‘*Basadi ba kae?* [Where are the women?]: A History of the Making of Sepedi (Sesotho sa Leboa) Womanhood, 1935 – 1999

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Abstract

This study sought to explore the way an African ethnicity – namely the 'Pedi' ethnicity - emerged through literary texts and examined the representations of black African woman in vernacular texts from 1935 to 1990. This thesis is geographically situated in the Northern Transvaal, currently known as the Limpopo Province, the 'homeland' of Northern Sotho speakers ('Sesotho sa Lebowa' or 'Basotho' communities). It began by tracing the various stakeholders who utilised the terms 'Pedi' and 'Bapedi' to represent a federation of independent chiefdoms within the *Lulu* (or *Leolo*) Mountain valley. The noun 'Pedi' became - over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth century - an ethnic category, encompassing those who spoke one of the many Northern Sotho dialects. As the Berlin Missionary Society (BMS) expanded their missionary enterprise into the Transvaal in the 1860s, a Northern Sotho language was formalised – with the aid of black African Christian converts from different Northern Basotho's chiefdoms. The formalisation of Northern Sotho as a language resulted in the creation of an artificial link between Northern Sotho communities and the Northern Sotho language by the Union of South Africa state. The state used this link as marker of ethnic difference, conflating speaking practices with ethnic units. In view of the foregoing, this study discussed the various historical processes that have informed our contemporary understanding of the 'Pedi' (henceforth referred to as Bapedi) – as an ethnic category. This study commenced with an understanding of the emergence of the 'Basotho' (Northern Basotho) subject, followed by the ways in which missionaries and black African Christian converts added cultural weight to this term through the formalisation of language, the particularisation of a Northern Sotho culture and the production of Northern Sotho print media. Within these texts, ideas around a Northern Sotho ethnicity were circulated. Additionally, within vernacular texts, appeared representations of black African women, which echoed missionary ideals of Christian womanhood and precolonial ideals of womanhood. This study foregrounded the discourse on the formation of the Northern Sotho ethnicity in the light of the representations of women in literary texts. This is because literary works were targeted at black African communities, and these works shaped black Africans' own ideas of ethnicity and womanhood.

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List of Abbreviations

ABM	American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions
BAD	Department of Bantu Administration and Development
BMS	Berlin Missionary Society
LMS	London Missionary Society
NAD	Native Administration Department
NP	National Party
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SANAC	South African Native Affairs Commission
SMEP	Paris Evangelical Missionary Society
TED	Transvaal Education Department
ZAR	Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek / Afrikaner South African Republic

Notes on Terms

The term 'Pedi' has been historically used by colonial records, in mining company registries and by missionaries to refer to a group of Northern Sotho speakers from the then Transvaal. I used the term "Pedi" to indicate a community and precolonial political system associated with Northern Sotho speakers. Although missionary records reflect that this community was referred to (and referred to themselves) as Basotho, who spoke a language called 'Sesotho' or 'Sesotho sa Lebowa', in this study, the above terms were utilised to indicate the various periods (in which this group lived), and the various stakeholders (precisely the inhabitants of the Lulu Mountains and its surrounding territories). The term "Pedi" or "Mopedi" was also used to refer to an individual Northern Sotho speaker. This term gained popularity among mining corporates and colonial officials during the 19th century to separate Northern Sothe speakers from other Sesotho speaking groups. The term 'Basotho' refers to a various language groups encompassing the 'Sepedi', the 'Sesotho' and the 'Setswana' speaking groups. Other linguistic groups such as the Vhavenḓa (Tshivenḓa speaking community) and the Vatsonga (a Xitsonga speaking community) were, during the early periods of European expansion into the Transvaal placed in the same category as the Basotho. However, missionary expansion in the early twentieth century separated these communities into various linguistic communities.

The terms 'Native', 'Kaffir' and 'Bantu' pose special problems because of their derogatory associations, but were retained in this thesis because they were crucial to my arguments, notably for the period between 1860 to 1930, where 'native' and 'kaffir' were used in colonial records and the term 'bantu' was used between 1950 to 1980 by the state. To ensure uniformity, I used the words 'Native', 'Kaffir' and 'Bantu' (in single quotes) throughout this thesis except when they appeared in direct quotes. The term 'Native' refers to the indigenous inhabitants of Africa. The term 'Kaffir' was used to refer to the indigenous inhabitants of South Africa. The term 'Bantu' was used to refer to groups belonging to the Niger-Congo language groups spoken in central and southern Africa, including Kiswahili, isiZulu and Northern Sotho (recorded in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa as Sepedi).

The term 'black African' was used to refer to people and their offspring who are historically of African descent and inhabit sub-Saharan Africa. The term 'African' is indicative of pre-colonial societies that inhabited the African continent prior to colonial expansion.

Introduction

This thesis was centred on the intersecting discourses which have informed the formation of the 'Pedi'[1] category, and the representations of black African women in Northern Sotho literary texts. By tracing how the term 'Basotho' was replaced by the term 'Pedi' and when each term was used by different entities, namely the Afrikaner Volksraad, in mining house records and through Northern Sotho encounters with the Berlin Missionary Society (BMS), I demonstrate how 'Pedi' ethnicity was constantly made and remade throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century. Additionally, throughout this thesis, I also illustrate the different ways in which the state and missionaries viewed ethnicity which differed from the ways in which black Africans understood and used the term 'Pedi'. In the corpus of literary productions authored by black Africans, one may gain insight into their conceptualisations of 'Pedi' ethnicity and understand the place of women in their literary depictions of women.

The primary intervention of this thesis is to shift the current historiography of ethnic categorisation in South Africa, away from its intellectual centre on the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, and Kwa-Zulu Natal, towards a focus on the Transvaal. The Transvaal encompassed Limpopo, Gauteng, the North-West and the northern region of Mpumalanga. The Transvaal's ethnically diverse composition presents a challenge in formulating a clear framework for the categorisation of ethnic groups. This complexity arises from the historical context preceding missionary and colonial interventions, namely the *Difaqane* and its aftermath during which the region was characterised by a multitude of autonomous chiefdoms. These chiefdoms were primarily organised around precolonial systems of patronage and allegiance to a regional or paramount chief, rather than along ethnic lines. The 'Pedi' present an interesting case study since the group and their supposed ethnicity was fashioned during the initial phase of South Africa's industrialisation in the nineteenth century. This problematises the notion that ethnic groups are 'pure' communities, untouched by modernity. Instead, we can see how "identities, ideas, practices and institutions were transformed when missionary and indigenous worlds were entangled on the ground."[2] The 'Pedi' were a small group from the Northern Sotho federation, the federation was a collection of independent chiefdoms bound by marriage or trade, whose history spans from the *Difaqane* in the 1810s, through the expansion of Afrikaner

[1] I use the term 'Bapedi' to indicate a community and political system associated with Northern Sotho speakers. The term 'Pedi' is also a shorthand for the community. Mopedi is an individual who speaks Northern Sotho and follows 'Pedi' customs. Sepedi is the dialect used by most Northern Sotho speakers. Please see notes on terms.

[2] D. Maxwell, *Religious Entanglements: Central African Pentecostalism, the Creation of Cultural Knowledge, and the Making of the Luba Katanga,* Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, 2022, p.11

settlement in the 1840s, missionary expansion in the 1860s, to British annexation at the turn of the nineteenth century.

