The Bible in the Bush: The First "Literate" Batswana Bible Readers[1]

Musa W. Dube[2]

> You should know that when we read our Bible we change the letters with our mouths.
>
> — Sebotseng Loatile, 1890 letter to the editor of *Mahoko a Becuana*

Introduction: A Storyteller Meets Storytellers!

In this article I begin with Laura Bohannan's 1966 celebrated essay "Shakespeare in the Bush," which is where I derive the title "The Bible in the Bush." I then discuss some of the first written responses of Batswana to Robert Moffat's translation of the Setswana Bible of 1857. The third and final part of the article looks at some implications for biblical translations in the context of globalization and localization.

First Bohannan's tale of 1966—a story about telling a story to and with other storytellers.

"Not yesterday, not yesterday, but long ago, a thing occurred!" began Bohannan as she told the story of *Hamlet* among an African ethnic group of the Tiv in Nigeria, appropriating their way of telling a story. In the telling of it, European kings soon became chiefs, swords became machetes, ghosts became omens, and devils became witches.

1. In this article "Botswana" refers to the country; "Batswana" refers to the people of Botswana; and "Setswana" refers to the language and culture of Botswana. "Motswana" is the singular of "Batswana." The colonial spellings were different: "Bechuana" for "Botswana" and "Sechuana" for "Setswana."

2. This article is written to celebrate Eugene Nida, for his lifelong commitment to exploring theories of biblical translation.

But Bohannan was not prepared for the plot and motivation also to change as the Tiv actively grafted the story into their cultural world-view and made it a good story for themselves, for she initially thought that, "although some details of custom might have to be explained and difficulties of translations might produce changes..., *Hamlet* had only one possible interpretation, and that one is universally obvious" (1966, 28–29). So she thought, until she met the Tiv in Nigeria.

Hamlet, a Shakespearian tragedy, is about Prince Hamlet, whose father had died. The king's young brother, King Claudius, ascended to the throne and married his widow, Gertrude, within a month of the king's death. Hamlet, suspecting that his father had not died a natural death and unhappy that his mother married a possible murderer of his father so soon, went about investigating the death of his father. Hamlet also fell in love with Ophelia, a woman he could not marry because she was from a lower class. Hamlet, possibly stressed out, started behaving strangely, like a mad person. Having satisfied himself that King Claudius was the culprit, Hamlet made a plan to kill him. Unfortunately, he killed someone else, Polonius, the father of the woman he loved, Ophelia. King Claudius seized this moment to send Hamlet to a faraway land with two escorts and letters instructing the hosting king to murder Hamlet. But Hamlet changed the contents of the letter, and the two escorts were killed instead, while he headed back home. Meanwhile Ophelia, who heard about her father's death at the hands of a man she loved, went mad and drowned herself. On the day of her burial, her elder brother Laertes, who had being living in Paris, jumped into the grave to see her just once more; Hamlet, who had also returned, likewise jumped into the grave, and the two men began to fight. King Claudius, who wished Hamlet dead so he could maintain his throne, set up a duel, but he also prepared a glass of poison beer, just in case Hamlet won the duel. Hamlet and Laertes' fight is a deadly sequel, for both are critically injured. Seeing her son dying, the queen mistakenly drank the glass of poisoned beer. This moved Hamlet to leap out and kill King Claudius, even as he himself was dying. All four died at this moment.

It is this story that Laura Bohannan, an American anthropologist from Oxford who was on her second field trip to the Tiv to observe some of their rare ceremonies, decided to tell. She had mistakenly chosen an inappropriate time for fieldwork. She arrived when the swamps were rising, which hindered communication and interaction between different homesteads. Until the swamps dropped so that plowing could begin, the Tiv, hosting Bohannan, amused themselves with drinking beer,

telling stories, singing, and dancing. No ceremonies were performed because the swamps cut communication between various homesteads.

So it was that Bohannan found herself with plenty of time on her hands and very little to do save to read a copy of *Hamlet* that had been given to her following an argument with a friend, who held that Americans tend to misunderstand Shakespeare, "a very English poet," for they "easily misinterpret the universal by misunderstanding the particular" (1966, 28). Bohannan protested this perspective, holding that "human nature is pretty much the same the whole world over, at least the general plot and motivation of the greater tragedies would always be clear—everywhere—although some details of custom might have to be explained and difficulties of translation might produce other slight changes." To end an argument they could not conclude, the friend gave Bohannan a copy of *Hamlet* "to study in the African bush," hoping that it would lift her mind "above its primitive surroundings" and that with prolonged meditation she might "achieve the grace of correct interpretation," namely, the English one (28). The more Bohannan read *Hamlet,* the more she became convinced that "*Hamlet* had only one possible interpretation, and that one is universally obvious" (29).

It happened that one morning the Tiv invited Bohannan to tell them a story. She was quite reluctant to do so, for, as she said, she was not a storyteller; besides, "[s]torytelling is a skilled art among them, their standards are high, and the audiences critical—and vocal in their criticism" (29). But thinking to herself that "here was my chance to prove *Hamlet* universally intelligible" (29), Bohannan allowed herself to be persuaded. So she began in their own style of telling a story, "Not yesterday, not yesterday, but long ago, a thing occurred. One night three men were keeping watch outside the homestead of the great chief, when suddenly they saw the former chief approach them" (29). Disruption. They ask. "Why was he no longer their chief?" (29). Altogether, I counted up to nineteen questions they posed to Bohannan, besides commentary, suggestions, and co-telling.

"He was dead," Bohannan explained (29). Dead? Dead people do not walk, according to the Tiv beliefs. So one of the elders made a point of correction: "Of course, it wasn't the dead chief. It was an omen sent by a witch. Go on" (29). Quite shaken by the elder's self-assured explanation, Bohannan continued, "One of these three was a man who knew things" (29). This was the closest translation that she could find for "scholar," but it also meant "witch" among the Tiv. When she explained that the scholar associated the appearance of the dead chief with Hamlet, his son, the elders disapproved: such omens were issues to be handled by

chiefs and elders, not youngsters. They were of the opinion that at the most Hamlet should have consulted a specialized diviner to clarify for him about the death of his father and then approached elders thereafter for them to handle the case for him. They began to debate among themselves and to provide reasons why Hamlet did not follow this path. They concluded that the diviner would have been afraid to divulge information about the most powerful man in the land, King Claudius. This became the trend of their listening. They questioned, objected, commented, and provided explanations for the events that motivated the plot, quite freely placing the story within their cultural worldviews and then urging Bohannan to continue with the story.

