

## Missionary Education and Pedagogical Practice

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### Introduction

The main focus of the previous chapters was on the philosophical and social/cultural contexts of the teacher-centred pedagogical paradigm. This chapter and the next adopt a more historical approach to the evolution of teacher-centredness in Botswana in particular and Africa in general. This chapter looks at how the colonial governments neglected education, leaving it to the missionaries. Their imported model of education was bureaucratic and premised on structures of domination and subordination, and it interacted productively with an authoritarian African cultural ambiance to engender and subsequently entrench a correspondingly bureaucratic and authoritarian pedagogical style. I focus on three aspects of the imported model, namely, its condescending conception of the child, the nature of religious knowledge and the embedded ideology of cultural supremacy.

In the case of the Tswana for example, these aspects combined with a correspondingly authoritarian traditional education, a deficit view of the child and the active involvement of traditional chiefs in educational matters to promote authoritarianism in the schools. The existence of this correspondence challenges directly the popular notion that mass Western education conflicted with traditional African society. Proponents (e.g. Namuddu 1991) of this 'incongruence thesis' have tended to focus on the *content* of education at the expense of its *form*. There is no doubt that the content of missionary/colonial education differed with, and aimed to obliterate any trace of traditional knowledge systems. For this reason, it was to be expected that the content of missionary education would not only differ from, but would also challenge traditional notions of knowledge. However, the proponents of

this thesis ignore the *form* of education, and its subtle, hidden messages that are embedded in the ways classrooms are socially organized. And yet it is the *form* of education that is more powerful than its content. In terms of form there was synergy between mass Western education and traditional African education. Thus, in some ways, the supposed chasm between the two forms of education is exaggerated.

Broadly, this and the next chapters assess the manner in which the historical development of education (taking Botswana as an example) might have helped shape classroom practices in schools. These chapters highlight the thread that binds together all the chapters of the book, namely that there is nothing value-neutral about pedagogical styles; the latter are products of the surrounding cultural, social and historical milieu. To this end, Giroux (1985) advises that:

.... to understand the present.... educators must place all pedagogical contexts in a historical context in order to see clearly their genesis and development (Giroux 1985:xxiv).

This chapter traces the historical development of primary and secondary education in Botswana from the time of British rule to independence in 1966. I then extrapolate from these educational developments their likely effects on pedagogy in the schools. As already stated, the pedagogical style characteristic of Botswana schools and classroom organisation is a product of cultural, social, economic and historical forces, and it has evolved over a period of time. It is now firmly embedded in our educational institutions to such an extent that it is almost a tradition. It is part of the teachers' and students' institutional biographies and they implicitly implement it in their day-to-day classroom activities. If education is to effectively transmit the 'myths' of the social structure in which it is embedded, it has to employ a pedagogical style that is compatible with society's habit of thought.

### **Educational Development in Botswana under British administration**

Botswana (then Bechuanaland) became a British Protectorate in 1885. However, the latter's commitment to the protection of the territory was not matched by a commitment to develop it. Why did Britain offer protection to a territory it had no commitment to develop? A number of explanations have been proffered. One such explanation is that the British thought that the territory was just a desert with no exploitable resources. This view is undeniably true as the statement of Lord Derby, Colonial Secretary from 1882 to 1885,

indicates: 'Bechuanaland is of no value to us . . . for any Imperial purposes it is of no consequence to us whether Boers or Native Chiefs are in possession' (as quoted in Gossett 1986:143).

However, to argue that British adventures in Africa were solely motivated by economic considerations would be an oversimplification of a complex issue. Gossett (1986) has added humanitarian and strategic motives to the economic motive for colonisation. He argues that the extent to which Britain invested in any of its colonies (including investment in human resource development) was dependent on the motive for colonisation, and this would later determine the gravity of local manpower shortages at independence. For example, where the motive for colonisation was purely economic, that is, involving the exploitation of natural resources, one would expect that human resources would be developed insofar as they were needed to develop the natural resources. This would inadvertently have led to the emergence of an 'African bourgeoisie' which would have occupied some of the public sector and management positions at independence. And where the motive for colonisation was humanitarian, one would expect the colonial power to invest substantially in human resource development. Where the motive was for strategic purposes, one would expect very little investment both in human and natural resource development. These motives, however, are not mutually exclusive. In the case of Bechuanaland, it would appear on the surface that Britain offered protection to the territory on purely humanitarian grounds since Tswana chiefs and the missionaries had asked for it. However, a closer look would show that the protection was offered neither for economic nor for humanitarian reasons, but rather for strategic reasons.