This history and the discourses which fashioned the 'Pedi' category have developed over time, creating a Sepedi archive through the production of ethnographic monographs, mining records, newspapers and vernacular literature. Extending the focus towards the Transvaal pushes against the scholarly dominance on the Zulu and Xhosa categories, by tracing and analysing the ways in which 'Pedi' ethnicity – as a concept, language and community emerged in the Transvaal. The Northern Sotho are the largest Sotho-speaking community in South Africa according to the 2011 Census, which recorded 4 618 576 speakers.[3] This intellectual intervention aimed to pull apart the entangled discourses which moulded 'ethnic' groups in the Transvaal. This is where the Northern Sotho vernacular literature emerges and provides specific representations of women – modelled on both Christian and 'traditional' conceptualisations of womanhood.

This thesis has placed women at the centre of its study because of their position as ethnic, racialised and gendered subjects under the colonial, segregationist and apartheid state. This position renders the category 'woman' as an intellectual "contact zone"[4] where Christianity and traditional conceptualisations of women can become entangled in the representations of woman in vernacular texts. This study provides an understanding of the interplay among historical processes, literature, and the construction of cultural knowledge on the Northern Basotho. The written word has been considered a marker of 'civilisation' brought by missionary education, and the introduction of a Northern Sotho orthographic system. While missionaries often engaged with various Northern Basotho communities, they were able to standardise a Northern Sotho dialect based on the Sepedi dialect. This later allowed for subsequent missionaries and the state to link a language and a Northern Sotho orthographic system, resulting into a conflation of the language with the ethnic communities who speak said language. This language was, utilised by black African Christians who produced vernacular texts. These texts were analysed as a document which aided in the construction of an imagined 'Pedi' identity[5] which evoked precolonial Northern Sotho customs, political institutions, gender systems and Christian ethos. By the 1890s, missionary power in the Transvaal "shifted

[3] Census 2011 Statistical Release, Pretoria, Statics South Africa, 2021, p.23
[4] E. Jansen, *Like Family: Domestic Workers in South African History and Literature,* Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2019, p.1
[5] L. de Kock, *Civilising Barbarians: Missionary Narrative and African Textual Response in Nineteenth-Century South Africa,* Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 1996, p.108

substantially to the colonial bureaucracy of governors, judges, magistrates, law enforcement officers and other delegated functionaries of government"[6] but the cultural knowledge co-produced by missionaries and black African converts was co-opted by the emerging South African state. As the state adopted an increasingly ethno-nationalist approach to black African administration, missionary education provided to black Africans, created a literate class of black African men. These African converts authored texts which reflected the missionaries' views on the place of black African women. Missionary views were not dissimilar to existing traditional views on woman, which stipulated that the domestic sphere was reserved for a black African woman. Women who were 'tainted' by modernity (in urban areas) or women who moved into urban areas were considered the 'wrong' kind of a 'Mopedi' woman as the representation discussed in this study illustrated. This study was interested in understanding how texts produced between 1930 and 1990 engaged with a "power beyond which groups of people, with whatever circumspection they constructed their strategies of living and believing, could not control."[7] Throughout this thesis, we can better understand when and how various discourses on ethnicity and gender emerge and how those discourses are reflected in Northern Sotho literature and representations of women.

Background and Main Argument

This thesis examined the discourses,[8] which have constructed the Northern Sotho (later the 'Pedi') ethnicity and the various representations of Northern Basotho women in Northern Sotho texts. Those who are currently referred to as 'Pedi' have not always been referred to by that specific label. In 1857, an agreement between the Volksraad of the Lydenburg Republic and *kgoši* Sewati (and junior chiefs Mampuru and Maetsi) was signed. In this document, the term "Matlatee Kaffir"[9] was used. This is one of the first documents in which the inhabitants of the region between the Steelpoort River and the Leolo mountain range were categorised as a homogenous group by external agents. Other terms were utilised by Afrikaner settlers to refer to these communities, such as 'Maketse' (from Manatatees). [10] Other agents such as the New

[6] L. de Kock, *Civilising Barbarians* ,p.108

[7] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond: Mission Strategies, African Conversion and the Development of a Christian Culture in the Transvaal,* Hamburg, Lit Verlag, 2001, p.285

[8] Foucault defines discourse "as groups of signs (signifying elements referring to contents or representations) but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak. Of course, discourses are composed of signs; but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things." from M. Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, London, Routledge Classics, 1989, p.49

[9] D. Hunt, "Account of the Bapedi Tribe", *Bantu Studies,* 5, 2, 1931, Collection no. A1655, Hunt Collection, The Library, the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg South Africa, p.24

[10] N. J. van Warmelo, "The Classification of Cultural Groups", in (ed.) W. D Hammond-Tooke, *The Bantus Speaking Peoples of Southern Africa,* London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959, p.72

Rush Diamond Mine, produced a register of 'natives' in 1872, where black African labourers from the north of Middleburg, were referred to as "Mahawa"[11] and "Seccoeni Basuto."[12] The term 'Pedi' originally referred to the royal house which Sekwati belonged[13] to; so, external agents assumed that all the black African inhabitants of the region viewed themselves as 'Pedi.' This thesis provides an overview of the ways in which the Northern Sotho label was constructed, through the formalisation of language by the Berlin Mission Society (BMS). Language became a marker of ethnicity because BMS missionaries with the assistance of their black African interlocutors, began separating black Africans along "linguistic lines."[14] Language allowed missionaries and the state to use the "political term 'tribe'"[15] to organise black African societies into linguistically defined communities. Language formed the basis of a Northern Sotho ethnicity as the BMS defined the communities among which they evangelised, with linguistic grounds allowing for the state to "conflate linguistic classification and ethnic identification."[16] This relationship between black African speaking practices and ethnicity emerged in the late nineteenth century and hardened over the course of the twentieth century in various domains.

In contemporary South Africa, there exists a common assumption that distinctions between black African linguistic communities are 'common sense' and that black Africans are 'inherently ethnic' and have historically divided themselves into ethnic units. However, throughout this thesis, I proffered the ways in which we can begin to think of the ways in which some ethnic identities are 'unfinished' ethnic projects. The Northern Sotho language is a linguistic category, but as a cultural category or ethnic category, the customs and knowledge are entangled in the colonial Christian historical context, paired with the industrialisation of the Transvaal region. Overall, this study was about undoing the assumption we make about ethnicity, demonstrated by historical figures such as Charolette Maxeke whose father is from the Transvaal but resettled in the Eastern Cape and assumed a Fingoe[17] identity. This is an example of how we can only think about black African communities as existing within static ethnically defined groups as opposed to identities that are in a state of constant flux. As Stoler

[11] 'Mahaw' was a blanket term used for all labourers from the Zounpansberg in R. Siebörger, 'The Recruitment and Organisation of African Labour for the Kimberly Diamond Mines, 1871 – 1888', MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1975, p.3
[12] I*bid,* p.5
[13] D. Hunt, "Account of the Bapedi Tribe", p.10
[14] P. Harries, *Butterflies and Barbarians: Swiss Missionaries and Systems of Knowledge in South-East Africa,* Oxford, James Curry Ltd, 2001, p. 158
[15] *Ibid,* p.164
[16] L. Kriel "Historical Context" in *Ethnography from the Mission Field: The Hoffmann Collection of Cultural Knowledge,* (ed). A. Joubert, G.M.M. Grobler, I.M. Kosch & L.Kriel, Leiden, Brill, 2015, p.3
[17] M. McCord, *The Calling of Katie Makhanya,* Cape Town, David Philip, 1995, p.5-8

notes, "what constitutes as common sense is at once historical and political."[18] Throughout this thesis, I ensured that the reader understands the ways in which the political and the historical inform the ethnic subject and the representations of women in vernacular literature.

Throughout chapter 1, a narrative of the changes occurring in the Transvaal was provided. This chapter is concerned with illustrating the ways in which Northern Sotho communities established themselves in the Transvaal after the *Difaqane*. Additionally, this chapter illustrates the ways in which the Northern Basotho adapted to economic and political changes such as the emergence of migrant labour and the encroachment of Afrikaner settlement. This narrative serves to provide contextual backing for some of the major historical processes this thesis sought to explore. Additionally, an exploration of the ways in which Northern Sotho communities engaged with the BMS.

