

The THEORY of WITCHCRAFT  
amongst South African Natives.

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It is somewhat assuming to search for reasonable principles in the monstrous superstition of Bantu witchcraft. Can there be a theory in absurdity? However, under every belief of any human group, there is a philosophical conception of some kind which explains why that belief has taken such a hold on the minds of the community and whatever ridiculous that conception may be, it is the duty of the ethnologist to try to discover it. That is the only way to understand the mentality of the savage.

Witchcraft is flourishing amongst South African heathendom more brilliantly than anywhere on earth! In fact it seems that, not satisfied by the scanty religious ideas that he possesses, the native mind has taken a special pleasure in developing beyond all limits the wonderful fancies of witchcraft. White people have very little idea of the richness of their imagination in that domain. But white people, as a rule, even those acquainted with the native language, do not understand properly what is witchcraft for the natives. There are two sets of conceptions which we include under that name, which exist also in the minds of the Bantu, but which are entirely separated for them. The other day a cablegram entitled Witchery exposed, which I read in the Transvaal Leader, announced to the world that Bambata was very much deceived by the death of his warriors shot by the Natal troops, as he thought that, by means of witchcraft, the bullets of the white men would be turned into water. Now that kind of magical operations which some special men pretend to accomplish is very different from what we generally mean by witchcraft /

witchcraft amongst natives. Those magical operations are called bunganga or bungoma in Thonga; bungoma in Suto, bungone in Zulu, and the kind of prophets, thaumaturgers, diviners, doctors, who perform them, the tinganga or bangoma (sing. mungoma), are held in high esteem. The witchcraft proper, that is the power of the evil eye, is an entirely different thing. It is called buloyi in Thonga and Suto; the people who performed it are very much dreaded and looked upon as great sinners. They are called baloyi (thonga: noi, sing. baloyi, plur. Suto: muloi, sing. baloyi, plur. Zulu: mthakati, sing. abathakati, plur.) Their horrible actions are called: ku loya (Ronga, Suto), or ku lowa (Gwamba) or ukuthakata (Zulu). These two kinds of operations, though both miraculous, are so wildly different in the eye of the native, that the one, the power of the divinator, is resorted to in order to check the power of the other, the witch.

I do not intend to speak of ordinary magic to-day, but I should like to sketch the wonderful superstitions of buloyi, with a view to finding out where they came from and how they are related to the animistic system of the Bantus. My remarks apply more especially to the Thonga tribe, which is one of the strongest of South Africa, extending from Zululand to the Sabi River, and occupying the N.E. corner of the Transvaal and the Delagoa Bay District, I studied it amongst the Ba-Ronga of Lourenco Marques and the Ba-Nkuna of the Selati District. Here I am staying amongst the Pedi-Suto, of the Ba-Kaha clan and have opportunity of investigating the Suto ideas. My impression is that the South African tribes as a whole do not differ substantially as regards their conception of buloyi.

1. The Baloyi.

The baloyi, or people who have this evil eye, are numerous in each tribe. This power is hereditary, but, strange to say, it is transmitted by the mother and not by the father. Therefore should a polygamist have three wives, one of them is a noi, all the children he will have from that 'noi' wife will be baloyi and his other children will not be such. That dreadful power, they suck it from their mother's breast when they are still infants, but it must be strengthened by special medicines to be really efficient. The 'noi' mother chooses one of her sons to whom she does not dispense those drugs and he will be free from buloyi. Her aim, in doing so, is that, should one of her offspring later on be accused of having killed by witchcraft and be called to pass through the ordeal (of which we shall speak hereafter) the immune child will be sent in his place to undergo the trial. The chief will consent to that substitution as it is well known that all the sons of a 'noi' woman are equally baloyi. But the intoxicating medicine of the ordeal will have no effect on the substitute and therefore the true noi will ~~not~~ escape!