To understand this, it is crucial to first understand that the territory was granted protection in 1885, just before the Berlin Conference was held, and about thirty years after the protection had been requested. It was at this conference (which was held at the height of the 'Scramble for Africa') that European powers systematically divided Africa among themselves. The British, therefore, were to use the Bechuanaland Protectorate as a bargaining chip at the conference. By proclaiming jurisdiction over Bechuanaland, Britain effectively halted further northward expansion of the Afrikaners and eastward movement of the Germans who were in present-day Namibia. Britain's 'road to the North' (from the Cape Colony) which passed through Bechuanaland was thus secured. This is but a small part of a complex story that serves to show that Britain's interests in Bechuanaland were more of a strategic nature than anything else.

Gossett's conceptual framework puts in doubt the popular view that Botswana's protection was secured by three Chiefs. What is clear is that the British had neither economic nor humanitarian interests in Botswana. Otherwise Botswana would have inherited a more robust economic and human resources infrastructure at independence, the same way Zimbabwe or Kenya did. Thus, the conceptual framework built around the three motives for colonisation helps us understand why different countries which were under the rule of the same colonial power had differential manpower needs at independence. Perhaps more important for the argument in this chapter is that Gossett's framework helps us appreciate why the development of education throughout the eighty years of British protection was left to the missions and local authorities (Colclough and McCarthy 1980), institutions that had limited capacity to produce the territory's human resources needs in the long term.

### **Primary Education**

Primary education in the then Bechuanaland was started by missionaries in the 1840s. As would be expected, the concentration in these schools was on evangelical education. Its main purpose was to enable the students to read the Bible so that they would later on assist the missionaries in spreading the Gospel (Gossett 1986). Students also learnt the 3Rs ('reading, writing and arithmetic') and some vocational skills. By the turn of the century, the missions had established twenty primary schools in the territory, with an enrolment of one thousand pupils. There were three major missions: the London Missionary Society (LMS), the Lutheran and the Dutch Reformed Church. There was, therefore, some danger of these denominations becoming involved in disputes, with each trying to bring as much territory as it could into its sphere of influence, as happened, for example, in Nigeria (see Bassey 1999). In view of this danger, the LMS, which was the most widespread of all the missions in the territory, proposed in 1910 that committees which would supervise the work of the schools be established in each tribal area. This marked the first move towards some form of a system of local administration. The interest groups which were represented in these committees were the tribal authority, district administration and the missions themselves. These committees were replaced by Local Education Authorities in 1966.

By leaving the provision of education to tribal administration, the colonial administration was not expressing any reasoned belief in the efficacy and value of tribal administration. Rather it wanted to limit its own administrative responsibilities for financial reasons (Hodgson and Ballinger 1932:150), and

above all, its presence in the territory was motivated more by the latter's strategic position than anything else and so there was no need to invest in the territory. Gossett (1986) also sees the decision by the colonial administration to leave education to tribal administration as an extension of indirect rule, since the Africans had only nominal independence to organise their own education. It only went as far as finance was concerned. Beyond that, for example, the realm of the curriculum, was the province of the Director of Education who was, so to speak, a surrogate of the colonial administration. Thus, although London was not directly involved in the provision of education in the territory, it nonetheless controlled and monitored what the schools provided.

In the 1950s, while primary school enrolment started to expand (see Table 6.1 below), problems still remained. Resources were inadequate to cope with this expansion. There was also an acute shortage of trained teachers. These problems plagued primary education beyond independence.

