

A Historical Exposition of the Dominance of Western Culture on the Batswana People

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ABSTRACT: *The aim of this article is to investigate the past in relation to the cultural dominance of Western philosophy over the Batswana. The Setswana proverb, as part of the greater language system, never existed in a vacuum, nor will it ever be. Interaction with other cultural groupings, particularly from the West, dealt a severe blow to the Batswana's way of life. Sadly for the Batswana, their cultural values as embodied by the proverbs were almost driven to extinction by powerful administrations that governed their lives.*

KEYWORDS: *Culture, Batswana, Proverbs, Religion*

I. INTRODUCTION

A South Carolina mountain proverb goes: “*we are not what we want to be, we are not what we will be, but we are not what we were*”. This attests to the principle of temporality. The author wishes to argue that knowledge and understanding of temporality helps clarify cultural change, since information about the past helps people to understand the present as well as predict the future. Landman *et al.* (1990: 101) view temporality as a cornerstone of history of education. They say that it is “mainly a study of the educational present in terms of the educational past with a view to the educational future”. In support of the same idea, Venter, in Kruger (1986: 15) adds that temporality is an effort to clarify the “working relationship between time on the one hand and education, the educator and the educand on the other”.

For starters, a look at the following agents of change will help in our knowledge of the past, so that we can understand the present, and they are:

- a) **Contact with other cultures, traditions,** and local attempts to experiment in a new direction.
- b) National crises and their effect upon education and teaching.
- c) Agitation for educational change by the teaching profession.
- d) The introduction of new subjects into the curriculum.
- e) **Social and economic developments, and their influence on education and teaching.**
- f) **Changes in a country's political system.** (Landman et al. 1990: 02) (Own emphasis).

The above factors of change will inform the greater part of this article, where it will be acknowledged that we are certainly not what we were.

II. THE BASE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN LEGAL SYSTEM AND/ OR ORDER: THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENTS OF THE CAPE

While it is appreciated that the occupation of the Cape was primarily for victual purposes, it is logical that settlement by the free burghers produced the desire to govern. Inherent in this desire was the propensity by these free burghers to preserve their cultural heritage. The unfortunate part was that while they were within their rights to preserve such, their practice affected the way of life of the indigenous people. Calvinism, for instance, paralleled the Dutch colonists to the ancient Israelites, who were assured victory over the Canaanites by the Lord. Thus the Dutch believed that predestination had it that they should conquer and dominate savage Africa. Afrikaners have frequently called themselves a “chosen people,” ordained by God to rule in South Africa, which idea was met with resistance to the bitter end. Cultural contact in this instance led to the superior Western culture dominating the various indigenous cultures, such that Western values became educationally dominant as well.

Theirs was not only to invade the southern tip of Africa, but to proselytize inhabitants as well. In support of that, according to Elphick et al. (1979:118), “*a number of early Company officials and predikanten (ministers), influenced by precedents in Portuguese and Dutch spheres of the Indies, hoped that the Khoikhoi would adopt both Christianity and the Dutch language and culture*”. The indigenous inhabitants were to be

subjected to some sort of total immersion, since the free burghers' minds were infested with cultural imperialism, according to Sharon Martinas and Chris Crass, (available online at <http://www.tao.calcoloursldefinitions.html>. Accessed on 11 February 2013).

This imperialism took a toll on the Setswana cultural heritage, and swallowed to a great extent, the social patterns of survival that carried a Motswana for ages. Let us take the example of the Norman Conquest. For a solid three hundred years the French dominated the English. Their culture and vocabulary tainted, to the extent that English is said to be the most inflectional language today, thanks to the many French affixes it has adopted. One important point to note in this regard is that it came to pass that knowledge of French during the Norman Conquest, was associated with prestige. It was thus lowly of one to be speaking "Old Norse" or Anglo-Saxon at that time. This pride was instilled, if not imprinted on the minds of generations to come. Probably due to fear of extinction, thus, when the British occupied the Cape they had to ensure survival by means of domination. The conquering culture's architecture was that of replacing Native's ways of hunting and gathering with the assimilation policy of imperialism. In the final analysis the Dutch, with their mentality of predestination, and the British with their sense of imperialism, were to determine and control the cultural fibre of black Southern Africa. In the next section we focus on the transitional governments of the Cape during the period 1795 to 1814 as the beginning of the cultural corrosion of the culture of the Batswana.

