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Missionary Conversions and Cross-Cultural Translations in the highveld, 1820 to 1870

Masters Dissertation

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Abstract

This dissertation examines missionary encounters, conversions and cross-cultural translations in the Southern African Highveld during the nineteenth century. It primarily focuses on the effects of alterity, or 'self' and 'other' binaries, within the context of Robert Moffat's encounters with the Batlhaping, or Batswana. The paper first identifies and examines historical theories of encounter, conversion and translation and then applies key aspects of these theories to the specific historical circumstances of the London Mission Stations and Wesleyan Mission Stations. It looks at the how missionary conversions, categorizations and modes of classification and translations helped to create a seemingly universal but actually Eurocentric regime of truth. This regime was premised on the negation of Batlhaping cultures and customs, and ultimately on their normative assimilation into idealized European cultures and norms. This assimilation was never complete, since African peoples had their own ideas regarding faith and belonging, but it nonetheless played a major role in constructing new forms of African subjectivity within a Eurocentric mirror, with a further bifurcation between 'converted' and 'unconverted'. A further component of this historical transformation was the ideological and institutional role played by European missionaries from 1816 to 1857 in the creation and invention of tribal categories on the highveld. These tribal categories ended up superseding more fluid and overlapping forms of identity, and thereby paved the way for essentialist models of identity and difference which had profound implications for not only the nineteenth century, but also the twentieth century and contemporary society.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to Missionary Encounters, Cross-cultural Translations

"I [Robert Moffat] have traversed those regions in which, according to the testimony of the farmers, thousands once dwelt, drinking at their own fountains, and killing their own game; but now, alas, scarcely a family can be seen! It is impossible to look over these now uninhabited plains and mountain-glens without feeling the deepest melancholy, while the winds moaning in the vale seem to echo back the sound, "Where are they?" … it was too late; past sufferings, and past offences on both sides, had produced a spirit of hatred so universal, that it was of no avail to pacify one party…" (Moffat 1842. 20-21).

"Mrs. Moffat and myself could not but feel deeply when we bade what, at that time, we supposed to be a long and a last adieu, to the man who had always been dear to us, and who was then still dearer. We had travelled with him [Mr Robert Hamilton] over many an African hill and plain; we had held converse with each other on the interests of Christ's Kingdom in Africa; and we had often bowed our knees together before the throne of God, on behalf of the sable sons and daughters of that desolate country, among whom we wandered and for whose sake we were strangers in a strange land" (Moffat 1842.165/6).

The initial statement made by Robert Moffat ignited in me a strong desire to acquire knowledge and comprehension of the African people he speaks about with such conviction. It aroused a desire to ascertain these individuals' identities, cultures, traditions, and beliefs. The inquiry "Where are they?" reverberates within the framework of Moffat's literary work and inside the broader structure of contemporary South African society. The second statement made by Moffat not only prompted an analysis of missionary journeys and their occasionally challenging and isolated presence in Africa but also emphasized the need to explore broader concepts of alterity, or the dichotomy between 'self' and 'other,' in the context of European interactions with African populations. This study aims to get a more profound comprehension of the African peoples described by Moffat and the different roles that Moffat and other missionaries occasionally held throughout this period.

The collective importance of these two statements made by Moffat further emphasized the need to investigate the dilemmas and consequences of missionary encounters with African populations. This examination functions as a method of comprehending the several elements that would subsequently establish the parameters and circumstances of

cohabitation between European and African populations. Therefore, the concerns and consequences of encounters closely connect to the questions and consequences of conversion and translation. These latter two are highly useful in elucidating the interaction and circumstances of cohabitation between missionaries and African people. These factors had significant consequences in shaping the various manifestations and configurations that the initial interaction between missionaries and African people assumed and even more profound implications on the different manifestations and configurations that modern African society has adopted and still holds (Anghie 2005, Mudimbe 1988).

Therefore, this study aims to comprehensively analyze the impacts of alterity, the dichotomy between "self" and "other," in the context of missionary interactions with African people residing in the highveld region of South Africa throughout the nineteenth century. Geographically, the highveld region covers nearly almost all of Gauteng and Free State provinces. Encompassing areas of the Northern Cape, North West, Eastern Cape, Limpopo, and Mpumalanga, this region extends to the western edge of Lesotho. I am primarily interested in how the missionary project of conversion and classification facilitated the legitimization and direction of both the conquest and quotidian violence of colonial rule and state-building. This work empirically examines Robert Moffat's contribution to the Christian canon and his collaboration and meeting with Batlhaping, a Batswana sub-group, between 1820 and 1870. My research centers on the Moffat mission station in Kuruman, Northern Cape. This station was founded in 1816 by the London Missionary Society (Landau 2010).

This study focuses on the efforts of Robert Moffat and other missionaries from the London Missionary Society and the (Wesleyan) Methodist Missionary Society, including Thomas Hodgson and Samuel Broadbent, to evangelize and convert Batlhaping and other Batswana people to Christianity during their initial interactions with these Africans. The highveld intertribal bloodshed, friendships, and hostility between African chiefs and European missionaries were the critical settings in which this ‘first encounter’ and African conversion process took place. This dissertation is concerned explicitly with cross-cultural relations, missionary evangelism, the initiatives of Indigenous conversion, and linguistic translation. These factors are fundamental elements of broader dynamics linked to the initial interactions between Europeans and Africans.

The significance of this analysis lies in its scope beyond the mere recollection of historical occurrences. It enables a more profound and analytical survey of the importance and essence of the initial interaction between European missionaries and African populations. Furthermore, it facilitates a more comprehensive analysis of African conversion to Christianity and the translations between different cultures (Todorov 1984, White 1973). Thus, it is highly pertinent in illuminating current issues of identity, sovereignty, African self-governance, direct and indirect governance by imperial and colonial powers, violence, gender, international law, multiculturalism, the evolution of capitalism in Southern Africa, and overall the progress of contemporary African nation-states. From this perspective, the analysis of missionary conversion, cross-cultural interactions, and translations is highly beneficial as it reveals the dual nature of missionary conversion and the dissemination of Christian faith in African communities. Simultaneously, it ensured a seamless infiltration of Southern Africa by colonial and imperial powers while submerging African people in colonial and imperial knowledge systems and epistemologies, thus diminishing their traditional intellectual capacities (Walsh 1967).

By drawing upon a wider body of research on colonial interactions and binary categorizations, with a particular focus on the missionary archive (Anghie 2004; Bowden 2009; Cesaire 1972, Todorov 1999), I will examine how theological beliefs and political structures in the highveld region contributed to the creation of a distinct "othered" perception of Batlhaping and African subjectivity as a whole. Additionally, I will analyze the violent consequences that ensued when African people in the highveld region deviated from the prescribed norms and classification systems imposed on them by colonial and imperial authorities.

Initial interactions between European missionaries and African populations, and more broadly, the process of missionary conversion, were not always unidirectional. According to Paul Landau (2010, 171-2), the expansion of the 'Black Church' throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century relied on established customs and relationships that consistently managed to avoid the oppressive and repressive consequences of colonial and imperial efforts to convert and categorize racial groups. In this context, the concept and implementation of 'first encounters' and conversion are fundamental and crucial

components of European imperialism and territorial expansion in Africa. A complex framework was created by European missionaries and colonial authorities to categorize their indigenous conversation partners as either witches, irrational, superstitious, or dissidents. This paradigm, for instance, attributed the same status to the 'African refuser' who declined conversion as a Christian sinner (Comaroff 1991, 1997; Mudimbe 1988). This long-term project was mainly intertwined with categorization models that revolved around a core vocabulary of 'odds' and 'ends,' 'remains' and 'debris,' and 'backsliders' and 'heathens.'

The explicit objective of the African conversion process was to offer redemption, civilization, development, and modernization to the African 'other,' who was primarily assigned the contrasting connotations associated with these classifications (Chidester 1996). When the African population did not adhere to the European normative standards, European missionaries found it convenient to attribute their perceived 'failure' to them and reflexively rely on racial stereotypes of 'primitive and Indigenous docile bodies' in their ethnographies (Hunt 1996). African conversion to Christianity significantly damaged cultural continuity to promote colonial missionary advancement and literacy (Hofmeyr 1987). The process mentioned above resulted in African peoples' deprivation of cultural authority, legitimacy, and sovereignty. The Moffat mission station in Kuruman throughout the nineteenth century offers a relevant framework and valuable model for comprehending the economic aspects of colonial violence in South Africa. This observation highlights the multifaceted nature of the economy of colonial violence, which extended beyond the physical realm to encompass cultural, spiritual, and psychological manifestations.

This study critically examines the colonial and imperial power patterns and hegemony that arose due to Africa's initial contact with European missionaries, the conversion process, and the translation project. From this perspective, the upheaval and destruction of African cultures and traditions can be mainly ascribed to the efforts of European missionary populations in collaboration with African informants, assistants and converts. Presented below are the research questions that I aim to adopt to assess and explore the importance of the interaction between the two.

Research Questions

The primary research questions to be taken up in this project are as follows:

What role did missionary ethnographies and labours play within processes of cross-cultural encounters on the Southern African highveld in the nineteenth century?

How and why did European missionary ethnographies and labours redefine African subjectivity in the nineteenth century in relation to Batlhaping cultures and customs and, more broadly, the Batswana people?

To what extent did missionary encounters and the missionary project of biblical translation from English to Setswana end up bifurcating Batlhaping subjectivity between 'converted' and 'pagan'?

Where and how do nineteenth-century cross-cultural encounters on the highveld fit within the more extensive histories and theories of encounters between Europeans and non-Europeans?

These questions occupy my thoughts during this research investigation. Through these inquiries, I seek a more profound comprehension of the mission of conversion and Moffat's literary translations of the Bible in the highveld region during the nineteenth century among the Batlhaping people. They also examine the consequences of missionary conversion and cross-cultural translation (Moffat's literary translation of the Bible) in present-day society and African democratic nation-states, particularly South Africa.

These questions shed light on the complex and conflicting interaction between European missionaries and anthropologists in Africa. They work to expose the inherent paradoxes, disputes, and disparities between the vocation of the missionary and that of the anthropologist. The anthropologist is a custodian of culture, traditional knowledge, practices, art forms, 'pagan' rituals, and values, and therefore a trained and good listener preoccupied with recognizing 'sameness' and 'otherness.' In contrast, the missionary occupation opposes that of the anthropologist. In several aspects, the nature of his occupation results in estrangement and asceticism. Its primary focus is on eradicating the culture and traditions of the 'other,' so displacing them from their so-called 'carnal and

pagan' origins and converting them into the Christian light or 'sameness' (Van Der Geest 1990).

These inquiries are significant because, within the European interaction (between missionaries and anthropologists) with African peoples (Batlhaping), they position both the missionary and anthropologist in an unfamiliar 'topos' or foreign culture. They try to establish moments of intersection, overlap, and collusion between the two insofar as both constituted 'strangers in a strange land.' Both were primarily shaped by the same anthropological concern that sought to establish a definitive understanding of the encountered 'other,' either for Christian loyalty, imperial ambition, or both. Given these concerns, I am particularly interested in comprehending the role that missionaries played in the process of African conversion, considering the varied and sometimes contradictory experiences and aspirations expressed and embodied by missionaries (sometimes missionaries turned anthropologists), colonial officials, and Batlhaping (Mudimbe 1988).

Through these questions, I seek to establish the effects of the encounter and process of African conversion in splitting the African self, with one part of the 'self' being progressive and Christian and the other traditional and 'primitive.' This research aims to analyze the consequences of the 'split African consciousness,' namely inside the individual and throughout the Kuruman community, concerning issues of self-governance, self-sovereignty, and community formation. The purpose of these inquiries is to go more into the impact of missionary translations on exacerbating the African split 'self' and how this psychological split eventually manifested as concrete divisions within African society. This division expressed itself through racial, religious, and tribal classifications, strengthening the dichotomy between the 'self' and 'other' locally and globally and among Africans and Europeans in the highveld (Mothoagae 2014; 2018).

Through these sets of inquiries, I investigate how African reality, both in the nineteenth-century and present-day society, is predominantly shaped by European missionary reconstructions and imaginings. I analyze how the missionary-engineered African condition in the nineteenth century progressively became a significant factor in escalating violence in the highveld. This is attributable to missionaries acting as intermediaries between the highveld and Cape Colony, enabling the exchange of firearms and associated commodities.

Alternatively, missionaries may be seen as representatives of a European imperial and colonial agenda. Within this context, I also investigate the impact of missionaries on shaping and establishing alternative strategies of African resistance and liberation politics. The research examines the effect of specific European missionaries on the development of an improvised African Christianity. This faith predominantly opposed various manifestations of physical, spiritual, cultural, and psychological violence imposed by colonial and imperial powers (Comaroffs 1991, Landau 2010, Mudimbe 1988).

Key areas of primary research

I comprehensively analyze the missionary archives about African populations in the highveld region throughout the nineteenth century. Additionally, I delve into Moffat's ethnographic publication titled "Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa." An analysis is conducted on Moffat's ethnographic narratives in conjunction with other relevant missionary ethnographies, including Samuel Broadbent's "The First Introduction of Christianity Among the Barolong Tribe of Bechuanas South Africa." The significance of these lies in their provision of a comprehensive narrative of missionary efforts among the "Bechuanas," "Basutos," and "Matabeles." Within the framework of my research, they also offer a relatively comprehensive description of the ontologies, cultures, and traditions of African populations, as well as narratives of the personalities, beliefs, and political and cultural roles of African leaders like Mothibi of the Batlhaping, Seleka of the Barolong, and Mzilikazi of the Matabele, among others. Furthermore, these sources encompass narratives from missionary societies regarding the work of missionaries and their authoritative positions on African groups such as Barolong, Batlhaping, Bangwaketse, Bakwena, etc., who are commonly regarded as belonging to the Tswana ‘tribal’ group (Broadbent 1865, Moffat 1842).

The present study is situated within the comprehensive body of research conducted by Comaroffs (1991), Paul S. Landau (2010), and other scholars who have critically examined and explored the topic of missionary labours among African populations. Regarding the Comaroffs, I investigated their analysis of how European missionaries initially pacified and Christianized Africans and considered them territory of colonial powers. This process was mainly influenced and propelled by the belief that Africans were primitive and required a

mission to civilize them. As a consequence, they were assimilated into colonial systems of subjugation and subsequently excluded from their African customs through the imposition of European standards and symbols. This study delves into the origins and foundations of a non-conformist position, analytical framework, and ideological drive that propelled European missionaries to evangelize the Batswana people.

In this analysis, I investigate the degree to which the European perception of the African subject and its identity was significantly influenced and molded by its Eurocentric public perceptions of African peoples as non-white and primitive. At the core of my investigation of the Comaroffs is that African peoples were not passive recipients of missionary teachings about Christianity. Instead, the extended interaction between the two parties was characterized by a mutual motivation to exchange ideas and symbols. Sometimes, one side sought to establish control and authority over the other, and vice versa. Key to Comaroffs's analysis of missionary labours among the Tswana people is the diverse methods by which missionaries, as a minority, exerted control and subjugated a larger African community in the highveld (Schoffeleers 1993).

Comaroffs subsequently observed that this process was accomplished via colonizing Batswana's consciousness. From this perspective, they propose two notions of culture, one of which is inherent, uninterpretable, and pertains to issues of hegemony. The alternative idea is subject to debate and requires validation and certification related to issues of ideology. Thus, the Comaroffs contend that the colonization of African indigenous consciousness occurred through both hegemonic and ideological registers. Within this context, culture is an inherent and unplanned dynamic process. The power dynamics between the two parties significantly influence its trajectory and evolution following the missionary interaction. According to the Comaroffs, the power structure defines the power struggle between the two over substance and sign (Comaroffs 1991).

Furthermore, I incorporate Paul S. Landau's analysis of religion, language, and tribalism in the highveld region throughout the nineteenth century. Within this context, I examine Landau's approach, which parallels Natasha Erlank's (2022) perspective on the black church as a locus of liberation. My analysis heavily relies on Landau's conceptualization of the political discourse, disputed domain, and the ongoing connections between the Tswana,

Griquas, Basotho, and missionaries of the highveld during the nineteenth century, characterized by their dynamic and intricate nature. There is no fixed focal point or unequivocally dominant political party. Instead, I perceive the disputed political landscape as composed of various and complex methods of mobilization and many alliances that are inherently rooted in religious beliefs, language, and tribal concepts. I analyze the main factors Landau (2010) identified as the leading causes of the contested political landscape in the highveld region and the reasons for its persistence extending into the twentieth century. This also serves as a method of comprehending its many ramifications for the present-day South African reality.

In this context, I also examine and advance Landau's argument that tribalism and tribal identities, as understood in contemporary society, originated and were constructed during the era of missionary interactions, formalizations, and their grappling with African indigenous languages, namely Setswana and Sesotho. To gain a deeper comprehension of this stance, I analyze it in connection to Martin Legassick's (2010, XVIII) concept that *"South African frontiers... should be considered geographically as zones, rather than lines, and consequently that the frontier in any given place was a process, not an event"*. Landau argues that Christianity in South Africa during the latter half of the nineteenth century, characterized by early struggles and mobilization, was not fully embraced in its Western, unadulterated form. Indeed, it was heavily imbued and charged with new African concepts that where comprehended and implemented within the framework of African experiences. Furthermore, I advance Landau's argument that the African indigenous adaptation of Christianity to align with African experiences greatly concerned European missionaries and colonial authorities (Landau 2010).

In this context, the concept of tribe was reinforced through church registers, translated Bible, and church district and representatives, which at the main recognized Coloured-ness as separate from newly created tribal classifications, acting as a mediator between these classifications and White-ness but also being peripheral to White-ness. Tribal psychological perspectives in this context were created and entrenched by missionary ethnographers and European anthropologists. I also delve into Schapera's (1953) examination of African ethnicities and traditions. I departed from his identification and labeling method, which primarily assumes tribal classifications in South Africa as inherent and pre-existing before

missionary interactions and interventions. In this sense, before missionaries, I argue that there were group formations that resembled tribes such as Barolong but that these groups were not constituted as tribes in the European sense. In this context, I support Stuart Hall's (2019, 225) argument that cultural identities originate from or have historical roots. We assign labels to how we have positioned ourselves or are positioned by others in relation to historical narratives due to our respective levels of power and knowledge or lack thereof.

After careful analysis, I draw upon V. Y. Mudimbe's (1988) approach and interpretation, and I argue that identities should not be regarded as 'true' but rather as 'relational' representations. Different types of knowledge and power define these identities. When knowledge is associated with power, it takes precedence as the authority of truth primarily because it can make itself accurate (Ngwena 2018). My focus is on examining missionaries' methods, thoughts, and attitudes in the discussion surrounding Africa. Through a process in which missionaries were greatly concerned with converting African minds, spaces, names, and languages, Africa was reshaped and inserted into 'human history' in several ways. Within the context of post-colonial South African thinkers on missionary encounters and processes of conversion (Chimhundu 2009, Dube 2014, Mafeje 1971, Mbembe 2015, Mothoagae 2014; 2018), I also contextualize my inquiry to establish a broader practical and theoretical understanding.

Colonial sources and research methods: Reading against the imperial grain

The comprehensive comprehension of the initial interaction, conversion process, and cross-cultural translation between European missionaries and African peoples is restricted and limited by the lack of the African subject's voice in historical and archival sources. Historical and archival sources serve as repositories of information that hold essential remnants of the past. However, the African subject is depicted explicitly in these sources through the perspective of European missionaries, and they are therefore seen as othered subjects. Consequently, the African subject is portrayed as a silenced 'other' who does not speak but is spoken about and spoken of (Mudimbe 1988). According to Stoler, a critical approach to the colonial archives involves a dedication to reading them in a manner that goes against the dominant imperial history, empire builders, and the priorities and perspectives of the authors. From a bottom-up perspective, students of colonialism

identified the colonizer and the colonial state as the *"structure"* while attributing *"human agency"* to the subaltern. This was evident in the minor acts of resistance and silence among the colonized individuals (Stoler 2008 46, 47).

European biases in nineteenth-century mission histories complicate the investigation of historical and archival sources. Impartial Kantian missionary subjects did not author these histories but reflected European perspectives. Consequently, European missionaries often viewed and documented African peoples from their perspectives, and their worldviews were influenced by their European-biased perspectives despite their working together with African agents (Comaroffs 1991, Kent 2015).