These baloyi know each other. They form a kind of secret society among the tribe and they assemble .... with their spiritual bodies - during the night to eat human flesh in the desert. There they form a true "hube" that is a debating assembly. They discuss what they will do to injure property or destroy life. They fight sometimes. If one of them is defeated in the discussion (saying for instance, that there should be no mealties this year a proposal which

is not accepted by the others) they condemn him to pay a fine and the fine will consist in a human body which he will have to provide after having killed it by witchcraft. It might be that he will choose his own child to bring it to the horrible banquet. It shows that there are powerful and less powerful baloyi, and they are constantly trying to overcome each other in finding out more efficient charms.

As regards the other members of the tribe who are not witches or wizards, they are considered by them as stupid beings who do not deserve a better fate than that of being eaten wholesale by the clever baloyi! These maneaters are the truly intelligent, the superior, the wise ones! But the others fear them immensely, and when a boy wants to marry the main thing to consider in the choice of his wife is that she does not belong to a family of witches. Therefore the accusation "You are a noi" is the gravest insult which a man can make to another.

The activity of the baloyi is almost entirely nocturnal. In fact they possess the faculty of getting out of themselves during the night; they fly, have large wings and, after having got out of the hut by the crown of the grass which covers its top - or by the closed door - they fly through the air and go to their horrible work. The flying flames which are seen sometimes in the marshes, the will o' the wisp, are considered as being one of the forms under which they go. Amongst christian natives, you will find some who believe that the wills of the wisps are the spirits of the deceased which come back to the earth. But I strongly suspect this idea of being of

European origin. For the Bantu the ghosts of their ancestors which are their gods, appear sometimes but under the form of snakes, around the graves, near the village in which they lived, and the wills o' the wisps are the balovi.

Two questions arise here. Does the native mind think that a true unsheathing (de-doublement) of their personality takes place then, or that they get out of the hut themselves, as entire beings, with their ordinary "ego"? As far as I could make out, the Suto theory is different from the Thonga view. The Ba-suto say: The witch is going entire, soul and body. Nothing remains on the mat, when he has departed for his nocturnal ride! He throws charms on the other inhabitants of the hut and they sleep so heavily that they do not notice anything. The Ba-Thonga speak differently. According to them, the noi is but a part of the personality. When he flies away his shadow remains behind him laying on the mat. But what is this shadow? If we could make it out we would learn something worth knowing about native psychological conceptions. It is not truly the body remains. It appears as such only to the stupid non-initiated. In reality what remains is a wild beast, the one which the noi has chosen to identify himself. The fact has been disclosed to me by the following striking confession made to me by a very intelligent Nkuna. "Suppose," he said, "My father is a noi and I am not. I want to marry a certain girl because I love her. My father knows that she is a noi because they know each other, and he tells me: "Don't do that! She is clever, you will repent!" However, I persist in my idea, He urges me to

leave /

leave that plan and threatens me with great misfortune. I marry her. One night my father enters my hut and awakens me. He says to me: "What did I tell you! Look! your wife has gone! I look at her place and find her sleeping calmly. No! here she is! "It is not her, she is away, take this assegai and stab her." "No father, I dare not." "Do! I say! and he puts the assegai in my hand and makes me violently hurt her leg. A cry, the cry of a wild beast is heard, and a hyaena appears instead of my wife, a hyaena which deposits its 'faeces' because it is frightened, and which escapes from the hut in howling. My father gives me some powder to swallow and I shall be able to see the balovi and their ways and habits. He leaves me - very much trembling from fear - and goes home. When the sun is going to appear, I hear a noise like that of the wind in the branches and suddenly something falls down from the top of the hut near me. It is my wife. She lies down sleeping, but her leg presents a wound, the wound that had been made to the hyaena!"

From this dramatic story it must be inferred that in the idea of the Ba-Thonga there is truly an unsheathing into of the personality ~~of the~~ two, when the noi goes to its nightly work.

A second question arises which is this: Does the balovi lead a double existence, a daylight one, where they are but men, and a nightly one, where they perform their work as witches. Are they aware during the day, of what they have been doing during the night? In other words, are they conscious of their doings as witches? The question is difficult to answer as there does not seem to be a clear idea on this point in the native mind. The old genuine representation is that a noi does not know what he is doing; he is not even aware that he is a noi as long

as he has not been revealed as such by the means which we shall see later on. Therefore he is unconscious. His nightly activity is unknown to him when he has come back to his daily ordinary life. For instance, my informants assure me that a man might have sent a crocodile to kill another one during his noi-existence, but he will be the first one to show sympathy to the poor wounded, to be grieved of this sad accident, and he will be amazed when his diviner points out to him as having caused the death by his bulovi of which he was in perfect ignorance. It seems as if the balovi which have long practised their horrible tricks are aware and even proud of their doings, and therefore more or less conscious of their double life.

