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The 19th-century missionary literature: Biculturality and bi-religiosity, a reflection from the perspective of the wretched

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The 19th-century missionary literary genre provides us with a window into how the missionaries viewed African cultural systems, such as polygamy. In their minds, polygamy was one of the obstacles to converting Africans to Christianity. Baptism functioned as a theatre of power and submission. To access baptism, a convert had to abandon and strip themselves of that which made them Africans and adopt Western colonial Christian norms and principles. In this article, we argue that the condemnation of polygamy by missionaries was a wielding of power within the colonial matrix of power. We further maintain that the decolonisation of Christianity cannot be achieved without a critical analysis of the impact of the missionaries in the deformation and labelling of African cultural identities as heathen and uncivilised.

Contribution: The cultural transfer that was achieved through Christianisation, civilisation and colonisation has led to what Biko referred to as the flight from the black self and what Du Bois referred to as double consciousness. The article applies the intersectionality of theoretical lenses of Africana critical thought, Foucauldian notion of power, negritude and decoloniality.

Keywords: decolonisation; baptism; cultural revolution; power; monopoly; primacy; monogamy; polygamy.

Introduction

Contextualising the construction of the African cultural practices from the perspective of the Western eye: The wretched space

The arrival of Christianity in South Africa must be contextualised within what De Gruchy (1995) labels as two distinct paths. He argues that in the first occurrence, Christianity was the established religion of the European powers. He further maintains that it was the same Dutch and British who colonised the Cape. The consequences of the colonisation project led to an influx of European settlers, who were Christians by tradition (De Gruchy 1995:28). From de Gruchy's perspective, it can be argued that the missionary enterprise's primary role was to transmit and transplant the European imagery of church through building and infrastructure. The second path of the development of Christianity was that of missionaries expanding and converting the indigenous people. It is the second strand that this article will focus on, as well as the rhetorical language and imagery employed by the missionaries in constructing the black body and its spiritual spaces. Thus, the notion of the colonial matrix of power becomes imperative to locate the forms of epistemic privileges that are embodied in these texts.

The argument by de Gruchy becomes important in contextualising what Kebede coins as the 'rise of arrogance in Europe' (Kebede 2004:36). Kebede states that because of Europe's arrogance, in their crusade of evangelisation and conversion of the 'Other', such an attitude that was based on the notion of evolutionism 'prevented the method of conversion to Christianity from being consonant with Christian love' (Kebede 2004:36). As will be demonstrated in the article, this 'perception' played a crucial role in the assumption that the Setswana belief systems were 'primitive' and backward, thus, suggesting the idea of a *tabula rasa* on that which was not conforming to the western norm and standards.

A closer analysis of the 19th-century missionary literary genre provides us with the missionary rhetoric of the time. As agents of the empire, the missionaries saw a need to 'Christianise', 'Civilise' and 'colonise' black bodies and the spaces they occupied, by labelling them as 'wretched' in

Note: Historical Thought and Source Interpretation.

Fanonian terms. Furthermore, their use of agricultural metaphors to describe the African land and its people illustrates the colonial matrix of power that they operated within. Mothoagae (2014:153) argues that anything that was not surveyed by the European eye was devoid of society and history, waiting to be watered and tilled by evangelical effort. The notion of missionary enterprise is premised on the idea that the West had the divine responsibility to spread Christianity. This form of power can be categorised in Foucauldian terms as pastoral power. He defines pastoral power as: (1) A form of power whose apogee is to guarantee individual salvation in the eschaton. (2) It is not merely a form of power, 'it must also be prepared to sacrifice itself for the life of the flock'. (3) It does not look at the entire community but focuses on a person during his or her earthly life. (4) Pastoral power as technology cannot be exercised as an epistemic power. 'It implies a knowledge of the conscience and the ability to direct it' (Foucault 1982:783). The contextualisation of the missionary enterprise and the zeal to 'convert' the so-called 'heathen' must be analysed within the notion of pastoral power. As such, the demonisation of African religio-cultural practices must be understood as a form of pastoral power. This is evident in the book by Prime (1846), in which he makes the following statement:

> Polygamy was another *obstacle* [italicised by authors], and the Bechuanas, jealous of any diminution in their self-indulgence, by being deprived of the services of their wives, looked with an extremely suspicious eye on any innovation on this *ancient custom* [italicised by authors]. (pp. 120–121)