Regarding this matter, European missionaries have left countless written records that have influenced and continue to influence attitudes, methods of treatment, and understanding of African people since the nineteenth century. The written documents were essential components of the colonial apparatus and so formed colonial transcripts to the extent that they lacked impartiality, were integrated into the dominant framework of the colonial enterprise, and European institutions that were primarily concerned with the task of subjugating and 'civilizing' African populations. To comprehend historical and archival sources, it is necessary to grasp the institutions and associated processes that led to their creation (Landau 2010, Satpathy 2004).

Furthermore, it is indisputable that mission histories, deliberately or inadvertently, still include precious narratives about African peoples, their reactions to ‘first encounters,’ the condition of existing together with European missionaries, and generally missionary labours. According to Stoler (2008), mission histories suggest the importance of interpreting them in relation to the imperial perspective. This approach helps to comprehend the broader African opposition to Euro-Christian infiltration and aggressive dominance.

They argue the necessity of being used as starting points. The purpose is to provide insights into Africa's historical background, current state, and the characteristics of post-colonial republics in Africa. Reading in opposition to the dominant imperial ideology also highlights the requirement of rejecting historical and archival sources as sources-of-sources. In several ways, these historical and archival sources diminished African people's cultures and

traditions to emptiness and insignificance. Furthermore, they highlight the need to examine the highlighted aspects and the omitted elements during their development (Schoffeleers 1993, Scott 1985).

Evaluating historical and archival sources is significant not just because of the fundamental cultural disparities between European missionaries and African peoples. Furthermore, it is essential to consider each group's specific role within this somewhat defined sequence of transnational and international interactions. This project also necessitates thoroughly examining the many methods by which knowledge was acquired. Still, it is regulated, privatized, and turned into a commodity by the colonial empire and later manifestations of neo-colonial governance. Consequently, assessing the missionary archive also suggests examining the different narratives it renders possible or impossible. The colonial empire played a crucial role in this process, and conversion and cross-cultural translation were supported by coercion without the essential agreement from the African community. In this way, the missionary archive serves as a place to acquire knowledge and critically examine the past and the current and potential future trajectories of African communities (Comaroffs 1991, Siener 2022, Stoler 2008).

In this sense, I assess, and analyze missionary sources by adopting a historical methodology. My study focuses on primary historical and archival sources that primarily emerged in the nineteenth century in the highveld region—examining the conversion and cross-cultural translation process between European missionaries and the Africans of the highveld, namely the Batlhaping people. I study missionary ethnographies, records, and written materials. I will also examine secondary sources, which are reconstructions and investigations conducted by authors in European interactions with otherness. I assess the factors by which specific sources arose and their importance in the studied subject to evaluate, examine, and refine our understanding of the past, present, and future in the context of South Africa and Africa.

The difficulties linked to historical research mostly revolve around sources, the composition of information, concepts of objectivity and explanations, and the selection of subjects. To appropriately alleviate the issue, one should differentiate between primary and secondary sources and assess the information's relevance and significance by considering internal and

external criticisms (White 1973). My research methodology combines analytical and scientific approaches to optimize studying and comprehending historical facts. I will conduct a more objective examination of knowledge to reduce subjectivity in the selection, appraisal, analysis, and interpretation of data. I mainly utilize primary historical archival sources obtained from the Witwatersrand University Library.

Chapter Structure

Chapter two begins with identifying and analyzing theories of encounter, conversion, and translation. These three dimensions are the fundamental historical origins that require thorough investigation to provide context and enhance comprehension of the interactions between European missionaries and Batlhaping in the nineteenth century in the highveld. The chapter mainly centers on the Europeans' comprehension and emulation of African populations and traditions. To be, deliberately or inadvertently, supplanted by European cultures and conventions as influential and the benchmark for the interaction. The chapter is formatted into three distinct sections. Section one mainly examines the interaction between Spaniards and Amerindians in the Americas and investigates the importance of divine and natural law in establishing the interaction conditions. Sections two and three primarily examine the processes of conversion and translation and the different effects of European ideologies and anthropologies on these processes.

During the nineteenth century, Chapter Three situates three dimensions – encounters, conversations, and translations – within the historical circumstances of the contact between European missionaries and Batlhaping during the nineteenth century. The chapter is further partitioned into three segments. In section one, I examine the history of Batlhaping and its early missionary presence, particularly by the London Missionary Society. Section two explores the role and significance of missionary ethnographies in constructing Batlhaping as ‘other.’ In contrast, the final section is concerned with understanding and examining the afterlives of conversion, defined by assimilating Batlhaping into European cultures and norms.

Chapter four similarly builds upon the fundamental insights developed in chapter two on translations. Section one starts by analyzing translations featured in Robert Moffat and Chief Mothibi's discussion on the origins of rain. I contended that translations facilitated the

rejection of the Batlhaping 'being' and established the contours of a colonized, Europeanised, and Christianised Batlhaping subject. Section two examines the displacement and replacement of Batlhaping systems of signification with European ones through translating the Bible from English to 'Setswana.' The third section discusses the influence of Moffat's translations on the Kuruman Settlement.

Chapter five delves into the consequences of indigenous conversion to Christianity and the formation of religious groups. This study investigates how tribal identities in the highveld region developed due to missionary language translations and codifications. Section one examines the role of missionary labours and their primordial understanding of tribe in the highveld. It focuses on how missionaries in the region were influenced by ideological and anthropological European traditions when defining and categorizing African peoples. Here, I trace the evolution of ‘Tswana’ as a signifier of the condition of being alike or equal to ultimately becoming a tribal category. Section two of my argument challenges the notion that tribal identities are inherent and inherent among the highvelders. Alternatively, I analyze the social and political environment in the highveld region and contend that tribal identities, to a greater degree, are fabricated by missionaries. In the research conclusion titled "Africans within a Eurocentric mirror," I provide a concise overview of the main arguments presented in my research. Additionally, I describe the consequences and significance of my research findings for present-day South Africans and the broader post-colonial South African society.

Chapter 2: Theorising Historical Encounters, Conversion and Translation

Introduction

European ideologies and anthropologies have long been preoccupied with the question of 'otherness.' The familiar category of 'European' does not exist in isolation but acquires its fundamental properties through stylized and self-serving comparisons with outsiders. In this chapter, I identify and analyze three central dimensions of this broader process of self-definition through external differentiation: encounter, conversion, and translation. These processes are not unique to the nineteenth-century interactions between European missionaries and Batlhaping on the highveld but have recurring features that link together historical periods and contexts. As I outline in more depth in later chapters, missionary labours and evangelical projects targeting the Batlhaping and, more generally, Batswana involved rendering 'African' customs and traditions knowable and legible to culturally assimilate and convert the Batlhaping according to idealized models of Euro-Christian norms. The assumptions and models employed here have deeper historical roots, which need to be excavated to theorize and understand developments on the highveld.

This chapter's primary task focuses on the benchmarking of Indigenous (i.e., non-European/Christian) customs and cultures against a theological and material European project of converting, assimilating, and civilizing the 'other.' The chapter is divided into three sections. In section one, I explore theories of encounter, investigating the earliest encounters of European explorers, traders, and evangelists with 'otherness.' The crucial nexus event here is the encounters between Spaniards and Amerindians in the New World. I explore the multiple ways in which the historical subjection of the Amerindians and generally non-Europeans/Christians by Europeans emerged from 'first encounters'. This led to legitimizing European experiences, paradigms, and forms of violence as universal while relegating the Indigenous world, its values, norms, and personalities to a peripheral and local domain. To further situate my discussion of encounters, I examine nineteenth-century positivism and colonial encounters on the African continent.

Sections two and three investigate theories of conversion and translation, respectively. I first investigate the project of conversion embodied by missionaries and how it was primarily driven and conditioned by European ideologies and anthropologies preoccupied

with the abstraction and otherness of man in both space and time. These European ideologies and anthropologies were further preoccupied with pinning down societies of different temporalities, directionalities, and spatialities, primarily reconstructing them according to idealized European and Christian models and norms (Mudimbe 1988). On the other hand, I investigate and grapple with theories of representation to try to understand more broadly Indigenous responses to European evangelism and the mission of conversion. I look at how the intersection between the 'European project of conversion' and 'Indigenous responses to it' historically and anthropologically often became the terrain from which imperial sovereignty, authority, and violence were exercised and a terrain from which Indigenous resistance and counter-violence to European hegemony frequently ensued.

Finally, I investigate how the 'project of translation' facilitated the use and deployment of language as a tool of imperial and European domination and hegemony. I argue that the translation project was not merely concerned with preserving and recovering some authentic truth, cultural meaning, or stable linguistic form but was defined by a preoccupation to substitute the Indigenous paradigm with an idealized European worldview. I argue that even Indigenous dialects, which acquired relative sovereignty, status, and authority by being used as the standard of Indigenous languages in the translation project, also fractured Indigenous systems of meaning and oral traditions. These were key in facilitating Indigenous division and uneven power differentials in the broader context of communication between Indigenous people themselves and Europeans. In this sense, I argue that the uneven power differential was largely embodied in the dominant socio-political parameters of the European imperial world (Comaroff et al., 1991).

Colonial Encounters

An encounter is a first meeting or interaction between two people without prior contact. According to Urs Bitterli (1989) and Guido Abbattista (2011), there have been multiple forms of encounters between European explorers, missionaries, and colonizers and peoples, communities, and cultures considered "other." Within this paradigm, encounters occur due to the necessity, want, or desire to explore the novel and deviate from conventional, predetermined, immediate, and ordinary social interactions and structures. Evangelism,

conquest, and trade were the means by which Europeans engaged with the rest of the globe to civilize, discover, and colonize new geographies, ecosystems, and civilizations.

This is the historical backdrop for European missionary interactions with Batswana, namely Batlhaping, in the nineteenth-century highveld. These interactions involved immersing and intermingling European and Tlhaping (Tswana) identities into sometimes friendly, advantageous, complex, disadvantageous, and hostile relations. From an ethno-anthropological perspective, the concept of 'first encounters' has the capacity to influence our societal contemplation of systems of governance, culture, violence, spirituality, and civilization. Social constructivists such as Antony Anghie (2005) and Emel Ultanir (2012) understand 'first encounters' in terms of the origins, nature, structure, continuity, and development of international systems and how a 'shared' world was (is) constructed. These concepts have great importance in elucidating the dynamics between Europeans and non-Europeans, conflicts arising from colonialism, and historical continuity.

In "Politics Among Nations" (1949), Hans Morgenthau dismisses the social constructionist perspective. In contrast to Erik Ringmar's hypothesis (2020), Morgenthau argues that envisioning oneself as a proselytizer, trader, or conqueror does not automatically result in the 'other' being a potential convert, customer, or vanquished. However, by the use of force and a necro-politics of violence, it is possible to compel the 'other' to fit into these prescribed categories (Mbembe 2019). From Morgenthau's perspective, 'first encounters' also embody a colonial centre, namely Moffat's establishment of Christianity, and are not entirely inherent within the societies where they occur.

The nature and character of relations of encounter in international systems bear many similarities to the concept of the 'old Foucauldian sovereign.' Due to their inherent power dynamics, Eurocentric classifications and definitions are considered universally applicable (Todorov 1984). Accordingly, the initial meeting between Europeans and non-Europeans was defined by two interactions. For non-Europeans, this entailed subjection to conquest, economic and cultural exploitation, and colonization. At the same time, Europeans were positioned as experts and interpreters of racial and cultural (social, linguistic, religious) diversity (Wynter 2015).

The civilizing mission and the endeavour to regulate non-Europeans during colonial interactions emphasized the requirement of assimilating the 'other' into a claimed universal European Christian culture. The prevailing perception of the 'other' in European ideologies and anthropologies was that of an individual in urgent need of redemption because of their socially regressive, degraded, and underdeveloped condition. Cultural distinction justified the unrestrained use of imperial force and methods of control against the encountered 'other.' The justification for the violence of coexistence was imperative to successfully convert the Indigenous or 'other' into a civilized, Europeanised, and Christianized subject (Abbattista 2011, Anghie 2005, Cesaire 1972, Fanon 1963). Furthermore, in this context, the Indigenous became the object of examination, akin to an insect being investigated under a microscope. The central argument of the thesis addressed colonial models, the scientific method, and the rudimentary Indigenous 'other.' The contrast encompassed the cultural perspectives and epistemological frameworks of the indigenous population, while the integration of the novel European scientific approaches for the indigenous world was the synthesis (Mudimbe 1988).

'First encounters' have shown varying manifestations in different historical circumstances. Furthermore, non-Western societies have actively opposed and engaged in various forms of resistance against colonial interactions. Interpreted from a macro-historical perspective, we can pinpoint five notable European interactions with the rest of the world. This study examines three distinct regions: the fifteenth and sixteenth-century Atlantic basin, the Northern waters encompassing the Baltic, White waters, and the coast of Canada, and Northern Asia and the Mediterranean Sea. This series of interactions occurred during the initial wave of encounters and was significantly shaped by a transition from a geocentric to a heliocentric view of the universe. Consequently, this led to the emergence of the age of exploration and the imperative and aspiration of Europeans to investigate and develop the limits of the planet (Abbattista 2011, McGrane 1989).

The second cycle of interactions (fourth and fifth, respectively) took place throughout the nineteenth century and mainly encompassed the Pacific area, Islands, Siberia, and Alaska; lastly, the interactions in the nineteenth century between Europeans and Africans, particularly the fierce competition for control of Africa. The latter two were significantly

shaped by the emergence of the Enlightenment and a positivist approach to international law and cultural practices. This may be juxtaposed with previous historical eras shaped by Christian Catholicism and its imitative Cartesian concept of cogito. The latter two were greatly shaped by the preceding emergence of Protestantism and the aspiration for growth resulting from the transition from feudal and aristocratic regimes to contemporary nation-states and capitalist societies (Anghie 2005).

Encounters between Spaniards and Amerindians took place from 1540 until 1848 and can be categorized as part of the initial wave of interactions between Europeans and non-Europeans. Francisco de Vitoria, a theologian and jurist of the sixteenth century, presents the most famous narrative and elucidation of this encounter. Vitoria argues that the interaction between Spaniards and Amerindians was a convergence of two distinct cultures, each characterized by its established structures and concepts of society, governance, economy, and property ownership. Vitoria's narrative of the meeting starts with a deviation from divine law, which granted the pope exclusive legal knowledge and power to determine the interaction between Spaniards and Amerindians under universal law. Vitoria rejected the papal framework, which Spanish kings primarily employed to rationalize and validate the forceful incursion into non-Christian regions only based on their non-Christian status. Within this context, it was considered not possible to have religious beliefs without identifying as a Christian. Consequently, the designation of being a traditional Amerindian indicated that one had not yet embraced Christianity (Anghie 2005; 16).

Contrarily, Victoria expressed a preference for natural law and a secular ruler as the foundation for international law and, thus, initial interactions. His thesis was that the Amerindians' sovereignty and ownership were not established by divine law derived from the Christian tradition but depended on natural law. In doing so, he reduced the papal hierarchy's authority, lordship, and civil power in favour of an absolute yet secular ruler (Waswo 1996). Consequently, interactions were to be regulated by natural law, known as 'jus gentium,' which was based on the cognitive capacity of individuals to reason logically for themselves. Simultaneously, there was a prevailing perception that Amerindians, considered under a universal natural law system, might be readily reduced to mere objects and minors rather than being regarded as equal subjects. The principle of 'jus gentium' ensured the

Spanish entitlement to unrestricted movement without any harassment in the territory of the purportedly primitive and barbarian Amerindians. Furthermore, it facilitated the exposure of the primitive and uncivilized 'other' to European civilization's ideals through their active involvement in trade and commerce (Anghie 2005; 17, 18, 20. Todorov 1984).

The 'jus gentium' concept did not adopt an equitable cultural and civilizational interchange, mutual exchange, and equality framework. Instead, it elevated Spanish cultural practices and norms to a universal standard that implicitly justified Spanish invasion and infiltration of Amerindian communities while depriving the Amerindians of their right to protect their lands and ways of life from Spanish invasion (Anghie 2005, Waswo 1996). Amerindians were characterized unfavourably based on their distinct social, epistemological, cosmological, and historical perspectives, and their situation could only be resolved by being included and subjected to the universalized Spanish 'jus gentium' doctrine. Above all, this right bestowed upon Spanish rulers the authority to govern the interactions between Spanish and Amerindians and between Amerindians themselves. The concept of 'jus gentium' granted Spaniards the authority to interfere, and at times resort to violence, on behalf of progressive Amerindians who had to deal with the so-called primitive and barbaric Amerindian practices and traditions (Todorov 1984).

Thus, the acquisition of the New World was motivated mainly by interests, encompassing commercial, territorial, and spiritual aspects, rather than philosophies and ideals. And 'jus gentium' ensued in the slipstream to rationalize and solidify existing forms of Spanish behaviour. Under the principle of 'jus gentium,' only the secular Spanish ruler, not the Amerindian one, had the legitimate authority to execute a just war. The foundation of his behaviour was not on the mutual agreement between Amerindians and Spaniards but exclusively on the idealized European principle now masked as 'jus gentium.' In defiance of divine law, the principle of Christianity was reinstated under 'jus gentium' not by a papal absolute ruler but by a secular Spanish ruler. In this sense, the Spanish secular ruler sanctioned and supported proselytizing, trade, property ownership, and travel as equally fundamental indicators of advancement and civilized society. In this framework, the true Amerindian "self" could only ever exist as an intractable source of conflict, a transgressor of natural law, and a constant enemy of European development under "jus gentium." The Bible

and art developed and solidified the cultural disparity between the Spaniards representing advanced Amerindians and traditional and primitive Amerindians (Anghie 2005; 23. Mudimbe 1988).

Through initial interactions, the concept of sovereignty obtained and evolved its essence. At the same time, however, there were substantial distinctions between fifteenth and sixteenth-century models and later positivist approaches in the nineteenth century. Contrary to naturalist jurisprudence, positivism emphasized phenomenality, deductivism, objectivity, and inductivism as ruling 'first encounters.' The perspective proposed a shift away from inherent, philosophical, and religious realities towards a domain of fundamental and empirical concepts. The statement clearly expressed the deliberate determination of a European ruler who is deeply concerned with bringing civilization to the less developed regions of this planet. This signified a break from an interpretation of law as arising from nature and therefore as self-evident to all, to a domain of the 'human' or 'European sovereign' as at the heart of the cosmos and regulating all the regions of the planet according to his will (Anghie 2005, Waswo 1996). Within this paradigm, nature was progressively perceived as a tangible object and a means of practical use, strengthening the process of using nature and 'otherness' as a means towards greater ends.

Machinery, tools, and commodities, including humans as commodities and inputs, were regarded as the benchmark and foundation for a historical progression and trajectory toward civilization. The challenge faced by Europeans no longer lay in the primitive condition or barbarism of the 'other,' but instead in their lack of progress and development. To Africans, machines, tools, commodities, and the Bible were regarded as symbols of divinity and catalysts for civilization's development. In this regard, the encountered African was a subject who could be taught to worship the missionary, his tools, and his gun. His lack of understanding of the 'causes,' rooted in the Enlightenment and positivist traditions, led to his perception as uncivilized (Chatterjee 2010, Landau 2010).

Within the positivist and enlightened paradigm, Africans were portrayed and seen as being akin to an outdated and historical European identity (often from the 'medieval' era) and constrained by irrational beliefs and myths. The difference here is between Enlightenment and positivism, viewed as being at the vanguard of the mechanical, civilized, statistical, and

rational, and 'primitivism' and 'savagery' assigned to an earlier social and political evolution stage. Within this context, the process of civilizing the encountered 'other' both assumed and affirmed the primacy of the European self and culture in and against systems of the encountered African (Comaroff et al., 1991).

Regarding the French and British, civilization is seen as both a state and a sequential progression. This theory of civilization in the context of the interaction established a delicate and normative potential to discriminate between the civilized, somewhat uncivilized, and wholly uncivilized (Bowden 2009). It exhibited hostility and animosity towards primal states. Under this European ethical framework and the Protestant heritage, the African consciousness was perceived as a focal point and location for European hegemonic control. This liberal theory of civilization was also incredibly crucial in legitimating the soteriological vilification of the African subject, whose continuity was guaranteed only if it was integrated within a colonial and settler sociology (Cohen et al 2007, Gutierrez 2017).

The positivist anthropology and enlightened discourse on the dynamic of culture were also essential in building a space of marginality between the West and the rest. From this perspective, the locus of reality was understood to be exclusively contained in Western lived experiences and not in African meanings, values, and norms. Consequently, the interaction between Europeans and Africans was also distinguished by a tendency to submerge the African personality within Western classifications and hierarchies of 'being' and society. Regarding this matter, the positivist discursive order, whether promoted by the trader, missionary, or governor, was mainly focused on devising a set of methods to civilize the so-called uncivilized Africans (Mudimbe 1988). Furthermore, within this positivist paradigm, sovereignty, political legitimacy, and authority were associated with the dominant colonial and imperial system. Africans consequently became equivocal figures with no culture and were precluded from having any legal personality.