But let us hear what are the dreadful acts which they are committing under their balovi form.

## 2. The crimes of the Balovi.

The Balovi, first of all, are thieves. This is the least criminal aspect of their activity. They steal mostly mealies or the products of the fields. The native doctors have a kind of medicine with which they plaster their mealie cobs in the gardens, and the noi, when he wants to tear them from the stalk, remains prisoner on the spot, unable to draw his hand away from the cob. But what is even more curious, the balovi of a country assemble to make up an army and go to fight with the Balovi of another one, in order to deprive them of their mealies and bring them into their own field. For instance, in 1900, there was a great war of the Balovi of Mpumfu (near Lourenco Marques), and those of the peninsula of Inyack, at the entrance of Delagoa Bay. That the year the kafir

beans were plentiful at Mpfumu and it was explained by the fact that the Mpfumu baloyi had had the victory over their Inyack enemies. They owed their success to the following trick: they gathered any amount of seeds of a little cucumber called nkakana, and made with them a kind of enormous ladder which was suspended midway between sky and sea; over it they crossed the twenty or thirty miles of the bay of Delagoa and stole all the kafir beans of Inyacka. Should a tempest have uprooted trees, broken branches, people are sure to say: Here the impi of baloyi has passed as terrific storm during the night.

(b). But the great crime of the baloyi is that of killing. They are murderers and all the more to be feared as they act unconsciously perhaps, at any rate without being seen or known. Two motives inspire their crimes: hatred and jealousy. Should one of them have been offended, he is sure to revenge himself by putting to death his enemy. During the night he escapes from his hut (as we have seen above), he opens his wings and flies directly to the dwelling of the man he hates. But the habitation of that man is well protected. Just as the village is surrounded with a material fence of thorns, leaving only the main entrance and some smaller ones, there is all round it a spiritual fence made up of charms, various medicines which close the kraal against any invasion of witches. Across the main entrance even, there is a stick daubed with certain magical powders which prevent him from penetrating inside. How must he act, however, to perpetrate his crime? He has first



made an agreement with another noi residing in that village, and who has wrought an opening in that spiritual fence, similar to one of the small holes of the material one. He then gets into the kraal, descends through the grass roof into the hut of the enemy sleeping calmly on his mat. Then he proceeds to the bewitching operation. It can be performed in various ways. The main ones are as follows:- Either he lies over the man as a vampire and sucks all his blood, - or he takes him and goes away with him to the big baloyi gathering where the victim shall be eaten just as a goat when they make a feast: the limbs will be distributed to all the assembly. The one will eat the leg, and the other the head; the noi has perhaps a fine to pay to his companions, and he will bring it to them - whatever may be his way of proceeding, the result will be the same; the poor bewitched man is condemned to die. "O loyiwile"- he has been bewitched, "ku sa nthuti ntsena"; his shadow only remains. They say also, the "nthumbu", the corpse only has been left, his true self has been stolen and eaten. He will get up in the morning, die some days later, but what will die is only his shadow. He himself has been killed during that frightful night, He has been eaten already! Here we find again an even more mysterious form, the ideal of the duality of human personality. How is it possible that a man who has still to live some days or months may be considered as already eaten up entirely. I do not pretend to explain, such is the native idea at any rate. A Mosuto tried to overcome the difficulty by saying that what the noi is taking with him to eat is the inside, the bowels; the external frame

only remains and the man will die soon. Most of the natives when you show them the absurdity of the idea, laugh and that is all.

The noi has still at his disposal five means of bewitching called - ruma, mitisa, matshelwa, ntchuntchu, and mpfulu.