Table 6.1: Enrolment in the school system, 1946-1976

YEAR	PRIMARY SCHOOLS					SECONDARY SCHOOLS				
	STANDARD 1	STANDARD 7	TOTAL	FORM 1	FORM 3	FORM 5	TOTAL			
1946	7,478	428	21,174	n.a.	n.a.	-	50			
1959	5,812	383	16,293	n.a.	n.a.	-	132			
1955	6,793	448	20,475	129	35	4	242			
1960	11,541	684	36,287	278	107	18	561			
1964	17,633	3,985	62,839	429	222	39	1,036			
1966	20,616	4,614	71,546	530	316	80	1,531			
1968	17,825	5,021	78,963	885	465	161	2,299			
1970	12,721	6,913	83,002	1,336	826	252	3,905			
1972	13,506	9,749	81,662	1,854	1,230	386	5,538			
1974	20,756	13,811	103,711	2,362	1,650	531	7,055			
1976	23,833	13,602	125,588	2,861	2,206	861	9,558			

Source: Colclough and McCarthy (1980:207)

## Secondary Education

Attempts to provide secondary education were made before the second World War (for example, the Tati Training Institute) but these were not successful. Secondary education in the Bechuanaland Protectorate was, therefore, a post-war phenomenon. Swartland and Taylor (1988:143) state that:

various attempts to start secondary school classes in the 1930s were resisted by the colonial government, which believed that students from Bechuanaland would be better educated at schools in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia.

Here also the colonial administration left the provision of education to the missionaries and the various tribal groupings. That secondary education was massively neglected during colonial rule is evident from the figures in Table 6.1. For example, in 1964, two years before independence, only 39 students sat for their matriculation examinations.

The first school to introduce junior classes was St. Joseph's College, a mission school, in 1944. It was followed by Moeng College (which was modeled on the English grammar school) in 1948 and was built on tribal initiative. Three more schools built on tribal initiative followed. At independence in 1966, there were nine secondary schools in the territory. Three were mission schools, four were built on tribal initiatives, one had been established with neither mission nor government assistance (Swaneng Hill School in Serowe, established by Patrick Van Rensburg), and the last one, Gaborone Secondary School in the capital, was conceived and built as a government school before independence and was opened in 1965. Studies leading to the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) were not introduced until 1955. Even by 1964, only four of the eight secondary schools in the whole protectorate offered a five-year course leading to the COSC (Colclough and McCarthy 1980:209). Only two teacher training colleges (for primary school teachers) and a government training centre in Gaborone existed before independence.

It is clear from the above that although the protectorate was politically administered by the British government, the latter did very little to develop formal education. One reason was that it was considered cheaper to send students from the protectorate for post-primary education to South Africa or Southern Rhodesia than to build facilities within the territory. This resonated well with the colonial government's strategic motive for colonizing Botswana. It was this dependence on neighbouring countries that was to later dictate educational developments in the protectorate in the 1940s and 1950s. This was the time when decisive political developments were taking place both in

South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. The irony, as Parsons (1984:39) has observed, is that this policy of dependence was being pursued with rigour at a time when *'those countries were beginning to squeeze out pupils from the Bechuanaland Protectorate'*.

Pressure mounted in the 1940s to keep students from the protectorate out of South African and Southern Rhodesian schools and universities. At this time, demand for education in those countries was also high. More serious perhaps was South Africa's determination to introduce Bantu education which, *inter alia*, entailed restricting the admission of protectorate students.

It was these events, therefore, that were to mark a turning point in the provision of educational facilities in order to facilitate education from within the territory. Thus, the colonial administration's decision to increase primary education expenditure in the 1950s and early 1960s was more a response to political developments in the neighbouring countries than a genuine willingness to fund educational development in the territory. As Parsons (1984:40) puts it:

political and educational divergence from South Africa in the 1950s was forced on the Bechuanaland Protectorate by South African initiative and British colonial response, rather than vice-versa.

Thus, Botswana's educational landscape up to independence in 1966 was shaped more by historical developments in the sub-region than by deliberate policy from the colonial administration.