One of the challenges that the missionaries faced was: how are they to 'convert' people who, in their view, practised 'uncivilised' rituals? The above citation illustrates the missionaries' views of customs such as polygamy. Their strategy was to demonise some of these religio-cultural practices. They applied discursive practices based on the notion of the regimes of truth. In the above citation, we can observe how, through discursive practices, the missionaries wielded power. According to Lorenzini (2022:542), regimes of truths in Foucauldian terms can be defined as the historically specific mechanisms that produce discourses, which function as truth in particular times and spaces. Furthermore, the notion of 'obstacle', in the above citation, illustrates the technology of 'othering', a form of surveillance based on the techniques of observing and of normalising judgement. Succinctly put, it is a normalising gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify why there is a need to 'convert' the so-called heathen. It can further be argued that it is a ceremony of power and establishment of truth. Thus, the categorisation of the Batswana in the above text manifests the subjection of those the authors perceive as objects of study, thus objectifying them (Foucault 1975:184–185).

The 1840 sermon by Robert Moffat demonstrates the performance of persuasion by the preacher, in front of the directors of the London Missionary Society (LMS). In so doing, he performs the regimes of truth by applying western codes as a criterion to survey and 'othering' that which does not form part of the universal truth. Moffat (1840) states:

> Let us now briefly enter their domestic circles. Polygamy and oppression are arrested in their progress, and population is increasing. True sociality and joy before unknown, enter the family circle; and feelings are created in filial and parental hearts, to which they had been utter strangers. (p. 43)

It is essential to locate the sermon within the broader imperial and missionary enterprise, based on the following: (1) The sermon was preached to mark the occasion of the vernacularisation of the New Testament into Setswana. (2) The sermon was preached in front of an audience, thus illustrating a form of discourse based on the notion of regimes of truth. (3) The notion of 'entering' the domestic circles demonstrates the evasiveness of whiteness, as well as the transplantation of the codes of culture that govern Western society. It can be argued that the preachings of the missionaries functioned as a mode of transmission of Western values and social hierarchy, based on the universality of knowledge within the colonial matrix of power (Foucault 1970:xxii; Mignolo 2007:476). The definition by Mignolo (2007) becomes imperative to locate the social and epistemic locations of the missionaries, in how they portray and construct both the black body and the religio-cultural practices. Mignolo argues, 'The "colonial matrix of power" is the specification of what the term "colonial world" means both in its logical structure and in its historical transformation' (Mignolo 2007:476).

Furthermore, Moffat is not only suggesting that the marriage system of Batswana has been altered. He is also demonstrating the normalisation of Western codes that govern as technologies of determining 'rightness' from 'wrongness', based on the notion of dualism and epistemic racism. In other words, the Western social structure redefined, modified and reconstructed the receptor culture. It is important to highlight the fact that while Moffat seems to be applying the notion of arresting the Setswana marriage custom of polygamy, Campbell, one of the missionaries of the LMS, on the other hand, makes the following observation: 'Polygamy is very general among them. The common people have seldom more than one or two wives, but their chiefs generally four or five' (Campbell 1815:514–515). The examination by Campbell contrasts that of Moffat's and illustrates the power of the pen, wherein the author constructs, in the mind of the reader, a particular image of the object of study, in this case, the Batswana marriage system. This performance of power is described by Mothoagae (2022) following Mbembe's (2001) notion of image ontology. In the following section, we will focus on the notion of baptism as a symbol of submission into a form of discursive practice.

Baptism as a theatre of submission and performance of power: An act of violence – cutting of the umbilical cord

In his article, Gulbrandsen (1993) makes the following observation:

In order to come to grips with variations in the interaction between agents of Christianity and an African politico-religious tradition, it is helpful to explain the difficulties faced by the Northern Tswana *dikgosi*, and to try to account for the fact that some Tswana *dikgosi* actually refused baptism. (p. 44)

In his 1981 book, Wa Thiong'o argues that:

The biggest weapon wielded and actually daily unleashed by imperialism against that collective defiance [of the colonised] is the cultural bomb. The effect of a bomb is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves. (p. 16)