The ruma (to send) consists in sending either a crocodile, or a lion, or more often a snake to the place where the enemy is going to pass through. He will be killed or wounded. Or if the noi does not wish to do so much harm, he will only send antelopes to destroy the fields and eat the sweet potatoes ... in in our christian village, during the days when the 'duikers' are plentiful and become a nuisance owing to the fact that the natives have no more guns, you might hear somebody saying: "They are sending us their duikers; Who are they? Mystery! they are the baloyi! But do not call them by their name.

The nitisa (ku mita, to swallow, ku mitisa, to make somebody swallow) is the only means of bewitching which is used during the day. It consists in giving to a visitor something to eat or to drink in which certain drugs have been introduced. The mealie pap or the beer seem perfectly normal, but owing to the enchantments of buloyi as soon as you have swallowed them, they are transformed in your throat, into any kind of harmful beast which threatens to suffocate you and give rise to a disease and perhaps produce death. You will have swallowed in this way a snake, a beetle of the copris genus, one of those strange dung-eaters, a big fly, or certain kinds of meats of animals. The great efforts of the native doctors to whom you will

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apply for treatment will be to remove these foreign bodies, and when you vomit they will show you with triumph a bit of bone, a tooth, that famous beetle or other objects which they had previously and cleverly introduced themselves. There is a strange medicine which natives like to have inoculated into their tongues, and which has the wonderful property of forcing the bewitched food to reveal its true character when you eat it. If you have been treated with it, you will hear the crackling of the elytra of the beetle and at once be able to spit out of your mouth the death containing food.

The matshelwa (ku tshela, to throw) are precisely these foreign bodies which the noi introduces into you by the way of giving you poisoned food, but during the night when he lies down over and wants to kill you in a slower a more mysterious way than by sucking your blood or stealing your spiritual body.

The ntchutchu (ku tchutchu, to inspire) is another way of getting rid of an enemy. It is a bewitching of the will by which the noi inspires to his enemy the idea of leaving the country. Without motive, the poor bewitched prepares himself to go to Johannesburg or anywhere else. There he shall become the prey of other baloyi who will kill him. When a boy dies in the mines, as hundreds of them do, his parents think he has been killed by such and such a disease, but the author of his death is not in Johannesburg, he is here at home; it is the noi who hated him and made him go by "ntchutchu".

The mpfule is still worse. That word which from the verb ku pfula, to open designates the mysterious power which the baloyi possess to open any kind of thing. One of them, a Nkuna, named

Nwayekeyeke, had charms to open the kraals of oxen during the night, he would come into a village holding a tail of hyaena daubed over with peculiar medicines and would throw on all the inhabitants a dead sleep. Then waiving the tail he would open the kraal and call the cattle out. Flying with the rapidity of the wind, he would then be followed by all the herd bewitched by him. When tired he would jump on a tree and rest awhile, fearing lest the oxen might come over him and tread him down, as they were invincibly attracted by the tail. Should people see him on his way, he would say: "Take an ox, I give it to you" - till he reached his village and introduced in his own kraal the stolen cattle. There are other kinds of mpfulo - the power of opening the hut, of putting away the husband sleeping there without waking him and committing adultery with his wife... But the great mpfulo consists in opening a man. The following story will show how that criminal act is accomplished. Some fifty years ago, a young man called Nkokana, the uncle of my informant, astonished the whole tribe by his splendid way of dancing like the chameleon. The circumcision school was just over and the last day of it, all the boys had to enter solemnly into the kraal of the chief, the back bent towards the earth, the body daubed with ochre, and in moving slowly legs and arms like the chameleon. This ceremony is well known under the name of tchekatcheka or nenga. One of the men of the tribe who was a noi was struck by the perfect performance of Nkokana, and filled with jealousy, he resolved to bewitch him. As the boys were going home that same day, happy to be at the end of all their trials, they had to cross a thick wood. Suddenly a voice was heard calling : Nkokana! the boy /

boy said "Yes, I am coming", and he went to the place from where the voice was coming, but he found nobody. Instead of coming back to his companions who were waiting for him, he ran all through the bush as possessed by a kind of madness, always following the voice, but with no success. The night elapsed ... he came home entirely worn out; a shadow only of himself and died some days later. He had been "opened up" by the witch. When such bewitching takes place, it is probable that the noi wants to enslave his victim and make it work for him. The shadow only dies, but the true self is living and toiling for his persecutor, ploughing his fields, cutting his wood, etc.