Chapter 2 is centred on understanding the way missionaries and black African interlocutors co-produced cultural knowledge systems underpinned by a "complex historical entanglement of indigenous and colonial concepts."[19] This chapter suggests that the ways in which missionaries thought of ethnicity and group belonging differed from the ways in which black African converts self-identified. The diverging views held by missionaries and their converts, were articulated in mission-published publications such as newspapers and literature produced by male converts. The chapter illustrates that missionaries did not think of the 'Pedi' as a homogenous group, while black Africans often thought of themselves as Christian and not necessarily as a belonging to a defined ethnic group. These differing views developed within the political context of an emerging South African state. As the state developed a system of black African administration, mission-educated black Africans began producing texts in vernacular. Northern Sotho texts produced during this period reflect the ways in which black African Christians self-identified. Additionally, the representation of women, illustrates a convergence between traditional and Christian ideals of women.

Chapter 3 illustrates how subsequent generations of black African writers, called 'good Bantus' worked within an apartheid framework informed by separate development logic, Christian nationalism, and state-driven re-tribalisation efforts. However, the chapter shows how state-driven re-tribalisation did not have an impact on 'good Bantu' writers or their works. The depictions of women in texts published by these authors echoed earlier representations of

[18] A. L. Stoler *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense,* Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2009, p.38
[19] D. Maxwell, *Religious Entanglements,* p.12

women which relegated women to the domestic space. There are some texts, which provide representations of women outside of the domestic sphere, but these women are corrupted by the 'modern' world. These representations suggest that women ought to remain in the Bantustan to safeguard their morality.

This study sought to understand how discourses on 'Pedi' ethnicity have evolved and examined the conditions under which Northern Sotho literature was produced. The representations of women in the texts illustrate how historical processes informed the underlying intellectual foundations of what is considered 'Pedi' and 'woman.'

Historiography

This thesis expanded upon the existing historiography of the BMS and the 'Pedi' (Northern Sotho) inhabitants of the region.

Donald Hunt's "A Short History of the Native Tribes of the Transvaal" is one of the earliest state ethnographic texts on the history of 'the Pedi' (Bapedi). Hunt's study predominantly concerned with understanding the origins of the various 'tribes' inhabiting the Transvaal, such as the Bakgatla, Barolong, Bapedi and others. Hunt recounts the genealogical histories of three Sesotho speaking communities found in the Transvaal: the Bechuna (Batswana), the Basuto (Southern Basotho) and the Bapedi (Northern Sotho). Hunt notes that the Bapedi "originally belonged to the Bakgatla family of the Basuto nation."[20] The text provides a historical overview of how a group of 'the Pedi' settled in the Zoutpansberg in the 1600s and illustrates how this group created a political system before and after the *Difaqane* wars (1815 until 1840). Hunt's analysis was used in this thesis to understand the nature of pre-colonial political systems in the Transvaal. Additionally, this text provides key insight into the heterogeneity of the region between the Olifants River and the Leole Mountains. Additionally, Hunt provided an intellectual springboard for this thesis's main argument that the various chiefdoms residing within this region were not subjects of the Bapedi; rather, they had their own regional chiefs and identities.

Mönnig's "The Pedi" is similar to Hunt's account, except that he focused specifically on the Pedi. Mönnig's work is derived from the BMS missionary records on the Northern Sotho and state ethnographic records. Mönnig notes the term 'Bapedi' should be used "loosely" because

[20] D. Hunt, *A Short History of the Native Tribes of the Transvaal,* 1905, Collection no. A1655, D. Hunt Papers Historical Papers, the Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, p.31

the term historically refers to a class of Northern Sotho speakers who formed the ruling elite of Sekwati's kingdom.[21] As such, the linguistic practices of the non-elites and communities which did not convert to Christianity or had little proximity to missionaries, were not likely to have been recorded. Mönnig does not illustrate how this process of formalising and standardising a 'Sepedi' language occurred, a process which was explored in this thesis. Instead, his work provides a social overview of the Northern Sotho communities, providing insight into the political institutions, customs, rituals and life rituals of the 'Pedi'. In this thesis, Mönnig's work was used to illustrate what missionaries have considered the historic and cultural differences between the 'Pedi' and other Sotho-speaking groups.

Peter Delius' "The Land Belongs to Us", provides insight into how Northern Sotho communities' political and economic institutions were "shaped by processes of conflict and change at work beyond its borders."[22] Delius follows Mönnig's trajectory, by using the terms 'Pedi' and 'Bapedi' when referring to Northern Sotho communities. Economic shifts such as the establishment of migrant labour and colonial conquest altered the ways in which Sekwati and other subchiefs controlled labour. Delius explains how the establishment of Afrikaner settlements – namely Ohrigstad in 1845 and Lyndenburg in 1852 created competition for land, ammunition, and cattle in the region. Tensions between Northern Sotho communities and Afrikaner settlers, increasing demands for labourers on Afrikaner farms. Afrikaner expansion also coincided with the emergence of the migrant labour system, which increasingly drew black African communities into a colonial economy and political system. It was through this system that Northern Sotho men were able to secure arms and resist against Afrikaner demands. Thus, becoming a principal adversary against colonial expansion in the Transvaal region who were defeated by British forces in 1879. Throughout this thesis, Delius's analysis is used to illustrate how in becoming subjects of the British Transvaal and later the South African state, the Northern Sotho became the 'Pedi' who had to negotiate and renegotiate their ethnicity based on their position as subjects to a power greater than that of the paramount chief and his subordinate chiefs.

Kirsten Rüther's "The Power Beyond" illustrates how mission stations across the Transvaal established by the Hermannsburg and BMS became the centres of social and religious interaction, which facilitated the emergence of a new Christian culture in the region. One of

[21] H. O. Mönnig, *The Pedi,* Pretoria, Van Schaik Limited, 1967, p.v
[22] P. Delius, *The Land Belongs to Us: The Pedi Polity, the Boers and the British in the Nineteenth Century Transvaal,* Ibadan, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd, 1984, p.7

Rüther's major points of departure, which is essential to this thesis, is that BMS missionaries viewed Christianity, ethnicity, and Christian culture differently to their black African converts. Where the BMS sought to integrate themselves into settler communities,[23] black Africans appropriated Christianity. Through this appropriation, the popular Christian culture that emerged between 1865 and 1890 was informed by a "fusion of old and new identities."[24] Her work illustrates the shifting cultural context in which a Northern Sotho print culture emerged in the nineteenth century. The discourses within the emerging print culture often encompassed colonial discourses from missionaries who published their own interpretations of black African subjectivity, but as this thesis illustrated through an examination of texts authored by black Africans, an alternative black African subjectivity began to emerge in the 1930s. However, the texts produced by black Africans provided representations of women, which incorporated both precolonial and Christian ideals of woman and womanhood.