This brief overview has brought to the surface two salient points. The first is that the colonial administration largely left educational provision to the missionaries and tribal groupings in Bechuanaland and that these had a limited capacity to develop education. The second point (which was a consequence of the first) is that at independence, Botswana had serious shortages of trained and trainable manpower to run the burgeoning government administrative machinery.

### **Missionary Education and Classroom Practice**

What were the pedagogical consequences of leaving the provision of education to the missionaries and tribal authorities? To answer this question we must first understand the nature of the schooling model that was imported from Britain and imposed on the peoples of Botswana and Africa in general. It is important in this endeavour to isolate the assumptions and values which appeared to inform the model. One of the premises of this study is that this model was

imported into Botswana by the missionaries who introduced Western formal education in most colonial territories. While missionary education contributed in no small measure to the development of the authoritarianism that research has found to characterize the classroom climate in Botswana, it can also be argued that this model interacted in productive ways with contemporary Tswana values and practices to entrench the authoritarianism.

Namuddu (1991) observes that the evolution of mass education in Western Europe was a response to certain important philosophical, cultural, social and economic imperatives. The same imperatives did not exist for the African population when mass education was introduced with the advent of colonialism. Mass schooling as it is known today came into being towards the end of the nineteenth century. Its organisational structure was bureaucratic, reflecting the then predominant mode of manufacturing and commerce in Britain. This organisational structure was essential for the production of a work force which would occupy subordinate positions in factories and offices. Because the education was for subordination and submission, it was authoritarian in practice. Emphasis in the schools, as Ottaway (1962) states, was on inculcating into pupils attitudes related to 'hard work, strict discipline, subordination to their betters, and Christian humility' (p.64). This strict rigidity of the school programme has since remained a salient aspect of schooling, as Shipman (1971:54-55) observes:

Punctuality, quiet orderly work in groups, response to orders, bells and timetables, respect for authority, even tolerance for monotony, boredom, punishment, lack of reward and regular attendance at place of work are the habits to be learned at school.

To carry out this function effectively, schools had to be organised along bureaucratic- authoritarian lines. This model of schooling has ever since remained prototypical of schooling programmes in Africa. Attempts to reform it have come to no avail (Serpell 1983). In the case of present-day Botswana, the schooling model is bureaucratic and centralized, with the state in total control of the curriculum. However, a bureaucratic-authoritarian schooling model relying on hierarchical social relations (Fuller 1991) can only be expected to engender a similarly authoritarian pedagogical style in the schools. The authoritarian nature of the pedagogical style which characterized nineteenth-century mass education in Britain was further compounded by two other factors: the then prevailing conception of childhood, and the conception of knowledge as objective, scientific and factual.

As discussed in Chapter Three, nineteenth century Europe, particularly its Christian theology, conceived of the child as innately depraved (Rusk 1954),

and education was a way of morally straightening children. The child was viewed as an incomplete and immature 'young adult' who was in perpetual need of some guidance, and it was precisely this conception that Rousseau decried in *Emile*. This conception of childhood led to the development of an 'image of education as a condescending process in which the teacher has an obligation to control and direct the student along a predetermined path' (Serpell 1993:91-92). This condescension assured the maintenance of asymmetrical relationships between the teacher and the student, resulting in a unidirectional flow of information in the classroom. Thus, the asymmetrical power relations mandated the teacher to authoritatively direct all classroom activities and to correct any 'deviations by the student from the prescribed form of behavior' (Serpell 1993).

The view of knowledge prevalent in the nineteenth century (and perhaps even to this day) further compounded the asymmetrical teacher-student relationships. Knowledge was viewed as scientific, objective and as a certainty. This epistemology was a product of the Enlightenment era of the eighteenth century. The general belief was that:

To every genuine question there were many false answers, and only one true one; once discovered it was final – It remained for ever true (Berlin 1956:16).

There was a general consensus that:

all problems were soluble by the discovery of objective answers which once found – and why should they not be? – would be clear to all to see and valid eternally (Berlin 1954:28).

As argued in Chapter Three, this objectivist, rationalist epistemology had implications for pedagogical practice in schools. If knowledge was perceived as objective and independent of the learner, emphasis had to be on the transmission of these immutable and incontestable facts from the knower to the novitiate, the knower being the teacher, and the novitiate being the student.