Such are the crimes of the baloyi and the 7 principal means of bewitching which they possess. They know a number of other tricks. The rich imagination of the native has full play to invent any amount of clever deeds which they attribute to them. What we said is enough to illustrate the theory of witchcraft.

Let us consider briefly how the common people try to protect themselves against such a terrible danger which threatens them all.

(3). The protection against baloyi, and the way in which they are punished.

As we saw every village is surrounded by a fence made up of charms, which competent doctors are putting all around to prevent the baloyi from entering. A great magician of the Nkuna tribe, Mankhelu, son of the chief Shiluvane gave me the receipt of the medicine which he employs for the purpose. It is a kind of ointment in which are contained different powders made up of various sea-animals /

sea-animals: the jellyfish (which the natives believe to be the result of the spitting of the whale) the sea-urchin, the sponge etc. To these sea-animals are added some roots which have been exposed to the light by the rain which has washed out the soil in the kloof. All these drugs which are also employed to obtain rain are mixed with fat and burnt on charcoal, at dawn, on the road to the village to protect the main entrance. Stones are daubed with it and put in all directions to close other openings. Then a second fire is made before the threshold of the hut, and the smoke which comes out from the magical fat will keep the baloyi away. "These medicines act wonderfully", says Mankhelu. "Should a noi succeed in entering the hut, the power of that smoke will be such that he will at once be revealed. Without any clothing the noi will suddenly be seen there as if dreaming, seeing nothing, knowing nothing. If it is a woman, I will call her husband and show him his wife... What are you doing here? he will say to her. She will not utter a word. Then I will tell him: Look here my friend ...I might be hard on you, but I have pity. Do not allow your wife to do anything of the kind again. Pay me one or two oxen, and I will keep silent. He will consent. Then I beat the woman with my stick; she awakes, and quite ashamed of being in another hut without any clothing, she will fly away home". Such is the testimony of Mankhelu, and he is sure of having succeeded more than once.

But should all the protective medicines which surround the village, which have been swallowed by the inhabitants or inoculated into them remain without effect, should a serious disease occur, one of those evils which are generally attributed

to the baloyi, the first thing to do is to go to the divinator who will cast the bones and make out if the disease is due to witchcraft or not. This consultation is secret and only preliminary. There are in the sets of bones employed in the Bantu divination, some which represent the baloyi, especially the astragalus of the "duiker", that small antelope which rambles about during the night, just at the time when the witches operate. Should that bone fall in a certain way near the bone representing the patient, it shows that his disease is the outcome of buloyi. The name of the noi will be searched for and perhaps ascertained that first day but the parents of his victim will never dare to accuse him only on the testimony of the bones. <sup>+</sup> The next step will be to go to the mungoma, the magician who "smells out" the baloyi. A wonderful personage is he. Amongst the Nkuna the great magician is Mwashihandjame, a splendid man, tall, clever, his eyes beaming with a kind of supernatural light, holding an enormous tail of a horse fixed on a handle richly decorated with beads and copper wire. He has a very great influence and the man on which the tail falls is a lost man. Should there be no white rulers in the country he would be hung. How is the mungoma disclosing the baloyi? The father of the bewitched, his parents, come to him, pay him £1, and ask him to find out the murderer of their son. He makes them sit down in a half circle and facing them begins to put to them some questions. They answer always by the word -mamoo, which means yes in the language of bungoma. But their mamoo is cool or warm, doubtful or convinced, and the clever diviner

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<sup>+</sup> The Basuto of the country generally were convinced by the mere consultation of the bones. They learned of the Thonga to go to the mungoma, and they chose a Thonga mungoma to help them. However they used also the munjo ordeal and were going to Palabora to make it.