Additionally, Delius's "A Lion Amongst Cattle" provides an overview of how Northern Sotho communities were divided into two administrative districts after British annexation: Nebo and Sekhukhuneland. Each district was incorporated into the segregationist 'native' administration system, which relied on 'tribal' authorities who would be appointed by the state. This fractured existing traditional political institution, fostering the creation of two different chiefdoms in Nebo and Sekhukhuneland, until 1953. In the same year, these districts were unified under the Bantu Authorities system ushered in by the National Party. This thesis used this text to illustrate how between 1950 and 1990, the Transvaal history was shaped by changes in South Africa's political system. This text illustrates the malleable nature of ethnicity as traditional structures were reformed to serve a separate development framework. The 'Pedi' people continued to develop their own ways of understanding and engaging with the 'Pedi' ethnicity as the texts in this study show. Additionally, as this thesis illustrates, the BMS's ethno-focused logic was reinforced by the state through the Bantustans system, the state's 'Bantu' education policies and the development of vernacular radio and literature. While Delius is not interested in the question of ethnicity but rather the ways in which Northern Sotho communities responded to the implementation of separate development, his text does illustrate the political changes in which an increased number of vernacular literatures were published. This thesis uses the

[23] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond: Mission Strategies, African Conversion and the Development of a Christian Culture in the Transvaal,* Hamburg, Lit Verlag, 2001, p.12
[24] *Ibid,* p. 13

political changes described by Delius, as a framework to understand how the state sought to 'retribalise' the 'Bantu' from the 1950s until the 1990s.

Although the literature on Northern Sotho speakers is limited to a handful of scholars, this thesis utilised this literature to highlight the interconnectedness between historical processes, the construction of the 'Pedi' ethnicity to interrogate the framework in which various representation of black African women emerged.

Theoretical Framework

I used two foundational concepts in this thesis: ethnicity and womanhood.

Ethnicity, as Stuart Hall notes is "grounded exclusively in cultural, in the realm of shared language, specific customs, traditions, and beliefs."[25] Throughout this thesis, I was particularly concerned with the formalisation of a 'Pedi' culture and language throughout the nineteenth century. David Maxwell's analysis of the construction of the Luba ethnicity provides insight into the ways in which my research traced the formation of the 'Pedi' ethnicity. Maxwell notes that the process of ethnic identifications involves the "creation of the category of Luba Katanga; the generation of a body of myth, folklore, proverb and history with which to fill it; and its dissemination via a standardised and unified vernacular."[26] In the context of the 'Pedi', this process of ethnic identification emerged through a collaboration between BMS missionaries and black African Christian converts who "wrote down the indigenous language and gradually began to write them and to teach them in non-religious contexts"[27] Language became a cornerstone of ethnic identification because BMS missionaries (along with other stakeholders mentioned in the thesis) sought to categorise black African communities and this form of categorisation was informed by the ways in which missionaries thought of nationhood and identity. As Patrick Harries notes, missionaries sought to make the world "more comprehensible and controllable."[28] Through language, one could determine linguistic boundaries of a 'primordial' ethnic community, which reinforced the link between groups inhabiting a specific area and the speaking practices found within said communities.[29] A focus on the linguistic boundaries led missionaries to believe that "they had not created a linguistic

[25] S. Hall, *The Fateful Triangle: Race, Ethnicity, Nation,* Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2017, p.108
[26] D. Maxwell, *Religious Entanglements: Central African Pentecostalism, the Creation of Cultural Knowledge, and the Making of the Luba Katanga,* Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, p.179
[27] N. Alexander, *Language Policy and National Unity in South Africa/Azania,* Cape Town, Buchu Books, 1989, p.19
[28] P. Harries, *Butterflies and Barbarians: Swiss Missionaries and Systems of Knowledge in South-East Africa,* Oxford, James Curry Ltd, 2001, p.74
[29] *Ibid,* p.164

category but that they had 'recognised' the Thonga (in our case, the Pedi) as a tribe and that they had 'discovered' the Thonga language in the same way they had 'discovered' species of plants and animals (rather than assembled)."[30] Having 'discovered' Sepedi (the language), missionaries had conceptualised 'tribes' as "the natural unit of African society."[31] Collections of communities which spoke the same language in a specific region were then categorised as a single nation – which according to Immanuel Wallerstein is a "sociopolitical category linked somehow to the actual or potential boundaries of the state."[32] Here, we begin to see why missionaries focused so intensely on language, since ethnicity acted as a 'link' between the communities in which they worked. If we use Wallerstein's definition of an 'ethnic group', which is "a cultural category of which there are said to be certain continuing behaviour that are passed down from generation to generation."[33] Language acted as a 'continuing behaviour', "hence they applied the political term 'tribe' (derived from classics) to linguistically defined communities."[34] In creating this link between language, territory and community, a process began where missionaries and converts began writing 'tribal' histories and "transforming pre-existing oral cultural resources into print."[35] As such, 'ethnic categories' such as the 'Pedi' has been "historically and culturally constructed."[36] With this understanding of ethnicity, this thesis was interested in understand the ways in which discourses around ethnicity and language have become entangled over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This is not to suggest that black Africans had no pre-existing ideas on linguistic difference but rather that these differences were not emphasised and did not exist for them as ethnic difference. Throughout this thesis, close attention was paid to the various ways in which different agents created a field of discourse on the 'Pedi' ethnicity and the ways in which the representations of woman and womanhood in text were impacted by missionary ideals of Christian womanhood.

Oyewumi suggests that "gender has been [a] foundational category upon which social categories have been erected."[37] 'Gender' as a form of social organisation, has been determined

[30] P. Harries, *Butterflies and Barbarians,* p.167
[31] D. Maxwell, *Religious Entanglements, p.184*
[32] I. Wallerstein, "The Construction of Peoplehood: Racism, Nationalism, Ethnicity", in (ed.) E. Balibar & I. Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities,* London, Verso, 1991, p.77
[33] *Ibid,* p.77
[34] P. Harries, *Butterflies and Barbarians,* p.164
[35] D. Maxwell, *Religious Entanglements, p.180*
[36] S. Hall, *The Fateful Triangle,* p.106
[37] O. Oyewumi, "Visualising the Body: Western Theories and African Subject", in (ed.) O. Oyewumi, *African Gender Studies: A Reader,* New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p.7

by a "differentiation between female and male bodies, a difference rooted in the visual."[38] The visual differences are also a historical construct. As Harries suggests, the process of gendering formed part of the process of reordering black African life and pre-existing notions of gender.[39] A part of the gendering process included the production of the "respectable Christian wives."[40] The gender system introduced by missionaries often hinged on the characteristics of women, girls, men and boys that were socially constructed[41] away from the communities among which missionaries conducted their field work. The state of being a woman – womanhood – is also a construct in that it was premised "Christian womanhood.[42]"

Within the colonial superstructure, missionary thinking and Northern Sotho literature, a man's body is "differentially placed in relation to power, and spatially distanced from"[43] a woman's body, which is considered inferior. This thesis interrogated how representations of woman and womanhood in Northern Sotho literature is a product of a gendered discourse.[44]

Ethnicity and gender are not static concepts. They are made and remade within different discourses penned by various historical agents, which are reaffirmed within the archive. Hartman suggests that the archive functions as a "conceptual prison house"[45]inside, which concepts and those who have the authority and power to pen these concepts determine what can and cannot be said about a subject. The categories of ethnicity and womanhood were used in conversation with one another to better understand the representations of Bapedi women and the discourses surrounding Sepedi womanhood in texts throughout the twentieth century.