Accordingly, the German view of civilization, opposed to a French and British conception, prioritized intellectual, religious, and artistic virtues and rejected materialism and an outward show of civilization. It emphasized national pride, culture, and consciousness and shared substantial connections with the Marxist tradition. And to a greater extent, there are more commonalities with Catholicism than Protestantism. However, in contrast to a liberal

stance, it adopted a more socialist-nationalist strategy (Comaroff et al 1991, Cohen et al., 2007).

Despite these facts in my research, I contend that despite the distinction between the German conceptions of civilization and other tangential theories in form and intention, the trajectory between these two concepts during the colonial encounters was, to a more significant extent, the same. Both wanted the subordination, surrender, and ultimate reordering of non-European regions according to European institutional patterns and moral economy. Indeed, the result was identical: the enlargement and colonial control and the coerced deculturation of African subjects (Mudimbe 1988). In this sense, terms and classifications such as heathen, sinner, inferior, and their opposites remained and were enunciated to sustain colonial order and silence 'otherness.' Assimilation during colonial encounters thus constituted the only access into society, and in this sense, positivists regulated interactions through trading businesses, settlements, and a government approach (Anghie 2005).

Conversion and "Civilization"

Missionaries played a fundamental role throughout most contacts between European and non-European peoples. And through missionary evangelism and a process of Indigenous African conversion into Christianity, they contributed substantially to the gradual slicing, transformation, mastering, and colonialism of the African continent and subjectivity. The infiltration of African people by missionaries resulted in the establishment of European cultural dominance, economic interests, and the promotion of European ideals (Gathogo 2008, Kilbourne 1988, Nathaniel 2012). On the other hand, the religious convictions of missionaries also resulted in substantial improvements in the lives of indigenous peoples and were not always aligned with those of the colonial and imperial rule but at the main they often intersected and sometimes clashed (Comaroff et al 1991, Porter 2004). In this sense, the Comaroffs (1991) posit that despite the positive labours of missionaries they were still parallel to the political and cultural aspirations of the European colonial elite (Comaroff et al 1991, Stanley 1990).

An exemplary illustration of these broader dynamics is provided by Zablon Nthamburi, who discusses the missionary efforts of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) of England in Kenya among the Kikuyu people during this period.

"It may be remarked that missionary activity, which went concurrently with the expansion of European hegemony in Africa, supplemented the colonial policy. The Gikuyu have a saying, "Gutiri Muthungu na Mubia," meaning that there was no marked difference between a colonial administrator and a missionary. The missionary felt more secure within the administration of their own colonial powers. In fact, they were happy to create an African middle class, which would fit the world of European. From such a middle class would be found a people who were suitable for a ministry. Such people would emulate the European missionary in every way by even adopting European way of life" (Nthamburi 1991).

Missionary evangelism advocated for the need to systematically reshape African mindsets and environments to align with European and Christian principles and experiences. According to Julius Gathogo (2014), most of the missionary labours and evangelism in the African continent, particularly during the Mau Mau revolt, had the effect of creating and generating a docile Christian African population which was to be above all, subject to the British Crown. Specifically, he contends that European missionaries, rather than acting with honesty and reverence, were authoritarian in promoting Christianity based on the purported universality of God's will (Comaroff et al., 1991).

The process of conversion frequently relies on the severe deployment of physical and epistemic violence toward Africans in disseminating and entrenching the language of Christianity (Gathogo 2008, Miya 2004). Mudimbe (1988) contends that the brutality of missionary conversions was supported by a unique epistemology, in which the African subject's primitive, traditional, and heathen character served as the foundation of missiology. Evangelism and conversion were mediators, and the aim was a Europeanised and Christianized African subject. As part of missionary evangelism amongst the Batswana people, the so-called naked, filth, grime, juvenile, and vicious nature of Batlhaping functioned as significant symbols of the need for conversion. Simultaneously, the objectives of the discourse were intertwined with symbols representing education, development,

evolution, and cleanliness, among other subjects. The ultimate goal was a progressive, clean, evolved, matured, and converted African subject (Burchell 1824).

Framed in these terms, the function of missiology was to mediate between European ideologies and anthropologies about the encountered 'other,' and to transport the encountered 'other' from its savage cosmologies, ontologies, and epistemologies into an idealized paradigm of Christian and European norms (Jules-Rossette 1991). This has the impact of devaluing, demoting, and upsetting local African practices and civilizations. For example, 'Ngaka,' which denotes indigenous healer or doctor amongst Batlhaping from the Batswana group of South Africa. Following European missionary evangelism by missionaries such as Robert Moffat of the London Missionary Society, Ngaka was divorced from its original meaning. It came to imply a marginal, unclean, nasty, and demonic African figure. Following the process of African Indigenous conversion into Christianity, a legitimate Ngaka, according to missionaries, was a figure who relied solely on prayer and Western scientific and medical techniques and approaches (the hospital and clinic) and not African Indigenous spiritual and traditional techniques and approaches (Dube 2014, Mothoagae 2018).

The violence perpetrated against African peoples by missionary linguists and evangelists manifested in the form of ridicule, depreciation, and the urge to comply. This canon of conversion was universal to all missionary denominations who encountered African societies. The goal of mass conversion and the recruitment of African converts in missions and churches meant that missionaries saw strategic advantages in conspiring with colonial and imperial governments. Europeanization and Christianization were understood to be intricately interconnected (Jules-Rossette 1991, Mudimbe 1988).

Take, by way of example, the Mau Mau revolt, which saw missionaries fixate on the "superstitious" taking of oaths, which were viewed as both irrational and uncivilized. The Mau Mau were likewise observed to have revolted against a government established by a Christian God, thereby rendering it antichrist. Missionaries in this regard went further and promised to physically take up guns against such a rebellion and, in many ways, on behalf of a colonially imposed government (Gathogo, 2014). The process of conversion, on the other hand, hinged substantially on building a binary between "Agikuyu a Karing'a" (traditionalist

Kikuyu who refused conversion) and "Agikuyu a Kirore" (abolitionist Kikuyu in favour of conversion).

In this context, missionaries utilized binary classifications such as heathen and convert, sinner and virtuous, etc., to seek to assert European and Christian authority in African societies (Comaroff et al., 1991. Jules-Rossette 1991). In this aspect, however, not all missionaries advocated the integration of African Indigenous people into Euro-Christian civilization. Their interpretation of the missiology chart, which includes the premises, mediators, and purposes of evangelism, varied. In some mission stations, terms such as sinner and pagan were used to describe Africans who refused to assimilate. Whereas to the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, these same categories were utilized with respect to Africans who resisted separation in the form of separate churches, schools, etc. Despite these observations, the overall objectives of the mission and colonial establishment were to underline the inferiority of African Indigenous people and their cultures in and against the supremacy of Euro-Christian cultures and values. The conversion process considerably contributed to changing African cultures, customs, melodies, and tones into vehicles for promoting European and Christian standards. And therefore designating the zone of African culture and subjectivity as an abandoned field that could be 'fixed' or 'saved' by a Christian faith and symbol (Mudimbe 1988).

One of the primary focal areas within histories and theories of conversion is the status and significance of the indigenization (or "creolization and Africanization of Christianity. Efforts to repurpose and reinterpret missionary evangelism and Christianization according to local norms have frequently been theorized to fight the alienation of African converts from their cultures and practices upon conversion to Christianity. This had the consequence, it is argued, of having Christianity resonate more directly with the general experiences of African people. The essential message of the Bible was also, in this regard, read within an African context and background and with a philosophical and empirical revelation that the divine universal essence is manifest and experienced in diverse ways that are culturally and historically specific to groups, communities, and cultures. Africanization established an avenue to fight imperial dominance and a severe process of missionary conversion by advocating for an African spiritual framework and a critical embrace of Christian doctrines.

As a result of this process, African Christian movements such as Ethiopianism and Garveyism emerged (Mbiti 1969, Mudimbe 1988).

African theologians thus emphasized rescuing local signals and strictures, which were formally demonized and branded as primitive and pagan by the process of missionary conversion. The vilification and devaluation of Indigenous cultures and behaviours is partly traceable to the ethnocentric writings of European missionaries. The work by African theologians such as Rev Mangena Maake Mokone, Prophet Mokaleng, James Mata Dwane, etc., facilitated the development of Christian African Indigenous spiritualities and epistemologies, which affirmed and reinforced the right of Africans to understand themselves in relation to collective African systems of community and black consciousness, and not only with regard to European and Christian norms, values and systems of thought and community (Landau 1999, Mbiti 1969)

African interpretations of Christianity had the power to turn European expectations upside down. They favoured worldviews that were open and fluid rather than closed and rigid. Regarding this matter, Christianity and missionary ethnographies were viewed and assessed in connection to the existing African conditions and vicissitudes resulting from imperial and colonial control. Consequently, they actively shaped Africa's hoped and envisioned future. This new view meant that a positive anthropological foundation would be the basis for a continual search for African identity. The prevention of violence through the act of 'othering' as a method of identifying similarity was achieved by rejecting the ideologies of evolutionism, functionalism, and diffusionism among African Indigenous people and in relation to European settlers. Common assumptions of human nature were questioned through place and time. Through a Hegelian dialectic, the thesis represented the alienation produced by colonialism, the "otherness" of African peoples as the antithesis, and the synthesis was African political, economic, and spiritual emancipation (Mudimbe, 1988. Mbiti, 1969).

Translation and Standardisation

Translation was vital in sealing and normalizing European dominance during colonial encounters and conversion. Translation functioned not just as a textual and linguistic

enterprise but also as a means of conveying and applying a European and Christian worldview to African realities and experiences. Colonization and translation were closely intertwined, as both processes entailed the conversion of African systems and traditions into the norms and regulations of the colonizer's domain. The successful translation of the English-Setswana Bible in 1857 by Robert Moffat and African interpreters, agents, and converts was lauded as the greatest triumph in the context of cross-cultural relations, but it also damaged the linguistic heritage of the Batswana through language uniformity of highveld dialects. It finally ousted Africans of the highveld from being the bearers and interpreters of their own cultural and historical memory (Chatterjee 2010, Landau 2010, Mothoagae et al 2015).

The operation of translations amongst Africans was also about making Africans into submissive and textualized individuals who exist and are restricted in a district of European study and gaze. Colonial anthropologies were established to characterize and objectify the "primitive" versus idealized European benchmarks. There were several elements to this process. The first was ideological, and it entailed the projection of consciousness of the European self and scientific norms onto the reified savage. The second involved the social sciences being based upon the natural sciences, with the mathematization and restriction of human culture and social activity into a scientific paradigm. The context of anthropology, philology, linguistics, and all social sciences were constrained under this epistemological paradigm of science. As a result, the truths, experiences, histories, and directionalities of these sciences talked inside, derived from, and spoke about their spaces that were possible (Bowden 2009, Comaroff et al., 1991, Mudimbe 1988, Shamma 2018, Todorov 1984).

The virtue and weakness of anthropology, which was considerably helpful in the translation process, was ethnocentrism, which, in the main, created the condition of anthropology's possibility. And Western epistemology in the translation project constituted the bedrock of anthropology without which the discipline would not exist. The intellectual climate and cognitive framework of ethnocentrism bestowed upon European anthropology its significance, position, and reputation as an academic discipline, discourse, and scientific subject within the realm of human experience. The primary purpose of missionary ethnocentrism was to elucidate the service, ideological shifts, and conflicts in the history of

social sciences, namely anthropology, which primarily focused on the process of othering and translating the experiences of Indigenous people in different geographical and temporal contexts (Mudimbe, 1988). Todorov, 1984).

The particularization of non-European civilizations and universalization of the European culture coming from 'first contacts' in various ways tended to place the Europeans as superior and Africans as inferior. The discourse of power and knowledge in the context of translation altered the mission of anthropology into one concerned with acculturation. This was, in many respects, attributable to the intertwined cultural and epistemological features of ethnocentrism. Consequently, the purpose of anthropology shifted from studying primitiveness, progressive development, retardation, and backwardness in subjects and objects. Yet, a challenge arises in effectively incorporating the encountered other or 'premise' into European and Christian norms and values as an energetic participant. Who at the main, gets denatured from his customs and civilizations and enters an alien paradigm as a regenerated and translated 'other' (Anghie, 2005. Bowden, 2009. Todorov, 1984).

This procedure proposed the departure of anthropology from its deductive function to a more productive approach, which is concerned with actively managing the evolutionary process. Consequently, African Indigenous people were forced and translated into new historical and linguistic dimensions by methods of conversion and evolution. This process was achieved by a reductionist and programmatic colonial approach anchored in agricultural, Spiritual, commercial, and industrial lexicon (Anghie, 2005. Comaroff et al., 1991. Landau, 2010. Mudimbe, 1988).

Consequently, the Western world claimed exclusivity over the means of culture, such as language, conventional beliefs, and social patterns. Difference was crushed into a Eurocentric context, meaning, and historicity, and African "being" was compelled to represent negativity, which came to support the presence of the "Same." African traditional art was forcefully uprooted from its Indigenous setting and came to embody witchcraft and haunt culture, and this was in service of the primitive/civilized dichotomy. Through a restriction to Western ideas and imagination, objects of ritual were classified as primitive art, and, in this sense, the European endeavour of interpreting meanings resulted in the loss of their African value. They were regarded as valuable insofar as they offered a potential for

mass production and a source of inspiration for new art forms (Comaroff et al., 1991. Landau, 2010. Todorov, 1984. Shamma, 2018).

The standard was a Western aesthetic grid without which Indigenous innovation constituted an expression of savagery, backwardness, and lack of reason. Thus, the process of translation resulted in the restriction of words, arts, social forms, rituals, and beliefs to an unfamiliar framework. They served to represent a Eurocentric paradigm and, as a result, lost their original meaning within an uncontaminated and untranslated African paradigm. According to Chatterjee (2010), Comaroff et al. (1991), Landau (2010), and Mudimbe (1988), African rituals, celebrations, and systems emerged as a consequence of translations as unscientific, irrational, and indicative of the necessity for conversion and a civilizing mission.

Chapter Conclusion

In conclusion, Western infiltration disrupted and destabilized the body of indigenous meaning through European interactions, conversions, and translations. The encounters, conversions, and translations served as concrete manifestations of theological and political disputes between the European and non-European cultures. Their efforts decimated the intellectual vitality of the indigenous population and were not just focused on intercultural exchanges and the sincere interpretation of the indigenous cultures and languages. In many ways, the missionary evangelist, translator, linguist, imitator, and or painter strove to invent the encountered other through the deployment of European ideologies and anthropologies. The missionary linguist, preacher, and translator, by straying from his self-appointed Christian responsibility to the non-Europeans, his subject of concern, in many ways, exhibited a dedication to the colonial cause. And consequently, encounters, conversions, and translations functioned to subvert and distort indigenous worth, intelligence, and beauty. They functioned to transport colonial reality and experience into Indigenous zones and ecosystems by aiding in the imposition of a Western worldview.

The imposition of a European paradigm into 'local' practices, cultures, and values is largely represented in the afterlives of encounters, conversions, and translations. Encounters, conversions, and translations as forms of transacting, borrowing, lending, and giving and taking were immensely defined by unfair and unscrupulous terms of trade between

Europeans and non-Europeans. This is manifested in the cultural erasure and effacement of 'local' customs and cultures following cross-cultural interactions with European and imperial hegemonic forces. Finally, the adoption of non-Europeans by the modern world was preceded by a violent misappropriation of non-Europeans of any genuine internal agency, dynamism, cultural variation, or complicated methods of organization. As a result, European hegemony through cross-cultural exchanges imposed dominance and control over public communication, canons of style and self-representation, education and ritual processes, patterns of socialization, and political and legal procedures

Chapter 3: Encounters and Conversions on the Southern African highveld

Introduction

This chapter applies the broad ideas and histories given above to the unique historical circumstances of missionary contacts in the Southern African highveld in the nineteenth century. It is arranged into three sections. In section one, I explore the overall history of Batlhaping, including that of the early meeting with missionaries in the nineteenth century. The focus of this section is the cultural institutions, practices, and social structure of Batlhaping prior to their encounters with missionaries, the most prominent of which came from the London Mission Society. I am concerned with conceptions of hierarchy, family, clan, marriage, circumcision, communal order, and belief amongst Batlhaping.

Section two investigates missionary ethnographies and their impacts, particularly on constructing the "other" as dirty, filthy, primitive, and needing conversion. However, I investigated other variables crucial to the theme of conversion, such as "difaqane," the desire for trade, and other considerations. Part three delves into the enduring effects of conversion in the Kuruman community among the Batlhaping people. I contend that the lasting effects of conversion were characterized by integrating Batlhaping into Euro-Christian social structures as individuals of minor standing or age. In this way, advancement was connected with the prevailing paradigm of the European missionary, whereas that of the Batlhaping was considered minor, backward, and static. Divisions between Europeans and Batlhaping were further compounded by divisions between Batlhaping, who were converts, and those who hung on to pre-existing traditions and patterns.

This chapter's primary sources of principal attention are Robert Moffat, John Campbell, and Dr. William John Burchell, while the Comaroffs and Landau are used as supplementary sources. This evidence supports my contention that whether intended or unintended, the conversion process displaced Batlhaping sovereignty and systems of authority insofar as they relied on systems of culture and tradition. Their systems were made devoid of significance within the context of missionary labours and could only persevere if they were subservient to the principles of Christianity.

A brief history of Batlhaping

The Batswana are a genealogically speaking people from Southern Africa, generally consisting of the Ba-Hurutshe, Ba-Kgatla, Ba-Kwena, Ba-Rolong, Ba-Tlhaping, and Ba-Tlokwa sub-groups. My primary focus in this study is the Ba-Tlhaping clan, a community that can be traced back to its historical roots in the Barolong nation. Chief Morolong (1240 CE) is perhaps the earliest recognized and, in many respects, founder of the Barolong clan. King Tau, whose reign began approximately in 1660, was a descendant of Chief Morolong, and it was from him that the Barolong obtained their clan names. In sequential order, Ratlou, Tshidi, Seleka, and Rapulana were King Tau's sons, from whom the clans derive their current names (Breutz 1987). Batlhaping are a clan that seceded from Barolong between 1710 and 1740 under the reign of King Tau, at least partly due to their failure to pay tribute (sehuba) to him. The totems of Batlhaping, Tholo (Koodoo) are reported to closely mirror those of Ba-Rolong, Ba-Seooja (Seghoja), and Ba-Taung, even if this relationship is sometimes questioned (Matthews 1945, Schapera et al., 1953).

Following the breakup from Barolong, the Ba-Tlhaping and Ba-Tlharo clans settled and intermarried with nomadic Khoi tribes (Korana, Griquas, and Hottentots) around 1750. The tribal name, Batlhaping, is often understood as denoting "individuals with a predilection for fish ." Once Ba-Tlhaping broke from Barolong, during the rule of their initial Chiefs Phuduhutswana and Mmile, they reportedly settled in Kolong, South on the Orange River, where they primarily consumed fish as their staple food. One hypothesis is that the name could have been influenced by the hunger and drought that afflicted the Southern African region from 1650 to 1700. As a society, they fought back against MmaNtatisi (1822-3), Kololo (1823-8), and Ndebele (1825-37) invaders and cattle robbers (Comaroffs 1991, Schapera et al 1953). The ancestry of the Ba-Tlhaping in descending order from the period of first missionary encounters. Starts with Chief Mothibi, Molehabangwe, Mashwe, Mokgosi Phuduhutswana, Mamae, Mokoledi, Moduana, and, lastly, from the time of clan sub-chiefs (Dikgosana) Chief Phuduhutswana and Mmile (1565 -1595) who are the most senior chiefs of the Ba-Tlhaping clan (Breutz 1987).

The earliest missionary encounter between missionaries and Batlhaping dates back to Kan Matthys Kok and William Edwards in 1801–1806. These missionaries were the first to

introduce the Bible to Batlhaping. These contacts can also be traced to Dr. William Sommerville, missionary Anderson, and others from the same years (1801–1806). The Cape Governor commissioned them to acquire cattle for the colonial market and, therefore, first encountered BaTlharo, who were based at Kuruman and were part of the Batlhaping clan or dependent on its chiefs. At the root of these interactions, however, was trade (Morelli. 2022). After the death of leader Molehabangwe (1812) and succession by chief Mothibi, missionaries began to live amongst the Batlhaping. Missionary James Campbell encountered Batlhaping in Dithakong (Lattakoon) in 1816 and 1820, and he described them as a tribe with roughly similar language, customs, and mannerisms to the general Batswana people (Breutz 1987).