diviner perceives easily every shade of meaning in that mamoo... he is well aware of all the disputes and hatred between the people and in his investigation, he draws nearer and nearer to the man of whom the parents are thinking. Their mamoo becomes bolder... the questions are more precise... at last when he feels himself agreeing with the consultant, the mungoma pronounces the name and lets fall his tail. He is bathed in perspiration after the great strain and he remains silent as if he were invulnerable; he has triumphantly "smelt out" the culprit. Next day the relatives of the patient go to the kraal of the noi, waving branches, dance before him and say: "Thus you are killing us." The accused one keeps silent. Then he says: "All right". We shall come to-morrow, and consult also our mungoma. Then both parties go to another divinator. The scene of "smelling out" is again gone through and likely the verdict of the second mungoma will confirm that of the first one...The augurs know that they must not contradict each other if they want to maintain their authority. As soon as the proof and counterproof have been obtained, the case becomes a judicial one. The plaintiff puts the matter before the Chief who will not condemn before the guilt of the pretended noi is confirmed by the ordeal, the trial by the famous philter called mondjo. The mondjo is a plant of the Soloneae family which possesses intoxicating properties. It is administered both to the plaintiff and to the accused by another doctor who knows how to prepare it. The noi who has drunk from it is exposed to the sun and after a little time shows symptoms of drunkenness. The whole scene is very characteristic. The explanation given to me by an old native is this:- In the mondjo there is a little bit of human flesh reduced to powder, or a bit of



bone taken from a leper. The noi who eats it in drinking the philter happens to do during the day what he is accustomed to do only at night - hence his loss of sense; he has been revealed as noi. In fact the man who administers the philter is clever enough to give a large dose to the accused and a small one to the plaintiff. The first one being already under the effect of a strong suggestion is more apt to feel the stupifying effect of the drug and his drunkenness is easily explained in this natural way.<sup>+</sup>

In former times there was but one punishment for baloyi. They were hung at once. The last one who was killed in that way amongst the Mudebana hung in 1892 or 1893 in Thabina by order of Mankhelu, the regent of the young chief Mohlaba. The Boers having heard about it condemned Mankhelu to death. The whole tribe was terribly excited. The sentence was commuted into an imprisonment of one year, and since then the native tribunal does not dare to condemn anybody for the crime of buloyi, although they remain convinced as much as ever of the reality of those crimes.

(4) The explanation of the origin of buloyi and the means of fighting against it.

It may seem inexplicable that millions of human beings who possess a fair amount of reason and of common sense, entire tribes which are not among the least gifted in mankind, can entertain such absurd, dreadful ideas as those on which rest the Bantu buloyi. But let us remember that three centuries ago European tribunals were condemning wholesale hundreds of poor people accused of witchcraft. There was however, a capital difference: The white witches, our ancestors,

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+ See for more details on the ordeal my book : Les Ba-Ronga p. 431-439.

ancestors, who were burnt by thousands all over Europe, were supposed to have made a pact with Lucifer, the prince of darkness. That sin was considered as essentially diabolical in its origin. The Bantu have no idea of Satan and that aspect of witchcraft is entirely absent from their mind.

Let us consider the various elements of the baloyi theory and seek an explanation for them. Bantu witchcraft is a direct outcome of the dogmatic of the savages, of that conception of the world which is at the basis of all their superstitions and beliefs. Animism is the name of that dim confused philosophy, and it consists in projecting into nature the state of things which we find in ourselves, just as every act performed by man is the result of a determination of his will, so everything happening in the world is the result of an intelligent agent. There is very little or no notion of natural laws in the Bantu. From him a spiritual cause alone can explain the facts especially those which hurt him and destroy his happiness in life. Apply these ~~great~~ principles to this great source of sorrow and disappointment, death, and you will hear him say: Death is only natural when caused by old age. But when a man is in his force, a lad, a baby, a person still useful dies, he must have been killed by a special agent. There are but two explanations of the fact: either he has injured one of his departed ancestors, one of the gods and is punished for that offence, or he is the victim of a living man who hates him and bewitched him. That is why a chief of great fame in the Nkuna tribe, Shiluvane had issued this decree: "I do not allow of anybody dying in my country except on account of old age. Let the baloyi at once cease their enchantments or I will kill them all".

