado missionaries justified their presence.

In the second part—"Martyrdom"—the hagiographies of Marcello Mastrilli (1603–37), an Italian Jesuit executed in Japan, and a less-known

72 Henrique Henriques, *Confessionairo* (Cochin: Collegio da Madre de Deus, 1580), Oxford: Bodleian Library, Reading Room, Oriental Dept., Vet. Or. f. Tam. 1; Pedro de Moura Carvalho, *Mir'āt al-quds* (*Mirror of Holiness*)*: A Life of Christ for Emperor Akbar. A Commentary on Father Jerome Xavier's Text and the Miniatures of Cleveland Museum of Art, Acc. No. 2005.145* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

73 The Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, or simply the *Propaganda Fide*, was a congregation of the Roman Curia that, from 1622, organized global missionary work. Giovanni Pizzorusso, *Governare le missioni, conoscere il mondo nel XVII secolo. La Congregazione pontificia De Propaganda Fide* (Viterbo: Edizioni Sette città, 2018).

AUP Amsterdam University Press

French Discalced Carmelite, Pierre Berthelot alias Denys de la Nativité (1600–38), killed in Aceh, ascribe supernatural and prophetic powers to their protagonists.[74] In the two separate chapters, I claim that these were "camouflage narratives" of a failure of the missionary and Portuguese expansionist nerve in Asia. They are rhetorically enchanted narratives geared to blind their readers to all the tactical mistakes the missionaries made in the described encounters. Unlike Acquaviva and his companions, portrayed as innocent victims of the barbarous peasants, Mastrilli and Denys de la Nativité were political prisoners executed by the "pagan" and Muslim governments. Their spilled blood was not immediately—nor ever—revenged because it would have taken the whole European Catholic army to do that. Their killing occurred precisely at a turning point in the history of the Portuguese *Estado da Índia.* All grandiose pretensions of controlling the whole of Asia—technically only accurate for maritime passages and connections with Europe—were dropped. The Portuguese were in no position to protect the missionaries or to rescue them with money or force.

The labor of Mastrilli's Jesuit hagiographers contributed to a full-blown request for canonization. How the prophetic and miraculous wove together, not just an individual life but the whole imagined history of the Jesuit missionary involvement in Asia, reveals the power of Jesuit narrative engagement to transform a tragic human disaster and foolhardiness into a divine triumph. The hagiographic accounts I discuss in chapters 4 and 5 were primarily addressed to prospective missionaries and the pious European audience. The Jesuit author of Mastrilli's *life*, Leonardo Cinami (1609–74), ended his life as a missionary in the Mysore mission in India. Denys de la Nativité may not have attracted as many imitators as Mastrilli because Discalced Carmelites did not have the propaganda network and know-how to compete with the Jesuits.

However, the French and Italian Discalced Carmelites, who started to publicize their missionary initiatives by way of the publications of the *viaggi* (travelogues), made all the efforts necessary to both capture the mission territory and to launch their "enchantment narrative" with which they tried to overwrite Jesuit and Portuguese missionary triumphalism. When the martyrdom of Denys de la Nativité occurred in Aceh in 1638, somewhat unexpectedly, it opened new possibilities for the French and for the papacy to bite into—and grab pieces of—the Portuguese colonial and spiritual empire in Asia and to position its peons in the sanctified space saturated with the Portuguese Padroado's martyrs. The scramble for Southeast Asia

74 See the chapters 4 and 5.

A U P Amsterdam University Press

saw Catholic religious and European secular enchantment work together and surreptitiously against each other. Denys de la Nativité, in the long run, grew into a French Catholic hero in his native place of Honfleur.

In the last three chapters, in the book's third part—"Knowledge"—wonder and enchantment are harnessed and instrumentalized. Acquiring verified or empirical facts took precedence and became preferable in missionary writing. The first relatively accurate summary narrative in Portuguese of the life of Buddha, the precepts he taught, ceremonies, and expansion of his "sect" in Asia is discussed in chapter 6. I start with a letter of information written by a Jesuit, Tomás Pereira (1645–1708), in Beijing to Goa-based Jesuit Fernão de Queirós (1617–88), who included it in his magnum opus *Conquista temporal, e espiritual de Ceylão*.[75] The bulky manuscript published only in the twentieth century exemplifies a late seventeenth-century Jesuit "enchantment narrative" that focused increasingly on geographical, historical, and sociocultural facts despite working from within the prophetic and providential framework. His professed goal of kindling the ardor of the Portuguese king to reconquer the island of *Ceylão* (Sri Lanka) that fell to heretic Dutch hands did not have the illocutionary force to stir the royal heart, but it contained the vigor and discernment of historical and avant la lettre Orientalist knowledge.