III. THE BRITISH RULE AND ITS IMPACT

During the period 1795 to 1803 British governance was met with unprecedented resistance from the Xhosa and the Khoikhoi. Fear of loss of power informed British iron-handedness in ruling the Cape. Having usurped the Cape from the VOC in 1795, the British returned the colony to the Dutch government in 1803. In 1806, however, with the beginning of the Napoleonic Wars, the British again took the Cape in order to protect their interests as well as ensure colonization of Africa in pursuit of world domination.

It should be remembered that this period was when black magic in England was rife and people were killed (by Christians) for practicing black magic. That too, determined to a large extent the vociferous ways that the British would use to dissuade the Black man from practicing his culture.

IV. THE SECOND DUTCH RULE AND ITS IMPACT

The Dutch were in power for the second time between 1803 and 1806. They had from the onset aimed at a permanent settlement, and thus planned to create a somewhat prosperous Cape. To their surprise, when they took the Cape for the second time they found British policies to be entrenched, and although they had vast differences with the past regime, they had to modify the reclusive form of governance to suit their needs. There were common denominators between them and the British, namely, the colour of their skin and a common enemy. This era, thus, brought no good news but rather perpetuated the British negative attitude towards the natives or aborigines. The Dutch, too, harbouring fears of the numbers of Blacks, sought refuge in protecting their minority status by practicing oppressive laws against Blacks. The Cape was to be a melting pot of cultures and language.

The combination of German, French and Dutch resulted in the Afrikaans language, which to a great extent has shaped the current state of the indigenous languages in South Africa. The damage that this emergent language caused was discussed under the sub-heading of the role of education in South Africa, since it falls outside the transitional period of governance as experienced in the Cape during the advent of foreign rule.

V. THE SOUTH AFRICAN LEGAL TRADITION

Gaudreau O'Connor elaborates on legal tradition thus: *"There are three highly influential legal traditions in the contemporary world: civil law, common law, and socialist law... A legal tradition, as the term implies, is not a set of rules of law about contracts, corporations, and crimes, although such rules will almost always be in some sense a reflection of that tradition. Rather it is a set of deeply rooted, historically conditioned attitudes about the nature of law, about the role of law in the society and the polity, about the proper organization and operation of a legal system ...The legal tradition relates the legal system to the culture of which it is a partial expression. It puts the legal system into cultural perspective"* (own emphasis) (Available online at <http://www.uctshiplaw.com/tulantxt.htm> Accessed on 16 June 2013?

The Roman-Dutch law, which is the cornerstone of the present South African law, did not find an organisational vacuum. The Batswana, as an organised nation, had a form of governance, which presupposes the existence of some legal practice. They had their way of managing the different institutions of the community, ranging from the family to the capital of the community. There were rules governing paternity, seasonal planting, heredity, regiments and initiation. Their culture was their pride, and a base for self-rule. What follows is a quick discussion of the different types of law, which the author argues, have been responsible for the loss of much of the African culture with its educative proverbs.

VI. COMMON LAW

This is a type of law that evolves from old customs (The Concise Oxford Dictionary 1990: 229). The formula here is that of; what you do on the left hand side must also be done on the right. In other words, do X and Y is the consequence. In the same vein, Setswana the proverb is also based on this equation, in which the left hand and the right are expected to reciprocate. African communities have always had a flexible approach to solving problems. For a people to be able to solve problems as a community, it must have a social organisational structure, which implies authority and direction giving. Unfortunately, there were clashes in terms of African principles and rules, and Western law. These clashes were brought about by the fact that what the African (by implication Motswana) may view as lawful may be interpreted as differently in Roman-Dutch Law. For instance, the Setswana saying that **tsa etelelwa ke e namagadi pele di wela ka lengope** (*a woman may not lead as a man would*) is an ordinary and simple statement that reveals communal sharing of duties, where each member of the community has culturally defined roles, and there is nothing anti-woman in it, as it would be propagated otherwise by Western thinking.