Against the backdrop of this citation, the annihilation of people's beliefs and cultures is comparable to what Butchart (1998:75) calls the 'abolition of savage customs in the name of civilisation'. The argument by Butchart becomes imperative in analysing the performance of subterfuge employed by missionaries, through persuasion that the 'other' needed to abandon their own cultural belief system. In this regard, the denunciation of polygamy, as a cultural practice, to access baptism rendered polygamy as a savagery custom that must be replaced by a Western form of marriage, namely monogamy. It is our submission that this form of pastoral power functioned as a technology of purification. In other words, purification of the 'others' traditional beliefs. Kebede (2004) rightly argues:

In view of the admittance of failure, only the rudeness of arrogance delayed the salutary shift from the wrong method of emptying the Bantu mind so as to staff Western beliefs into it to the practice of a critical regeneration of Bantu belief. (p. 37)

The notion of a cultural bomb becomes an important metaphor in understanding the impact of the cutting of the umbilical cord. Therefore, the image of the superiority of Christian beliefs and the inferiority of African religions indicates the role of pastoral power within the colonial matrix of power. Succinctly put, the space of the wretched becomes an inhabitable space, it becomes a theatre of nothingness and annihilation. Thus, conversion to the higher stage could take place only if one cuts the cord and eradicates that which makes them who they are, disassociating with the black self.

The intention of this article is to argue that the demonisation of the Batswana marriage system, in particular the system of polygamy, and that of other African communities did not happen in a vacuum. The purpose of the article is not to argue for or against polygamy. It is to draw attention to the systematic intentions of the missionaries to annihilate the indigenous belief systems and replace them with Western cultural norms. We argue that these 'norms' created the bi-religiosity and biculturality of the indigenous people, leading to a state of schizophrenia. In other words, from the beginning, the missionaries were concerned with Christianisation, civilisation and colonialisation of the indigenous people, to facilitate the flight from the black self (Biko 1972). Kebede surmises these evolutionary assumptions

of the Western Christian missionary enterprise as the rise of arrogance in Europe (2004:36). Thus, the erosion was an intentional act. Put differently, the production of these texts took place within the colonial matrix of power.

We analyse the 19th-century missionary enterprise (literary genre) conscious of the fact that we are applying 21st-century theoretical lenses. Furthermore, our epistemic and social locations are of being colonial subjects with a constant tension between the indigenous knowledge systems and those of the West. In other words, our analysis of these texts is from the perspective of the wretched, *les damnés* (the damned) in Fanonian terms. Our location is that of the zone of non-being borrowing from the Fanonian term (Fanon 1963). It is for this reason that we engage these texts with a sense of commitment and responsibility, to critically raise the strategies that the missionaries applied to erode and deform the religio-cultural practices of the receptor culture.

The article applies the intersectionality of theoretical lenses, namely Africana critical thought, Foucauldian notion of power, negritude and decoloniality. These lenses will function as tools in excavating the multifaceted aspects of the impact of Christianisation and conversion and colonisation. It is through the apparatus of imperialism that baptism functioned as a theatre of submission, monopolisation, assimilation, epistemicide and spiritualcide of the indigenous Africans. The impact of such an erosion led to the state of schizophrenia or what Du Bois (1903) refers to as double consciousness.

The image of 'conversion' becomes important in piecing together the mosaic glasses scattered on the ground. The imagery of scattered glass becomes an important image to illustrate the depth of the damage caused by the missionaries, in prescribing a complete stripping down to the skin of one's own cultural belonging using Mackenzie's (1884) concept of cultural revolution. The notion of cultural revolution speaks to the idea of a cultural bomb (Wa Thiong'o 1981). As agents of the empire and the implementors of pastoral power, missionaries continued in zealousness to 'convert' the 'pagan' from their 'paganist customs' into the light of Christ. Succinctly put, with assimilation into the Western and patriarchal form of existence, the missionaries executed what Comaroff and Comaroff (1988:6) refer to as 'the vanguards of British Colonialism'.

The actions of missionaries did not consider the repercussions of altering and modifying the Batswana marriage systems and those of other African communities. For instance, a husband in a polygamous marriage was required to send his other wives away to access baptism, but because of customary law, he was still required to support them (Tippet 1970:76). This is also observed in the 1857 Journal of David Livingstone, in his engagement with *kgosi* Sechele. According to Livingstone, he encouraged Sechele to abandon his other wives. He further states that Sechele 'had no desire that he should be in any hurry to make a full profession by baptism and putting away all his wives but one' (1857:15). It can be argued that baptism was key to making *dikgosi* (kings), such

as Sechele, abandon their cultural practices and adopt a western cultural norm.