So it was when Bohannan explained that the widow of the late king had married the young brother of the king soon thereafter, a month after the death of her husband, they approvingly said, "He did well," pointing out that it is consistent with their culture, thereby knocking off a key issue in the plot of the story *Hamlet* (29). The major question they had was whether the late king and the current one were sons of the same mother, a question that Bohannan could not answer but one that they held to be pivotal to the plot of the story. Given their positive perspective about the levirate marriage, Bohannan found herself skipping Hamlet's soliloquy of disgust at his mother's marriage. This would apply to several issues: they disapproved the kings' monogamy and taxes, insisting that a king must marry many wives and have many children so he is able to grow food and to entertain his guests without relaying on taxes; they dismissed the cultural norms that debarred Prince Hamlet from marrying Ophelia, pointing out that as a mistress to the king, her father would be lauded with many gifts more than a normal husband could pay bride price; they said Hamlet's madness and Ophelia's drowning was the work of witches or being exposed to creatures of the forest. Yet for them, one could only be bewitched by a male relative. King Claudius thus became the first suspect for causing Hamlet's madness. Similarly, Laertes, the only male relative of Ophelia, became the suspect in his sister's madness and death. Commenting from the perspective of hunters, they said that Polonius's accidental death was a result of an inexperienced fool: Why did the man not shout "It is me!" to identify himself (32)? Bohannan's explanation that Hamlet, who was scolding his mother, already had an intention to kill King Claudius sent shocking shudders to the Tiv. This was ethically unacceptable, for "a man should never scold his mother," and "for a man to raise his hand against his father's brother and one who has become his father" was unacceptable by all standards to the Tiv (31–32). There was deadlock about Hamlet's unacceptable behavior toward

his parents, but one elder unruffled the quandary by pointing out: "if his father's brother had indeed been wicked enough to bewitch and make him mad ... it would be his fault that Hamlet, being mad, no longer had any sense and thus was ready to kill his father's brother" (32). Bohannan notes that at this explanation, "There was a murmur of applause. Hamlet was again a good story to them, but *it no longer seemed quite the same story to me*" (32, emphasis added).

In the process of this major retelling of *Hamlet,* Bohannan became quiet upset by the Tiv for taking the story from her and telling it in their own way. The point of whether the ghost was an omen or not, whether a ghost or omen can talk, walk, or cast a shadow, was an intense moment of debate between the Tiv and Bohannan. One old man pulled a Kola nut from his pocket, bit it, and gave it to her, thus making peace with Bohannan and asserting that it was not a fight but rather the art of storytelling. The listeners in most African cultures are not passive listeners. They participate, urging the storyteller to go on and providing commentary; indeed, in some African cultures the listeners are so active that they can take the story from the storyteller and tell it to another direction. The storytelling space, therefore, becomes a writerly moment, a moment of public production of new stories through old stories and with various other storytellers. The storyteller does not have the last word, nor does one story exist to the exclusion of others. Rather, a storytelling moment is a space of production of new stories within the existing field of other stories (Donaldson 1992, 139). It becomes a moment of networking of stories.

Accordingly, the Tiv conclusion was an invitation for more foreign stories to be told: "You must tell us some more stories of your country. We, who are elders, will instruct you in their true meaning, so that when you return to your land your elders will see that you have not been sitting in the bush, but among those who know things and who have taught you wisdom" (Bohannan 1966, 33). Two ironies are noted concerning their concluding statement. First, we note that, like Bohannan, they were convinced that theirs was the "true meaning," just as Bohannan's friend held that the true meaning was in Shakespeare's English culture. Second, Bohannan's report of this event was published as "Shakespeare in the Bush," although the Tiv said that she was "not sitting in the bush" but rather among those who knew things and had taught her wisdom (33). Their knowledge and wisdom, informed by their worldview and value system, led them to conclude that Bohannan concurred with them, but it was through a different plot and assumptions. Her assumption that there would be one meaning of Shakespeare, one evident to all human beings,

was thus disapproved by her fieldwork data. The Tiv, however, were careful to point out that they were not just hearing and asserting their own culture but equally conscious that Bohannan presented them with a different story. Thus one old man reassured her, "You tell the story well, and we are listening.... we believe you when you say your marriage customs are different, or your clothes and weapons. But people are the same everywhere; therefore, there are always witches and it is we, the elders, who know how witches work. We told you it was the great chief who wished to kill Hamlet, and now your own words have proved us right" (32).

My Response and Implications for Translations

There is much more that can be said about Bohannan's narrative from various perspectives than I have been able to summarize. Like Bohannan, who had crossed many boundaries to reach the Tiv and found herself hedged by the swampy season, "the number of borders being crossed in one translation are always multiple" (Gentzler 2001, 203), as "Shakespeare in the Bush" amply demonstrates.

Maria Tymoczko holds that

> [t]he case of Hamlet in West Africa ... illustrates resistance to translation and transfer of concepts ("ghost"), values ("chastity of Ophelia"), customs (the European period of mourning), motivations (Hamlet's madness), material culture (swords for machetes) and plot sequence, as well as rhetorical and linguistic structures. The awareness of such resistance to the uptake and translation of oral material, as well as better understanding of the actual working dynamic between passive and active bearers of traditional cultures, has led to re-evaluations of the process of survival, transmission and translation of oral literature. (1990, 49)

Tymoczko further underlines that research in translation in the past two decades indicates that "translation is a form of literary refraction: translated texts are processed texts, texts that are manipulated between literary interfacings, illuminating the sociological, ideological and literary constants at work behind the manipulations involved in translation" (1990, 46). Nonetheless, Tymoczko admits that, "despite the historical documentation and theoretical build up for more than a decade now, the idea that translation involves manipulation—ideological and poetic processing—remains shocking to traditionalists, students and teachers alike, who persist in the belief in a value-free translation process" (1990, 46).