The essence of this section is to establish the role proverbs can play in the life of a community, the Batswana in this case. This is done in order to test whether there existed a legal theory that can elucidate specific characteristics of African law, proving whether the Motswana as an

African had any legal understanding or legal thought, as well as the relationship between performance and legal discourse. In the concluding section of his article, Coming to our senses, Hibbitts presents some characteristics of performance, when he asserts that performance is (i) personal, (ii) social, (iii) open-textured, (iv) dynamic and (v) ephemeral, among others (online at mw.lawpitt.edulhibbitts.lctos.m.htm). These and other examples support much of the argument of this article that performative law belongs to custom, and is expressed in prose narratives that produce images of participants doing right or wrong. It is here that the educational value of the principles and rules embodied in the proverbs come into play as they maintain an equilibrium between what the left hand does and also what the right does.

The argument presented in this article is that the Batswana, as an African people, had a concept of law and human rights in their language. It was inherent in their metaphoric nuances, since they were a performative society. Upon initiation, for instance, the elderly, and appropriately so, the custodians of lore and law, recite these to the young initiates, and subsequently make them recite as well, to promote retention. Speech, in a form of recitals, helps transmit their society's most cherished truths, as reflected in the feeling of patriotism embodied in the different national anthems, idioms and proverbs.

Chiloane (1998:01) asserts that the African's concept of law emanates from its communal way of life. It is intended as a tool for social cohesion and affiliation. According to him, the African's concept of law is founded on the notion of *Gemeinschaft*. This *gemeinschaft* is a result of a strong symbiotic association between law, religion, kinship and culture, according to Mqoke (1997: 18). In this context, the proverb is significant in that its educative role connects the fibre that holds the society together.

Monnig (1978: 300) says of the nature of Pedi law, another African nation, that it is to a great extent a manifestation of this people's belief in action, and that law is employed to maintain proper order, based on their collective beliefs, which encompass proverbial wisdom as well. Such law is communal, and senses to obviate the possibility of individual popularity at the expense of the masses. The group on the other hand is not to override individual human rights, as in mob rule. A quick look at the following passage helps clarify this point: "Within the life of the individual he is, through the normal processes of enculturation, taught to conform to the norms and customs of his tribe, and is made aware that a breach of the accepted conduct is sanctioned in various manners, amongst others by legal institutions. Pedi law, as a body of rules with legal force, is principally customary law. It consists of an aggregate of concepts and rules which has been developed over the years to adjust the relationships between individuals or groups and of people to their environment. The Pedi, therefore,

see their legal institutions as contributory institutions which add their powers to those others which also safeguard the rights of individuals or groups (Own emphasis).

The proverb in this regard plays a crucial role of admonishing and also alerting the people of the sanctions that could be imposed upon them should they break the law. For the Batswana to be able to practise their law and custom, they need to have a government. Now the study will focus on a brief look at the types of governance the Batswana had, and probably still have.

VII. THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

The Batswana of the ancient times apparently believed in the old adage that charity begins at home. It is thus no coincidence that the family was seen as the primary and most basic form of governance among the Batswana as it played an important educational role of socialising the youth. The family had to be organised in such an educative manner that it was structurally and functionally positioned pave Way for the next level of being able to receive the authority of the kgotla. The role of the kgotla was to ensure that the leadership of the larger community, that is, that of the King and his counsel ran smoothly in its fulfilment of its functions. In this regard, the author was interested in the political system of the Batswana in the past, and tried to establish how the system of governance responded to the use of proverbs. This aspect has an educational implication because the kgotla plays an important role educational in the practical application of the proverbs as a cultural wealth of a people. The kgotla applies proverbs as it deliberates on issues and also as it takes decisions.

VIII. THE HOMESTEAD

This was the basic unit of social organisation, and the real seat of primary education. The leadership of the homestead was strictly patriarchal, and was responsible for performing religious rites - which were pertinent to law -, the resolution of disputes among family members, the protection of such members, as well as the maintenance of law and order within the jurisdiction of the homestead. The administration of the homestead, although somewhat independent, had to be congruent with that of the larger community, it was, put simply, an important link with the Kingdom. As institutions recognised by the community, these were an integral part of the legal system of the Batswana.