Methodology

This thesis used a variety of archival material to understand the construction of ethnicity and the representations of woman in vernacular texts. Archives used include the Hoffmann Collection of Cultural Knowledge, ethnographic studies from the Rhodes University Cory Library for Historical Research and the University of the Witwatersrand's (Wits) Research Archives. Northern Sotho literature was also sourced from the University of Limpopo, Turfloop Africana reserve. These archives are found on different continents, written in multiple

[38] O. Oyewumi, "Visualising the Body, p.7
[39] P. Harries, *Butterflies and Barbarians,* p.83
[40] D. Maxwell, *Religious Entanglements, p.75*
[41] J. Butler, "Performativity, Precarity and Sexual Politics", *AIBR: Revista de Antropologia Iberoamericana,* 4, 3, 2009,p.4
[42] D. Maxwell, *Religious Entanglements, p.76*
[43] J. Butler, "Performativity, Precarity and Sexual Politics", p.7
[44] S. Hall, "Foucault: Power, Knowledge and Discourse" in (ed.) M. Wetherell, S. Taylor & S. J. Yates in *Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader,* London, Sage Publication, 2001, p.78
[45] T. Siemsen, "On Working With Archives: An Interview with Saidiya Hartman", *The Creative Independent,* 18 April 2018

languages. Texts found from the Hoffmann Collection are predominately in German and posed a language problem to the researcher. This online archive consists of missionary records on 'the Pedi'. Some texts are written in Northern Sotho, namely the first Northern Sotho literary text used in this study while others are translated into English, such as Hoffmann's personal diary. The texts utilised from this archive were read as texts, which informed the discursive creation of 'the Pedi' ethnicity. The sources from both Cory Library and the online Wits University Research archives, were read to understand how knowledge on 'the Pedi' continued to develop into the twentieth century.

This study also utilised Northern Sotho (Sepedi) literary texts. These texts were selected from Northern Sotho school teachers in Polokwane, some were also sourced from the University of Limpopo Africana Reserve. In total, I selected ten texts from each decade between 1930 and 1990. Northern Sotho literary texts developed by Northern Sotho speakers were a product of the missionary-sponsored textual enterprise and later, the apartheid state's 'Bantu literature' enterprise. I identified the representation of women in these texts to yield a richer picture of the discourses, which unpinned 'the Pedi' woman and representations of Bapedi women in the twentieth century. These texts have been translated using my own knowledge of Northern Sotho, and translations were verified with the help of a mother tongue Northern Sotho speaker. Translating from Northern Sotho into English is complicated by the nature of the Northern Sotho language: the idioms, proverbs and images in the texts were translated according to an English proximate.

I am 'Pedi, but I am also a 'coconut.'[46] 'Coconuts' in the crudest sense are a modern 'detribalised native'. It is at worst extremely alienating because I do not have the necessary linguistic tools that would categorise me as a 'true' Mopedi, nor do I have a vast knowledge of what 'Pediness' means, culturally. At best, being a 'coconut' has afforded me the opportunity to gain a command over the English language but that comes at a cost, losing my mother tongue. This loss is reflected in my limited command of the Sepedi language. However, this research was not simply concerned with language, but rather understanding how one can feel 'out of place' in both their ethnicity and their womanhood. Throughout this project, I have acquired a better command of Northern Sotho, now than I did before, also I have increased my

[46] Lwando Xaso suggests that the term 'coconut' is "an inter-racial slur that calls into question the blackness of 'coconuts' suggesting a divisively narrow conception of what it means to be black… There are those who prescribe that to be 'authentically' black you must remain in one place linguistically, mentally, socio-economically and geographically" in L. Xaso "The Coconut's dilemma – a foot in the black and white worlds, but acceptance in neither" *Mail and Guardian,* 16 April 2019, at https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2019-04-16-the-coconuts-dilemma-a-foot-in-the-black-and-white-worlds-but-acceptance-in-neither/ (Accessed 10 February 2023)

ability to read Northern Sotho literature. Researching the history of these two concepts and the ways in which these concepts manifest in literature allows one to understand why they might not feel like a ‘good’ ‘Pedi’ woman, as constructs do not always translate into one’s lived experience.

Chapter 1: A Missionary Walks into Pre-Colonial Transvaal (1845-1935)

Initially, I had some very particular ideas about ethnicity, precisely on the meaning of what it means to be black in South Africa and the relationship between historical processes which have defined blackness and the creation of knowledge about African communities. Here, instead, I want to tell a story of a group of Northern Sotho-speaking communities, currently known as the "Bapedi" or 'the Pedi'. This story is imbedded with the ways in which I have begun to think about the creation of the 'Pedi' ethnic category through various lenses such as the community's engagement with migrant labour, its internal politics, Afrikaner expansion into the Northern Transvaal, missionary encounters, and the textual production of this category (by mining companies, Afrikaner settlers, missionaries, the state and Christian converts). I begin the chapter by locating this community geographically, explain how another event in Southern African history – the *Difaqane* – impacted and restructured the community and their internal politics. I demonstrate that in the aftermath of the *Difaqane,* the Maroteng, along with other Sesotho-speaking groups, spent the first half of the nineteenth century re-establishing their political structures. This is followed by a short discussion on the community's response to migrant labour demands in the Cape, its adaption to Afrikaner settlement in the region and the communities' interactions with the colonial state. By understanding the community's early history, this chapter shows how ideas around language and the idea of ethnicity were not used by Africans as a marker of difference but rather how precolonial political system were based on patronage, political allegiance, and common descent.

The second section of this story illustrates how a variety of colonial interactions such as the development of Afrikaner settlement, mining companies' written records, the Berlin Mission Society (BMS) and Christian members (interlocutors) began to create knowledge on these communities. As such, the term Pedi (Bapedi) and/or associated terms that can be located in multiple discursive sites – articulated as a tribe, ethnicity or nation. My primary interest, however, was in the ways in which the missionaries – through development of Northern Sotho orthography – also forged the 'Bapedi' category as an ethnic category through a collaboration with Christian converts.

The chapter provides the background for how the category 'Pedi' emerged through the development of the language and subsequently as an emerging ethnic category through BMS missionaries' conflation of language with nationhood. Throughout this thesis, I return to this argument, as it illustrates how our thinking about Northern Sotho texts and Northern Sotho

womanhood depicted in the literature was underpinned by the knowledge produced by both missionaries and their interlocutors.

Basotho to Northern Sotho Federation (1815 – 1830)

Northern Sotho as a language is placed within a larger cluster of Southern Bantu language groups found in South Africa – typically divided into the Nguni languages, SeSotho, Tshivenḓa, Xitsonga and isiNdebele. Northern Sotho is part of the Sesotho language complex, which includes the Setswana (Western Sotho) and Sesotho (Southern Sotho).[47] Sotho speaking groups inhabit the North Eastern Lowveld along with the Venda and Tsonga.[48] The major differences between the three Sotho-speaking groups lies in their geography: the Southern Sotho in Drakensburg are surrounded by the Drakensberg mountain range which acts as a boundary; Tswana and Northern Sotho communities have a river as a boundary[49] with the Batswana typically situated south of the Vaal River and the Northern Sotho on the north.