When I first read "Shakespeare in the Bush," I was highly impressed by the Tiv community. They were an empowered audience who listened critically, questioning, commenting, making suggestions, thereby rewriting the story within their own cultural worldview. While initially Bohannan thought her task was merely to find some "equivalent" words, such as using "great chief" for "king" or "machete" for "swords," the task involved much more. As translation studies have underlined, the translation of any work is not just a matter of formal, dynamic, or functional equivalents of words, phrases, sentences, meaning, or effect. Rather, translation work or processes involve "the translation of cultures," fully informed by the agendas of the patrons, publishers, and purposes they serve. As amply demonstrated by "Shakespeare in the Bush," translation studies "no longer defines translation as an activity that takes place between two languages, but views it as an interaction between cultures" (Gentzler 2001, 190). The Tiv had asked for Bohannan's story and threatened not to tell her any of their stories unless she told them stories from her culture. For them, it was an exchange of stories within their space, within their stories, and within their own culture. The Tiv acknowledged Bohannan's language limitation, saying, "you must explain what we do not understand, as we do when we tell you our stories" (Bohannan 1966, 29). As an anthropologist, Bohannan was a story collector. She had not forgotten that as an anthropologist she came to collect primarily the African stories for a European audience. Thus the moment the Tiv explained that madness is caused by witchcraft and creatures in the forest, Bohannan said, "I stopped being a storyteller and took out my notebook and demanded to be told more about these two causes of madness. Even while they spoke," she says, "I jotted down notes, I tried to calculate the effect of this new factor on the plot" (1966, 31).

It was quite intriguing to me as an African that Bohannan reached a point where, while her audience was enjoying the story, to her it was no longer the same story. At this point I said, "Laura Bohannan, welcome to the world!" For us Africans who come from largely oral communities yet in a historical context where the first written stories—whether they are cultures, history, religion, language—were written by Westerners, especially during colonial times, it has been excruciatingly painful to read the anthropological record, the travelers story, the missionary record: for the most part, one cannot recognize herself. It is a different story, precisely because it is an African story that is grafted into and interpreted within a Western culture. Unfortunately, the colonial context, which entailed the collection of the stories of the Other, who is different, was a time when the Other was already despised. Consequently,

the refraction of our stories was informed not only by Western cultures but by racism and Eurocentrism.

Similarly, when I first read "Shakespeare in the Bush" I also wondered what kind of Bible translations we would have if our translators and communities were culturally empowered citizens involved in intra- and intercultural activity where there is more interactive intercourse between the source and the target text, not in the missionary style, where the target culture is supposedly always submissively under, receiving male sperm from the source text—the biblical/Westernized cultures—but rather in a more interesting love-making where wrestling turns everyone up, down, sideways, and all angles. What kind of Bible translations would we have?

Further, do we desire this type of translation, or do we build a hedge of theories, intuitions, policies, practices, ideologies, agendas, experts, publications, and cultures that often mute the targeted communities as subjugated "recipient cultures"? "Shakespeare in the Bush" posits a model of translation as a public hearing. It posits a model that calls us to regard targeted communities and their cultures just as sacred as the stories we bring from other cultures. It posits a model where recipient/targeted communities are not the subjugated Other. Reading this story, I became quiet interested in those historical moments when culturally empowered communities first heard the Bible and the translations they embarked upon to bring the story home and how such translational spaces were negotiated—if, in fact, we can exegete them from missionary narratives. This, of course, leads me to the second part of my paper: the response of the first "literate" Batswana readers to the Setswana Bible translation. I place the word "literate" in quotes to mark the fact that there is literacy in all cultures outside the Westernized school system.

The First Batswana Bible Readers

In this section I seek to tell the story of the translated Setswana Bible and how the Batswana received the biblical story from the earliest translation presented to them. The translation was in stages, stretching from 1830, when the translation of the Gospel of Luke was completed, to 1840, when the New Testament translation was completed, to 1857, when the complete Bible was first printed in Kuruman, located in present-day South Africa. Since translation studies urges us to study the translators and their time, context, agenda, ideology, and patrons, a brief background of our Bible translator is in order.

The Scottish missionary Robert Moffat, who started his work in southern Africa in 1817, is credited with translating the first Setswana Bible. Moffat's academic records indicate that he was a gardener who later trained as a farmer. He joined the London Missionary Society in 1816 and arrived in South Africa in 1817 to start his job (Doke 1958, 85). Obviously, Moffat's training was close to nothing—a year or less. As Clement Doke points out, "Moffat had never trained as a linguist" (nor as a biblical scholar, I must add), and "he came up against intricacies of Tswana" (1958, 85). In addition, Moffat carried out his work and translation during the height of modern colonialism, fully immersed in its thinking and attitudes toward the colonized.

How did the Batswana respond to the translation? To explore the latter, I will largely read the letters Batswana wrote to the editor of *Mahoko a Becwana*, a newspaper that was published by the London Missionary Society (LMS) from Kuruman, between 1883 and 1896. A number of "literate" Batswana wrote letters on various subjects, which gives us a window into how they responded to Setswana Bible translation. These letters were recently collected and made available in *Words of Batswana: Letters to Mahoko a Becwana 1883–1896* (Mgadla and Volz 2006). I will focus on those letters dealing with correct ways of writing Setswana, since the first written Setswana was associated with Bible translation. Perhaps the reader is wondering how and why *Hamlet* is comparable to the Setswana Bible. Just as *Hamlet* was a work of "a very English poet," the Setswana Bible was the work of a Scottish man who was grafted in his worldview, which at that time was that of the British Empire. Would the Batswana readers demonstrate efforts to reclaim the Setswana culture as the Tiv of Nigeria did? The analysis of their letters will greatly assist us in answering this question. In reading these letters, I seek to identify ways employed by the earliest Batswana Bible readers to resist colonizing translations.

I must admit that comparing the Tiv with Batswana literate writers may be unfair on several levels. First, the Tiv had an opportunity to comment and rewrite the story of Hamlet prior to its written translation. The Batswana writers were only commenting on a completed translation, and we have no substantive knowledge of their engagement with the biblical story during the process of translation, since Robert Moffat does not provide a detailed description of if. Second, unlike the Tiv, whom Bohannan characterizes as "pagans ... who had no belief in individual afterlife" (32), most of the Batswana writers were converted Christians who had already undergone training in mission schools. Third, while the Tiv were apparently oral, these Batswana were literate,

since they could write letters. Fourth, their letters, written between 1883 and 1896, were drafted almost four decades after Moffat's New Testament appeared in 1840. However, since the LMS newspaper's publication of these letters was the first of its kind among Batswana speakers, we could say that this was the first written response to the translated version that was addressed to the missionaries and the writers' fellow Batswana. Remarkably, forty years after the publication of the New Testament, the debate was still hot! We may well say that these Batswana writers had been waiting to exhale!