In summary, therefore, the nineteenth- and twentieth-century schooling model was bureaucratic and authoritarian in style, based on a deficit-system conception of the child and on the objectivist, rationalist epistemology. Such then was the nature of the educational model that was exported, not only to Botswana, but also to many other African countries by missionaries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. What remains now is to demonstrate that Botswana provides a specific example of the general point that the social context influences classroom practice.

As stated above, formal Western education was first introduced in Botswana (then Bechuanaland) by missionaries in the late 1840s. The whole institution was foreign. Therefore, the curriculum, teaching methods, assessment procedures, and its aims were alien to local communities. As would be expected, teaching in missionary schools concentrated on evangelical education. Its main aim was to enable students to read the Bible so that later they could assist the missionaries in the propagation of the Gospel. So important was this aim that the Bible was translated into the various languages of Bechuanaland. The schools emphasised reading, writing and the Scriptures, and the pedagogic principle was essentially the monitor system (Parsons 1984:25). This pedagogical principle involved training the older students by the direct method so that they could later drill the younger ones in small groups. It was a strategy David Livingstone (the first missionary to establish a formal school in Botswana in 1844) called the use of native agency in education. It must be noted that the pedagogic principle of the monitor system was imported directly from Britain. There, it had been developed at the beginning of the nineteenth century by an Anglican clergyman, Andrew Bell, and a school teacher, Joseph Lancaster. They saw it as most appropriate method for mass education since *masters* (teachers) had to deal with large groups of students. The lesson was broken down into its simplest elements by the master for the monitors (usually older boys) to teach in a mechanical fashion to small groups of children. Though cheap, such instruction did not take into consideration the unique needs of individual children.

The nature of religious knowledge itself made it naturally amenable to the direct method – religious knowledge was viewed as objective, factual and unchanging. This is as true today as it was in the nineteenth century. In such epistemological circumstances, it is difficult to think of any other pedagogical style that would have suited the teaching and learning of religious facts more than the transmission-reception pedagogical style. This authoritarian pedagogical style is what perhaps best characterizes schooling in Africa, as research indicates. As an educational tradition, the style is very resistant to change since it is now part of the ‘unconscious’ of teachers, students and the general community; it is now history sedimented at the base of society. A technicist approach alone is unlikely to ever be able to change it. As Dewey (1952) (cited in Skilbeck 1970:42) states:

To change long-established habits in the individual is a slow, difficult and far more complicated process. To change long-established institutions – which are social habits organised in the structure of the common life – is a much slower, more difficult and

far more complicated process. The drive of established institutions is to assimilate and distort the new into conformity with them.

However, the contribution of missionary education in the development of the banking-education pedagogical style in Botswana should not be over-emphasised. Indeed, it would be wrong to assume that missionary education, with its attendant bureaucratic-authoritarian educational model, was solely responsible for the evolution of this style of pedagogy in the country. In fact, it is only fair to argue that its authoritarian nature notwithstanding, the model found a conducive environment to flourish in local communities. After all, as noted in Chapter Five, traditional education was just as authoritarian. Tswana social hierarchy and interpersonal relations have always been regulated by a rigid, paternalistic structure, and the same authority structure pervaded traditional education, which to say the least, was training in conformity.

The influence of the wider social structure on educational practice has always been very much evident in Tswana society. In pre-colonial Tswana chiefdoms education was both formal and informal. Informal training was life-long since it was embedded in day-to-day socialization. Formal education, however, was more elaborate and involved initiation rituals for both boys and girls. The rituals 'were the ideological reference point for Tswana daily activity' (Mafela 1993:39) and they formed the fabric of society. Specifically, through these rituals, traditional education served to maintain the sharp hierarchical distinction between children and elders. This shows that traditional education shared some aspects with the imported Western model of education, such as the deficit-view of the child. This symmetry of views about the child helped to institute a pedagogical style in which the relationship between the student and the teacher was clearly authoritarian. This symmetry is often overlooked by those who tend to over-emphasise the conflict that existed between mass Western education and traditional society. So powerful is the influence of the latter that some have suggested that modern, formal primary education in Botswana, for example, 'should be understood, at least in part, as carrying on something of the traditional role of the extended family in the teaching, socializing and disciplining of young children' (Yoder and Mautle 1991:12). The rote learning that traditional culture fosters discourages the development of attributes such as spontaneity, self-reliance, creativity and learner autonomy. A good student must display docility, obedience and submissiveness towards her/his teachers. As argued in Chapter Five, these role patterns are inculcated by child-rearing practices, formal education and other established organizations in society. However, these are antithetical to a learner-centred pedagogy.