It was at Dithakong that Robert Hamilton and James Read began their missionary work amongst the Batlhaping. Chief Mothibi did not take the impact of missionaries on his people lightly. He believed that Christianity, whether directly or indirectly, would reduce his people to servitude. For Mothibi, Christianity served as a diversion from the main community concerns of the Batlhaping people, such as raising cattle and engaging in agriculture. Most importantly, it contradicted their established traditions. Initially, Mothibi perceived Christianity as a social impediment, a colonial encumbrance to his people, and destined for failure. The missionaries nonetheless continued in the face of his opposition (Breutz 1987, Comaroffs 1991, Landau 2010).

The cultural institutions of Batlhaping and, more generally, the Batswana people were embodied in the collective spirit of the Tswana people and community. The social body of the Batlhaping was modelled along the patterns of family life. Accordingly, the chief held a paternal position among his people and was granted equal respect and authority. Individual tribesmen were subjected to the control of the extended family, the kraal head (lekgotla) or clan (kgoro). Polygamous marriage was the foundation of prevailing hierarchical systems, and this rank system was expressed in the areas of ancestor cult, rules of inheritance, political life, status of families, clans, and personalities. Initiation rituals (male and female) functioned to sustain this socio-political order. Stratification of communal order was predicated on a system of age-grouping ("mephato" or "mophato"), tied to circumcision rites and ancestor belief (Breutz 1987, Morelli 2022).

The primary societal unit among the Batlhaping is the family rather than the individual. In this view, a family was a consequence not just of a marriage between two persons but more of a relationship between two families and participation by ancestors through specific ritual actions. Marriage was not just embodied in the execution and conduction of a single event, the wedding day, but instead unfolded through a series of transactions culminating through the gift of stock ‘bogadi’ or ‘lobola.’ The rite of initiation or circumcision imparted personality and social standing to an individual, which, therefore, permitted them to qualify for marriage or even to have intercourse. Polygamous marriage was generally popular amongst the Tswana people but was practiced more by leading and rich characters. The framework of the Batlhaping social life was in many ways paternalistic, and this meant that post-marriage, save for unusual situations, the male figure of the family, because of his marital status, was allowed to assume responsibilities in the family and society (Schapera et al., 1953; 83, 84).

'Bogwera' for boys and 'bojale' for girls were initiation rites through which discipline, communal laws and conduct, ancestral wisdom, familial relationships, and obedience were taught. These initiation schools constituted open societies with secret initiation rites of passage open exclusively to initiates and the chief's kraal. Initially, decision-making and matters of legitimacy, requiring the chief's consent, were handled by the family-council 'Khuduthamaga,' tribe council ' lekgotla la dikgosana,' and the people's public 'pitso, lebatla, or phutego .'Furthermore, the citizens were given a certain degree of freedom to express their disagreement on public affairs and decisions on different concerns were made by consensus (Breutz 1987).

Clans, or 'dikgoro,' constituted the pieces that composed the group, with further provision for sub-clans, or 'dikgoroana .'The clan structure influenced how Batlhaping identified and interacted with one other, establishing hierarchies, marital relationships, employment, etc. Social relations were recognized through totems expressed by patrilineal and independent clans. Totems elucidated concepts of affiliation and familial relationships, making them valuable for the divination of bones 'ditaola' and understanding dreams' meaning and importance. All totems were tied to and attributed significance to a particular animal, such as a crocodile or lion. Animals symbolized social function, rank, and status and were

extremely valuable for use in ritual and admission into the domain of ancestors (Breutz 1987, Landau 2010, Schapera et al., 1953).

Batlhaping believed in a god called Modimo, and they believed that ancestors were intermediaries between Modimo and the living. Ancestors were located down below, in a kingdom lower than Modimo. Modimo was the most ancient of forefathers. Similarly, Ba-Hurutshe believed in 'Thobega,' a deity whom they thought was from the sky or the high-up and was, therefore, related to the sky and weather. In his encounter with the Batlhaping, John Campbell observes and notes that:

"During morning worship in our kitchen. One, being asked afterward if he knew what we had been about, said we prayed and we did not know to whom. When told it was the Great Being, he said he believed there was a Great Being, but they did not know him, for they had never seen him" (Campbell 1823, 183).

Campbell reports that the Batlhaping thought that they originated or were from a country beyond them, which was to the north. They traced their origins to two individuals who emerged from water. Among these two individuals, one was reputed to be affluent due to his extensive cow holdings, while the other was impoverished and owned many dogs. The affluent agriculturalist lived on oxen, whereas the affluent dog breeder lived on hunting. They argue that between these two men, one of them fell, and the impressions of his footsteps to this day are inscribed on a rock. According to Campbell's description, who fell between these two men is not apparent. Credo Mutwa argues that Modimo was uncreated, that he created himself, and that this is traditional knowledge that had been around since about 740 A.D. Breutz (1987) argues that this knowledge can be traced back to ancient Egypt from around 1500 years ago, and is derived from the dung-roller (scarabaeus sacer). Depicted by a beetle in hieroglyphics and symbolizing the one 'who made himself", this is further incorporated in the glyph, which denotes 'to create .' It is in this sense that males were buried in their family cattle kraal together with their weapons, and women in the backyard of their compounds with their hoes and seeds of every grown grain. The belief was that the 'souls' of the two would continue to dwell in good health and riches in the afterlife as 'badimo'. According to Schapera et al (1953), women would persist in cultivating the land,

and men would engage in herding livestock belonging to their grandfathers, both of whom would serve as guardians to the living.

Missionary Ethnographies

According to Campbell, Batswana's minds were inert and inactive as they didn't believe in the creator God. Despite the rich cosmology detailed above, he concluded that:

"The sameness has a tendency to drive the mind into a type of torpid state, which it is uncomfortable even to observe. The gospel is remarkably fitted for rousing such sleeping, inactive minds, by placing before them the majesty and glory of infinite Jehovah, the unbound felicity of the blessed, and the unspeakable misery of the wicked in the world to come – subjects which in all ages have produced effects on the human mind" (Campbell 1823).

Despite the stated knowledge of Batswana customs, traditions, and beliefs, Europeans, through their ethnographies, continued to believe that Batswana were without any meaningful beliefs and rituals. And William Burchell, who visited Batlhaping in 1812, describes them in the following terms:

"The superstition of the Bachapins, for it cannot be called religion, is of the weakest and most absurd kind; and, as before remarked -, betrays the low state of their intellect. These people have no outward worship, nor, if one may judge from their never alluding to them, any private devotions; neither could it be discovered that they possessed any very defined or exalted notion of a supreme and beneficent Deity, or of a great and first Creator. Those whom I questioned, asserted that everything made itself; and that trees and herbage grew by their own will. Although they do not worship a good Deity, they fear a bad one, whom they name Mulzimo (Mooleemo), a word which my interpreter translated by the Dutch word for Devil; and are ready to attribute to his evil disposition and power, all which happens contrary to their wishes or convenience" (Burchell 1824, 550).

Following this first encounter with missionaries of the London Mission Society, Chief Mothibi invited the missionaries to establish themselves among his community. He is reported to have had three critical motives for reaching this decision. The first was his

queen, Mahuto, wishing to have missionaries amongst Batlhaping. The second was the pledge by missionaries to translate the Bible and make it available to Batlhaping in their language. Finally, there was a desire to extend trade with the Cape and beyond (Breutz 1987, Landau 2010, Matthews 1945).

According to the Comaroffs (1991; 400, 401), this choice signalled the beginning of "the colonization of consciousness and the consciousness of colonization" for Batlhaping. It is as if restating the assertions made by Chief Mothibi to his clan, *"The missionaries will employ you as their servants."* Furthermore, Chief Mothibi's subsequent rather cold, enigmatic, and perhaps obscure comment to Campbell that *"that ought to be so; but the Griquas once did not understand -now they have changed. I hope it will be so with us"* (West 2016; 164, 165).

Paul Landau (2010) dismisses the Comaroffs's structuralist-functionalist approach to missionaries. He contends that British culture was not homogenous, nor was that of Batswana. According to Landau, Christian influence was not at the main disadvantageous to Batswana and advantageous to Missionaries, but it sometimes was beneficial and took a toll on both. Though the hegemonic cultural encounter does represent a clash of beliefs in the psyche. In this sense, the focus of the Comaroffs is orientated to those unconscious, unideological, and unarticulated forms of Batswana resistance. This approach runs the risk of stripping the Batswana of agency. Landau contends that in the expanding political arena of the highveld, Batswana were not only a bundle of conservatives and this observation is embodied in chief Mothibi's desire to fulfil his queen's desire for a mission station and his desire for a translated bible (Moffat 1842*)*. This time for Landau, far from being given and predetermined by hostile colonial attitudes towards non-Europeans, signified a political process whereby people, "Zulu kingdom, the Boer republic, Ngwaketse, Sotho, Rolong, Korana, and Bastards (inter alia)" took advantage of the developing political arena of the highveld and it was "not only missionaries" (Landau 2010;108-123).

It was an arena not just defined by Batlhaping and missionary contacts in isolation or as enemies but by the need to grow political influence, access trade, immersion into something new, and the necessity to make new alliances and or forsake old and unworkable ones. The process was characterized by its plasticity and dynamism and was further shaped by the emergence of the difaqane crisis from 1815 to 1840. In this view the resentment of Boers

toward locals, particularly of their contact with Englishmen and missionaries, more than else contributed to the colonization of Batswana. As missionaries were perceived by the Boers as spreading propaganda and assimilating locals into expanding trade patterns (Schapera et al 1953).

The "Difaqane or Mfecane" was a moment of violent conflicts, hunger, raids, seizures, and displacements. It contributed to the spreading of Batswana people along the Kalahari Desert, Vaal River, and the Caledon River Valley. It cast a long shadow on relations between missionaries and Batlhaping since they relied upon missionaries for the trade of guns, exports, and other essential supplies, as well as counsel and support (Landau 2010, Watson 1977). The Difaqane is closely associated with the ascent of Shaka and his ambitious expansionist agenda, together with the increasing demand for enslaved people and cattle in the Cape Colony and Portuguese Delagoan slave trade (Cobbing 1988). In 1820, at the order of Chief Mothibi, the Batlhaping left Dithakong due to limited water supplies and lack of grazing lands. They trekked and, together with the London Mission Society missionaries, settled in Maruping and eventually re-settled at Kuruman. The London mission station was established at Kuruman (Breutz 1987).

In 1820, Robert Moffat, a member of the London Missionary Society, arrived in Dithakong and joined Reverend Robert Hamilton and other travellers. His involvement in the Batlhaping expedition to Kuruman in 1824 led to his ultimate assumption of command of the mission station at Kuruman. His agricultural knowledge proved very beneficial in the appropriate establishment of the community, enabling Kuruman to profit from water furrows and perennial irrigation systems. This progressively changed the arid desert into a habitable and fertile environment. The mission station at Kuruman consisted of Moffat's initial homestead, a school (1825-9), and a church (1838) with a capacity for 800 people (Schapera et al., 1953). The ensemble comprised an ox wagon, a bronze relief, and a sundial. The Batlhaping population was believed to contain roughly ten thousand individuals.

It is in Kuruman, the oasis of the Kalahari, where Moffat laboured and produced the first translation of the Bible into Setswana, together with African agents, translators and collaborators. The New and Old Testaments were published in 1840 and 1857, respectively. He was the first missionary to formally settle amongst the Tswana people, which meant that

the Batlhaping were the first group to be evangelized. A severe rejection of a fusion between indigenous leadership and practices with Christianity often marked Moffat's approach to conversion. He opposed the more flexible attitude of Christian inclusion associated with James Read, one of his missionary contemporaries at Dithakong, and he later stripped Read of his duties. Moffat's aversion to mixed Christianity originated from his examination of the Griqua mission, which he deemed too extensive and encompassing, as it was shaped by the political matters of the Griqua and Christian mandates (Landau 2010). For Moffat, the Griqua mission's untethered theological approach was analogous to an unruly African river:

"Like an African river, it now swells, and then dwindles - is now rapid, then slowly spreads its refreshing waters over a large surface of desert waste - now disappears, and then rises in another part of its course, in which it resumes a steady flow – affording, all seasons, permanent fertility, to the advantage of those who assemble on its banks, or come within the range of its influence" (Moffat 1842, 135).

Moffat argued that African traditions or government systems were not worthy of incorporation or consideration in establishing the future and form of Christianity in the highveld. According to Moffat, 'non-Europeans' were characterized by a profound condition of darkness, barely above savages and devoid of any trace of civilization. This appraisal, once again, was based upon a juxtaposition against a European man, who stood as a beacon of hope, a cultured species, and as one redeemed in scripture and positioned a little lower than Angels. In this sense, Africans were banished from cosmology and shown as people without subjectivity, save for their inner and exterior incarnations. They were akin to captives in the Platonic cavern, and the Dutch Reformed Church, which rejected the LMS Protestant and non-conformist position in various ways, to Moffat resembled a Platonic fugitive. Indigenous ontology, in this sense, meant refusing to depart the cave. Lacking a subjectivity (looking at shadows and pictures), Africans could neither in the fullest sense be sinners/poets (Dutch Reformed Church) nor saints/philosopher-kings (Moffat), but permanently non-beings insofar as they clung to their ways of life (Reeve 2004).

Moffat sought to establish a strong differentiation between the spiritual and governmental aspects of the Batlhaping society. In contrast to missionaries like James Read or Jan

Hendricks, who envisioned either the expansion of Christianity or Griqua imperialism, Moffat exhibited conservative tendencies in several aspects. He felt that abnormalities in the church could be handled by mastery and firmness and saw a church intimately linked in form and style to the administrations of the Cape Colony and tethered to the larger denominations in the colonial centre (Landau 2010). In this way, he imagines the duty of the missionary to be like that of managing a ship, taking good care of the cargo, being mindful of the sailors of the vessel, and contemplating all eventualities of being at sea, such as winds, reefs, storms, and severe weather. He further imagines himself as God's gardener of the London Mission Society. Being a good gardener means focusing on seasons, the weather, sowing, reaping, pruning, watering, domesticating and defending the garden against wild beasts or foxes. This was representative of the relationships between missionaries and Griquas. In the sense that missionaries, in their meeting with African leaders or chiefs, tended to support those who were sympathetic to Christianity and passionately opposed the leadership or rule of those who refused conversion. Furthermore, Moffat observes that:

"This was a decision which reflected the highest honour on the judgment of the Griquas, for the person (Andries Waterboer) on whom they had fixed their attention, was one who possessed neither name nor riches. He had enjoyed advantages, having been educated on the station, under the eye of the missionaries; had been with others set apart as a native teacher… where he was found on the very day of his appointment… we had neither part nor lot in the matter, though it afforded us entire satisfaction… This was a new era in the Griqua, which brought it to a state so ardently desired; and the mission-houses instead of being turned into a kind of council-chamber, were visited only by such as had cases of conscience to propose, or what had a reference to the general welfare to the church of God" (Moffat 1842).

Thus, the Christian meeting between Moffat and Batlhaping was simplified to a linear model of assimilation to European society and faith. From the standpoint of Batlhaping, this meant a systematic denial of the self or a process of relinquishing and uncloaking those elements which, to European missionaries, were considered ‘savage,’ ‘dark,’ and incompatible with established Christian governmentality. Furthermore, it suggested a certain level of cultural uniformity that contradicted the variety of Indigenous models, as Batlhaping society was not

uniform but rather diverse, encompassing many perspectives and values about the significance of culture. There were frequently internal tribal divisions on whose ancestor to worship, along with linked questions of respect and ascendancy, which were antithetical to the European paradigm of a singular and standardized script (Comaroffs 1991, Landau 2010).

Moffat's centralized Christian approach in the Batlhaping settlement was related to a style of indirect authority administered via the house of prayer. Mission stations served as technologies of surveillance with inherent systems of discipline, including periodic expulsions of insubordinate members, excommunications, attendance records, the pulpit, and mission toilets, among other features. This colonial machinery was wrapped up in models of European respectability and technology. Over time, the road, telescope, thermometer, sextant, sword, pistol, and plough emerged as the benchmarks for a new societal and cultural standard, symbolizing the emergence of a new civilization. *"They served to excite the savage"* (Burchell 1824; 577) and to foster a consumerist mentality that supported colonial expansion and assisted the process of conversion (Landau 2000, West 2016).

In his efforts to propagate Christianity among the Batlhaping and other highlveld communities, Moffat regarded African cultures as obstacles to its dissemination. From his perspective, several African habits and beliefs were considered superstitions that must be conquered. His viewpoint is made evident when he observes that:

"Before concluding this general review of the prevailing notions which exist among the tribes of Southern Africa, which throw some light on their origin, and present the most formidable barriers to their evangelism, a few remnants of tradition may be noticed… which were reflective of inventive brain of the wily rain makers… This was one of the trails to which allusion has been made, and it was severe blow; while the heathen laughed at our puny efforts to reform the nation" (Moffat 1843, 201).

This utterance by Moffat illustrates his disgust with African traditions and customs. This discontent is also expressed in his lexicon, exemplified by terms such as "wily rainmaker"

and "heathen." Moreover, his stance reflects his patriarchal mentality and cultural biases that often characterized the views of missionaries in the nineteenth century.

The afterlives of conversion

The Christian utopia and desire of missionaries to bring about a converted Batlhaping (African) public in this regard aided Batlhaping incorporation into imperial and colonial frameworks and authority. An integration of Batlhaping into hidden colonial structures and patterns was employed to ensure and justify colonial brutality and exploitation. In this sense, the sheer desire and purpose of converting the "other" inherently implies a process of constructing and re-constructing the "other," his identity and location. Conversion necessitated the Batlhaping to embrace novel paradigms of organizing society and acknowledging one another within society (Comaroffs 1991).

These phenomena encompassed novel social interactions, family organization, intimacy, patterns of love, courtship patterns, commercialization of personal life, and innovative forms of labour and recreation. It necessitated new habits of the mind, moral standards, and structures of feeling, which, to a more significant extent, were imported from a Protestant European paradigm (Crossland 2013, Erlank 2022).

This approach entailed a sterilized Christian environment that was deeply influenced by colonial practices, resulting in the redefinition of Batlhaping symbols of culture and authority as non-Christian, barbaric, primitive, unproductive, and culturally "other ." This process manifested in the interaction between missionaries as representatives of Christianity and Batlhaping as representatives of culture and traditions. The dynamics between Batlhaping and Europeans were re-examined based on a sequence of contrasting categories: non-believers and believers, primitive and refined, the ill and healthy, and females and males (Chidester 1996, Comaroff 1991).

The mission station constituted a space from which these binaries were nurtured and hatched amongst highveld societies insofar as mission stations were epicentres of a European paradigm and were at the same time hostile and closed to difference and, therefore, a threat to Batlhaping sovereignty and systems of culture. In this regard, Moffat observes that:

"We could not help being sincerely thankful that there was no public prohibition made against attendance on divine worship; therefore, generally, a few came, though sometimes only such as were our dependents. A very large majority had never entered the chapel, being threatened by their superior if they did; and others would not for their lives have set a foot within the threshold" (Moffat. 1843, 229).

The articulation and propagation of European Protestant views necessitated substantial modifications to traditional social norms and relationships. This dynamic was notably visible with respect to patterns of love, sexuality, and types of marriage. For African converts, becoming Christian was not merely a religious identity but a political and social one. The footprints of Christianity were not confined to Church settings but spread throughout the Batlhaping society. This encompassed concepts of cleanliness, social hygiene, health, and home and often contained missionary desires and animosities against physical subjectivities. Being "greasy" and “dirty” in many respects became signifiers of an African ontology that stood as a sign of immorality, corruption, and a breach of God's rule (Burke 1996). Within the Kuruman settlement, colonial governmentality was disseminated by means of the church's rituals and grammar, diverse methods of scheduling time, and written documentation.

The emergence of a Christian population in the settlement challenged parental decision-making, the authority of traditional courts, lobola or bogadi, circumcision, and the legality of polygamy. As the missionary hold deepened around the 1840s, tribal courts, or 'Makgotla' gradually lost their importance. The written record and magisterial courts rapidly superseded oral tradition and performance. Missionary advancement entailed delegitimating traditional structures and continuity. Through the written record, western concepts of intimacy, family, and justice progressively obtained a grasp on Indigenous societies and imagination, and they stood as an alternative to oral traditions. Missionaries believed that the written record was more reliable than knowledge transferred orally and was, therefore, more effective in resolving land disputes and succession battles, compared to the often aged and uneducated local experts who relied on memory (Comaroffs 1991, Erlank 2022, Schapera et al., 1953).