The family unit of the Batswana is an extended one, and therefore covers not only the matrimonial and parental relation. According to Mqeke (1997), "*a pervasive feature of traditional African society is the so-called extended family, customarily encompassing even distant relations who may number into hundreds*". He goes on to refer to Cotran's (1968) notion that the basic feature of a traditional African marriage is that it is polygamous or potentially polygamous. This type of a family needs a certain level of jurisdiction to allow for the establishment of a kgotla, where the most senior of the family becomes the headman, who reports to the King. The homestead was thus on a certain level of law making and custody, which suggests that there was a legal system among the Batswana.

The family represents the primary education where rules and principles are taught at a tender age. It represents the primary education level because of the relationship between society and what it would like to instil in its members and "the influence of new societal phenomena on children and youths on their way to adulthood" (Pretorius 1994:96, in Prinsloo et al. 1998:4).

IX. THE CHIEFTAINCY

The Batswana were, and are still divided into different clans. These were based on the totemic system where a particular group would call itself according to an animal of their choice. For instance, the **Bakwena** are named after the crocodile, and would keep this animal not only sacred but would revere it highly. Examples of these groupings include, among others, the **Bakgatla** (totem: **kgabo** [monkey]), the **Bahurutshe** (totem: **tshwene** [baboon]), and the **Barolong** (totem: tholo [kudu]).

The Chieftaincy was based on the collective membership of a particular tribe. It was the collective of all the homesteads within the village. Unlike an executive leadership where leaders are voted into power, the Chief is not elected but born into leadership, as evident in the expressions: **Bogosi bo a tsalelwa** and **dinaka tsa go rweswa ga di gomarele** (*borrowed robes do not fit*). The Chief was responsible for the administration and maintenance of law. It has to be reiterated here that the law was not meant to be oppressive to the subjects, but to create peace for every member of the tribe. The institutions that were responsible for the provision and

execution of law were the **bogwera** (*initiation school*), which represented secondary education, **kgotla** (*court*) and **mošate** (*palace*), which represented tertiary education, where knowledge of the principles governing behaviour was tested. These are places where linguistic idiosyncrasies took place. Actions would be observed and precedents established from the outcomes of different activities. Proverbs and other sayings were used not only to educate but also to ridicule by way of parody. The ability to speak appropriately was developed at these institutions. The **bogwera** (*initiation school*) was a link between the homestead and the **kgotla**. Before initiation, a young boy would not know much of his responsibilities, firstly to his father and mother, and then to other men in the village, as well as to his Chief. By the time he graduates from initiation, he has an idea of his duties. He knows, for instance that **ngwana wa mosimane molao o o tsaya banneng** (*a boy gets ways of life from men*).

The **Kgosi**, the most superior citizen in the Kingdom, was the custodian of the law. He had the prerogative to appoint captains to act as mediators between his subjects and himself. So there was a hierarchy of authority that ensured that the law is maintained. The **Kgosi** and his captains were in essence, not lawmakers as such, but protectors of the law. The basic **Pedi** social and living unit is the **kgoro**, which is a semicircular residential cluster of dwellings sheltering an extended family that is established around a group of related males but that may also include other people.

The important son of a Chief often establishes **dikgoro**. The Chief (Kgosi) is the overall executive and judicial authority. In modern South Africa, however, the traditional Chief must balance his traditional functions with the European based legal system, according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica (Available online at <http://global.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/147411/custom> accessed on 14 March 2013). The basic Setswana social and living unit is the kgoro, which is a semicircular residential cluster of dwellings sheltering an extended family that is established around a group of related males but that may also include other people. Law was established, in Structuralist terms, by the larger community, that is, the *langue*, and only expressed by individual citizens - the *parole*.

Distressing enough is the fact that these ideals of good governance as was enshrined in the social organisation of the Batswana was successfully erased by what Professor Kgware (1970) refers to as detribalisation based on foreign and unsavoury cultures of capitalism and individualism, in a paper entitled *The Bantu of South Africa at the Crossroad of their Development*.