The philosophical reason of buloyi is then obvious, and that accounts for the fact that it is so much spread and so deeply rooted amongst the Bantu. But the psychological conception of the native fosters also the belief in buloyi. We have seen in two instances the buloyi supposes an unsheathing of the human personality. That idea is very common amongst primitive thinkers, and it has found a wonderful development in the modern system of theology and spiritism. Whatever is true in it, scientifically speaking, is another question, but we ought not to be astonished at the Bantu superstitions when we see so many philosophers of our time speak of astral bodies, subliminal existence, and so on. That idea of a double life has no doubt found some foundation in the fact of dreams. Dreams are a very important thing for the natives. They are fully convinced of their objective value, and no wonder if they explain a nightmare by the action of the baloyi, or if their dreams make them think that they lead a second existence during the night.

When did cannibalism disappear from South Africa? The answer to this question is impossible to give in the present state of our knowledge, but it is likely that the South African Bantu, as well as the tribes of the Equator passed through that stage and were at a time cannibals. When the distasteful custom began to fade away, it must have left in the minds of the new generations a feeling of disgust, if not of horror. We find traces of it in the numerous tales about orges of the Bantu folklore, and I guess that if the baloyi are accused of the crime of cannibalism, it is for the same reason.

Finally, if some people dare to attribute to members of their tribes such awful acts as those

of killing and eating human flesh, it is sufficiently explained by the terrible power of hatred which the savages possess. They know that a native who hates would not shrink from anything to satisfy his desire of vengeance.

In conclusion, I would say, the origin of the theory of witchcraft, the power of that absurd superstition on the Bantu mind is easily explained when we consider that it is but an application of the amnistic system to the problem of death, that it is in accordance with the Bantu psychological conceptions of the duality of the human being and of the objective value of dreams.

The resemblance of cannibalism, the intensity of hatred amongst savages, all these facts and principles correspond perfectly with the various elements of the superstitions which have been analysed now.

The only way of getting rid of that dreadful theory, which can be readily called the curse of the natives is to replace in their minds that primitive and dangerous animism of the spiritual, highly moral philosophical theism of Christianity. A Bantu when he becomes a Christian has given the deathblow to his old belief of witchcraft. However, that belief is slow to die. It is one of the superstitions of heathenism which sticks with the greatest obstinacy to his mind, and how often do we see the accusation of buloyi thrown in the face of a convert by another convert. Every missionary understanding the natives, will agree that any apparition of the buloyi superstition amongst those new congregations must be at once denounced as sin of heathenism and punished as such by those of ecclesiastical discipline which these young churches cannot yet be dispensed with.

But there is another very efficient way of putting a check to the buloyi superstition. Buloyi is condemned as a crime and the noi must be judged and punished by the chief. Now, since the white Government has taken in hand the direction of Native Affairs all over South Africa, the native chiefs have seen their power very much diminished. They only judge less important offences. In doing so they are acting in the name and with permission of their white masters. Accusations of buloyi are frequently brought before the native tribunal. The Christian chief generally refuses to accept them, but heathen ones do it, and therefore they uphold in the semi-official capacity that wretched and dangerous heathen superstition. Though we quite agree that the State is not called as such, to interfere with the beliefs of the subjects, we must recognise that here a civilized Government has the duty to prevent any judicial act which supposes the reality of buloyi. And I would suggest a few principles and a few rules which the Department of Native Affairs might inculcate on the subject to its subordinates, the native Chiefs -

1. The crime of buloyi does not exist and does not fall under the penal law.

2.. It is prohibited for a native chief to try any buloyi case. These would be the two main principles. I might add the following ones :-

3. The plaintiff must be scolded as upsetting the peace of the country.

4. The mungoma who pretends to have "smelt out" a noi must be fined as employing his authority to deceive people and foster hatred amongst them.

5. No evidence based on the use of divinatory bones must be accepted.

In the course of time, if that policy is followed, and if a true Christianity and education spread amongst natives the buloyi will have lived, and the grandsons of the actual natives will read with amazement what their forefathers could believe.

(Sgd.) HENRI A. JUNOD.

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