The Christian moral imprint on the minds, morals, and structure of feeling led to a change from traditional to European marriages and weddings. This meant that marriage no longer indicated a bond between two families but was more about an intimate affair between couples mediated by the church. It was also more focused on the creation of a nuclear family. This meant that ancestors' participation through the ceremony was replaced and substituted by Christian marriages, which were more oriented towards a consumerist culture and labour economy. Distinctive indicators of this shift encompassed white weddings, formal attire, wedding cakes, and abundant exchange of gifts (Erlank, 2022).

This endeavour resulted in the emergence of a Indigenous autonomous subject who perceived himself as self-governing, self-reliant, and less constrained by conventional institutions and their hierarchies. ‘Bogadi,’ or ‘lobola,’ was progressively perceived as a form of female captivity, and this perception was a result of the Christian influence. The act of gifting stock was considered a type of transaction that mediated this form of slavery, which reduced women to lowly slaves and property of their husbands. According to missionaries, African cultures, by virtue of practicing ‘bogadi’ or ‘lobola’ were practically slave societies, with fathers selling their daughters into slavery. However, Morelli (2022) contends that some special marriages functioned as a type of bondage for women, men, and sometimes children.

One other source of conflict was polygamy, which subsequently had significant consequences for productive work and the makeup of the home or complex known as ‘moste or lapa .’ Polygamy was seen as a symbol of the regressive and primitive condition of Indigenous people, intensifying the necessity for the mission of civilization, which was considered the responsibility of the dominating white population. A polygamous individual was constructed as particularly savage: a master with several slaves. Robert Moffat concluded that recently converted Indigenous individuals within the Batlhaping community who were engaged in polygamous relationships should legally dissolve their previous marriages as a symbolic indication of their genuine conversion. This meant the disintegration of social links and communities insofar as polygamous marriages played a significant role in the organization of society. Polygamous marriages symbolized a union between multiple lineages and a multiplicity of links between Batlhaping; therefore, their

breakdown might have far-reaching ramifications. One significant example here is 'seantlo,' a customary legal marriage of a young widow to the late husband's younger brother or paternal kinsman, or picking a woman from the same family in circumstances where the initial first chosen wife is claimed to be infertile. Adopting the offspring of a deceased family member as one's own or a barren first wife adopting children from a polygamous relationship as her own was entirely rejected by missionaries and viewed as primitive manifestations. The missionaries' investigations into Indigenous sexuality and intimacy, including 'bogadi or lobola' and polygamy, were intertwined with a broader colonial endeavour, in which African customs were assimilated into colonial moral frameworks and the interpretation of African experiences from a colonial perspective (Erlank 2022, Morelli 2022, Palmary et al., 2019, Schapera et al., 1953).

At the Kuruman settlement, circumcision and the rites and rituals accompanying it were progressively supplanted by a blend of Enlightenment and Christian concepts of character and conduct. The practice of circumcision transitioned from a limited to a total prohibition inside the church. Moral authority, position, and link with ancestors obtained from having undergone circumcision eventually faded. The practice of circumcision was included in religious texts and became a topic of the Abrahamic tradition in the Old Testament. This integration served to weaken and eliminate traditional knowledge systems. Being Christian and educated became a social substitute for circumcision. Though not all Indigenous Christians fully conformed to all these new colonial norms, the standards established a visible boundary distinguishing 'African' Christians from 'African' 'others' (Erlank. 2022, Schapera. 1953).

Non-Christian Africans were associated with immorality, hypersexuality, primitiveness, uncivilization, witchcraft, heathenry, and the practice of slavery. To a greater degree, this binary served a Euro-Christian worldview and material culture. To be a Christian convert entailed self-denial and denial of culture. It meant devouring each other in the protection of Christianity, and protecting Christianity meant deliberately or unconsciously defending European supremacy in the settlement. Thus, Christian converts assumed the role of catalysts in eliminating culture, including its concepts and representations. Indigenous people gradually became agents of their oppression. To embrace Christianity entailed fully

integrating as a lifelong follower and subservient to Euro-Christian concepts of society, family, intimacy, love, work, and play. It also suggested a profound transformation in the Indigenous emotions, ethics, and attitudes frameworks. For this reason, apart from being divinely inspired, Batswana chiefs progressively embraced Christianity. To establish and maintain their political, moral, and spiritual credibility, power, and independence among their populace.

Chapter Conclusion

Prior to their meeting with missionaries, the Batlhaping lived according to their customs and traditions. Their polity was organized around ancestor belief, "lobola or bogadi," circumcision, and traditional courts, amongst other things. Throughout this chapter, I have shown that missionaries perceived Batlhaping culture as an obstacle to Christianity and interpreted ‘otherness’ as a sequence of unfavourable dichotomies. Consequently, the post-conversion eras were characterized by the incorporation of Batlhaping into alternative patterns of social structures, sexuality, and respectability. In many aspects, Euro-missionary ways of dress, labour, prayer, work, play, and intimacy. Within this context, missionary labourers were significantly influenced by an ethnocentric perspective on "otherness ."A vision of Batlhaping as in the early phases of human evolution without any belief in the Supreme Being. I have argued that this attempt led to a violent and systematic elimination of Batlhaping rituals, traditions, and ways of life. Leading to weaker institutions of traditional authority and sovereignty and a fractured Batlhaping polity. Between proponents of conversion and its opponents. I have argued that this was not necessarily a one-way track in the sense that tactics of resistance to colonial dominance were affected by Christianity.

Chapter 4: Missionary Translations in the Kuruman Settlement

Introduction

In this chapter, I look at the significance of the nineteenth-century biblical translations from English to African languages by Robert Moffat from 1825 to 1857. Building upon the templates introduced in chapter two, I consider the role of translation in entrenching the European civilizing mission by creating an ostensibly universal but actually Eurocentric regime of truth. This translation process negated and continues to negate the "being" of the Batlhaping (Batswana) and Africans more broadly. In this chapter, I examine the role of missionaries in forging the contours of a Europeanized, Christianized, and colonized African subject made docile by imperial expansion and war (difaqane). The end result was a newly forged subjectivity, which was fertile ground from which Batlhaping cultural precepts of identity were reinscribed to suit colonial frameworks and logic. The sovereignty, legitimacy, and influence of chiefs were, in turn, devalued by this process of translation.

I begin the chapter by looking at the conflict between Moffat and Chief Mothibi around the figure of the rainmaker and rain. I argue that this conflict embodies a difficult encounter between missionaries and Batlhaping (Batswana), which is therefore mediated through a process of missionary translations, underscored by the desire and need by missionaries and Batlhaping to engage in cross-cultural interactions, the missionary to communicate the idea of Christianity, which was linked to Mothibi's desire to fulfil his queen's desire, Mahuto, to have a mission station. And invariably also linked to Mothibi's strategic desire to participate in trade, have regional influence in the highveld, and benefit from cross-cultural interactions with Europeans through literacy and connections with the Cape Colony, mainly by consenting to having a permanent mission station.

I am particularly concerned with how missionary translations dislocate the Batlhaping from their metaphysics and epistemologies. In this regard, I look at the figures of Modimo and Badimo and how these categories ended up being translated. I am concerned with how Modimo and Badimo came to constitute a source of binary and conflict between Christian and traditional Batlhaping following translations. The various ways in which the Christianized version of Modimo and Badimo gradually came to displace and substitute traditional Batlhaping meanings of the words.

Finally, I look at how the newly forged Batlhaping subjective, through the English textual form, also in-directedly constituted a framework from which to resist Euro-Christianity and colonial hegemony. This chapter is also particularly indebted to Paul Landau's work on translations amongst Batswana. I look broadly at issues of language and contextualism, translation and interpretation, and appropriations and analytic shortcomings. Instead of focusing exclusively on missionary failures, ignorance, and successes, I attempt to examine the dialectic between missionaries and the Batlhaping people broadly.

Robert Moffat, Chief Mothibi, and the origins of rain

The central preoccupation of missionaries in their encounter, existing together with Batlhaping and in the project of translating the Bible into African languages to bring about an African Indigenous Christian following, was significantly dependent on missionaries understanding languages of the highveld, particularly that of the Batlhaping. And in regards Moffat notes that:

"The acquisition of language was an object of the first importance. This was to be done under circumstances the most unfavourable, as there was neither time nor place of retirement for study, and no interpreter worthy the name. A few, and but a few words were collected, and these very incorrect, from the ignorance of the interpreter of the grammatical structure either of his own or the Dutch language, through which medium all our intercourse was carried on. It was something like groping in the dark, and many were the ludicrous blunders I made. The more waggish of those from whom I occasionally obtained sentences and forms of speech, would richly enjoy the fun, if they succeeded in leading me into egregious mistakes and shameful blunders; but though I had to pay dearly for my credulity, I learned something" (Moffat 1845. 199).

"The reducing of an oral language to writing being so important to the missionary, he ought to have every encouragement afforded him, and be supplied with the means necessary for the attainment of such an object" (Moffat 1845. 200).

From these two findings by Moffat, it is more evident that the missionary enterprise, distinguished by a deep desire to bring about a Christian public in African societies, was only possible via translation. This observation also signalled the initial steps toward the coming

true of the Batlhaping queen's dream for literacy among her people and confirmed the commitment of missionaries (Landau 2010). On the other hand, the discourse surrounding the necessity for translations was particularly evident in the rivalry between missionaries and rainmakers. Rainmakers were responsible for inducing rain in seasons of drought, and as a consequence, they acquired a significant following. Their position was endangered by the construction of water courses and dams for irrigation, such as in Kuruman by the London Mission Society and amongst the amaNgqika people by the Glasgow Missionary Society. Irrigation was clearly inspired by the need and desire to resist the influence of rainmakers and despite the underlying motives it was in line with Chief Mothibi's envisioned progress for his people. (Shell 2006). Moffat and missionaries, at the core, exploited the introduction of agricultural and essential technology to ambiguate the role of rainmakers and enter the African public. In this regard, Moffat himself notes that:

"People and water were, however, the objects of the missionaries' pursuit; and of all places they had seen or heard of, this was the most likely in which to congregate a tolerable, though at most a small, community. Here they resumed their labours of love, casting the heavenly seed in the hearts of their hearers. These were composed of a mixed multitude of Namaquas, and Bastards from the colony, (called on account of Oorlams,) whom they, as well as other missionaries, found it difficult to manage" (Moffat 1845. 65).

Despite the clashes between rainmakers and missionaries, both Chief Mothibi and Chief Jongumsobomvu Maqoma believed that missionaries could help facilitate Batlhaping and AmaNgqika's access to skills, trade routes, commerce, security, literacy, and at the main the desired progress. The interaction between missionaries and chiefs was characterized by encounters and bewilderment, traditions and beliefs, hostilities and amicable connections, biases, and tendencies. From a theological standpoint, both sides confronted a mutual necessity to express, through language, the idea of Christianity on the one hand and, on the other hand, African concepts of deity.

One such example was a semantic battle between Moffat and Mothibi concerning Moffat's uncut beard as the likely cause of an impending drought in 1821. Their exchange raised the subject of connotation, meaning, and, thus, translations. For missionaries, rain was a gift from a Christian God, yet they also viewed rain scientifically as mere precipitation that

originated out of meteorological conditions. Under this premise, the presence or absence of rain could be unrelated to Moffat's untrimmed beard. Hence, it is not unexpected that missionaries from the LMS, WMS, and GMS strongly denounced the role of the rainmaker (Landau 2010). James Laing, in his "Paper on the Kaffer Customs," states that:

"The Rainmaker stands nearly on the same ground as the sorcerer. He must in no instance be allowed to bring punishment of any sort on anyone who has according to his false system prevented the rain from falling. It does not seem to me that a legal enactment is called for to abolish the offices of doctor and rainmaker but whenever their orders lead to cruelty and injustice, let them be punished in the most signal manner. They would thus be prevented from being a means of causing others to be justly deprived of their cattle, and their power would in a short time be entirely destroyed" (Extract: Shell 2006; 455-457).

For missionaries the thought that the chief or his experts could manage forces unseen and generate rain contradicted the universal demand of ‘it's raining’ and ‘rain’ as universal and constant assertions. This infringement for Moffat further testified to Mothibi's inability to reason scientifically. For Batlhaping, ‘rain’ and ‘it's raining’ were directionally inflected to fit with experience. Mothibi's power was thus improvised and translated to a regional domain of signification, which harmonized with the experiences of Batlhaping. Unlike missionaries, rain among the Batlhaping extended beyond mere precipitation and represented a time of historical commemoration, tranquillity, and abundance rather than the harsh realities of old age and adversity (Landau 2010).

This semantic conflict demonstrated Moffat's rejection of introspective psychology and a predisposition to defer meaning exclusively to quantifiable and observable conduct or occurrences. It further pointed to a structuralist separation between the spoken and written word. Broadly speaking, the post-structuralist concept posits that meaning is inherent in the conceptual structures in which it occurs and operates rather than being detached or abstract (Philip 2007).

Thus, even from the beginning of the interaction, missionaries among the Indigenous people tended to favour rigid, consistent, and unalterable interpretations, where x is synonymous with y and nothing else. Specifically, they dismissed the semantic spectra associated with

"rain." All variations from the conventional definition of rain as mere precipitation were solely intended to reveal the ignorance, and superstition of the Batlhaping people. (Comaroffs 1991, Hunt 1999).

The missionary position, therefore, contributed to stripping words of their phenomenality, whose meaning is created and comprehended in their occurrence. Moffat's objects of discipline and control in the use of Setswana meant that even Batlhaping may be erroneous in their usage of the language. More precisely, Moffat's concept of 'establishment Christianity' was based on the necessity to oversee and control language usage, even inside the Batlhaping community (Landau 2010).

Confinement of rain to scientific meanings and propositions necessitated the cruelty of cultural erasure. Rain ceased to be linked to lineage, historical events, chiefs' authority and legitimacy to govern, fertility, and the broader social connections relevant to the general well-being of Batlhaping polity, or more broadly, Batswana. Missionaries like Moffat saw Batlhaping as infants, immature, and non-believers who had yet to grasp spiritual truth and significance correctly. They perceived themselves as possessors of knowledge and authority over divine truth and importance. This meant that Christian conceptions were no longer only translated for comprehension but, above all, for the development of a European universal regime of truth (Chidester 1996, Landau 2010, Shell 2006).

Furthermore, Landau (2010) further posits that the Batlhaping people were not necessarily an unscientific community of primitives and savages. In this regard, Burchell (1824, 550) notes that *"These people have no outward worship, nor, if one may judge from their never alluding to them, any private devotions; neither could it be discovered that they possessed any very defined or exalted notion of a supreme and beneficent Deity, or of a great and first Creator. Those whom I questioned, asserted that everything made itself; and that trees and herbage grew by their own will."* This observation reveals that missionaries in their contact with Batlhaping thought of themselves as possessors of knowledge and Batlhaping as lacking in this knowledge. To the contrary Batlhaping consistently exhibited scientific knowledge that surpassed or challenged the understanding of Burchell and missionaries, who were simultaneously constrained by an unquestioning faith in Christianity (Etherington 2012, Schumaker 2001).

At the main, Missionary translators disregarded the idea of writing as affirmation and, therefore, as open to diversity and difference. In their pursuit of universal norms and institutions derived from Enlightenment concepts, they viewed writing as a process of codification, aiming to standardize and stabilize the primitive world of the indigenous people according to Euro-Christian norms and practices. Within the Kuruman settlement, this strategy primarily established Batlhaping as a paradigm of difference (Comaroffs 1991, Mudimbe 1988, Molapo 2021).

Moffat's Biblical Translations of Modimo and Badimo

The Europeanized regime of truth also meant that prayer 'Go rapela, go bosta' which might previously be addressed towards a local ancestor, chief, or local or family elder for thanksgiving and or asking for rain, fertility, victory in battle, bountiful harvest, etc. Because of Moffat's scientifically imposed worldview, the term could only denote a scientific Christian deity. Ancestor 'Modimo' was translated to imply God in the Christian sense. Furthermore, 'Go rapela,' in the conventional interpretation of Batlhaping, was thus shown as outdated, lacking maturity, and flawed insofar as it referred to a distinct temporality and lacked allegiance to a Christian God. Missionaries rejected the Batlhaping idea, which confirmed that the experiences of the world of the living follow from the domain of deceased ancestors, who have the same bloodline. They dismissed the concept that the habituation of Divinity may be traced back to the domain of deceased or revered ancestors (Divinity as perceived in connection to loss, deceased people, or ancestors) (Comaroffs 1991, Landau 2010).

Missionaries saw the experience of the world not in reference to ancestors or what is lost but in relation to what ought to be lost to death, i.e., death itself. The dimension of time represented in the cult of balimo (badimo), or ancestors, was rejected by missionaries through codification processes. Hence, the notion of time as a finite entity that is both accessible and subject to the influence of emotions so serving as a foundation for establishing a link between the living and the deceased. They refuted the notion that the connection between memory and loss forms the structure that intertwines confirmation and realization and represents the connection between location and time. Moreover, the relationship that exists more widely between memory, death (loss), and reception. In the

sense that, Batlhaping traditions posit that experience, being shaped by its past, also possesses a future through the act of receiving and directing it toward others, whether they are born or strangers (Molapo 2021).

Samuel Broadbent and Eugene Casalis concurred with Moffat's interpretation of Morimo/Modimo as being synonymous with the Christian figure of God. In his 1823 speech to Sefunelo, the leader of Barolong at Thabeng, Broadbent explicitly identified the Christian God as Morimo/Modimo and subsequently as Jehovah. The broad reference to God as Modimo contradicts Moffat's previous comment that:

“Morimo, to those who know anything about it, had been represented by rainmakers and sorcerers as malevolent ‘selo,’ or thing” (Moffat 1842. 261).

Within the Batswana community, Modimo was commonly perceived as an entity or power manifesting in the realm of the underworld or in relation to the ground. This dwelling for Modimo was documented by Dr. Andrew Smith, Moffat, Eugene Casalis, and other missionaries and diplomats from the nineteenth century in the highveld region. In this context, Batlhaping conceptualized Modimo as a 'selo,' or entity that comes before personhood and represents the potential for beginnings and ends. Without personhood, these beginnings and ends would be unattainable or inconceivable, namely Modimo as affirmation (Etherington 2005, Molapo 2021).

Moffat further observes that *“based on the principle of constructing the plural form of personal nouns starting with 'mo', Barimo would suffice as the plural form of Morimo, just as Monona is "a man" and Banona is "men." However, this particular form of the word is never employed, nor does it communicate to the Bechuana people the concept of an individual or individuals”* (Moffat 1842, 261).

Although this passage does not imply that Modimo is the plural form of Badimo, Moffat ultimately translated 'Modimo' to mean ancestor or 'dead other,' and the plural form of this term is 'Badimo,' which also means ancestors or 'dead others.' To firmly place Christian metaphysics and epistemology within the Batlhaping (Batswana) culture, Moffat observes that lighting is referred to as 'legadima,' hurricane as 'ledima,' and so he deduces that the translation of heaven is 'legodimo.'

Moffat's translations are closely linked to his notion of 'ancestor in the singular,' or Modimo, which was converted into the Christian God of the Bible through translation. Furthermore, in his discussion with John Campbell, Broadbent rendered the term 'spirit' as 'moya' (Landau 2010). God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit can be rendered as "Moro, Morwa le Moya wa-Boitshepo," with 'Boitshepo' denoting Divinity.

Etherington (2012) argues that missionaries were not alone in the translation project. He stresses that African agents contributed significantly to the translation project, sometimes rejecting certain aspects of missionary translations. In this sense, the contribution of African agents was often disregarded and minimized, particularly in the early nineteenth century. This observation makes it difficult to ascertain which specific interpretations were advanced by African agents during this time. Furthermore, Schumaker (2001) contends that in Africa, knowledge is a consequent of co-production, which involves not only debate but also leading, introducing, teaching, debating, and discussing knowledge or local language with the European interlocutor. This phenomenon can be understood as a social process characterised by complex interactions and negotiations between the indigenous and European subjects. It is influenced by the specific local circumstances and collaborative efforts, and subjects cannot control its directionalities or potentialities.