Baptism, therefore, functioned as a form of power. Borrowing from Butchart's (1998) notion of 'theatre', we argue that baptism operated as a 'theatre of submission of the body' to a god, based on the regimes of truth and codes. In other words, baptism necessitates a move and a shift from the familiar to defamiliarisation and disorientation from one's sense of belonging to the unfamiliar. Thus, the metaphor of monotheism cannot be separated from the concept of monogamy. This is emanating from baptism as a demonstration of submission. To analyse baptism as a 'theatre of submission', we borrow the following imperative concepts from Mbembe (2001:214), namely *primacy*, *totalisation* and *monopoly* in analysing the metaphor and the theatre of baptism. Mbembe (2001) surmises the notion of conversion:

> It is also assumed that the person who is converted agrees to accept, in everyday life, the practical consequences of this submission and of this transfer of allegiance. By this definition, every conversion ought therefore to entail, at least in theory, a fundamental change in modes of thought and conduct on the part of the convert. From this point of view, it is implicit that the act of conversion should be accompanied by the abandonment of familiar landmarks, cultural and symbolic. This act means, therefore, stripping down to the skin. (p. 228)

Baptism as a technology of power and as the theatre of submission functioned as an admission of the primacy of the Western colonial Christian God. In other words, the convert acknowledges the *primacy* and supremacy of the Western colonial Christian God, namely that nothing can be substituted for Him. Put differently, the neophyte abandons the indigenous conceptualisation of the divine and assimilates into the new concepts of the divine. The religio-cultural practices are forbidden based on the notion of *totalisation*. This means that the neophyte exclusively practices the codes and doctrinal precepts of Western colonial Christianity. This is amplified in the notion of a *monopoly* that entails the suppression of one's own cultural belief system and religiosity. Cultural spirituality becomes a forbidden form of worship. Succinctly put, baptism as a theatre of submission within the zone of non-being is performed as a form of domination over the colonial subject, thus implying the subjectification of the non-being into a state of being. Such a state of being is informed by a divine that surveys, through the performance of pastoral power infused in the three concepts, namely *primacy*, *totalisation* and *monopoly*.

The performance of surveillance by the divine and the Western colonial Christian God is based on adhering to the tenants and precepts of the Western colonial Christian doctrinal belief system. By implication, the neophyte is to practice the belief in a *monotheistic divine* including the abandonment of the Batswana marriage system, namely polygamy. This is based on the discourse Mbembe refers to as the 'radicality is what gives the single god part of his jealous,

possessive, wrathful, violent, and unconditional character' (Mbembe 2001:214). As previously argued in the preceding paragraph, to access baptism entailed a complete rejection of the indigenous belief system. The politics of conversion are based on the idea of expansion and universalisation of the divine. Conversion, therefore, functions as a technology of disciplinary power (Foucauldian 1975). Mbembe (2001) argues the following:

> By divesting himself or herself of previous beliefs, the neophyte is supposed to have shifted his or her center of gravity. A test or ordeal of de-familiarization and disorientation, conversion distances the convert from family, relatives, language, customs, even from geographical environment and social contacts – that is, from various forms of inscription in a genealogy and an imaginary. This distancing is supposed to allow the neophyte to situate himself or herself within an absolutely different horizon a horizon that paganism, in its horror, can no longer attain or recuperate. (pp. 228–229)

The metaphor of cutting the umbilical cord becomes an important image of the politics of conversion. This is highlighted eloquently by Mbembe's earlier argument in relation to the notion of divesting, defamiliarisation and disorientation. These three concepts summarise conversion and baptism as theatres of submission and their consequences on the deformation and erosion of the indigenous belief systems. Wa Thiong'o argues (1981):

> [T]he effect of a bomb is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and in themselves. (p. 6)

Kebede (2004) states:

> The more missionaries relegated African religions, superstition witchcraft, the higher, they thought, the place of Christianity became. Their insensibility to the anti-Christian nature of their approach was caused by belief painting the disparagement of African beliefs as an exaltation of Christianity. (p. 36)

Thus, decolonisation becomes an important theoretical tool within the toolbox. As Mignolo (2012:25–26) reminds us, 'decolonizing epistemology means, in the long run, liberating thinking from sacralized texts, whether religious or secular'. He further stated, 'The first task of decolonizing epistemology consists in learning to unlearn in order to relearn and to rebuild'. In the subsequent section, we will briefly engage the implications of the demonisation of the indigenous belief systems.