X. ROMAN-DUTCH LAW

John Hare, in his paper: *Good Faith. Disclosure. Misrepresentation and the Omnipotent Warranty: South African Perspective* highlights the following as characteristics and formation of the Roman-Dutch law:

The South African legal system is a strange yet vibrant hybrid of its civilian and common law roots Its socio and legal history reflects a century and a half of Dutch rule during the period when the Dutch traders were masters of the seas.... throughout English rule (until Union in 1910), and even thereafter with the establishment of a Republic in 1961 and the birth of the New South Africa in 1994, the Roman-Dutch common law established by the Dutch remained the 'fall-back' regime of South African 'common law'. That Roman-Dutch law, distilled by the Dutch writers and fine-tuned by three and a half centuries of academic writing and judicial decisions, remains the cornerstone of present South African law (Available online at <http://www.uctshiplaw.com/tulantxt.htm> Accessed on 16 June 2013).

This type of law is important in this study because it is the foundation of the South African law, as it exists today.

XI. THE ROLE OF EDUCATION

The Gikuyu proverb that goes “*there is no difference between a missionary and a settler*” (Schoffield 1984:17) supports the notion that one cannot separate religion, economics and education from politics. The arrival of the Missionaries in Africa was not only inspired by the famous text from the Holy Bible that the disciples were to go out and teach the gospel of the Lord to all the nations of the world (The book of saint Matthews 27: 1 *et seq.*). It was also informed by the predestination mentality, as alluded to in preceding sections. The belief that savage Africa was to be enlightened and converted was strong. The Missionaries and settlers were the harbingers of good tidings to the Dark Continent.

The Puritanism by the British Missionaries, the Calvinism by the Dutch and later the Afrikaners, as well as the uncompromising emergence of Germanic Missionaries, have all contributed to the disorganisation of the African (by implication Batswana's) way of running their affairs. The Missionary schools and their various missions undermined the Setswana culture to varying degrees. Take the example of twentieth Century Uganda for instance, where Sir Harry Johnston said to the Soga: "*We want you to learn Christianity and follow our steps and you too will be great*" (Schofield 1984:19). In other words, being Christian was seen as part of being great. An African Christian would ultimately become a black European. Christianity was more than a religion, for its aim was to change the entire life of the Africans to Western oriented type of life. The exploration of the interior created a frontier of men who made radically diverse assumptions about their place in the universe.

JJ Ross, in Duminy (1967: 4) speaks of the negative attitude of the Missionaries thus: "*The original make-up of the Bantu was wrong... In its origin, then, the system of Native education was diametrically opposed to what are commonly accepted today as the basic principles of education... The systems of literary education, which had been evolved in Europe, were transplanted to a people differing widely in original nature, in environment, and in future opportunities*". Education had to be manipulated at all cost in order to ensure that it served their needs. This is where the principle of temporality comes into picture. Historical educationists argue that we study education systems of the past to understand the present and make predictions about the future. It is without doubt that the Missionaries knew what spot to touch in the heart of the native. Mitchel *et al.* (2000:34) advance ideas by Chief Luthuli that the teachings of Christianity conducted at the mission schools disputed traditional black religion. Exposure to Western culture changed Black culture and society permanently. Significant are the following influences: the introduction of an economy based on money and materialism, democratic ideals, individualistic (rather than communalistic) social values...

It is indeed true that the Black man's culture was put under undue competition with Western cultures. The economics of present day have influenced the way of thinking to a great extent. **Bogadi** (*lobola/ dowry*), one of a Motswana's cherished institutions, has come to be associated with money. As such men tend to regard their wives as property bought, as a result subject them to unfair, and at times, inhuman treatment. It is known that in the past, **bogadi** was in the form of cattle. One head of cattle to a Motswana is a collection of symbols, among others, that of life, wealth and communion. It binds the bride and groom and their families together. The ancestors, it is believed, bless the union after **bogadi** shall have been presented, and a cow is slaughtered as a way of establishing a union.