And in this light, Moffat and to a lesser or greater extent African agents rendered God the Father as 'Modimo Rara,' God the Son as 'Modimo Morwa,' and God the Holy Spirit as 'Modimo Moya o o Boitshepo.' In this context, God the Father also carried the connotation of 'father of ancestor' or 'Hare a Murimo,' while God the Son connoted 'son of the ancestor' or 'Mu-rimo.' In this context, the term "ancestor" or "Modimo" served as a central point from which many perspectives fought for dominance by contextual positioning. These concepts served as a focal point from which various subjectivities intensified conflicting applications, implementation, and interpretation.

The translation of missionary texts led to a division into two of the terms ‘ancestor’ and ‘Modimo.’ The phenomenon of meiosis was such that the notion of Modimo as Ancestor or Great 'it' was considered recessive and rejected by the Christian populace, including African converts and missionaries. Although the belief in Modimo as a Christian deity was prevalent and well accepted, the opposite was true for a traditional Batlhaping society.

Therefore, Modimo, in the conventional sense of Batlhaping, became the objective of missionary replacement to the extent that it was considered atheistic. And Modimo, as the Christian deity, is the intended substitute itself. Therefore, this process of missionary codification involved the connection between ancestor and chief. It was progressively moved and shifted from a practical and denotative sense to a metaphorical domain of meaning that contributed to the delegitimization and erosion of judicial authority (Comaroff 1991, Etherington 2005).

Moffat, Broadbent, and Thomas Hodgson firmly affirmed the distinctiveness and exclusive designation of the Christian 'Modimo'. His kingdom was elevated into the sky, known as 'kwa legodimong.' The term 'up' or 'sky' refers not only to the visible plane of stars and galaxies but also to an invisible realm still situated in the celestial 'legodimo' or divine realm. Through translation, the term 'Ancestors,' also known as 'Badimo,' came to denote Satan, Devil, or Evil. By the 1820s, the term 'Badimo' officially denoted Satan. Metis translators and missionaries went to the extent of attributing real-world acts of evil to 'Badimo' and considered them to be the primary source of highveld hardships (Landau 2010).

Presented below are two pivotal manoeuvres. The first aspect entails the confinement of the conventional Modimo within a celestial realm and his withdrawal from African philosophical systems, metaphysical concepts, and epistemological frameworks. The second entails the act of trivializing and demonizing Badimo. Significantly, 'Modimo' was redefined as a gendered Christian deity and no longer existed as a 'selo' or the omnipotent 'it.' Post-translation, Modimo acquires individuality and assumes the role of a Christian masculine paternal figure. His kingdom is relocated from the realm of the dead to a celestial sphere. Conversely, Badimo are degraded and forcefully removed from their social role and position as protectors of Batlhaping ethics, upholders, and intermediaries between Modimo, the dominant personality, and the Batlhaping people (Molapo 2021, Mothoagae 2014, Nkomazana 2016).

The explicit consequence of missionary translations in this context is the forceful Eurocentric incursion and transformation of African culture, traditions, and spiritual frameworks. With the advent of missionary translations, the veneration, admiration, and respect for Badimo became more linked to the perilous and immoral influence of Satan. Badimo were perceived

as beings engulfed in a biblical hell. External to the Christian context, Modimo was deemed unnecessary. It was only when Modimo stayed incorporated within a Christian framework as a gendered, violent, and triune God of Israel that his function, status, and rank were considered reasonable and maintained (Mothoagae 2014).

Moffat's predominantly agricultural background was crucial in creating a clear distinction between Christian Modimo and Badimo (ancestors), as described in Matthew 13:24-43 (Parable of Wheat and Weeds). Through the process of codification and standardization, the realm of sin known as 'medleebe or se-bi' was linked to ancestral figures, rainmakers, traditional leaders, and non-Christian highvelders. The African ontologies were identified and linked to sensuality, malevolence, and erroneous beliefs about the presence of a universal and divine essence (Landau 2010).

The missionaries rejected the idea that the divine essence can appear in various and multifaceted forms that are influenced by particular cultures, values, and conventions beyond the Christian context. By means of codification, the domain of sin 'se-bi' came to be the dwelling place and domain of non-Christian highvelders or Batlhaping. Highvelders omnes were perceived as requiring redemption, or 'pholoso,' which denoted a procedure of being gathered, purified, and rescued from stary or 'timelo' and assimilated into a Euro-Christian framework or Moffat's 'establishment Christianity.' Framed in these terms, stray or 'timelo' became a manifestation of Indigenous ontologies to the extent that they diverged from a Euro-Christian temporality and materiality. The African subject, by rejecting Christianity, became 'molatlhegi' or 'the one who strayed' (Mudimbe 1988).

Moffat and his interlocutors interpreted the herder' modise' as a representation of Christ, the Christian free bestower of redemption or 'mo nei wa pholoso.' In this context, embracing Christianity for Batlhaping entailed being integrated into a global, imperial, and all-encompassing group of adherents that was fundamentally characterized by a rejection of difference and advanced through assimilation (Molapo 2021).

Moffat's efforts and other missionaries on the highveld and following commentary provide insight into the many mechanisms of the assimilation process, and this is also evident in Broadbent's 'The Lord's Prayer:

"we exist, and descended from our progenitors, and they from theirs, and so on to the first of human kind; but who gave them being? Several answered Mudeemo. I then spoke of the earth and heavens, and remarked they also had a beginning and must have had a producing cause, for you know, from nothing, nothing can proceed; who then, I further asked, is the great first cause of all? Again they replied, Mudeemo" (Broadbent 1865).

In this context, the biblical period is located in a remote historical past characterized by narratives and a male lineage. Moffat and Broadbent's mention of a 'long ago' or 'bogologolo' symbolizes this specific location in the biblical age, which is associated with the concept of the 'very great,' 'mogolo,' or great ancestor. According to Batlhaping, authorized Christian missionaries concurred that Modimo was referring to the great ancestor. It is argued that this formidable progenitor did not have any descendants to whom he may be considered biologically connected to any individual in the current era (Landau 2010, Nkomazana 2016).

Nevertheless, this translation procedure effectively emphasized the originality of the bible. It strengthened a millennialist (chiliast) perspective or the urgency of the arrival of the Christian deity 'Modimo' to his position of primary authority. Through translations, Modimo departed his previous state of emotionality, loss, perpetual passage, and death and instead became a symbol of presence. This transformation indicated a shift from a perception of personhood that is defined and considered via death, loss and the eternal passage (Molapo 2021).

The impact of Moffat's translations in the Kuruman Settlement

The influence of Moffat's translations on the Kuruman Settlement was significant as the missionary codification and translation systems replaced the previous Batlhaping interpretations of Modimo. Furthermore, they presented vastly distinct methods of considering time and the concept of creation, which, in this case, adopted a patriarchal perspective, deviating significantly from accepted paradigms. According to Mudimbe (1988), the missionary project of translation revealed a strong focus on acquiring and establishing control over the indigenous intellect and the aspiration to appropriate and establish control over the whole essence of the African subject, including both their mental faculties and physical experiences.

Significantly, the system of missionary codification also served as a technology of forgetting. It eliminated the opportunity to consider matters of salvation, creation, and time beyond the framework of missionary codifications and the concept of Modimo as the current embodiment of presence. It also signalled a shift from Indigenous Batlhaping oral traditions to Western written forms. The practice resulted in the eradication of indigenous oral knowledge systems and an interruption of cultural continuity to further colonial missionary ideology.

Broadbent contended that conversion entailed the process of assimilation with the embodiment of Christ, with the term 'setshwantso' being interpreted as 'being made same.' This effectively prevented the possibility of considering the 'other' beyond the confines of a Euro-Christian ideological framework. This Presbyterian focus proposed the incorporation of Batlhaping into a Eurocentric, self-referential, self-interested, self-contained, and creationist framework of totalisation, which, in general, is oblivious to interchange, the concept of otherness or the 'other,' and that which comes before individuality. The embodiment of Christianity, in this context, subjected Batlhaping to epistemic violence. The relentless and comprehensive structure of Christianity also implied that it existed and justified itself only by assimilating the purportedly profane, uncivilized, uneducated, untamed pagan, and barbaric 'other' or the Tswana. In this context, missionaries perceived themselves as Socratic philosopher-kings and regarded rainmakers and traditional chiefs as poets and heroes of the Homeric tradition (Nkomazana 2016, Reeve 2004).

The process of incorporating a Euro-Christian symbolic framework into the cultural identity of the Batlhaping people was also manifested through the creation and innovation of borrowed vocabulary. Examples include 'temon' denoting a demon, and 'mewa e e maswe' referring to impure spirits (Landau 2010). The Indigenous languages and spiritual systems held no inherent worth for missionaries but instead were only helpful insofar as they served as "praeparatio evangelica" and mechanisms that facilitated the dissemination of Christianity. This, however, does not imply that there was always consensus on crucial aspects. Not only did missionary translations provoke controversy among missionaries and Batlhaping, but there were divergences of opinion among the missionaries themselves and, in this sense, between Batlhaping themselves (Etherington 2005, 2012).

During the early stages of translations in the Kuruman settlement, Broadbent concluded that Moffat had not adequately mastered the command of Setswana, a position later echoed by Mary Moffat in 1827 (Etherington 2005, Mothoagae 2014). And it is in this regard that Moffat intensified his reading and understanding of Setswana and Northcott records that:

"Moffat… halted his wagon on the open veld at Tswaing (the modern Morokweng), some ninety miles north-west of Vryburg, and there started his eight weeks of listening, talking and writing; while the flies pestered him, drank the very ink from his pen, and the genteel beggars' swarmed around, demanding tobacco and beads" (Northcott 1961. 117).

In this light, the project of translations encompassed a wide range of participants, including multilingual and Griqua brokers, missionaries, travellers, and Batlhaping collaborators, agents, and translators, such as John Moketedi Serian, who served as Moffat's assistant. This suggests the potential for mutual exchange between missionary linguists and Batlhaping (Batswana) rather than only a condition of creating the 'other' through linguistic colonization. It is evident, furthermore, that the Batlhaping were not only passive beneficiaries of the Christian teachings (thuto). Textual sources varied based on individual and regional factors. They were also shaped by missionaries' historical and cultural backgrounds (Catholicism and Protestantism) and the Indigenous Batlhaping people (Landau 2010, Mudimbe 1988).

This undermined the authority and capacity of missionaries to regulate the various ways Batlhaping converts comprehended, embraced, and propagated Christianity. Although missionaries aimed to establish a single and uniform reality, the act of translation enabled the emergence of many subjectivities. Both Batlhaping and missionaries were able, in some instances, to truly engage with the teachings of the Christian God or 'Lefoko la Modimo wa maKreste.' Furthermore, they engaged in communal religious rituals and displays of devotion that aimed to challenge and occasionally directly address the fundamental essence of colonialism and imperial dominance originating from the Cape Colony (Gilmour 2007, Volz 2008).

An exemplary instance is the African Methodist Episcopal 'Ethiopian' Church, led by Chief Samuel Moroka (1840 – 1933) of the Seleka people originally from Barolong. The Samuelites

employed the translated term to gain access to scripture and thereby question the conceptual and isolating notion of a Euro-Christian society. The objective of missionary discourse was to entirely displace them from their inherent underlying beliefs, philosophical principles, and knowledge systems. However, this proved to be a far more challenging task than anticipated. The Samuelites successfully resisted and contested the dominance of Western hegemony and colonization by incorporating indigenous elements into Christianity, therefore repositioning it within the framework of their own experiences, cultures, and traditions. Thus, it evolved into a technology that supports the process of liberation and offers a critical examination and visualization of the position of an African in a modern colonial society (Comaroff 1991, Landau 2010, Mudimbe 1988). However, despite the purported genuine and innovative purpose of missionary operations, it is indisputable that their efforts resulted in a significant decrease in the sovereignty, control, power, influence of chiefs, and traditional authority (the rainmaker). The introduction of missionary labours among African peoples was followed by the disintegration of chiefdoms, displacement of land and loss of lives, and a progressive establishment of Western hegemony (Mudimbe 1988. Mvenene 2019).

Chapter Conclusion

The present chapter has posited that missionary translations were predominantly shaped by situational temporality and materiality. The evangelical missionaries' aspiration to spread Christian doctrine led to the restriction of rain or 'pula' to refer to precipitation, which was the initial indication of indigenous cultural intrusion by the missionaries. The process of translation and writing, when transformed into codification, involved the deliberate dismissal of the uniqueness and diversity of cultures, customs, and beliefs. By means of translations, missionaries aimed to standardize and freeze indigenous customs within the framework of Western metaphysics and epistemologies.

The missionary translations displaced the expression of prayer 'go rapela' from the local ancestors or chiefs, leading to a forceful displacement of Batlhaping from their customs and institutions. My contention is that extracting Modimo from the underworld, known as the endless passage, and granting him male identity led to his confinement in heaven. Modimo transitioned from being a 'selo' or omniexistent entity to becoming a gendered, aggressive,

and triune deity of Israel. My contention is that this extraction process led to the emergence of novel perspectives on time, Divinity, and creation within the Batlhaping community. A characteristic of the missionary translation process was the inclination to divide words into two parts, known as Modimo. While Modimo may have alluded to a Christian God to a Christian public, to a traditional Batlhaping public, it would have referred to a great 'selo' or 'grand it or ancestor.' An essential outcome of this transition was the weakening of chiefly authority, as the connection between ancestor and chief to Indigenous converts was relegated to a metaphorical realm rather than a practical and denotative one.

I contend that the translations carried out by missionaries exacerbated the marginalization and forceful removal of Badimo from their traditional role as protectors of morals and as intermediaries between Modimo and Batlhaping communities. By means of missionary translations, Badimo were linked to malevolent, demonic powers and sensuality and were perceived as beings forever damned to a Christian hell. It is in this context that the Christian community exhibited hostility and epistemic violence towards traditional and non-Christian Batlhaping methodologies. In conclusion, I have contended that Christianity, when expressed in written form, brought forth aberrant manifestations of patriarchy and disturbed the ongoing preservation of cultural traditions. Through the written medium, Christianity operated as a means of eradicating knowledge and, in some aspects, aimed to colonize the whole of the Indigenous population, including their intellect and physical experiences. I have contended that the process of indigenousizing Christianity (mainly through the Samuelites) had a crucial role in challenging colonial dominance and in engaging in critical analysis of the role of Africans in colonial modernity.

Chapter 5: The afterlives of conversions and the invention of tribes

Introduction

This chapter explores the role played by missionary linguists of the London Missionary Society and Wesleyan Mission Society in creating, inventing, and imagining tribal identities in the highveld from 1815 to the 1870s. I explore how missionary codifications and translations, particularly by Moffat and Broadbent at Kuruman and Thaba Nchu mission stations, respectively, contributed to the creation and invention of tribal identities. I argue that the development of tribal identities amongst African people can be traced back to missionary efforts to render legible and knowable local people and practices.

Missionaries on the highveld spent huge amounts of time classifying, categorizing, and ordering local people and practices to fit within idealized models of European and Christian norms. Ultimately, this gave rise to tribal identities in the highveld, while earlier periods' rich cultural and linguistic diversity was devalued and eventually destroyed. This is partly attributable to the standardization of textual norms via an invented Setswana exclusively based on the widely spoken Batlhaping and Barolong dialects in mission stations. Local dialects relevant yet peripheral to mission stations were neglected, contributing to the aggregation of highveld peoples under tribal banners.

This chapter is divided into two sections. In the first section, I examine the ideological and anthropological project of missionary linguists in their encounters with the highveld people. I am particularly concerned here with the trace, constellation, and evolution of the word 'Tswana,' whose meaning shifted from ‘alike’ or ‘equal’ to ultimately standing for and signifying a singular tribal category. The constellation of the word 'Tswana' is important because it reveals the primordial influence and logic of discovery dominant within ethnographies, labours, and language study of missionaries in their encounter with highveld people. Section two examines tribal categories not as natural and given but as deliberate creations and inventions by missionaries. This examination is essential because it helps to reveal that tribal identities in African societies, in many ways, emerged only when African social networks and systems of community were abrogated.

Missionary labours and the primordial conception of ‘tribe’ in the highveld

According to essentialists, ethnicity (tribe) is a collection of fundamental connections and inherent or presumed realities such as shared culture, land, religion, language, and ancestry/history. These 'givens' unite individuals into groups, fulfilling the demand for 'self-esteem and belonging.' According to essentialists like Harold Issacs (1975) and John Stack (1986), ethnic identity is formed through prenatal ascription, inherent in close relatives, and influenced by the clan and kin organizational structure. Once an individual is born into a particular ethnic group, their ethnic identity becomes immutable and enduring. Clifford Geertz (1963), the pioneer of interpretive social theory, argued that social sciences should be regarded and approached as a series of continuous seminars. Exploring primordialism and his ideas, it is evident that the essentialist perspective of tribe emerged and was maintained by missionaries in the highveld region through their categorizations and classifications of African peoples in the nineteenth century. In many ways, these categorizations and classifications were also employed in the development and successful implementation of the Apartheid system of governance on African populations over the twentieth century. However, they were, in this sense, developed during the nineteenth century.

To essentialists, ethnicity is an inherent characteristic of individuals and social groups. This notion of ethnicity (tribe) is exemplified by the Old Testament Amalekites, Canaanites, tribes of Israel, and early medieval Normans, among others (Lentz 1995). Ethnic identity, in this context, enables individuals to distinguish themselves from others and different social systems psychologically. Simultaneously, it allows 'others' to determine the 'we group' from the 'self' and other cultural systems. The phenomenon defines a dual border, encompassing an 'inside' perimeter resulting from socialization processes and an 'outside' perimeter arising from intergroup interactions (Bacik 2022, Isajiw 1993).

Missionaries in Southern Africa were greatly shaped by an essentialist viewpoint or understanding of tribe (ethnicity). Such was apparent in a widely recognized dichotomy between what they referred to as "Kaffir and Sichuana" sister languages. Broadbent, in his ethnography, observed that:

"In the present state of our information, it appears probable that all the languages of South Africa may be classed under two divisions or families. The first, and most ancient, comprehends the dialect spoke by the Namaquas, Bushmen, and Korannas, called Hottentot. The second division, or family, of South African languages comprises the sister dialects spoken by the Kaffir and Bechuana tribes… That the relationship subsisting between the Kaffir and Sichuana is that of descent from a common parent is evident… As will appear from a comparison of the present Sichuana Grammar with that of the Kaffir published in 1834" (Broadbent 1865. 184).

This split initiated the active process by missionaries of categorizing distinct indigenous communities in the interior as tribes or ethnicities. This is not to say that before missionary labours, no highveld groups resembled the idea of 'tribe.' On the contrary, I argue that these groups did not understand themselves as essentially tribes in the Western sense but rather as communities or nations (Landau 2010). In this way, the 'Kaffir and Sichuana' division was primarily administered by the colonial enclave located in the Cape Colony. Indeed, it was highly beneficial in expediting a gradual and systematic expansion and settlement of indigenous lands beyond the Cape border (Legassick 2010).

The sequence of events began with the nonviolent missionary establishing a mission station, followed by the trader through mission stations and routes (trade routes) leading to mission stations and beyond, and finally involved the Governor and his entire oppressive and aggressive colonial bureaucratic system (Majeke 2012, Shell 2006). The fragmentation of the "Kaffir and Sichuana" sister languages also signified the initial implementation and adoption of European tribe and ethnic systems among the inhabitants of the highveld region. The distinction between the sister languages of "Kaffir and Sichuana" was highly advantageous for the Cape Colony and its administration as it let them accurately identify and understand the territories and African groups beyond their frontiers. Subsequently, the Griquas were established as buffer nations and territories between the Cape Colony and the highveld or the interior. In this context, the split further divided the already fractured African communities and undermined their collective assertions of the land (Legassick 2010).

Missionaries adhering to essentialist viewpoints perceived language and group as isomorphic or structurally identical. This paradigm delineated Indigenous populations based

on language, culture, and geographic borders, as well as their classification as tribes or ethnic groups. The essentialization of groups into tribes was further shaped by missionaries' naivety and desire for ease of use (Landau 2010). This process of ethnic coding heightened the susceptibility of the Indigenous population, established the basis for the dominant control of imperial and Boer invading armies, and therefore made it structurally unfeasible to create a really peaceful highveld (Elbourne 2016).

Missionaries used the tangible aspects of tribal or ethnic identity, such as birth, ancestral connections, and inherent belonging (as discussed in chapter three), to argue for the existence of tribes in the highveld. This shows their identification of tribes (ethnicities) as inherent within individuals and social groups and uniquely African (Lentz 1995, Mafeje 1971). The 'Kaffirs' in this framework were predominantly located in the Eastern Cape. In contrast, the Bechuanas were primarily situated in the highveld and extensively dispersed along the Orange River, extending to present-day Botswana (Legassick 2010, Shell 2006).