The categorisation and demonisation of the indigenous belief systems as primitive

The conversion of the Batswana and other African communities was based on the notion that they were in a state of primitiveness. Thus, their religio-cultural practices were viewed as backward and inferior. The socio-hierarchical structure, infused with the religio-cultural belief systems, was viewed as being in a state of decline and deterioration. Kebede (2004) reminds us that such a view clears:

God of any accusation of injustice for creating inferior human beings. It also gives sense to the civilizing mission, which is then a kind of assistance rescuing Africans from a state of decline. (p. 38)

The analysis by Kebede can be observed in Mbembe's concept of image ontology. It was through image ontology that Western colonial Christianity and imperialism constructed the black body. Such a construction was based on the idea of the African mind as a *tabula rasa* in need of Western epistemological enlightenment. We contend that it was through the demonisation of the religio-cultural beliefs of the Bantu (Batswana) that the notions of categorising the religio-cultural practices as 'primitive', 'backward', 'savage', 'barbaric', 'uncivilised' and 'heathen' of these traditions was to forcefully tow them, by misconstruing their understandings constructed on the ideas of western categorisations, *episteme* and principles measured based on the regimes of truth. Foucault (1970) states:

> The fundamental codes of a culture – those governing its language, its schemas of perception, its exchanges, its techniques, its values, the hierarchy of its practices – establish for every man, from the very first the empirical orders with which he will be dealing and within which he will be at home. (p. xxii)

The measurement and criterion to which the demonisation of the religio-cultural practices and beliefs, such as polygamy, and their categorisation as impure and oppressive is based on the idea of codes that governs Western norms and principles. It is the very norms and values that are imposed on the black body that produces de-familiarisation and disorientation of the neophyte. The missionary zeal to convert was also informed by the idea of educating the neophyte to abandon that which makes them Black. In other words, the basis of the fundamental codes, its values and hierarchies to label practices (such as polygamy) as obstacles to evangelisation can be best described as the ontology of race. Yancy best describes the notion of regime of truth as a measurement and a criterion applied by the missionaries as a performance of whiteness. Yancy (2004) states:

> Whiteness, as a power/knowledge nexus with respect to black 'selves' and black bodies, produces a *philosophical*, *epistemological*, *anthropological*, *phrenological*, and *political discursive* [italicised by authors] field that 'enables a more continuous and pervasive control of what people do, which in turn offers further possibilities for more intrusive inquiry and disclosure'. (p. 108)

The depiction of the custom of polygamy as an obstacle in the missionary literary genre illustrates Yancy's notion of anthropological and phrenological views and the construction of black bodies. This can be observed further in the 1842 book by Robert Moffat. Moffat states the following:

> Among numerous examples of the *power of Divine grace* [italicised by authors], it ought to be particularly noticed, that *polygamy* [italicised by authors], that formidable barrier to the success of the Gospel among barbarous nations, has in numerous instances given way to the *principle sanctioned by Christianity* [italicised by authors]. Submission to this law is the severest test to which a savage can be subjected. (p. 377)

The observations that can be made from the citation above are: (1) the idea of the divine power as an instrument of facilitating a move from one state of 'existence to another'. (2) The concept of principle sanctioned by Christianity illustrates both the anthropological, phrenological and epistemological knot of whiteness as a form of power, to construct and produce knowledge of the 'other'. (3) The concept of submission demonstrates the performance of baptism as a theatre of abandonment and assimilation. (4) The notion of 'subjected' illustrates what Foucault (1998) refers to as subjectification. It is in Moffat's (1842) assertion that 'submission to this law is the severest test to which a savage can be subjected', that the apparatus of power becomes visible. It is in this context that we argue that the submission to the Christian principles demonstrates how the neophyte is led to perceive, examine, elucidate and identify themselves. Succinctly put, the subjectification of the 'savage' into the principle sanctioned by Christianity illustrates the systematic form and the apparatus of power that the missionary performed in the construction of the Batswana.