In the culture of the Bahurutshe (a section of the Batswana staying in the Zeerust area of the North West Province) there is a ritual referred to as **go loma** (*lit. to bite*). Here the marrying couple are put in a room with chosen elders of the families, and a special piece of meat from the slaughtered beast is roasted on burning wood, and they (the couple) are made to eat it. Significantly, they do not eat from their hands. The meat is put in their mouths. It is an important ritual that binds them together. It is their marriage certificate.

Poverty was not known, for life was very communal, as Luthuli suggests above. A family member who seems not to be as self-sufficient as his or her siblings, would be borrowed a few cattle to plough with, and milk, as well. His or her children would survive resultantly, and where feasible, his or her boys would herd the brother's cattle, and one given to him per year. That value has been replaced by individualistic practices based on money.

Behr, in Mitchel *et al.* (2000:34) says "*Sir George Grey, a British governor in the 19th century believed that schooling caused the peaceful subjugation of the Africans. Sir Langham Dale, Superintendent of Education at the Cape reported that blacks were not always in favour of the schooling introduced by the white man because it weakened tribal bonds and customs. Dale's successor, Dr Thomas Muir complained that the courses offered at the mission schools were too bookish and impractical; too little attention was given to the teachings of indigenous languages and too much to the teaching of English*". (Own emphasis)

Judging from the type of upbringing the different settlers had from their respective homelands, it becomes crystal clear that their way of imparting religion, Christianity in particular, would be informed by their background. The Missionary schools and their mission undermined to some extent, the legitimacy of the Setswana culture, as Johannes du Bruin and Nicholus Southey in Bredenkamp & Ross (1995:28) quote Walker (1928) when he says that Christian missions represent the most naive and ethnocentric, and therefore the most thorough-going facet of colonial life... Missionaries invariably aimed at overall changes in the beliefs and actions of native peoples, at colonization of the heart and mind as well as body.

It is against this background that the author feels religion has been responsible for acculturation and confusion among the Batswana. In the next section, thus, focus will be on the different Missionary schools and their intentions, culminating in the notorious Christian National Education of the Nationalist administration.

XII. THE BERLIN AND HERMANNSBURG MISSIONARY SOCIETIES

Although these Missionary philosophies were founded at different times, their teachings belong to the teachings of Martin Luther, the founder of the Lutheran fold. Born of very strict and uncompromising parents, Martin Luther believed in the maxim: spare the rod and spoil the child. He is in fact described as having been an architect of the 'criticism of indulgence' (Dodd *et al.* (undated: 113). A product of German upbringing, he believed in the philosophy that one has to work very hard to earn a decent living. Luther was ex-communicated by the Roman Catholic Church for his ninety-five theses in which he criticised and questioned the scriptures and church practice. He modified the idea of predestination by clarifying the difference between "simple necessity" and "conditional necessity". In the former, it is believed, as in Calvinism, that man is destined to be what he or she is long before birth (du Pre 1992: 19 *et seq.*). In other words, that exonerates man from responsibility for his or her actions. With the latter, meaning that while we were destined to live on earth, we are thinking beings, and are thus responsible for our deeds. This accounts for the judgement day, where everybody will answer for his or her actions.

This background is essential to the understanding that the Lutheran Missionaries were to inculcate these philosophies on the African. Upon Baptism, for instance, the sponsors have to denounce the devil and all his actions. These deeds include, inter alia, witchcraft in all its forms, ancestral worship and several other cultural elements that held the people together. In their schools, these missionaries constantly worked on fighting the forces of evil as embodied, in their myopic minds, in the character of the indigenous peoples. To do this they meticulously structured their teachings to inculcate permanent habits of tenacity and industry, based on the famous Biblical reference in the book of Genesis 3: 17, when the Lord said to Adam: Cursed is the ground because of you: through painful toil you will eat of it all days of your life (The Holy Bible: New International Version 1997: 04).

What a Motswana would call a healer was to be called witch-doctor, a King, the most superior citizen of the community, would be reduced to the level of a Chief (of course this was a British arrangement, for an African leader would not be accorded the status of an English monarchy). Ultimately the teachings of Lutheranism forced the Batswana to believe that what they were doing was heathen, and they had to repent and denounce such practices. This was denying these people their human status.