The term Batswana, or 'Beetjuana,' was initially mentioned in the papers of a German explorer named Hinrech Litchenstein amidst the Batlhaping people in 1806. David Livingstone, a distinguished missionary of the London Missionary Society who subsequently married Mary Moffat Livingstone, observes that:

"The name Bechuana seems derived from the word chuana – alike, or equal – with the personal pronoun Ba (they) prefixed, and therefore means fellows or equals. Some have supposed the name to have arisen from some mistake of some traveller, who, on asking individuals of this nation concerning the tribes living beyond them, received the answer, Bachuana, "they (are) alike;" meaning "They are the same as we are," and this nameless traveller, who never wrote a word about them, managed to engraft his mistake as a generic term on a nation extending from Orange River to 18° south latitude… The Bechuanas alone use the term to themselves as a generic one for the whole nation. They have managed, also, to give a comprehensive name to the whites, viz., Makoa, though they cannot explain the derivation of it more than of their own" (Livingstone 1858. 200-201).

Livingstone's functionalist etymological analysis of the term 'Tswana' indicates a certain level of ambiguity about the precise identity of the Batswana. In this case, the main contention

was whether ‘Tswana’ should be interpreted in connection to the comprehensive term 'Makoa,' which refers to whites as 'unlike' or as indicating indigenous similarity or, more precisely, similarity to the highveld region. At its core, Livingstone's etymological account highlights the circumstances and complexities of the evolving political, cultural, and social environment of the nineteenth-century highveld. Furthermore, it highlights the influence of missionary administrative convenience in the challenging endeavour of firmly establishing control over highveld inhabitants (Landau 2010).

Archie Mafeje (1979) famously contended that Indigenous peoples derived their identity from their land, chief, founder of the royal family, or shared paternal ancestry. Indigenous tribes groups did not have a fundamental role until the arrival of colonial powers. Prior to and during missionary interactions in the nineteenth century, local languages lacked a term for tribe but instead included terms for lineage, clan, and nation. In this context, the Bakwena people identified themselves as speaking Sekwena, Bangwaketse, Sengwaketse, Batlokwa, Setlokwa, and other languages, but not Setswana (Otlogetswe 2005, Bagwasi 2019).

The study of language in missionary contexts was influenced by the recognition of Setswana as the primary language spoken in the highveld region. The nature of Batswana and Setswana identities was inferred from the cultures and dialects of the highveld region as an inherent and fundamental aspect. Building upon Aristotelean observations, missionaries held the belief that several highveld cultures and dialects, including Batlhaping (Setlhaping), Bakwena (Sekwena), and Barolong (Serolong), were considered separate entities or subordinates. Livingstone's functionalist concept of 'Batswana' (Setswana) was seen as this diversity's underlying substance or superordinate. The initial point of missionary departure was specifically the species "Kaffir and Batswana" rather than the broader Southern African political community known as a genus (Legassick 2010, Lentz 1995, Shell 2006).

Tswana (Setswana) and derogatory classifications such as 'Kaffir' and, subsequently, Xhosa (isiXhosa) evolved into distinct species and diversified families of cultures and languages in the highveld and Eastern Cape. Commencing in 1815, the London Missionary Society, subsequently joined by the Wesleyan Missionary Society in 1827, pioneered a study effort on Setswana. Missionary scholars created historical accounts, ethnolinguistic maps, and

ethnographies and organized their discoveries into the initial iteration of Setswana grammar (Broadbent 1865, Landau 2010).

A compilation of eighty 'Boochuana' terms was published by John Campbell in 1815, while a Batswana spelling book and Batswana Catechism were produced by Moffat in 1826. The Batswana grammar, published by James Archbell in 1833, was based on an isiXhosa grammar and aimed to establish Setswana as fundamentally separate from isiXhosa. The publication of another Setswana grammar by Eugene Casalis in 1841 led to the establishment of Tswana (Western), Sotho (Southern), and Pedi (Northern) as a unified species known as Setswana. Subsequently, in 1882, he rejected his classification and classified Tswana, Sotho, and Pedi as separate tribes and languages (Broadbent, 1865).

The subsequent conviction of Casalis was influenced by the preceding entrance of Boer colonists and British imperialists on the highveld between 1836 and 1845. This further solidified territoriality as the fundamental characteristic of tribes. Conversely, the study of Setswana mostly revolved around and concentrated on two specific factors: Moffat's Kuruman Station and the Wesleyan Station in Thaba Nchu. Other cultures and dialects of the highveld were peripheral to this process. Part of this selective strategy may be attributed to the impact of difaqane hostilities or Mfecane wars between 1815 and the 1840s, which limited missionary efforts (Landau, 2010). Therefore, European attempts to standardize the linguistic norm of the Setswana language were mainly based on the interpretations and translations of Setlhaping (Batlhaping dialect) and Serolong (Barolong) by Moffat in Kuruman and Broadbent in Thaba Nchu both together with their African agents (Comaroffs, 1991. Landau 2010).

The study of Setswana was characterized by missionaries' purposeful disregard for the cultural and linguistic differences among the highveld cultures and dialects. A significant focus on homogeneity and convergence characterized Moffat and Broadbent's analysis of the Batlhaping and Barolong dialects. The 'Setswana' language study process proved advantageous for both the Batlhaping and Barolong chiefdoms as it allowed for the conservation and uninterrupted development of their dialects and cultures in written form. It also established them as the benchmark and foundation for a Setswana grammar and subjectivity, often known as "Tswana-ness (Botswana)." In this context, missionary works,

and language study also reduced the status, continuity, textual credibility, and sovereignty of other highveld languages and cultures (Landau 2010).

Central to this process were the well-established interactions between insiders and outsiders. Not unexpectedly, the Greek etymology of ethnos first denoted homogeneous collectives of either animals or soldiers. Aristotle subsequently used the term ethnos to denote the contrast between the Greek society, organized as a polis (Cape Colony), and non-Greek barbarian communities (Indigenous or Batlhaping people). In this context, the distinguishing factor (Aristotle's differentiation) between the Cape Colony and African Indigenous populations primarily lay in the purported capacity of the white man to engage in scientific reasoning, therefore facilitating his aims of civilization. Therefore, as a civilized species, this enabled him to civilize, identify, and organize the illogical condition of African political systems (Comaroff 1991). "... whatever appellation Adam bestowed upon each living being, that constituted its name" Genesis 2:19.

In Hellenistic Greek, the term 'ethnos' specifically denoted 'heathen,' while 'ethnikos' indicated a state of being uncivilized and barbaric. As far back as ancient Greece, ethnos was deeply rooted in a context-specific binary distinction between 'we-group' and 'them .' Regarding Southern Africa, the unique characteristics of ethnos were evident in the exertion of coercive authority by the Cape colony or the polis towards the interior (in a vertical sense) and in the power dynamics amongst tribes (in a horizontal sense). The legitimacy and justification of essentialized self-determination and particularist tribal interest and loyalty among African 'Indigenous' people resulting from missionary classifications can be derived from an analysis by Lentz (1995).

Tribalism as a European and missionary construction and invention in the highveld

According to constructionists like Georg Elwert (1989), Michael Banton (1993), and Paul Brass (1991), the primordial or essentialist concept of tribe is explicitly rejected. They challenge the idea that tribe or ethnicity is something beyond natural and inherent participation in a community. *"The identity I am thinking of is something that hovers between a man and the rest of the world: a midpoint between his view of himself and theirs of him – for each, of course, affects the other continually. A reciprocal fluxion, sir. There is nothing absolute about this identity of mine"* (O'Brian, 1969).

Even though it does not explicitly mention tribe or nationality, Maturin's statement in Patrick O'Brian's novel "Master and Commander" (1969/1970, 372) effectively conveys the message. It highlights the constructionist concept that tribal identity is formed, reshaped, and occasionally demolished over time. Contrary to the assumptions made by nineteenth-century missionaries, constructionists maintain that tribal identity is neither absolute, fundamental, fixed, or permanent. Instead, it is characterized by its plural, contingent, fluid, and cognitive nature, and it arises from certain historical and political conditions. Therefore, constructionists confirm the fundamental ideas of primordialists while also incorporating activism and the core legitimacy of circumstances (Calhoun 2006, Isajiw 1993).

According to postcolonial theorists like Mafeje (1971), Achille Mbembe (2015), and Bongani Nyoka (2020), tribes in Africa are cultural concepts and creations of colonial powers. Before colonization and during missionary interactions, African people were inherently part of many social networks, including nuclear and extended families, lineages, age groups, village communities, chiefdoms, professional guilds, religious secret societies, and ancestor sharing. These social networks lacked a central authority, in contrast to the inflexible and polarising Euro-ethnic identities imposed by missionaries. These identities were distinctively characterized by a separatist mindset, namely "we group" and "them ."Prior to colonization, social identities and loyalties were not rigid but rather adaptable, intricate, and without a sharply defined structure or form. This collection of overlapping, intersecting, and complementary models could not easily conform to European-defined notions of tribe (Landau 2010, Legassick 2010, Lentz 1995). This observation alludes to the fact that during the period of missionary encounters and, to a larger extent prior, Africans were not passively waiting for Europeans to invent their identities (Etherington 2012).

In some instances, they actively rejected European and missionary-imposed notions of identity (whether through rejecting language and or territorially imposed notions of identity). Despite the sometimes marginalization, they worked alone and also collaborated with missionaries to define their identities (Etherington 2012). Furthermore, Msindo (2007) rejects both the primordial and constructionist notions of tribe, which primarily derive their roots from colonial inventions. He argues that the Bulawayo case shows that tribal and ethnic identities were influenced by multiple and complex interactions between pre-existing

cultural affiliations and colonial policies. Finally he argues that social competition, economic pressures and political opportunities influenced the kinds of identities that African chose.

The development of Sotho-Tswana's social and cultural identity is mainly shaped by a multitude of influences that originated from two distinct sources. These encompass the migration or dispersion of populations from Indigenous speakers of Central Bantu and Middle Zambezi languages. Starting in the late 18th century, many Nguni communities migrated into the Drakensberg region and established themselves among the Sotho-Tswana chiefdoms. Certain migrations underwent adaptation and assimilation into the customs and dialects of the region, while others persisted in preserving their customs and dialects (Legassick 2010).

The development of the Sesotho and Sotho ethnic group can also be attributed to studies on languages carried out by the French Missionary Society during the nineteenth century. This process involved the active participation of Basotho and their King, Moshoeshoe. Through this study, Basotho individuals maintained their sense of belonging and self-identification within diverse African social networks, including village communities and extended family lines. The incorporation of click-words in the phonology of Tlokwa, Fokeng, Kwena, Phetla, Phuti, and Pulani dialects indicates cultural exchange and impact from the Nguni-Khoi speaking community. During the difaqane, many immigrants sought temporary and permanent sanctuary from King Moshoeshoe, the former ruler of Basotho, because of his remarkable achievements in successfully defending and governing his vast sovereign territory. By 1833, missionaries Eugene Casalis (who served as both a missionary and counsel to Moshoeshoe), Thomas Arbousset, and Constant Gosselin had reached the residence of Moshoeshoe at Thaba Bosiu. Their linguistic studies together with Basotho collaborators commenced, and, by means of translations, they transformed Sesotho into written form (de Clark 2007).

Their labours mainly focused on the Tlokwa dialect and resulted in the standardization of other dialects in accordance with the norms of the Tlokwa dialect. Through their choice to substitute the syllable 'di' with 'li,' they established Sesotho as the standard language in Moshoeshoe's family dialects and Sotho as a separate tribe. Upon completing the New Testament in Sesotho in 1850, Sesotho grammar and texts became widely distributed

throughout the Valley and Maluti highlands and stored in several school classrooms (Khaahloe 2015, Tseuoa 2020). Furthermore, this significant accomplishment not only initiated literacy in Moshoeshoe's domain but also initiated a process of categorizing and defining the people of Moshoeshoe in connection to the standard of written Sotho. Once more, this process, despite advances in written Sotho, signified the gradual eradication of oral tradition (Etherington 2005, Tseuoa 2020).

Conversely, Moffat's long-standing companion Mzilikazi, who seceded from the Zulu nation during the 'Difaqane or Mfecane' conflicts in 1820, established his nomadic realm of 200 to 300 warriors. These warriors married women, trained young men from the highveld, and subsequently subjugated tens of thousands of "Sechuana" speakers under the authority of the Khumalo and, eventually, the Ndebele nation. Thus, in 1825, the Ndebele established their settlement on the Apies River and promptly launched an assault on the Kololo and Taung, looting the Ramabutsetse and 'Ratsipip .'In 1826, they raided and subdued the Hurutshe and Rolong nations. From 1827 to 1828, they conducted a scattering, pillaging, and subjugation campaign against the Ngwane people in Transorangia. Subsequently, in 1828, they achieved victory over the Ngwaketse. At that time, the Hurutshe of Mosega had already become a subordinate group of the amaNdebele and were compelled to send significant portions of their yearly produce to Mzilikazi's kraal at eHlahlandela (Landau 2010, Legassick 2010).

In 1829, the Ndebele achieved a significant triumph that enabled the nation to dominate the Transorangia region. When they, together with their subordinate state Rolong-Rapulana, emerged victorious over the Taung group in Moletsane. Their reduction of the Taung villages to around twenty dwellings remained under the jurisdiction of the Ndebele Nation. Not until 1838 or 1839 did Mzilikazi and his supporters suffer defeat and were repelled to the Limpopo River, ultimately leading to their expansion into present-day Zimbabwe. This happened after a coalition, backed by missionaries, between Moroka and Potgieter, who were further allied by Peter David, Gerrit Maritz, the Linkses, and Jan "Kaptein ." The warriors of Mzilikazi were vanquished by a seamlessly synchronized infantry of Moroka, Boer, and British regiments. Furthermore, the 1886 discovery of Gold in present-day Johannesburg further accelerated this partnership (Landau 2010).

The conflicts demonstrate that the Ndebele nation was a diverse group of individuals that could not be aptly classified as a tribe but, above all, as a nation. Part of this can be attributed to the wide range of languages involved. Moreover, the invasion forces led by Mzilikazi, the Cape Colony, and the Portuguese Delagoa slave trade finally resulted in alliances and means of habitation that contradicted the concept of tribe but yet adhered to African community structures and which also at times included European missionaries (Lentz 1995). Legassick (2010) contends that the alliances and settlements of the nineteenth century should be regarded as frontiers characterized by violence. She posits that frontiers are not merely events or boundaries but rather areas and processes that facilitate diverse types of inter-group (racial and tribal) cultural, spiritual, political, and economic connections and exchanges.

Moreover, it is crucial to highlight that the inhabitants of the highveld region persistently refused to accept narratives influenced by missionaries regarding their origins and notions of distinction based on skin colour and accent. Between 1828 and 1830, Mahura, the younger brother of Chief Mothibi, relocated from Kuruman and established himself in Old Dithakong. He assembled a group of ten to twelve thousand individuals, known as "merafe," who were mostly refugees. Among the exiles were those of Batlhaping ancestry, Rolong, Maidi, who seceded from Barolong leader Tawana, and several more. A primary concern of Mahura's confederate was to obstruct the passage of Mzilikazi and white settlers through the Old Dithakong settlement (Landau 2010).

In 1836, Mahura exerted control over a massive population of thousands of individuals from various backgrounds in the Hart Vaal region. This diverse group consisted of 1500 Batlhaping from Old Dithakong, 2000 permanent Hurutshe, the Kora people of Mosweu, 500 refugees of Sotho-Tswana mixed heritage, around 1500 Maidi, and other individuals. Mahura's state-building effort was motivated by the necessity to effectively acquire and safeguard land for communal settlement. Additionally, it provided shelter and integration for orphans, former slaves, women, and children (Legassick 2010). Conversely, Mahura's efforts to establish a state were hindered by the absence of missionaries, which posed challenges in dealing with Boer immigrants and impeded the development of a church as the cohesive element for this diverse population.

In the 1830s, the Barolong clans, namely Seleka, Ratlou, and Tshidi, relocated and established themselves in Thaba Nchu under the authority of King Moshoeshoe of the Basotho subsequent to an incursion by Mzilikazi of the Ndebele kingdom. The settlement in Thaba Nchu consisted of hybridities in the form of mixed settlements and twin courts between Barolong, chief Mosema whose people had been stolen into slavery, Basotho, Metis people, and Berend Berends's followers at New Boetsap, and the Kora at Umpukani, the followers of Jan Taaibosch and Xgai. During the same period, the Orange River, a Griqua colony of Piet Sahba (excommunicated missionary), comprised 12 Griqua and 17 Bechuana families. At Philippolis, which was officially in charge of Piet Sahba village, John Melvill's classroom was made up of a total of 62 children, 28 of which were Griqua, 8 bushmen, and 26 Bechuana (Landau 2010).

Moreover, Moffat's realm in Kuruman greatly profited from Mzilikazi's incursion forces and disruptive power in the area. Significant waves of orphans, men, women, and children from nearby and troubled chiefdoms flocked to the mission site. Who was prepared to receive the Christian 'thuto' or instruction (Landau 2010, Volz 2008)? According to Julian Cobbing (1988), throughout 1823, missionaries, including Moffat, Melvill, Broadbent, and George Thompson, had a significant role in initiating and coordinating confrontations in the highveld region. Their endeavours were believed to have focused explicitly on communities that were perceived as resistant to Christianity. Wars compelled many to join Christian-dominated chiefdoms, such as the kingdom of Mothibi. In this context, Cobbing (1988) also observes that certain highvelders who were taken captive during this period were traded as enslaved people in Graaff Reinet or the Cape Colony, occasionally by missionaries.

Cobbing asserts that the battle of "Dithakong" was triggered mainly by Moffat's unverified allegation within Griqua town of the invading Mantatees. Melvill was responsible for coordinating the procurement of gunpowder and firearms, as well as directing the mobilization of the Griquas (Waterboer, Adam Kok, and Barend Barends). Moffat and Thompson, on the other hand, were responsible for spying on the position of Mantatees. This united effort culminated in the execution of a seven-hour massacre of the Mantatees, burning down of their villages, a capture of their women and children back to Kuruman, and a confiscation of their animals equal to a thousand. Of them, thirty-three were allocated to Melvill (Broadbent 1865). A portion of the captured victims were traded on the slave market

in Graaf Reinet, while Melvill was compensated with ammunition (Cobbing 1988). Broadbent argues in his study that this atrocity not only caused immense suffering to the Mantatees but also resulted in some of them being reduced to cannibalism.

"Upon going near the fire, however, we found them employed in cooking the leg of a human being! We were now satisfied of this being a part of the retreating enemy, a division of whom had evidently rested in this place on the preceding day. Horror-struck at the scene before us, I was truly thankful that my dear wife was not present to behold it" (Broadbent 1865. 70).

Cobbing (1988) contends that these narratives of Indigenous cannibalism were frantic efforts to depict missionaries as saving agents of humanity and as rescues of Indigenous people from evil and ruthless leaders. Conversely, the instances of cannibalism associated with subversive missionary behaviour also exposed the occasionally ruthless and aggressive endeavours of missionaries in their desperate undertakings to propagate Christianity. Antoinette Burton and Isabel Hofmeyr (2014, 12, 23) contend that the 'bible' was not only a representation of Englishman in his purest and most flawless condition but also a symbol of imperial authority. Its substantial thickness consolidated imperial dominance in the diverse South African society and served a purpose beyond just a decorative element inside.

The 1829 non-racialized Griqua Christian elite, including Griqua, Khoekhoes, Batswana, and Dutch speakers, was systematically destroyed by the entrance and policies of a dominant group of Boer Trekkers from the Dutch Reformed Church in 1836-1845. This group of Boer settlers believed that religion, race, and ethnicity were fundamental distinguishing factors among individuals. Another source of encouragement for them was the foundation of Christianity by Moffat and Henry Calderwood in Grahamstown. This support arose from Moffat and Calderwood's core issues with Waterboer's mixed Griqua fellowship and his assertion of possessing 'bongaka' or the exceptional abilities of a traditional doctor inherited from 'Badimo' ancestors (Landau 2010).

The Dutch Reformed church at Thaba Nchu implemented laws that segregated church membership based on racial classifications. The rise of racial essentialism occurred simultaneously with the implementation of more stringent LMS rules starting in 1838. These

policies aimed to reintroduce issues of Christian fellowship, Coloured Identity (Waterboer's mixed Griqua fellowship), and European Identity. Church missionaries at the Cape defined 'Coloured-ness' as a separate classification from indigenous. The rationale for this evolution was partially based on the necessity to safeguard the Indigenous Batswana population against wolves (Waterboer) that aimed to destruct the group.