Also interesting is the form the administration of education took in colonial Botswana. Throughout the eighty years of British administration, the development of education was largely left to missionaries and local authorities. This, however, was not an expression (by the colonial administration) of any reasoned belief in the efficacy and value of native control of education. This could never be, given the condescending attitude of the missionaries/colonialists towards the local people and Britain's strategic motive for its presence in the territory. Britain simply wanted to limit its own administrative responsibilities. Furthermore, leaving the administration of education to local control was an extension of the strategy of indirect rule. This strategy, however, ensured that tribal chiefs were actively involved in educational matters, to the extent that conflict between them and the missionaries over education was common. Nevertheless, local control was nominal, going only as far as finance. Beyond that into, for example, the realm of the curriculum was the exclusive province of the Director of Education who was a representative of the colonial administration.

Although nominal, local control of education had more than just a symbolic meaning. It linked education closely with tribal organization. In particular, the active involvement of tribal chiefs in educational matters ensured the influence of conservative indigenous forces in education. As a result, traditional authority tended to be perpetuated at the expense of progressive educational ideas. Indeed, innovations to make colonial education more progressive were attempted. In 1931, for example, a more locally-oriented syllabus was received for adoption. It urged teachers to use 'activity, creativeness, song, story and dramatization as vehicles for instruction' (Parsons 1984). However, the innovation appears never to have really taken off. The adoption of these methods of instruction would have constituted a paradigm shift in classroom practice in colonial Botswana. Undoubtedly, the lack of suitably trained teachers and shortages of teaching materials contributed to the failure to institute these new methods. More fundamental perhaps may have been the fact that the proposed pedagogic innovations, which would have required students to exercise some degree of initiative, were out of step with the objective social conditions where conformity, not initiative, was the expectation from both missionaries and traditional society. Thus, local control of education, because it involved the infusion of traditional structures and values into a Western institution (i.e. formal education), might have inadvertently acted as a barrier to innovativeness, thus perpetuating authoritarianism in educational practice.

### The Ideology of Cultural Supremacy

However, to say that missionary educational practices in Bechuanaland were informed by a bureaucratic-authoritarian model, complemented by the authoritarian nature of the traditional Tswana social structure, does not seem to capture the total picture. Riveted to this model was the missionaries' own condescending attitude towards the local people and their cultures. The source of this condescension is not very difficult to establish; it was inherent in the very aim of the missionaries – the aim of 'saving native souls'. No wonder they described Africans in crude terms such as 'heathens' and 'primitives' who had to be transformed. These sentiments were clearly shared by John Mackenzie, a London Missionary Society (LMS) missionary working amongst the Bangwato of Botswana's Central District. Mackenzie believed that, 'The heathen was to be converted in his (sic) beliefs and customs, industry was to be encouraged, education fostered, a new society created and western civilization established' (Dachs 1975, cited in Mgadla 1986:82). Native refusal to embrace the missionaries' worldview was often met with hostility. For example, Chief Sekgoma of the Bangwato was described as a 'savage', 'heathen', 'fiend' and 'barbarian' because he had refused to be converted and did not personally approve of missionary education.

These sentiments must be understood within the wider framework of the missionaries' attitude towards Africans. Generally, the missionaries saw nothing of worth in Africans and their culture:

They regarded the people as immoral, lazy, and drunken, steeped in superstition and witchcraft, and doomed to spiritual damnation. There could be no question of grafting the Christian message on to the traditional culture. That whole culture was rotten, in their view, and had to be replaced, root and branch (Snelson 1974:11, cited in Serpel 1993:92).