Although I have not had access to Batswana's first oral hearing and response to the biblical story, I have read Moffat's 642-page volume on *Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa*, a volume he published in 1842 in London, two years after he published the Setswana New Testament translation. The volume amply indicates that in the first decades Batswana resisted the biblical story, displaying significant indifference that was frustrating to missionaries. Moffat thus observed that, "although they received much instruction, they appeared never for a moment to have reflected upon it, nor to retain traces of it in their memories, which are generally very tenacious" (1842, 244). To illustrate the point, he cites two examples: one from a friend and one from an adversary.

Moffat describes his friend Munameets as a very supportive and intelligent Motswana man who always traveled with Moffat. Just before his death, however, Motswana rhetorically pleaded an incapacity to understand Moffat's teaching due to age, deferring such a task to the future generations. Munameets said, "Perhaps you may be able to make children remember your *mekhua* (customs)" (1842, 246). The second case involved the speech of a rainmaker that received great applause, leading Moffat to remark that "the poor missionary's arguments, drawn from the source of Divine truth, were thrown into the shade" (247). Moffat narrates that, "when we attempted to convince them of their state as sinners, they would boldly affirm with full belief in their innate rectitude that there was not a sinner in the tribe" (254).[3] So Moffat laments that, "O, when shall the day-star arise on their hearts? We preach, we converse, we catechise, we pray, but without the least apparent success" (285).[4]

3. See Carroll 1996, where he discusses a case of one missionary's attempt to deal with lack of guilt among his targeted audience in Latin America by making a translation that said that the particular group "killed Jesus."

4. See Comaroff and Comaroff 1991, where they show that in fact Batswana

These are largely reported accounts in Moffat's book, but I have not yet encountered intense engagement concerning a particular biblical story, including dialogue, comparable to Bohannan's Tiv.[5] The letters to the editors, which began to appear in 1883, the year that Moffat died, discussed his Bible translation, focusing on the orthography, the various dialects of Setswana, the correct way of writing Setswana, and various Christian teachings that clashed with Setswana culture. They thus serve as my source for now.

Setswana Bible Translation: "Whose Interests Are Served?"

Given Moffat's accounts of Batswana's disinterest and indifference toward biblical teaching, it is obvious that they hardly asked for the translation. What was the purpose of this translation, when the community was quite indifferent? Who commissioned it, and who was served by it? We can hardly place it in the hands and agenda of Batswana. As Part Mgadla and Stephen Volz point out:

> Most African-language publications in the nineteenth century were produced by European missionaries as part of a larger project to make the Bible and other Christian teachings more widely available to potential converts. This process began in southern Africa in the 1820s and 1830s with the publication of biblical excerpts, catechisms and other materials in Setswana, Sesotho, and Isxhosa. The first complete vernacular bible was in Setswana, published in 1857 by the LMS. (2006, xix)

The agenda behind the Bible translation lay outside Batswana's interest. It follows that it did not necessarily serve their interest or agenda. Obviously, Robert Moffat's Setswana was not perfect when he undertook the translation, and I have yet to discover literature that describes the indigenous people who helped him with the task. In his voluminous *Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa,* which I as a native of that region can only describe as a "text of terror," Moffat speaks very disparagingly and bitterly of his interpreter for his poor translations, to a point where Moffat holds that:

were very resistant to Christian conversion until a time when they realized that they had lost autonomy to the ever-encroaching forces of colonialism.

5. Some Bantus' response to the biblical text was to regard it as "an instrument of divination" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991, 228).

> A missionary who commences giving direct instruction to the natives, though far from being competent in the language, is proceeding on a safer ground than if he were employing an interpreter, who is not proficient in both languages, and who has not a tolerable understanding of the doctrines of the Gospel. Trusting to an ignorant and unqualified interpreter, is attended with consequences, not only ludicrous, but dangerous to the very objects which lie nearest the missionary's heart. … The interpreter, who cannot himself read, and who understands very partially what he is translating, if he is not a very humble one, will as I have often heard, introduce a cart-wheel, or an ox-tail into some passage of simple sublimity of Holy Writ, just because some word in the sentence had a similar sound. Thus the passage, "The salvation of the souls is a great and important subject;" The salvation of the soul is a very great *sack*, must sound strange indeed. (1842, 294)

But by criticizing the translator for translating "great and important subject" as "*kgetsi e kgolo*," or a "great sack," Moffat demonstrates that he was quite unqualified to criticize his interpreter, for the latter was correct. An important issue, a court case or task, is referred to as *kgetsi* among Batswana to denote its importance and gravity. The interpreter was spot on to refer to the salvation of the soul as "a very great sack." Of his own ignorance, as one who also could not speak both languages fluently and who was equally vulnerable to translation blunders, Moffat is apparently self-forgiving and tolerant, arguing that a gross mistranslation is forgiven on the basis of good character! He writes, "The natives will smile, and make allowances for the blundering speeches of the missionary; and though some may convey the very opposite meaning to that which he intends, they know from his general character what it should be, and ascribe the blunder to his ignorance of the language" (1842, 294). It is not only Moffat's translator who falls under the mercy of Moffat's eye; the whole of Batswana/southern Africa are held to be ignorant and godless.

There is, however, hope under the able hand of a gardner-farmer to cultivate their arid souls into the fertile fields of salvation. "Satan," Moffat says,

> is obviously the author of polytheism of other nations, he has employed his agency with fatal success in erasing every vestige of religious impression from the mind of Bechuanas, Hottentots, and Bushmen; leaving them without a single ray to guide them from the dark and dreary futurity, or a single link to unite them with the skies. Thus the missionary could make no appeals to legends, or to altars, or to an unknown God, or to ideas kindred to those he wished to impart. …

> Their religious system, like those streams in the wilderness which lose themselves in the sand, had entirely disappeared; and it devolved on the missionaries to prepare for the gracious distribution of the waters of salvation in that desert soil, sowing the seed of the word, breathing many a prayer, and shedding many a tear, till the Spirit of God should cause it to vegetate, and yield the fruits of righteousness. (1942, 244)

In service to this major agricultural project of cultivating arid desert soils into life, Moffat had produced a Setswana Bible translation before he grasped the language. First he had to do the orthography. Five to six decades later, different mission centers used his Bible to develop better Setswana, even within the LMS; hymns and other books appeared with an improved Setswana orthography. Thus by 1883 there were varieties of written Setswana, Robert Moffat's Bible translation being the crudest of all.

The rising numbers of educated Batswana became dissatisfied with Moffat's translation, as attested by their letters to the editor of *Mahoko a Becwana*. The debate became heated as soon as the newspaper was launched with regard to the correct way of writing and pronouncing Setswana. Many Batswana writers insisted that Robert Moffat's earliest translation clearly indicated that he did not understand the language. They preferred the latest forms of writing and pronouncing Setswana (Mgadla and Volz 2006, 7–42).