Furthermore, the technique of missionary gatekeeping implemented by Moffat and Calderwood effectively distinguished Batswana, amaXhosa, and other groups from the Coloureds. Moreover, it simultaneously establishes whiteness as an inherent and fundamental racial identity. Coloredness, in this context, was defined as an extension of whiteness and a mediator between whiteness and Indigenous identity. Through the formation and monitoring of Bechuana, Xhosa, etc., church registers, representatives, and districts, this process of racial and ethnic individuation and subjectification was accomplished (Broadbent 1865, Landau 2010).

The institutionalization of Setswana as the language of the pulpit and literary standard further solidified tribal subjectification. Heterogeneous groups were progressively classified as either Tswana, Xhosa, or Sotho. They were combined and distinguished based on the established tribal classifications, now seen as separate and unique rather than overlapping. This phenomenon of indigenous stratification based on tribal divisions was accompanied by the progressive deprivation of territory to both Boers and British colonizers. With the abolition of African social networks and systems of community, such as village communities, ancestor sharing, and group mobility, the category of tribe became deeply ingrained (Etherington 2005).

Tribalism and tribal identities in the highveld exhibit notable distinctions compared to those predominantly established in the Copperbelt by the Bisa tribe. The Bisa tribal identity resisted and satirized European dominance, culture, and its notions of social advancement through the distinctive 'Kalela Dance' and fashion. Mainly, highveld tribes were characterized by their effort to conform to European standards and traditions by suppressing their African Indigenous identity. Leroy Vail (1989) contends that the collection of tribal customs and history was not only created and transformed by colonial administrators and missionaries but also by traditional chiefs, Christian converts, interpreters, educated elites, and cultural

brokers. The emergence of tribe theory was not necessarily unidirectional. Still, it was also influenced by the evolution of 'tribe' (a Setswana linguistic system) by Africans who derived spiritual, personal, and economic advantages from this novel framework. In this sense, taking into account the formation of the AmaLala tribal identity it becomes apparent that the formation of these identities was evidently linked to fluid and changing social contexts and power relations (Wright et al 1989).

Chapter Conclusion

The categorization of highveld people based on tribal groups was designed by missionaries to identify Indigenous communities and facilitate their conversion and assimilation into the prevailing European and Christian standards. The classification, categorization, and ordering of highveld people based on tribal identities were considerably shaped and impacted by a primordial perspective and a logic of exploration. Through their labours and language preoccupations, missionaries perceived themselves as uncovering Indigenous tribes and languages. Administratively, the classification of 'tribe' was advantageous for missionaries and complemented the dominance and broader objectives of the Cape Colony. It once again resulted in the disruption and annihilation of the cultural and linguistic variety of the highveld plateau.

Before the nineteenth century, the identities in the highveld were not inherent, immutable, or enduring classifications. Their construction and standardization around tribe as a fundamental organizing technology were achieved solely through missionary ethnographies, histories, grammar, and ethnolinguistic maps. The atrocities of difaqane played a role in the development of African social networks and flexible, intersecting, and voluntary structures of community. Tribal identity, in this context, was established through task codifications and translations carried out by missionaries—externally enforced false consciousness.

Missionary endeavours aimed at establishing a Christian community through a written Setswana language. The standardization of highveld languages by Christian grammar was based on the widespread dialects found in mission sites like Setlhaping in Kuruman and Serolong in Thaba Nchu. Over time, these dialects became the defining textual standard of Setswana. The procedure of language standardization proved to be highly beneficial and

advantageous as it effectively strengthened the literary authority, sovereignty, prestige, and legitimacy of the Batlhaping and Barolong chiefdoms. Furthermore, it significantly contributed to the decline of the position, authority, sovereignty, and legitimacy of associated chiefdoms that refused to accept the efforts of missionaries.

In the 1830s, Dutch Reformed Church policy viewed religion, race, and ethnicity in greatly simplified terms. This, in conjunction with conservative LMS policies targeting Waterboer's non-racialized Christian elite and collective, had a role in the development of Coloured-ness as a protective barrier between white and black individuals and in the justification of tribal reasoning. Historically, White Europeans have identified themselves as ethnically white in connection to their Coloured heritage. Historically, black people were classified as tribes based on being non-coloured status. Furthermore, missionaries disseminated this tribal standard through the distinct indigenous church spokespeople and districts. Consequently, tribal identity in the highveld region became deeply rooted when several African social networks and community structures were abolished and substituted with separate churches, preachers, and communities and expanded territorial boundaries.

Research Conclusion: Africans Within a Eurocentric Mirror

This dissertation focused on missionary interactions, conversions, and translations in the highveld region between 1820 and 1870. These intercultural interactions occurred in a Eurocentric context, where European missionaries hindered or even prevented African peoples from engaging in self-examination, self-reflection, and self-criticism from an African perspective, as guided by the Socratic principle of "know thyself." Instead, African subjectivity was perceived and assessed in relation to a mirror that was influenced and characterized by a Eurocentric perspective, ideologies, and methods of categorization and classification. A redefinition of African cultures, practices, ontologies, and epistemologies resulted in their reduction to hindrances to progress, being regarded as "irrational" traditions and baseless superstitions. Through more extensive assimilation into Euro-Christian frameworks, the African subject assumed the role of a self-destruction agent, as well as an agent of colonial and imperial institutions, since it reflected a pessimistic perspective on their culture and traditions. And was thus primarily based on their substitution with European hegemonic ones.

In this context, the African subject's agency is characterized by self-negation and denial, brought about by affirmation and acceptance of the 'self' as defined by European conceptual criteria and normative values. Regarding this matter, the African individual could not confidently justify his Euro-Christian religion, profession as a church interpreter, or role as a 'helper translator' without suggesting the eradication of his own culture and traditions. Whether consciously or unconsciously, the African subject experiences a reality that is inverted and flipped upside down from the perspective of European missionaries. Hence, when African individuals attempt to challenge the colonial and imperial system, they inevitably find themselves rebelling against both themselves and their community. In this context, the transformation and undermining of African subjectivity complicate acknowledging African experiences and realities without succumbing to Eurocentric standards and values.

While Eurocentric mirrors can be applied to various historical interactions with non-European groups, my main focus was nineteenth-century encounters between European missionaries and Batlhaping in the highveld; the initial step involved identifying and

exploring hypotheses pertaining to encounter, conversion, and translation. I contended that the three elements of encounters, conversion, and translation possess profound historical ramifications that contribute to a more comprehensive understanding and contextualization of the interactions between European missionaries and African people in the highveld region throughout the nineteenth century. It has been observed that the historical interactions between Europeans and the rest of the globe have had distinct manifestations within various historical circumstances. Furthermore, the rest of the world has encountered, opposed, and engaged in distinctive forms of resistance against them. The European interactions with the rest of the globe were motivated by the perceived necessity to investigate, civilize, and colonize new physical regions, cultures, and ecosystems through evangelism and commerce.

Within this context, I examined the initial interaction between Spanish and Amerindian populations in the New World from 1540 to 1848. Vitoria, a theologian and lawyer of the sixteenth century, can most precisely explain the interaction between the two. Thus, within the framework of international law evolution, the interaction between the two was characterized by a deviation from divine law that bestowed on the pope complete authority and universal legal principles over Christian and non-Christian provinces. The transition of Vitoria from a papal framework to universal natural law represented a shift away from a closed-minded understanding of international law that failed to acknowledge the reality of being religious and not Christian. Thus, it defined the condition of being a traditional Amerindian as merely indicating that one had not yet embraced Christianity. I observed that, principally, the interaction between the two represented a convergence of two distinct realms, each characterized by its own culture and modalities of knowledge.

Furthermore, I observed that global natural law, rather than addressing the deficiencies of divine law, simply functioned to standardize Spanish cultures, customs, norms, and rights while simultaneously categorizing those of the Amerindians as local, primitive, and peripheral in the context of the interaction. Inside the context of universal natural law, there existed a perception that Amerindians might be readily included as objects and minors rather than equal subjects inside a naturalist framework of international law. Christianity was restored under a secular Spanish ruler, and, similar to commerce, property rights, and the opportunity to travel, it was equally strengthened and considered a symbol of progress.

The Amerindian culture, trade systems, and customary land relational practices indicated a primitive and barbaric character. The genuine Amerindian 'self' carried the connotations of barbarism, immaturity, and ongoing conflict. The avoidance of perpetual conflict between the two societies can only be achieved by assimilating the Amerindian people into Spanish customs and norms, presented as universal natural law. Contrary to naturalist jurisprudence, I contended that positivism in the nineteenth century emphasized reason's extraordinary and practical role in regulating first interactions. This approach prioritized fundamental and scientific concepts while dismissing the idea of inherent, metaphysical, and religious truths.

Fundamentally, I contended that sovereignty acquired and evolved its essence within the framework of 'first encounters.' Furthermore, in contrast to the sovereign limitation imposed by self-evident naturalist international rules, the sovereign within a positivist framework is only limited by their own volition. Thus, within the positivist paradigm, a genuine sovereign is defined as actively exercising their will. The tools, commodities, and machines of the white man became the benchmark for this new society or 'sovereign.' They served as the basis for a road toward civilization, especially for the Indigenous people encountered. In many respects, the Africans encountered symbolized the primitive, outdated, and historical European 'self' that depended on superstition and mythology for explanation.

To the extent that he deviated from the Enlightenment and positivist traditions, he required development and 'humanization.' Despite the varying notions of civilization exemplified by Europeans in their interactions with 'otherness.' One perspective tends to favour individuality and Protestantism, while the other focuses on culture and the national spirit, aligning somewhat with Catholic thought. Primarily, both notions required the submission of non-European lands and cultures to European models and frameworks. Both of them insisted on deculturating African populations, the enlargement of the imperial system, and the implementation of colonial control.

Consequently, missionary evangelism and the systematic conversion of African people to Christianity proposed the transformation of their subjectivities from their traditional cultures and practices and their integration into a European and Christian cultural framework. European cultures and conventions also regarded them as inferior. The contention was that missionaries were closely aligned with the cultural and political ideologies of the imperial

colonial ruling system. They significantly contributed to the acquisition, metamorphosis, and subjugation of the African territories and continent. The conversion process was characterized by violence and severe treatment of African religious traditions. The priority of missiology was to act as a mediator between European ideologies and anthropologies toward the encountered 'other.' Furthermore, the transportation of the 'premise' from its primitive and uncultured ontological and epistemic frameworks. Into idealized and purportedly civilized European civilizations and standards.

Conversely, African Indigenous people, in diverse ways, embraced conversion for varied purposes. Their counter-response to the process of conversion involved the incorporation of indigenous elements into Christianity as a strategy to oppose the sense of isolation that accompanied conversion and to reject ethnocentric beliefs and cultural theories. The thesis in this context was the experience of alienation resulting from conversion and colonization. At the same time, the antithesis was the perceived distinction of African indigenous systems, and the synthesis was the attainment of African political liberation.

I contended that missionary translations were not solely a detached textual endeavour. Moreover, they greatly enabled the integration of African peoples into unfamiliar and colonial contexts and encounters. Furthermore, colonization itself was a significant endeavour to translate African subjectivity and experiences into a colonial framework. Due to missionary translations, the societal norms adopted a European model, while African creativity and ontologies progressively became manifestations of primitiveness, absence of rationality, and barbarism. Translations resulted in the dismissal of African reality, regarded as illogical, irrational, and perpetuating the need for a civilizing mission and evangelistic process.

Chapter three of the research presented the primary case. It delved into the overall history of the Batlhaping people and their interaction with the London Missionary Society in the nineteenth-century highveld region. I contended that before the arrival of missionaries, the Batlhaping people adhered to their own cultures and traditions. Their political system revolved around the religious beliefs of ancestors, 'lobola,' polygamy, circumcision, and traditional twin courts. And that missionary ethnographies and labours contributed

substantially to a perception of Batlhaping traditions and customs as primitive, heathen, and an obstacle to the propagation of Christianity. I contended that the consequences of missionary interactions and conversions were shaped mainly by incorporating Batlhaping into colonial social structures. Furthermore, the Kuruman settlement and Thaba Nchu were characterized by notable advancements in agriculture and commerce.

I contended that the perception of Batlhaping by Moffat and other missionaries as a community devoid of any faith in the Supreme Being played a substantial role in the forceful eradication of Batlhaping cultures and traditions. Missionary contacts and conversions, while they significantly bolstered allied chiefdoms compared to their neighbouring regions, also contributed to the division of African polities along the lines of heathen and convert, undermining the traditional authority and sovereignty of chiefs.

Expanding on the analysis presented in chapter three, I examined Moffat's translation of the Bible from English to Setswana between 1825 and 1857. I contended that Moffat's translations had a dual purpose: conveying the Christian doctrine or 'thuto' and promoting a European worldview. I argued that the initial intrusion of the Batlhaping culture and traditions was exemplified by Moffat's render of rain or 'pula' as mere precipitation. I also argued that Moffat's writing system, functioning as codification, in several ways expressed his rejection of the uniqueness and diversity of cultures and traditions. Consequently, both the London Missionary Society and the Wesleyan Missionary Society took different approaches to immobilize and standardize the indigenous world according to European epistemologies, spiritualities, and metaphysics. From this perspective, I argued that Moffat's translations also deliberately endeavoured to displace Batlhaping from their traditional values and cultural practices.

The interpretation of Modimo as a tumultuous triune deity of Israel, rather than a 'selo' or 'great it' to the Batlhaping people, led to the emergence of novel perspectives on time, emotion, creation, and divinity that contradicted African indigenous traditions and practices. The translation of Badimo by Moffat to symbolize malevolence, demons, and the devil, together with his portrayal of Badimo as languishing in a Christian hell in several ways, resulted in a forceful elimination of Batlhaping spiritual systems and their substitution with prevailing Christian ones. The translations undertaken by Moffat were not only a neutral

textual endeavour but rather a deliberate effort to establish a normative European and Christian paradigm for the Batlhaping people. In this context, I contended that Christianity represented a Eurocentric mechanism of erasing memories in several aspects aimed at colonizing the whole essence of African Indigenous subjects. Consequently, I posited that the Samuelites' indigenization of Christianity served as a strategy to challenge and resist the dominance of colonial and imperial regimes. And a method of reinstating Batlhaping within a Christian paradigm that considers their cultures and experiences.

Chapter five investigates the contribution of missionary linguists and translators, namely Moffat and Broadbent, in shaping tribal and ethnic identities in the highveld region from 1815 to the 1870s. The investigation focused on the diverse mechanisms via which missionary codifications led to the forming of tribal identities in the highveld region. In this context, I contended that the emergence of tribalism on the highveld throughout the nineteenth century was motivated mainly by the missionaries' aspiration to establish and restructure African communities as Christian populations, furthermore, driven by the intention to transform and integrate African subjectivities into European and Christian normative structures. To this end, I contended that the primordial understanding of tribe had a substantial impact on the missionaries' efforts to arrange, classify, and categorize African peoples in the highveld based on tribal reasoning. Furthermore, I contended that the act of physically organizing African Indigenous people of the highveld and standardizing their diverse languages was administratively advantageous for missionaries and complemented the broader imperial and colonial endeavour.

On the African side, it resulted in the annihilation and upheaval of the abundant cultural and linguistic legacy and sustainability. Thus, I contended that the tribal identities of African Indigenous people of the highveld were not inherent but rather were constructed by Eurocentric missionary ethnographies, resulting in the creation of histories and textual norms. I posited that the African populations residing in the highveld region maintained their simultaneous membership in several African social networks and community structures. The process of translating texts, while advantageous in establishing the textual legitimacy and sovereignty of Batlhaping and Barolong, so establishing these dialects as the standard of the proposed Setswana, simultaneously eroded the textual sovereignty and

authority of peripheral dialects and groups, relegating them to the mission stations and occasionally to those who opposed Christianity.

Ultimately, I contended that Boers' colonization of the highveld from the Cape, and consequently the Dutch Reformed Church, strengthened tribalism starting in 1837. This historical event resulted in the establishing of distinct churches and schools on the highveld based on race and tribal divisions. Furthermore, the policies of the London Missionary Society served to expedite this process. This initiative aimed to establish Europeans as racially white with respect to their Coloured population. The African Indigenous population, as a tribal group, is defined by virtue of not being coloured. The propagation of tribalism norms was said to be facilitated by the translated and accessible Bible in Setswana, Sepedi, Sesotho, or isiXhosa, as well as by church registrations, representatives, and the construction of church districts, all of which adhered to tribal philosophy.

Long-term effects of highveld encounters, conversion, and translation

The interactions, conversions, and translations of the nineteenth century also had enduring consequences in forming the political landscape of the twentieth century. The encounters and positivist logic that emerged from the contact and cross-cultural interactions between missionaries and African peoples played a significant role in the development and formation of the paternalistic attitudes of the colonial and apartheid institutions. The missionary ethnographies that emerged in the nineteenth century played a role in the inclusion of African peoples into the Union of South Africa in 1910 and into the subsequent Apartheid regime in 1948, portraying them as immature, childlike, and illogical beings. They were considered undeserving of being admitted as citizens into the South African State. Still, they were instead relegated to being subjects of colonial and apartheid rule and so unable to engage in universal suffrage because of their "degraded" and "inferior" status.

Although missionary efforts were ostensibly focused on spiritual issues, they were also integrated into a broader ideological framework that considered machines, commodities, and tools indicators of a civilized individual and the sole "correct" route to civilization. The colonial and apartheid governments strategically used this "scientific" paradigm of machines as a means of distinguishing between European and African peoples, as well as between a civilized and progressive Africa and a primitive and uncivilized African, through the

establishment of physical infrastructures such as roads, electricity, buses, chairs, hospitals, and schools. This was an expansion of the same rationale that missionaries used to justify the uncivilized and savage state of African people.

Moreover, the inescapable reliance on European machinery and goods, initiated by missionaries in the Kuruman settlement and the broader highveld region as part of their Euro-Christian endeavour to establish civilization, were subsequently used in modern society as symbols of hierarchy, class, status, respectability, and entitlement. Furthermore, these infrastructures were efficiently utilized in the post-colonial African nations to promote neo-colonial and capitalist ideologies about health and hygiene, family, intimacy, leisure, work, success, etc. Furthermore, they persist in shaping the occasionally aggressive terrain of South African politics, predominantly characterized by tribalism, regionalism, and a deep-seated lack of tolerance for opposition.

Attributing the creation of apartheid solely to missionaries is an exaggerated claim, as they occasionally had a conflicting or strained relationship with political authorities. However, these disagreements over particular policies should not diminish that missionaries and officials were closely in agreement on the fundamental normative standards that shaped African subjectivity and were consequently proven inadequate. Of particular significance in this context was the involvement of missionaries in formulating and implementing essentialist frameworks of human distinction, hence establishing the 'tribe' as an inherent and objective reality. Before the arrival of the nineteenth century, the concept of identity on the highveld was dynamic, adaptable, and characterized by many intricate layers. Missionary labourers, church representatives, registries, and different districts finally brought this to a stop.

Political leaders adhered to the same tribal reasoning, as the apartheid regime in the twentieth century drew inspiration from the teachings of missionaries and occasionally collaborated with them, especially from the Dutch Reformed Church. They worked together to establish a vision of South Africa cantered around racial and tribal divisions, maintaining separate churches, enacting laws, and establishing separate tribal territories. From this perspective, Apartheid authorities, similar to missionaries in the eighteenth century,

established flexible identities and solidified them by perceiving them as immutable, predetermined, and unalterable classifications.

The transition had the additional consequence of projecting tribal categories, which were actually of recent origin, backward in time, therefore elevating them to the status of foundational categories that had always existed. In post-colonial South Africa, these tribal and racial classifications persist and are now widely considered to be nearly unavoidable. The dimensions of missionary labours in the highveld region are similar to those observed in most non-European global contexts.

Even in colonial South Africa, the state persists in categorizing and defining converts and citizens based on Euro-Christian norms and specifications. Furthermore, to a greater degree, it persists in delegitimizing African cultures and traditions by means of narratives about witchcraft and devil worship. Unsurprisingly, Christianity is the prevailing religion in South Africa, with over eighty percent identifying as Christians. This serves as evidence of the historical impact of the missionary endeavour and its ongoing consequences. However, it is essential to acknowledge that African Christians engage in their religious beliefs in manners that deviate from the idealized standards conceived by European missionaries. The religion of Christianity persists in integrating hybridities through the manifestation of African Christianity, therefore exemplifying a conversion paradigm that amalgamates diverse cultural elements and lineages. Christianity has exhibited diverse manifestations throughout its history, and the current form observed in South Africa is not a rigid import from Europe.

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