For the missionaries of the Congregation of the Oratory of the Holy Cross of Miracles, an eighteenth-century religious order famous for its mission in Sri Lanka, Catholicism was a religion they were born into, unlike their Goan Brahman ancestors who were forced to convert. The ultimate effort of cleansing their community's identity ever under suspicion of containing traces of earlier "gentility" was to impose themselves as local (and global) religious specialists and missionaries. A story of Catholic Goan Brahmans' social ascension has been recently studied in more detail. In chapter 7, I follow their first steps as missionaries whose commitment was exemplary and whose spirituality cannot be questioned. Like their Jesuit models, they worked on their history in the enchantment mode of Iberian Catholic missionary hagiographies but refrained from commenting on "false" and demonic religions surrounding them. Were they not in awe of the Sri Lankan supernatural world of demons, nor impressed by the royal display and the rituals of the Buddhist monks from Siam who came to ordain local priests?

75 Fernão de Queyroz [Queirós], *Conquista temporal, e espiritual de Ceylão, ordenada pelo Padre Fernão de Queyroz, da Companhia de Jesus da Provincia de Goa* (Colombo: The Government Printer, 1916) (hereafter: Queirós); English translation: Fernão de Queyroz, *The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon*, trans. S. G. Perera (Colombo: A. C. Richards, 1930).

Why are their descriptions of local supernatural events and objects flat and lacking in details? The answer is that they did not want to be seen as experts on the "pagan" enchantment they were fighting. They professed strategic ignorance lest they be accused of incomplete conversion themselves. They had to hide their knowledge of Indian idolatry, and they compensated it with their learning of theology and Christian history.

Finally, in the last chapter, we can glimpse what appears, at first sight, to be the erosion of enchantment among the pious Jesuit missionaries. The French Jesuits established their own independent *Mission du Carnate*, imitating the famous accommodationist *Mission du Maduré* (Madurai mission) of the Portuguese Padroado.[76] The French King Louis XIV, who provided the financial aid, ordered the Jesuits residing in Pondicherry and Chandernagore, the two French settlements, to study Indian "sciences." The fruit of their missionary and scientific research is displayed in the accounts and letters, many of which were published in the thirty-four-volume collection *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*. The "*mathematician du roi*"—as the first batch of French Jesuits sent to Asia was called—settled in China and India, where different political and cultural regimes redirected their efforts. In India, demonic possession became one of their research topics and objects of reflection. The results of this research came to be known and were debated in various French publications by famous theologians and Catholic apologists. The conversation between Jesuits and learned French theologians persuaded the Jesuits that Indian divinities, sacred books, and "sciences" were relics of the Christian message available in India in the past and misdirected by demonic forces. While interested in wonders, miracles, and demons, the missionaries were even more attracted to studying "sciences" and the local "scientific language," Sanskrit. What did they hope to find? Let us close the circle in which enchantment and reason bite each other's tails: the missionaries wanted to find proof of the truth of the Christian message, history, and destiny.

Many book-length primary documents studied in missionary enchantment belong to a muddled genre of hagiography. The Catholic missionaries in India and everywhere in the early-modern world conceived history as a providential unfolding of lives—of God, saints, and their own. In these texts, they composed a place for themselves next to their divine and saintly tribe. According to Michel de Certeau, hagiography is a tautological tomb since everything is already given initially. I argued that, in the missionary texts

76 S. Joe Sebastian, *The Jesuit Carnatic Mission: A Foundation of Andhra Church* (India: Jesuit Province Society, 2004).

Amsterdam University Press

I studied, the evocation of supernatural events serves as glue, justification, and utopian possibility, holding the stories together and tying them to actors and places. The stories and the storytelling the Jesuits perfected shaped the emotional and ethical environment around them. Missionary capacities and vulnerabilities commingle in the present book against the broader canvas of their "missions" in India. Emotions are essential to these stories, and they provide a narrative lead. Rather than dispersing the plot and the discursive elements, the supernatural—overflowing with spirits and magic—generates arguments and normativity.[77] The supernatural may appear as missionary pyrotechnics, but it is much more than that. In the interstices of their narratives, it articulated the culture of reason and order, combining divine revelation and universal rationality. The universe remained mysterious and enchanting for the early-modern missionaries as long as they kept it that way. The story of the early-modern European "expansion," "discovery" and colonialism cannot be properly told by bleaching out or flattening enchantment.[78]

77 In addition to reading Jesuit and missionary sources closely, I also focus on historiography. I listen carefully to authorial voices as they formulate their concerns and engage in debates about the merits of "modernization theory," "decline of magic," "Dialectic of Enlightenment," and "postcolonial critique of European reason." The debates grasped something of the real, lived experience of the missionaries but theorized towards general (and anachronistic) solutions that do not seem directly relevant to my analysis. For a general assessment of these theories, see Jason Ā. Josephson-Storm, *The Myth of Disenchantment; Magic, Modernity, and the Birth of the Human Sciences* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2017). For a pioneer anthropological take on emotions in India, see Owen M. Lynch, ed., *Divine Passions: The Social Construction of Emotion in India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021, first ed. 1990).

78 John Cottingham, "Religion Without Magic; Responding to the Natural World," in *The Philosophy of Reenchantment*, eds. Michiel Meijer and Herbert De Vriese (New York and London: Routledge, 2020), 38; Joe Sebastian, *The Jesuit Carnatic Mission,* 53.

A U P Amsterdam University Press