Since better ways of writing Setswana had been developed over the years, most Batswana readers also insisted that the latter should be adopted as the standard for the newspaper. At the center of the debate were the letter *d*, which was translated with *l* or *r*; the consonant *w*, which was written as *oe*; and the letter *t*, which in some words needed to appear with *l* (*tl*), in some words with *h* (*th*), and in others with *lh* (*tlh*) together. Leaving *l, h, or lh* out of the letter *t* when they need to be included creates different meanings than the intended. A good case in point is the verb "created" in Genesis 1:1. When *h* was left out of *tl*, the verb was written as *tlola* (jump?) instead of *tlhola* (create). The Moffat Bible thus read "in the beginning God jumped the heavens and the earth," instead of "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Mgadla and Volz 2006, 29).

Another debate centered around the vowels *o* and *e*, whether they should be written plainly or with an accent and a macron, respectively (i.e., è and ō). In each case, using or not using the letter *d*, *w*, or the accented/marked *e* and *o* changed the pronunciation of the Setswana word; in some cases, meaning was changed as well, as elaborated above.

In his letter to the editor, Gomotsegang Magonaring (December 1889) underlined that, even though there are a number of Setswana dialects, "the letters *d, o, e* and *w* are the ones with which the language of Setswana is spoken, throughout the entire language of Setswana" (Mgadla and Volz 2006, 31). Another letter dated December 1889, written by Sekaelo Piti, captures and illustrates the general concern:

> we have complained much about our language in the books, because they have not been representing true Setswana but rather Setswana and English—an English Setswana—that is read as only a reminder of the real thing.[6] For example, "*go diha*" [to make] has been written as "*go riha*", "*didimala*" [be quiet] as "*ririmala*" or "*lilimala*", also "*Modimo*" [God] as "*Morimo*," and "*legodimo*" [heaven] as "*legorimo*". But when we saw hymn books in the year 1883, we were very happy because a missionary had arrived who speaks the language of our mothers and who speaks proper Setswana. He says, "*Yesu kwana ea Modimo*" [Jesus lamb of God] and not "*Yesu koana*" or "*kuana*". This missionary also printed a spelling book in the year 1885. He is the one who knows the true language of Setswana. (Mgadla and Volz 2006, 31)

These concerns were quite legitimate, for in some cases the changing or leaving out of one letter dramatically changed the meaning of verses. For example, changing the *w* in *kwana* to a *u* created verses that, instead of reading "Jesus, the lamb [*kwana*] of God" or "behold the lamb of God," actually read "Jesus, the hat [*kuana*] of God" or "behold the hat of God." If *go diha* is used for the verb "to make," it would easily be heard and understood as "to drop something down" instead of making or creating. Going back to Genesis 1:1, suppose the translation chose the missionary word for "to make" (that is, used *go diha*) for "to create"; the Setswana translation could read, "In the beginning, when God dropped [*diha*] the earth and the heavens," instead of make (*dira*). In other cases the translation created meaningless new words, such as *ririmala* for *didimala* (be

6. This writer was spot on, for indeed when Moffat discussed how he designed the written Setswana it is clear that he based it on Western languages and sounds. Giving guidance of how to pronounce Setswana, he says, "*Ch* [is] represented in Bechuana books by the Italian *c*, is sounded like *ch* in chance ... *tl*, like the Welsh *ll*, preceded by a t; *ng*, which is represented in the written language by the Spanish *ñ*: has the ringing sound of *ng* in sing. This outline will enable anyone to read the Sechuana language with tolerable correctness" (Moffat 1842, 226). He goes on to discuss how the word *Botswana* was spelled differently among the Dutch or English, depending on whether they found an equivalent sound or not in their languages.

quiet). The new word, *ririmala,* could possibly be read as referring to a hairy stomach, if it signifies anything at all.

In the same letter to the editor mentioned above, Gomotsegang Magonaring (December 1889) provides a number of examples to illustrate how replacing the consonant *d* with *r* creates new unintended meanings. For example, exchanging an *r* for the *d* in the word for "thundering" or "sounding" (*duma*) produces the word *ruma*, which means "to devour." With the *d* replaced with *r* in the verb *duela* (to pay), one reads *ruela*, which means "to keep, domesticate, or possess something for someone" (Mgadla and Volz 2006, 31). One can imagine that, if a verse said that Jesus paid (*duela*) for our sins, it would now be read to mean that he *kept* (*ruela*) our sins. Similarly, the word *dumela*, which is used in Setswana for "greeting," meaning "let us agree" or "peace among us," written with an *r* instead of *d* would read *rumela*, which means "send"!

Second, Batswana were unhappy because, through translation and the written books (hymns, spelling books, dictionaries, Bible), their language was now infused with English and was now an English version of Setswana. Piti called it "an English Setswana ... that is read only as a reminder of the real thing" (Mgadla and Volz 2006, 36). As Banani Diphafe would state in his letter of January 1890, "I see us becoming confused, only parallel to the language and speaking it like a white person who is just learning Setswana. He says '*Modimo*' [God] as '*Morimo*', and '*dilo*' [things] as '*lilo*'. Speaking with a '*d*' sounds right but '*l*' is ridiculous" (2006, 35). In Setswana only little children still learning to speak are expected to be unable to pronounce words and say things such as "*lilo*" instead of "*dilo.*" The Moffat translation thus introduced changes that made readers sound like stuttering and stammering little babies still learning how to talk. The translation had infantilized them. Hence each time they had to read the Bible they had to put on the persona of infants. Age among Batswana is traditionally an important social marker, far above gender, in fact. Failing to recognize an elderly person and treating him or her as a child is regarded as great disrespect and an insult. Naturally, then, Batswana readers were upset by their Bible-reading experience.