The image of totalisation emerges as a form of power, a stage of domination and monopolisation of Christian values as universal. It is in this image that we can also observe the argument on evolutionary by Kebede. Western colonial Christianity – does not only demonise, but also facilitates a process of rupture spiritually, mentally, physically and spatially. It was in this process of objectification and subjectification that the spiritualcide and epistemicide took place. MacMaster (2001) argues:

> It is clear that highly *negative stereotypes* [italicised by authors] began to develop even before the slave trade and were *closely linked to a Christian worldview* [italicised by authors] that saw the African as the *embodiment of all that was most heathen* [italicised by authors]: they were typically described as 'a people of beastly living, without a God, law, religion, or commonwealth'. (p. 60)

Césaire (1972:60), in his article, eloquently describes the notion of 'African as the embodiment of all that was most heathen'. In his equation, he states that 'colonialization = thingification' (p. 42). It is important to locate the categorisation of the Batswana religio-cultural practices by the missionaries in their literature applying the equation by Césaire. This is because it was not by accident that they depicted everything indigenous as heathen and barbaric. It is the very stereotypical attitudes that they displayed that informed the views of their readers, as well as the justification of Christianisation, colonisation and civilisation. We contend that it is in this performance of power that we are confronted with the power of whiteness. The labelling of polygamy as an oppressive and primitive form of marriage, as well as its characterisation as an obstacle to Christianity, suggests that as one of the marriage systems within the social hierarchy, the missionaries viewed it as uncivilised. Thus, baptism as a theatre of submission and transmogrification becomes a cartography of space of primacy, totalisation, domination, monopoly, assimilation, monotheism and monogamy becomes a reality, leading towards what Wa Thiong'o refers to as a cultural bomb and Mbembe as de-familiarisation and disorientation. In the subsequent section,

we focus on the impact of the deformation of polygamy and the reconstruction of marriage and its meaning by the missionaries.

The impact of biculturality and bi-religiosity: Two-ness

The impact of the reconstruction of marriage through the eyes of Western colonial Christianity must be understood within two concepts, namely foreignisation and domestication. The indigenous understanding of the marriage system was foreignised by the missionaries. This technology of foreignisation was the beginning of the erosion, deformation, deconstruction and alienation of the custom. The missionaries, as we have stated previously, categorised and named the system as an obstacle to Christianity. The neophyte had to cut the umbilical cord and assimilate into a new identity. This process led to the practising of the Western form of marriage [monogamy]. It is this form of marriage that functioned as a rubric that we define and locate as domestication. In other words, the Western marriage system functioned as a rubric and replacement of an indigenous marriage custom and as a pretext to Christianity. The prerequisite for one to become a 'Christian' was that one had to undergo a process of transmogrification, the denial of the self. It is our contention that foreignisation and domestication form two sides of the same coin. We further maintain that it is within these social and epistemic locations that the colonised become foreign to themselves. It is this foreignness that we identify as double consciousness. Du Bois (1903) states:

> One ever feels his two-ness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (p. 8)

This citation illustrates the schizophrenic conditions that the colonised face within their social and epistemic locations. Put differently, the erosion of the African identity necessitated the continual tensions that the African experiences. The notion of two-ness is further argued by Mocombe (2009:8) that notion of schizophrenic conditions of the black folk emanates from the American capitalist world, forcing the blacks to internalise its negative stereotypes (i.e. soul-less, poor, immoral, uncultured, irrational, barbaric, affective and emotional) because of their material conditions and 'blackness'. This caused black people to feel self-hatred because of their unfavorable circumstances brought about by their relationship to the means of production. The schizophrenic condition of the neophyte facilitated spiritualcide and epistemicide. This can be observed in Moffat's letter to Alexander Moffat. He Moffat (1842) states:

> ... You are probably aware that the ancient custom of betrothing is practiced almost universally among Bechuanas. Whatever were the effects of this custom in days of old, they have very bad tendency here. They are sometimes espoused in childhood by the parents, and when maturity directs the virgin eye to an object more worthy of her esteem, she is forced by the sjambok or knobstick to associate with one whom her soul hates. Any thinking mind may easily conceive what secret iniquity results from such measures. Peclu, since his return, has paid his addresses to a young lady of some rank, but she is espoused to another, whom she does not love. He is, as may be conceived, much opposed, and how he will succeed I am not able at this moment to foresee. (p. 118)