The Berlin and Hermannsburg Missionary schools subsequently imparted these principles among the Batswana, for it is among them that they flourished. It has to be noted that this nation has no history of war and conquests. They were a pacifist people who preferred peace to fighting, hence the proverb **gaabo boi ga go liwe** (*a coward's family has no reason to cry*).

XIII. THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH MISSION

It has been mentioned in this work that the Dutch Reformed Church finds its roots in the Calvinist theory of predestination. This illusion about exclusive birthright to God has an interesting genesis worth noting here. In his paper: Philosophical roots of nationalism, Johannes Degenaar, in Sundermeier (1975) gives an overview of the myth of the chosen people. Firstly, the Hebrews are guaranteed an unequivocal parenthood in the (Book of Deuteronomy 14:2): For thou art an Holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord has chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, out of all the nations that are upon the earth (Sundermeier 1975: 124)

The Germans too claim heritage to the Fathers place. German nationalism asserts that God is the God of the Germans (ibid.); the Russian Slav Messianism says the regeneration of mankind can only be achieved through 'the Russian idea, the Russian God and Christ' (ibid.); the Americans go beyond the limit. The following excerpt elucidates this: "*It has been often remarked that the people of the United States come nearer to a parallel with Ancient Israel, than any other nation upon the globe... Herman Melville is of the opinion that: We Americans are peculiar, chosen people, the Israel of our times; we bear the ark of the liberties of the world*" (Sundermeier 1975:25).

This background does not serve to justify the separatist ideology the Dutch Reformed Church had, but to reveal the subconscious drive that pervaded the minds of the colonisers. The Afrikaner people were referred to as “the Israel of Africa” (ibid.), and this Holy relationship with the Almighty was protected and made known to the indigenous people. The Great Trek, for example, was God’s plan. The Afrikaner was to occupy the interior (the parallel of Canaan), and conquer all the inhabitants. All apartheid policies were founded on the teachings of this church, and the resultant denigration of the language and culture of Africa. This explains the type of set-up in the inferiority and superiority complexes of Blacks and Whites respectively. It is from this background that the author feels the Batswana’s culture has been degraded.

XIV. POLITICAL DOMINATION AND CULTURE

An article by de Villiers (1987): *The weird edifice: apartheid and its prophets* will be heavily relied on in this section, partly because she artfully presents the different Acts passed by the Nationalist Party since 1948, and partly because as an Afrikaner herself, she admits to the folly and unrealistic investment put in these Acts. She refers to the Afrikaner people as having been dreaming passionately for a Promised Land that would never be. The enactment of the racial laws against the Blacks dealt them a serious blow. Only relevant Acts that affected the way the Batswana were supposed to lead their lives will be identified. Firstly, the Group areas Act of 1950 (de Villiers 1987:1316, du Pre 1994: 28, Sundkler & Steed (2000: 821), was intended specifically for urban population control (It should be remembered that the Batswana were a pastoral-agricultural people), but it affected the entire social organisation of these peoples. It affected the sense of animal territory, where every living being naturally does not welcome interference.

This Act thus restrained the Motswana’s normal way of reasoning. Use of such proverbs as **Tshipu o rile ke lobelo, motlhaba wa re ke namile** (*one cannot escape all the time*) and **motho ga a itsiwe e se naga** (*trust no one*) are thus rendered futile, for it is only through knowledge that one has land that they can give meaning to such a proverb. Another example of a proverb that depends much on land and control thereof is: **O se bone majwe go katogana, majwe bosigo a a etelana** (*even those you think are enemies do meet in secret*). Here the landscape, with all the symbolisms attached to it, is held in high esteem. War and bloodletting defend it and all the citizens of a country have to express this patriotic sentiment. **Majwe** (*rocks*) refers to the different Kingdoms of the Batswana, and it implies vastness and correspondence.