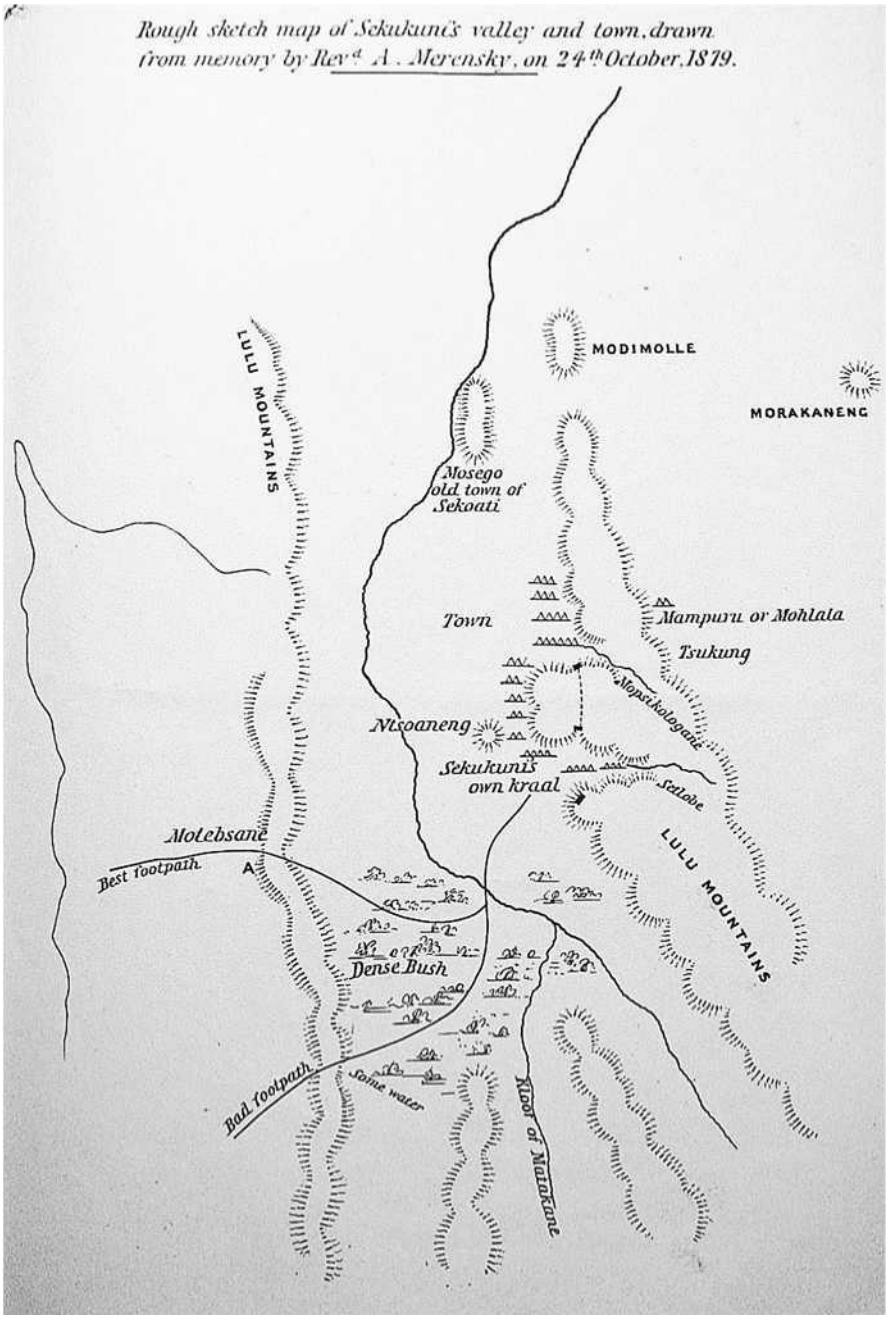
The Northern Basotho occupy a linguistically and politically heterogeneous region. This region hosts several independent chiefdoms, namely Bapedi, Masemola, Lemba, Ndebele; Matlala of the North-West Transvaal, Mmamabola of Woodbush, the Lodebu, Vhavenḓa and Bahananwa.[50] These communities moved into the Zoutpanberg region during the *Difaqane* wars – a period in which African chiefdoms were dispersed across the interior or the Southern Africa as a result of Zulu militarisation along the coast of Southern Africa. In the aftermath of the *Difaqane* – between 1815 and 1837 – Northern-Sotho speaking communities began banding together, against Mzilikazi's (an ally of Shaka Zulu) Ndebele raids in the region.

The 'Pedi' were a group of Northern Sotho speakers, an off-shoot of the Bakgatla-Ba-Ma-Kou (or Kgatla) who originated from the Mapogole (or Mahlkakoaneng).[51] The community's ruling house was the Maroteng. According to Donald Hunt, the Maroteng moved into the region around 1650-80. The map below illustrates the region where the Maroteng settled. The

[47] N. J. van Warmelo, "The Classification of Cultural Groups*",* in (ed.) W. D Hammond-Tooke, *The Bantu speaking Peoples of Southern Africa,* London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959, p.72
[48] Krige provides a comprehensive image of the make- up of the North Eastern Transvaal in the following "[t]o east, the Game Reserve, low-lying, unhealthy, very sparsely populated even in the old days, remains an effective barrier to contact with and further migrations from the Shangana-Tonga of Portuguese East Africa. South are the Olifants River and the towering Drakensberg range curving north-west then northwards to merge into the well-marked escarpment on the west dividing Lowveld from Highveld. On the north the Klein Letaba river roughly demarcates area from the Venda and the Shangana-Tonga of the Knobnose Location" in E.J Krige "The Place of the North-Eastern Transvaal Sotho in the South Bantu Complex", *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute,* 11, 3, 1938, p.1
[49] N. J. van Warmelo, "The Classification of Cultural Groups", p.72
[50] V. van der Vliet, "Growing Up in Traditional Society" in (ed.) W. D Hammond-Tooke, *The Bantu speaking Peoples of Southern Africa,* London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959, p.229
[51] D. Hunt, "Account of the Bapedi' *Bantu Studies,* 5, 2, 1931, Collection no. A1655, Hunt Collection, The Library, the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, p.1

Maroteng were a community of ancient metalworkers.[52] The Maroteng claimed a territory in the Leolo Mountain valley and began creating oral histories which tied the group to a mythical ancestor, named Mopedi, who named the region Bopedi.[53] In the subsequent centuries, the Maroteng facilitated the creation of a federation of "tribal estates"[54] through trade agreements, political marriages and military obligations – between groups in the Olifants River (Lepelle) and the Leolo (or Lulu) mountain region. Initial accounts from missionaries state that "the Bapeli [sic] have always had dominion over a small or larger number of tribes"[55] suggesting that the Maroteng was the paramount leader of all Northern Sotho speakers, extending their political will throughout the region. However, the map below provides the names of various other chiefdoms such as Mampuru, Morakneng and Ntsoaneng, who may not have considered themselves as subjects of the Maroteng, suggesting that these tribal estates were loosely bound together. The term federation better describes the relationships between various chiefdoms and the Maroteng.

[52] The ancient metalworker's totem was *kgabo* (monkey), H.O Mönnig, *The Pedi*, Pretoria, Van Schaik Limited, 1976, p.18
[53] H.O Mönnig, *The Pedi*, Van Shaik, Pretoria, 1976, p.18
[54] B. Sansom, 'Traditional Rulers and their Realms" in (ed.) W. D Hammond-Tooke, *The Bantu speaking Peoples of Southern Africa,* London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959, p.268
[55] Berlin Mission Society, "Contributions to the History of the Bapeli", Mission Report, No.20 in *Mission Reports of the Society for the Promotion of Evangelical Missions among the Heathen in Berlin for the Year 1862,* Berlin, Wilhelm Schultze, 1862, p. 327



[Figure 1 A map drawn by Rev. Merensky for the British Military. From https://www.worldhistory.biz/sundries/49050-colonial-agents-alexander-merensky-and-the-pedi-polity.html Accessed on the 4 October 2024]

The 'tribal estates' within the federation were a collection of independent chiefdoms which formed alliances or an affiliation with the Maroteng in the lowveld region. While some were able to retain their independence, other chieftaincies were also incorporated into Maroteng's political polity.[56] 'Tribal estates' spanned a large portion of the Transvaal. Often, this complex

[56] This hierarchy was an administrative tool, with the paramount at the apex of the hierarchy, followed by sub-chiefs, then wards (district heads or *indunas*) and heads of households, according to Basil Sansom notes that each tier of this hierarchy was an administrative office who functioned as follows; "Administrators did not – unlike feudal lords – own their estates. The estate 'belonged' to the official only in this limited sense: within the estate he controlled access to resources, concerting the work pattern of his followers and protecting individual and communal rights." B. Sansom, "Traditional Economic Systems""

federation has been studied as an area in which the Maroteng created a "homogeneous Pedi polity" across the region.[57] This suggests that the paramount – at the time *Kgoši* Sekwati - had uniform control over a federation, but in actuality, the paramount's influence and control diminished at the peripheries. Additionally, groups of different origin, such as the Tau, Kwena, Roka or Koni groups[58] did not view themselves as subjects of the paramount. The Northern Sotho federation hosted groups who did not necessarily self-identify as 'Pedi' (or Maroteng), but interactions between these groups through trade, intermarriage, and political alliance, created a common Basotho culture.[59]