The letter by Moffat illustrates the notion of two-ness in the following: (1) he writes the letter after his return from the Cape Colony with the son of *Kgosi Mothibi*, Peclu. (2) His categorisation of betrothal as an ancient custom underscores the resoluteness of the missionaries to create, in the psyche of the neophyte, a state of constant battle with the self. Lastly, this is further demonstrated in his letter to Rev G. Burger on 08 May 1824, his anticipation of Peclu taking over the reins that he will somehow bring some of the missionaries' reform in relation to the Batswana indigenous system (Moffat & Moffat 1951). This attitude can also be observed in the technology of transmutation by McKenzie, in the alteration and Christianisation of public rituals. As Gulbrandsen (1993) has rightly argued, the missionaries deliberately encouraged the Christianisation of the Batswana rituals. He further argues that they adapted these rituals to serve relevant worldly functions (Gulbrandsen 1993:71). Yet, at the same time, they applied discriminatory identities in that they condemned certain public rituals informed by their obsessions with the destruction of indigenous practices associated with marriage. It is in their application of the regimes of truth as a technology of universalisation of knowledge and epistemic racism that the dichotomisation of pure and defiled emerges. The project of deculturation cannot be analysed outside the embodied institutions and apparatuses of imperial colonisation through missionary agency.

Negritude provides us with the analytical apparatuses to conceptualise the impact of the attempt to de-culture indigenous people through baptism. Borrowing the concept of dependence from Irele (1965), the Christianisation of public rituals and the promotion thereof by the missionaries did not only lead to the transmutation of the indigenous rituals, but it also led to the dependency on the institution called the church within Christianity. The dependency syndrome emerges with the requirement to abandon indigenous belief systems and assimilate into the Western belief system. It is this requirement that we categorise as dependence. Irele (1965:502) states the following: 'The Negro predicament of having been forced by historical circumstance into a state of dependence upon the West, considered the master society and the dominating culture'. Maldonado-Torres (2007) refers to this state as the 'coloniality of being'.

Therefore Senghor (1976) justifies negritude not merely as an instrument for the recovery of the lost dignity, but rather a constructive force which can, and must, ensure its own contribution to humanity. In short, for Senghor, negritude has to function as a technology of subterfuge, a cultural concept and theory of racial identity within the democratic dialogue for cultural exchange and cultural enrichment.

The paucity of integrating one's Africanism within missionary Christianity has been one of the obstacles that Africans have faced. It is this predicament that gives rise to the continual

double-bind that Africans find themselves in. Put differently, baptism as the theatre of power and submission required the Africans to abandon everything that made them who they are. This resulted in a state of double consciousness and twoness. It is in this state that negritude, decolonial and Africana critical thought challenge the condition of schizophrenia to facilitate the cartographic struggles and effective rendezvous within these black-inhabited spaces.

Conclusion

In summation, the context of biculturality, which is a state of being with which Africans attempt to locate themselves in the world, signifies what Bell (1996:96) refers to as 'a dynamic epistemological mode of critical inquiry'. In other words, the erosion of the indigenous belief system and the demonisation of public rituals, such as marriage customs (polygamy), has created a dualistic nature of being in the world for an African. Negritude, decoloniality and Africana critical thought, as epistemological and philosophical equipment to analyse the impact of this transmogrification, provide us with lenses through which the collection and assembling of the scattered glasses can be pieced together. This process requires the intentionality to learn to unlearn for the purposes of redefining and reconstructing the pieces of glass scattered (indigenous belief systems). This is because the Africans have continued to preserve the marks of the indigenous beliefs through orality – a space that Western epistemological distortion has failed to erode. The notion of delinking becomes an integral technology in challenging the double consciousness constructed by Western colonial Christianity. According to Mignolo, 'delinking means to change the terms of the conversation, and above all, of the hegemonic ideas of what knowledge and understanding are' (2007:459). Put differently, for the Africans to break the chain of bi-religiosity, biculturality and the hegemony of knowledge, it requires a form of border thinking (Mignolo 2007:498). As Soja (2010:1) reminds us, historical ([in]justice) has consequential geography. He argues that the consequences of geographical injustice pertain not solely to geographies of physical and political boundaries but also involve the geographical mappings of ideas, images and normative structures. Thus, pluriversality as a strategy challenges the assumption of universality, resulting in the opening of the domains of the epistemic dismantling of the colonial matrix of power (Mignolo 2012:25).

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Authors' contributions

I.D.M. and T.S. contributed in the conceptualisation, research conducting, compilation of information and the writing of the final article.

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