The Group Areas Act thus prohibited and discouraged growth in terms of expansion, and thus interfered with the Motswana’s freedom of expression and authority. Here the meaning of authority should be understood in both family and national leadership contexts. Firstly, this Act implied that an extended family would share the same dwelling place at the expense of privacy. The head of the family, who would usually command power and respect, would be exposed to night raids by police, in most cases either naked or half nude. That affected the relationship between children and their father. To them, their father, the ultimate power wielder in the homestead, was rendered powerless and humiliated as a result. They felt he was only as strong as he was toothless. The universal idea of children respecting their parents was affected thus.

In extended families, power sharing was affected negatively too. The normal practice among different heads of families, including the nuclear family, the grandparents, paternal and maternal uncles and aunts and their offspring, was that the eldest of them all holds authority. Sharing one roof unfortunately defied the old saying that **Dipoo ga di tlhakanele lesaka** (*there is only one master in a place*). Sometimes the police would ridicule the eldest in front of the junior heads. In most cases elder members of the families would not possess permits to be in the urban localities.

Not only was Group Areas Act meant for influx control in the urban areas, but also to inculcate the notion of separate development in Africans. Such expressions as **Moswela gae o tshwana le moswela Tebele, ga a jewe** (*if does not matter where one dies, his or her body will be buried*) evolved due to the belief that one’s culture is superior to others. This and several other tribalistic proverbs found expression, and thus influenced popular thinking as if it were correct.

The custodian of land rights and allocation thereof was the King. This went to the extent that even the time for ploughing was announced by the palace. It is also interesting to note that even wild fruit could not be plucked before palace could permit. The king’s pride rested on his ability to provide land and sustain it. As such, being removed from a particular place and resettled on a strange land, next to another tribe, led to the eradication of that pride. This was done in order to deprive people of the possession of good grazing land with green arable vegetation, and squeezing them into small arid lands.

To expedite the Nationalist Administration's agenda, this Act was fortified by other similar Acts. They include the Native Land Act of 1913 and the Native Trust Act of 1936 (Petje 1995:26). The Bantu Authorities Act of 1951, the Resettlement of Natives Act of 1954 and the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959 (de Villiers 1987:317 et seq.) were also instrumental in the pacification of the Africans. These Acts diminished the powers of the **Magosi** (*Kings*), and thus rendered their capacity for guidance and administration ineffectual.

The heinous effect of Bantu Education on the language development of a Motswana cannot be overemphasised. The Nationalist government regarded education as one of the most important pillars of the entire social order, and it deliberately and explicitly employed it as a vehicle for indoctrination and social control. The African was slowly but surely swayed away from the collective, affiliative mode of thinking, to a more individualistic and selfish way of life. Proverbs such as **matlo go ša mabapi** (*good neighbours share problems*), **motho ke motho ka ba bangwe** (*I am what I am because of you*), **ntime o mpheleng ngwana** (*do not deny my child because of our differences*) (*do not let our hate affect innocent children*), and others, which represent **botho/ ubuntu** (*humanism*), were soon to be replaced by such somewhat narcissistic ones as **mphe mphe e a lapisa, motho o kgonwa ke sa gagwe** (*give me give me (some food) is too tiresome*) transl. Plaatjie (1916:71), '**rotse la makopo ga le na kgodu** (*stop bothering people and provide for yourself*).

The education system was aimed at inculcating a particular feeling of inferiority complex in the African child, which produced unwarranted statements (by implication proverbs) as **setlhare sa Motswana ke lekgowa** (*a Motswana cannot work without supervision by a white*), and **mosebetsi o tshwana le mosadi, o a rapeletswa** (*one's job is sacred and should be respected*), as if life depended solely on the presence of a white man and the job that he offers. There is the famous **mmuso ga o fele pelo** (*the law has a long arm*), which has turned into some form of greeting. Here, by implication, the Nationalist government was so powerful that even parents taught their children to be cautious with it.

XII. CONCLUSION

It suffices to take note of the mental slavery that the Motswana has been subjected to, and the way this disintegrated his linguistic prowess. It has been established that the transitional governments of the Cape in the late 19th century and early 20th century respectively, coupled with religious forces of the time, as well as the draconic laws of the previous regime in South Africa, were all responsible for the lack of power of the language of the Batswana.

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