In a letter dated June 6, 1883, the missionary editor (Alfred Gould), though patronizing, acknowledged that, indeed, the issue of the correct way of writing and pronouncing Setswana needed to be attended (Mgadla and Volz 2006, 15–16). He then promised to include the issue for consideration by the general missionary council. This he did, although not until three years later. On his return, he reported that the

missionary council had voted to return to the most "original" written Setswana, one that was consistent with the earliest Bible translation of Robert Moffat, and to suppress the newer ways of writing, which were more appreciated by Batswana. This meant the retention of the most corrupted written Setswana. The report on the response of missionaries, dated September 2, 1889, is worth quoting at length:

> In March this year, missionaries of the LMS who teach in the language of Setswana gathered at Kuruman. As they met, they took up the issue of the letters that are used for printing and writing. Many missionaries of other missions oppose some of the letters with which they have been writing. They reject them because they have never liked them. They reject the letter *d* and they reject the letter *w*. These missionaries like the old way of printing, the one that is still used today for the Bible and the Testament. They also argue that the old printing is known by many more people. So, these things were discussed, and it was agreed that those letters should not be changed, and that writing and printing should be done only with the old letters. Now *w* has been dropped so that it will be written "*banoe*" [others] not "*bañwe*", and it will be written "*rumela*" [greet] not as "*dumela*", and "*Morimo*" [God] not "*Modimo*", and "*lilo tse di thata*" [difficult things] not "*dilo tse di thata*". It was agreed that *è* and *ō* should be changed and instead put as plain *e* and plain *o*. Some letters will for the time being still be published as they are. The letter "*h*" will be used to differentiate "*tlala*" [hunger] from "*tlhala*" [divorce]. (Mgadla and Volz 2006, 27)

The report indicates that one little but significant victory was won: the inclusion of *h* in the syllable *tl*. At last Genesis 1:1 could be read as, "In the beginning God created [*tlhola*] the heavens and the earth," instead of as, "In the beginning God jumped [*tlola*] the heavens and the earth." Indeed, Alfred Wookey's 1908 revised version of the Setswana Bible did just that.

The report from the missionary council meeting, however, had more bad news than good. The overall concerns with other central consonants and vowels such as *d*, *l*, *w*, *ō*, and *è* were rejected. The reasons given are quite telling and patronizing, to say the least. The views and feelings of the missionaries were all that mattered. It was what they liked that would stand. The prevailing or current and better ways of writing, appreciated by Batswana speakers, were to be reversed. The protests of Batswana about their distorted, meaningless language, which was now reduced to "an English Setswana ... that is read only as a reminder of the real thing" (Mgadla and Volz 2006, 29), did not matter, "for these missionaries like

the old way of printing" (2006, 27). The report goes on to say, "So, these things were discussed, and it was agreed that those letters should not be changed, and that writing and printing should be done only with the old letters," that is, the Robert Moffat Setswana Bible translation. The missionaries preferred the English Setswana and insisted that it should be the standard way of writing. Their response enables us to answer better the question about the agenda of the translation.

Decolonizing the English-Setswana: Subversive Ways of Reading

Following this report, the letters to the editor revealed that many Batswana objected to this decision, and some pleaded for the decision to be reconsidered, to no avail. They were, in fact, protesting something that had already been concluded, a nonnegotiable issue—until such time that it pleased the missionaries to reverse it. Shot down, forced to write and read Setswana according to the stuttering tongue of a child, forced to read and write in English-Setswana, the Batswana were nonetheless not helpless. In fact, they had already developed reading strategies that circumvented the imposed discourse of the "English-Setswana." They had hoped it could be corrected, but now they had been informed that what would be maintained as the standard way of writing the Setswana language was what the missionaries liked. Consequently, the Batswana readers fell back to their strategies of reading as resisting readers. Dikokwane Gaboutlwelwe, who wrote in response to the report using the example of Genesis 1, illustrates the point: "I see the old written Setswana in the Bible, as we read in Genesis, chapter one. There we find it written like this: '*Morimo o lo ua tlola magorimo le lehatsi mo tsimologong*.' ... but when we read it aloud we say, '*Modimo o lo wa tlhola magodimo le lehatshe mo tshimologong*'" (Mgadla and Volz 2006, 29). Gaboutlwelwe says that their reading strategy overlooked the colonial missionaries' constructed English-Setswana language. Instead, they read the Moffat Bible from their oral base, putting back all the excluded consonants *d*, *h*, *w* and ignoring the new creations of *r*, *l*, *ua*—which infantilize readers, create confusion or meaningless words, and induce wrong meanings. So, in fact, even if the verse said "In the beginning God jumped [*tlola*] the heavens and the earth," they read it as "In the beginning God created [*tlhola*] the heavens and the earth." (I have to say there was more that was problematic in the translation than the create/jump debate. While I do not know how to name it, I think it is best noted that what we have here was "setswana-english//English-Setswana.)

This reading strategy is further confirmed by Sebotseng Loatile's response to the missionary report:

> I am very happy to receive the newspaper and to hear the words that I have been hearing. I hear news about other nations and the word of God. But about the letters that have been taken out, I am very concerned. I assumed that our Bible was printed as it is because the missionaries had not quite grasped our language. But now they understand our language and they speak it very well. So I am surprised they are removing core letters [*d*, *w*, *ō*, and *è*]. Here everyone who reads books is not happy about the removal of the letters that have been removed. *You should know that when we read our Bible we change the letters with our mouths.* (Mgadla and Volz 2006, 33, emphasis added)

This strategy of reading from the base of the oral tradition is quite significant. What is in the oral base is the whole culture, another canon embodied by the community. The refusal to change what was overtly wrong helped Batswana readers to openly assert their oral tradition and understanding as the main reference point than to take the English-Setswana Bible as the final authority about their culture. This was crucial because the English-Setswana translation of the Bible involved more than just the replacement of key consonants and vowels with newly created (*li ri*) ones. It also included changing the Batswana spiritual world from sacred to evil in order to supplant it with Christianity. An excellent example was the translation of *badimo* as "demons" (Dube 1999). I renarrate my encounter with this translation in order to illustrate how the Batswana ways of reading from the Setswana oral tradition base subverted the colonial discourse of darkness and heathens.

Reclaiming *Badimo* as Sacred Figures: Batswana Reading Strategies

In 1995 I carried out fieldwork research, seeking to read Matthew 15:21–28 with Batswana women. In the process, I discovered something else: "demons" had been translated as "ancestors" in the Alfred Wookey revised Setswana Bible of 1908. I did not have access to Robert Moffatt's original Bible of 1857 to verify where this use of "ancestors" for "demons" originated. Where in Matthew 15:21 the woman says, "My daughter is severely possessed by demons," in the Setswana translation she says, "My daughter is severely possessed by *badimo*/ancestors." Where Jesus cast out demons in the original, he cast out *badimo*/ancestors in the translation. I was so shocked by this translation that I pored

over all the other New Testament passages where Jesus cast out demons to verify my stunning discovery.