Throughout the Northern Sotho federation, several common Basotho cultural features began to emerge that "emphasized [sic] kinship ties, the division of the sexes and the differentiation of age."[60] According to Mönnig, each regional chief (*kgoši*) "in various ways obtains [sic] ties of kinship with all units."[61] The 'House' or *kgoro*[62] functioned as the main social and political unit of the community. Sotho-speaking *kgoro*(s) were headed by polygyny-practicing fathers and sons ranked according to the rank of the son's mother.[63] The father's totem – usually an animal – was the Sotho equivalent of *isizwe* (patriclan) and the totems used animals as their clan's name.[64]

Kgoro(s) were social and political units which were organised into a class system. The lowest ranking class was called *mathupya* – a class of *Difaqane* 'immigrants' or 'refugees.' Another low-ranking class was called the *bafalodi* (commoners),[65] and a proxy-middle class, *balatu/ batho feela* were usually related in some form to the ruling lineage (or nobility), *bakgomana*. Sekwati also created a new patronage system or *bastseta* system,[66] where unmarried men would

in (ed.) W. D Hammond-Tooke, *The Bantu speaking Peoples of Southern Africa,* London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959, p.146

[57] M. Ramushu 'The House of Thulare: The Problem of Succession and the Spilt of the BaPedi Nation, 1824 – 1884' MA Thesis, University of Limpopo, 2007, p. 37

[58] P. Delius "Migrant labour and the Pedi, 1840-80" in (ed). S. Marks & A. Atmore, *Economy and Society in pre-industrial South Africa,* London, Longman, 1980, p.294

[59] P. Delius "Migrant labour and the Pedi, p.294

[60] H.O Mönnig, *The Pedi*, p.249

[61] *Ibid,* p.249

[62] H.O Mönnig, *The Pedi*, (Pretoria, 1976), p.10

[63] *Ibid,* p.31

[64] According to Mönnig, there are "fifty Koni tribes in Bopedi, among whom the following totems are found: *tlahanthlange,* (scaly-feathered finch),*Phiri* (hyena), *tlou* (elephant), *phuti* (duiker), *nare* (buffalo), *kwena* (crocodile), *nkwe* (leopard), *tau* (lion), *tswene* (baboon)." H.O Mönnig, *The Pedi*, p.17

[65] P. Delius, *The Land Belongs to Us,* Raven Press, Johannesburg, 1983, p.53

[66] Delius builds on Monnig's idea of a patronage system by mentioning the *batseta* system, "an administrative system where formal relations between the *kgoro* and the ruling nucleus were maintained through a network of intermediaries known as *batseta* who were usually senior members of *kgoro*. *Batseta* from higher ranking *kgoro* acted as intermediaries for *kgoro* of lower rank. Lower ranking *kgoro* did not, however have to act through all higher ranking *kgoro* but only through that appointed as it *batseta* group. The *batseta* system was a politically sentivive means of administration and particularly through the fees from dispute settlement, it also gave a number of *kgoro* at the capital a material stake in the wider polity." P. Delius, *The Land Belongs to Us,* p.57

form age regiments which were a source of both chiefly and *kgoro* power as the groups could be called upon to perform duties such as hunting, fort construction, cattle-guarding, clearing and working land.[67] Regiment members were also part of individual patriarchal *kgoros* and remained dependent on the *kgoro* for access to land and cattle.[68] These unmarried men were barred from owning land or cattle until marriage, which reinforced their dependence on the *kgoro* and "senior agnates to pay bridewealth"[69] for marriage. Men from the *bakgomana* class usually married kin or second cousins to limit the circulation of bride wealth goods,[70] namely cattle and later, ammunition. Marriage between individuals from the *bakgomana* class were arranged by the *kgoši.* Arguably, the paramount derived most of his power through controlling marriages amongst his subchiefs.

Governing people meant governing marriage practices. Mönnig highlights the importance of marriage within the Sekwati's federation, as marriage was not "primarily concerned with legalising the sexual relations between individuals or even between two groups."[71] Instead, it established paternity and created reciprocal links between groups. Delius notes that marriage also served to restrict the circulation of bride-wealth within the ruling class and contributed to the "redistribution of cattle from commoners to the *bakgomana* and royals within the chiefdom through rank-related bridewealth exchanges."[72] Women and cattle were thus central to Sekwati's political economy and for the reconsolidation of the empire. So much so that the Maroteng were known in the region as "wife-givers to all subordinate chiefs."[73] High ranking women and refugee women[74] were "a crucial form of economic and political capital."[75]

High ranking women customarily married for diplomatic reasons, such as the *kgoši*'s chief wife, *mohumagadi* (meaning "she who acquires wealth" or "she who will produce the heir of the chieftainship).[76] Within this system, her role was to bear the chief who would be the human "link with the royal ancestors."[77] She also performed a political function because she was

[67] Delius, *The Land Belongs to Us,* p.50
[68] *Ibid,* p.50
[69] *Ibid,* p.52
[70] P. Delius, *The Land Belongs to Us,* p.51
[71] H.O Mönnig, *The Pedi*, p.196
[72] P. Delius, *The Land Belongs to Us,* p.51
[73] B. Sansom, 'Traditional Rulers and their Realms", p.269
[74] Mönnig recounts the *go beka* ceremony (transferring the bride to the groom). For refugee women, who did not come from the polity, "a few women will be especially chosen for their knowledge of Pedi custom to instruct her in these customs. A few men from the senior *kgoros* also accompany the group to introduce the bride to her new people." H.O Mönnig, *The Pedi,* p.258
[75] P. Delius, *The Land Belongs to Us,* p.52
[76] H.O Mönnig, *The Pedi*, p.256
[77] *Ibid,* p.256

always from another chiefdom and thus served as a diplomatic tie between chiefdoms. Additionally, in providing chiefs with wives, new chiefdoms or groups could be incorporated into the federation or marriage, signifying the recognition of the division of one chiefdom into several new political groupings.[78] Refugees or 'newcomers' were usually naturalised into the community through the guidance of older women. Refugees and women who were commoners were essential for their reproductive and productive labour (on both the chief's land as tribute and their individual *mašimo*[79] or garden). Their labour was also essential to the continuation of the pastoral economy. Often refugees or *bafalodi* were married to heads of patriclans. Married women obtained land "from her mother-in-law, although the rights over the land rest largely with her husband."[80] Husbands were expected to pass down land to the first son of their highest-ranking wife. Ethnographer, Charles Harries describes 'Pedi' marital practices, stating that,

> It is not customary for a true Mopedi man to give his daughter in marriage to a man whom he regards as his inferior, or to one of a different clan from his own. Different clans intermarry nowadays, but a few generations ago a woman would have scorned to have been taken to wife by a man not of her father's clan. Of course, as a matter of policy, chiefs have always intermarried with other clans, and even with distinct tribes, such as the Swazi. However, the head wife of a chief must be a member of a branch of the same tribe and clan as that of the chief. [81]

Sekwati had succeeded in establishing a federation by the 1830s, which had been stabilised mainly through marriage. The paramount also had other aspects of political power, such as ritual legitimacy, a system in which every ritual performance involving the *bakgomana* and the chieftainship required the "consent, patronage of the paramount."[82] Subordinate chiefs sought permission from the paramount for various rituals and ceremonies such as the 'castrating bulls' (a euphemism for the commencement of the youth circumcision ceremony), 'eating the first fruits' (a euphemism for consuming the first harvests of the season).[83] Additionally, the paramount, in collaboration with subordinate chiefs, controlled the flow of men to and from the diamond fields in the Cape as well as the distribution of firearms within the federation.[84] The paramount's political system depended on an interplay of ritual legitimation of their rule