As a consequence of such convictions, Tswana 'indigenous culture became submerged and many Batswana were encouraged to believe that their own cultural inheritance was inferior to that imported by the British' (Republic of Botswana 1977:11). This was clearly reflected in the curriculum content; it was biased against the local culture, in favour of European (particularly the British) culture. For example, even by the turn of the century, English rhymes, recitations, and the Oxford English Readers continued to dominate the curriculum (Mgadla 1986). Local history was not taught in the schools, and the reasoning was very simple – the natives had no history that was worth teaching. Teaching them their own history, therefore, would send

the wrong message – that they had a history. Instead, students were taught about Britain and its national figures. Thus missionary education, to say the least, was alienating and depersonalizing. It had to be so if the missionaries were to attain their objective of profoundly transforming the ‘heathens’ into fully-fledged persons. This shows that the missionaries’ educational practice was inherently cloaked in an ethnocentric assumption of cultural supremacy. Batswana, by and large, internalized their supposed cultural inferiority as part of their subjective reality and this in turn guided their relationship with their European ‘superiors’. The relationship was, as would be expected, inherently asymmetrical. Missionaries had nothing to learn from the ‘rotten’ Tswana culture, and by extension, Batswana had nothing to contribute towards their own civilizing process. Whatever exchange of ideas took place, one can only surmise that it necessarily involved a ‘unidirectional transfer of information, skills, understanding and civilization’ (Serpel 1993:95) from the European to the African. It is, therefore, plausible to conclude that the missionaries’ assumption of Western cultural superiority in Bechuanaland implicitly justified a condescending pedagogical style in schools. This style of pedagogy functioned as an instrument of social control. Thus, missionary education was necessarily a domesticating education. Only an equally domesticating pedagogical style could be expected to accomplish this objective.

It is, nevertheless, critical to reiterate the point made in Chapter Three that this use of education as an agent of social control characterized mass education in nineteenth century Britain. Such education was meant for the working class, which was ‘generally regarded as having no system of values’ (Prophet and Hodson 1988:134). The task of education, therefore, was to inculcate Christian moral values into working-class children. This is the same task that was assigned to missionary education in colonial Africa (although here the task was broader since it involved the total uprooting of a people’s culture). It is for this reason that Curtin (1965:427) asserts that the curriculum and teaching methods that Christian missionaries introduced in Africa were designed for the working class in Europe and were naturally of a condescending nature.

### **Conclusion**

Using a socio-historical approach, this chapter sought to trace the historical evolution of teacher-centred pedagogy to the imported bureaucratic-authoritarian model of education of nineteenth-century Britain and the missionary/colonialist belief in the supremacy of Western culture. The imported model had three problematic qualities; first, it was bureaucratic

and authoritarian; secondly, it was based on a deficit-system conception of the child; and thirdly, it was based on the objectivist, rationalist view of knowledge. Interestingly, it found in Africa a cultural ambiance that was equally authoritarian, based on structures of child domination and subordination and an 'empty vessel' conception of the child. These qualities taken together authenticated a bureaucratic, authoritarian pedagogical style which has since remained prototypical of teaching in Africa. The missionary/colonialist belief in their cultural supremacy promoted asymmetrical power relationships between themselves and the colonized. Looking down upon the latter's culture, the former promoted a unidirectional flow of information in interactional situations. In the classroom (as one such situation), the ideology of cultural supremacy implicitly justified a condescending pedagogical style. However, the arguments advanced here are not meant to dismiss as inconsequential the technical issues associated with the innovation delivery system (such as lack of resources, poorly trained teachers and high teacher-student ratios). Indeed, these interact with aspects of the social context in complex ways to determine the fate of innovations. Rather, the chapter merely challenges the weight that they are often accorded when accounting for failure by teachers and students to adopt and/or implement pedagogic innovations. In short, the chapter sought to demonstrate the social embeddedness of pedagogy.