Yes, I discovered a very sad story: the word "demons" had been translated "ancestors" in the Setswana Bible. It was unbelievable. Almost desperately, I turned to Mark 5, where Jesus cast out the Legion demon that possessed and maddened a man. I found out that in the 1908 Setswana Bible Jesus cast out the legion of *badimo*/ancestors, who ran into the lake and were buried beneath its waves. It was a textual burial of *badimo*/ancestors. I was trembling, shocked that Batswana who first read the so-called word of God were made to discover that what they venerated as sacred figures were, in fact, just demons. Ancestors—the extended memory of the families with their departed members—could not be reduced to demons without reducing everyone to the same. What a perfect way of proving that Batswana were helpless heathens lost in the darkness. For more than 150 years Batswana Bible readers consumed this colonial bomb, planted to explode their cultures away, and they could not read Greek for themselves to find out if this was representative or the closest "equivalent" term. I was deeply shaken. But that was before I discovered that the first Batswana readers had long known to read the Bible from their oral cultural base rather than from the missionaries' perspective of heathens in the darkness. As expressed by Gaboutlwelwe and Loatile: "You should know that when we read our Bible we change the letters with our mouths." But how would they reinstate the demonized *badimo*/ancestors?

Again, this was a separate but pleasant surprise and discovery. In the process of reading the Bible with nonacademic women who were church leaders in African Independent Churches, I found out that they read/use the Bible as a divination set. Now, divination among Batswana involves consulting *badimo* about all situations of concern for the living and finding useable solutions. It involves recognizing *badimo*/ancestors as mediators between the living, the dead, and God. So, far from *badimo* functioning as demons in the service of negative power, in the Batswana ways of reading *badimo* together with Jesus were divine forces of positive power. I could not have imagined this U-turn. This strategy of resistance depends on reading the Bible with and through Batswana oral cultures. It depends on using the authority of African traditions rather than giving the English-Setswana Bible the final word. It is a strategy of the Tiv, taking a story that conflicted with their values and retelling it such that to them it was "a good story again," although to Bohannan "it no longer seemed quite the same story." In these processes we are in touch with the forces of globalization and localization

(the Tiv and Batswana readers) appropriating the new texts according to their cultures, texts that were being globalized by agents of globalization (Bohannan and Moffat).

The Bible in the Bush: Globalization, Localization, and Biblical Translation

I must conclude by touching briefly on translation in globalization and localization contexts. In fact, when we speak of globalization, we hark back to modern colonialism, which has given us the current form of globalization. Both Moffat and Bohannan are important cultural translators during this spinning of time, cultures, and spaces into Western images. In her article "Globalisation and Translation: Theoretical Approach," Esperança Bielsa argues that, although the digital language is purported to be the universal language of globalization, there can in fact be no globalization without translation, for "the activity of localisation, through which a product is tailored to meet the needs of a specific local market," involves translation (2005, 142). She thus proposes that translation is a "key infrastructure for global communication and can also be conceived as an analytic borderland where the global and the local are articulated" (2005, 139). The current form of globalization is often defined in terms of the compression of time and space and the speed with which goods, ideas, and services move across the globe (Krishna 2009, 2). The major instrument of the current globalization is information technology: the computer and the Internet. Hence today's Bible translators celebrate that they no longer need to carry bulky manuscripts across real distance and that one can have access to various translation resources from a particular office, leading to faster and cheaper production. Nonetheless, it is important not to eschew the inherent inequalities or the history of globalization. As Cheryl Kirk-Duggan points out, "Globalization emerged with voyages of discovery, land theft via manifest destiny, imperial hubris, freebooting conquest, and colonialism" (2010, 476). The question we must ask is whether globalization implies the disappearance of differences or equality. Studies indicate that with globalization there is more localization: communities are more likely to hold on to their cultures for fear of being washed off by the dominant cultures and languages of the globalizing structures. Thus if we agree that much of translation is not just "interlinguistic process but more ... an intracultural activity" (Gentzler 2001, 194), then we are more challenged "to study cultural interactions" in the context of globalization. As Edwin Gentzler holds,

"the most obvious, comprehensive data for studying cultural interactions are the translated documents themselves" (2001, 194).

In the biblical area, we have a mighty archive of "translated documents," for, as Philip Noss writes, "No other book has been translated over such a long period of time, portions of no other literary work have been rendered into many languages, and no other document is today the object of such intense translation activity as the Bible" (2007, 1). By studying the first literate Batswana readers' response to the Moffat translation, we observed cultural interaction between the globalizing agents and resistance on the localization sites. To digress a little, as a biblical scholar I think we have underutilized this major archive, since most of the time translation is not part of our biblical and religion departments, save for the exercises of those learning Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, French, German, and Spanish. It is good that there are independent schools of translation, but how did Bible translation as an area of study become so marginal from the academic studies of the Bible, given the record that Noss highlights? How did the theories of translation in the past six decades become propounded largely among linguists, with a marginal participation of biblical scholars? Although we may be touching here on the power, patronage, agenda, and ideology of translation houses and their structures (Yorke 2012, 159–71), I still cannot explain why academic departments of the Bible and religion do not have full-fledged programs on translation. In the light of what Noss tells us, it is a major academic gap in most academic departments and schools of religion. In a recent article I have argued for a curriculum shift in biblical studies in favor of studying the language of the first translated Bible in one's particular region (Dube 2012, 11–15). That is, instead of Two Thirds World biblical students being required to learn two more European languages on top of Greek and Hebrew, as is the standard requirement, they should rather learn and pass a language that was used to translate the first Bible translation in their region.

Acknowledging that biblical translation is a cross-cultural exchange within the context of globalization brings with it responsibility. It obligates us to ask how biblical translation has been part of the globalization process and what its undesirable aspects have been. Irina Shchukina argues that "globalization is the appropriate culmination of the processes that began two thousand years ago with the spread of Christianity" (2010, 139). According to Bassnett and Trivedi, "Translations are always embedded in cultural and political systems and in history" (1999, 4). They underline that "translations are never produced ... untainted by power, time, or even the vagaries of culture. Rather, translations are

made to respond to the demands of a culture and of various groups within that culture.... A culture, then, assigns different functions to translations of different texts," and that "function of translation has very little to do with the transfer of information which is so often claimed to be its one and only raison d'être" (Bassnett and Lefevere 1990, 7–8). By evoking globalization and localization in the translations of the Bible, the 2012 Nida School of Translation Studies has accepted the responsibility of tracing the biblical translation function within "cultural and political systems and in history." If we go with Bassnett and Trivedi's proposition, then we need to ask: How are biblical translations embedded in the cultural and political systems and history that lead us to the current form of globalization? How are biblical translations tainted by power relations, time, and the vagaries of culture that have brought us to the current globalization? How did the culture that brings us to the current form of globalization inform the functions of biblical translation in history and until now?

Further, if we consider that the current form of globalization is the culmination of the modern colonial history and modernization of the past two centuries, then it is quite significant that the last two hundred years were also two hundred years of the most intense and Western-dominated Bible translations. Gille Gravelle holds that this "200-year period of largely Western and cross-cultural Bible translation ... is quickly coming to an end" (2010, 13). Given this historical background, Gravelle underlines that it is necessary to review these translations and that we should review in terms of "1) what the goal of Western mission was, 2) how that goal influenced translation practice, and 3) how translation practice may have been influenced by advances in linguistic theory" (2010, 13). Bassnett and Trevidi place translation theory within this colonial history and ideology—as a metaphor for colonization. They hold that "Europe was regarded as the great Original, the starting point, and the colonies were therefore copies, or 'translation' of Europe, which they were supposed to duplicate. Moreover, being copies, translations were evaluated as less than originals" (1999, 4). It follows that Bible translation should review its theories and practice in terms of the history that brought us to the current form of globalization, paying attention that inequalities and cultural wars will intensify rather than get diminished. It also means training translators, translation consultants, and communities to become self-conscious of their identity and journeys in history and how it informs their current translation practices.

Bohannan's story highlights that all readers will translate narratives according to their worldviews. I believe this is perhaps the reason

why biblical translation currently emphasizes the importance of involving mother-tongue translators—one can only hope that such mother-tongue translators are not already-muted subjects who are unable to assert their own cultural dignity. One can only hope and pray for Tiv-type communities who make their cultures central to the translation of the text, particularly in light of modern colonial influence in worldwide biblical translation. I want to believe that Bible translation has been on the road for so long. Like Bohannan, the traveling anthropologist, Bible translation and translators have long crossed many boundaries, and they are already perched among elders who seek to hear more stories told according to their own terms, even if the story may no longer seem quite the same story to its bearers. Such decolonizing community rewritings are long overdue.

References

Bassnett, Susan, and André Lefevere, eds. 1990. *Translation, History and Culture.* London: Cassell.

Bassnett, Susan, and Harish Trivedi, eds. 1999. *Postcolonial Translation: Theory and Practice.* New York: Routledge.

Bielsa, Esperança. 2005. Globalisation and Translation: A Theoretical Approach. *Language and Intercultural Communication* 5:131–44.

Bohannan, Laura. 1966. Shakespeare in the Bush: An American Anthropologist Set Out to Study the Tiv of West Africa and Was Taught the True Meaning of Hamlet. *Natural History* 75.7:28–33.

Brenner, Athalya, and Jan Willem van Henten, eds. 2002. *Bible Translation on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century: Authority, Reception, Culture, and Religion.* Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 353; The Bible in the Twenty-First Century 1. London: Sheffield Academic Press.

Carroll, Robert P. 1996. Cultural Encroachment and Bible Translation: Observations on Elements of Violence, Race, and Class in the Production of Bibles in Translation. *Semeia* 76:39–54.

Comaroff, Jean, and John Comaroff. 1991. *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa.* Vol. 1. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Doke, Clement. 1958. Scripture Translation into Bantu Languages. *African Studies* 17:84–99.

Donaldson, Laura E. 1992. *Decolonizing Feminisms: Race, Gender, and Empire Building.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Dube, Musa W. 1999. Consuming a Colonial Cultural Bomb: Translating *Badimo* into "Demons" in the Setswana Bible. *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 73:33–59.

———. 2012. "The Scramble for Africa as the Biblical Scramble for Africa: Postcolonial Perspectives." Pages 1–28 in *Postcolonial Perspectives in African Biblical Interpretations.* Edited by Musa W. Dube, Andrew M. Mbuvi, and Dora R. Mbuwayesango. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.

Gentzler, Edwin. 2001. *Contemporary Translation Theories.* 2nd ed. Topics in Translation 21. Clevedon, Eng.: Multilingual Matters.

Gravelle, Gilles. 2010. Bible Translation in Historical Context: The Changing Role of Cross-Cultural Workers. *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 27:1–20.

Kirk-Duggan, Cheryl. 2010. Globalization and Narrative. Pages 474–93 in *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theology.* Edited by Mary McClintock Fulkerson and Sheila Briggs. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Krishna, Sankaran. 2009. *Globalization and Postcolonialism: Hegemony and Resistance in the Twenty-First Century.* Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield.

Mgadla, Part Themba, and Stephen C. Volz, trans. and eds. 2006. *Words of Batswana: Letters to Mahoko a Becwana 1883–1896.* Cape Town: Van Riesbeck Society.

Moffat, Robert. 1842. *Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa.* London: Snow.

Noss, Phillip A., ed. 2007. *A History of Bible Translation.* History of Bible Translation 1. Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura.

Shchukina, Irina. 2010. The National Image of the World in an Objective Process of Globalization. *Interdisciplinary Description of Complex Systems* 8:138–47.

Smith, Abraham. 1996. The Productive Role of English Bible Translators. *Semeia* 76:69–80.

Tymoczko, Maria. 1990. Translation in Oral Tradition as a Touchstone for Translation Theory and Practice. Pages 46–55 in Bassnett and Lefevere 1990.

Yorke, Gosnell L. O. R. 2012. Bible Translation in Africa: An Afrocentric Interrogation of the Task." Pages 157–70 in *Postcolonial Perspectives in African Biblical Interpretations.* Edited by Musa W. Dube, Andrew M. Mbuvi, and Dora R. Mbuwayesango. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.

Musa W. Dube, a Humboldtian awardee, is a biblical scholar based at the University of Botswana. Her research interests include gender, postcolonialism, translation, and HIV/AIDS studies. She is the author of *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (2000) and *The HIV&AIDS Bible: Selected Essays* (2008). She is also an editor of several volumes, including *Postcolonial Perspectives in African Biblical Interpretations* (2012), *Grant Me Justice: HIV/AIDS and Gender Readings of the Bible* (2004), *Other Ways of Reading: African Women and the Bible* (2001), and *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories and Trends* (2000). She was the Nida Professor of the Nida School of Translation in 2012. Email: dubemw@mopipi.ub.bw.