[78] B. Sansom, 'Traditional Rulers and their Realms", p.270
[79] According to Mönnig, each married woman was entitled to her own lands, assigned to them by the heads of the households. H.Mönnig, *The Pedi,* p.153
[80] H.O Mönnig, *The Pedi,* p.154
[81] C. L Harries, The Laws and Customs of the Bapedi and Cognate Tribes of the Transvaal, 1929 Book, Hortors Limited, Johannesburg, Cory Library, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, p.4
[82] B. Sansom, 'Traditional Rulers and their Realms", p.269
[83] *Ibid,* p.269
[84] P. Delius "Migrant labour and the Pedi, 1840-80", p.308

and the exercise of military might.[85] By the early 1840s, this Northern Sotho federation consisted of separate chiefdoms which were 'tribal estates'. Put differently, the federation was a political "chequerboard of chiefdoms."[86]

By illustrating the complexity of the Northern Sotho federation, it is important to highlight the ways in which this system of 'tribal estates' determined community membership. Wright notes that in precolonial Africa, "identity was fluid and ethnicity, if such a concept existed, was a permeable membrane through which passed links of marriage, [and] ties to religion and much more."[87] Individuals within chiefdoms were not pressured to speak one specific language, nor were these communities conditioned to perceive linguistic differences as significant markers of difference.[88] Instead, the formal declaration of allegiance and patriclans formed the basis of group belonging. Ethnicity and tribes as a form of categorisation began to emerge as the result of interactions that Sekwati, his subchiefs and their subjects, had with the migrant labour system and Afrikaner settlers.

The Development of Afrikaner Settlement and Migrant Labour (1837-1861)

In 1837, the first Afrikaner trekkers who encountered Northern Sotho communities were led by Louis Trichardt who settled in the northern Transvaal.[89] A second group made contact in 1845, led by Andries Hendrik Potgieter. Around 300 Afrikaner families were granted access to land between the Steelpoort River and the Leolo mountain range. Potgieter's group created the first Afrikaner settlement in the region, Ohrigstad, in that same year.[90] Relations between the Afrikaner settlers and Northern Sotho communities were friendly at first. However, "accusation and counter accusations of stock-theft and encroachment of land"[91] resulted in Potgieter attacking Sekwati's capital, Phiring, in 1847 and 1852. Sekwati moved his capital to Thaba-Mosego (Mosego-Hill) from Phiring in the hopes of preventing conflict between Northern Sotho communities and Afrikaner settlers.[92] In 1849, the Transvaal Republic (Volksraad) was established by Hendrik Potgieter and his followers.[93] By 1852, the Volksraad signed a peace agreement with chief Sekwati – the paramount chief. In this agreement, the entire Northern

[85] According to Sansom, the paramount could command the regiments of his home chiefdom, but he also relied on subordinate chiefs to mobilise their own age regiments. B. Sansom, 'Traditional Rulers and their Realms", p270
[86] B. Sansom, 'Traditional Rulers and their Realms", p.271
[87] D. Wright, "What do you mean there were no tribes in Africa?", p.421
[88] J. Arndt, *Divided by the Word,* p.115
[89] Monnig, *The Pedi,* p.24
[90] K.W Smith "The Fall of the Bapedi of the North-Eastern Transvaal", *The Journal of African History*,10, 2, 1969, p.237
[91] H. Mönnig, *The* Pedi, p.24,
[92] H. Mönnig, *The* Pedi, p.24
[93] H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: A Biography of a People,* London, Hurst & Company, 2003, p.173

Sotho federation was referred to as the 'Bapedi.'[94] This term was used to set these Sotho-speakers apart from other Sotho-speaking groups, namely the Tswana under chief Mokgatle in the Rustenburg districts.[95]

Attacks and counterattacks continued until 17 November 1857, when Sekwati and the Volksraad Republic signed the *Vredernstractaat* (peace treaty).[96] This treaty was one of many which allowed the Volksraad to "regularize [sic] relationships with African chiefdoms."[97] The treaty also demarcated tracts of land within the Transvaal for Afrikaner settlement. Afrikaner settlements were divided into three settlement centres in the Transvaal region, in the south-west settlers under Marthinus Wessel Pretorius called themselves the South African Republic (Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek or ZAR) and agreed on a constitution in 1855; later in 1858, a Zoutpansberg group led by Stephanus Schoeman joined the republic.[98] In 1860, Afrikaners in the Lyndenburg[99] signed the Republic's constitution. Political differences between Afrikaner settlements made it difficult for Afrikaners to establish unified political co-operation throughout the region. This constitution did not translate into a unified Afrikaner stance with regards to Afrikaner interactions with African communities.[100]

Delius notes, collaboration took place between Afrikaners in Lydenberg and Northern Sotho speaking communities, particularly on ivory hunting expeditions. However, settlers also sought to extract labour from independent African communities to work on their farms. Delius argues that "[t]rekkers were not in a position to extract labour or tribute on a systematic basis"[101] from black Africans. Giliomee argues that "acquiring African labour was a high priority"[102] for Afrikaner settlers. Thus, settlers relied on a mix of coercive labour from neighbouring chiefdoms and their own servants, called *inboekselings.*[103] The *inboekselings* institution was

[94] A Short History of the Native Tribes of the Transvaal, 1905, Collection no.A1655, D. Hunt Papers, Historical Papers, The Library, University of Witswatersrand, Johannesburg, p.30
[95] F. Morten, "Fenders of Space: Kgatla Territorial Expansion under Boer and British Rule, 1840 – 1920" in (ed). P. Limb, N. Etherington & P. Midgley, *Grappling with the Beast: Indigenous Southern African Responses to Colonialism, 1840 – 1930,* Leiden, Brill, 2010, p.27
[96] P. Delius 'The Pedi Polity', p.50-52
[97] P. Delius, *The Land Belongs to Us,* p131
[98] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond: Mission Strategies, African Conversion and the Development of a Christian Cultural in the Transvaal,* Hamburg, Lit Verlag, 2001, p.79
[99] Rüther states, "Ohrigstad was a second centre of settlement in 1845 and was transferred to Lydenburg in 1850 due to bad climate", in K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond,* p.80
[100] *Ibid,* p.79
[101] P. Delius, *The Land Belongs to Us,* p.35
[102] H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners,* p.167
[103] Delius notes that these were often black African or children of mixed descent from the Cape Colony who were captured by Boer trekkers. These children became indentured labourers. Female children would work until 21 and male children would work until 25. During labour shortages the Boers would raid neighbouring Pedi polities for child labour and cattle, this did result in a lot of tension between Boers and Pedi from as early as Sekwati's reign but it reached its peak during Sekhukhune's reign. P. Delius, 'The Pedi Polity', p.58 -59

"derived in part from the apprenticeship laws promulgated in the Cape Colony in 1775 and 1812 which allowed for the indenturing of Khoekhoe and slave children."[104] Rev. Merensky of the BMS noted in the late 1800s that *inboekselings* were the Afrikaners major source of labour.[105] However in 1852, a major exodus of *inboekselings* out of the Transvaal occurred as the group headed to Natal.[106] The Afrikaners lost a large portion of their labourers. Potgieter, along with other Afrikaners, began increasing their demands for tributes from Sekwati and other subchiefs, requesting children in particular. The Afrikaners' demands were met with black African refusal to comply, chiefs continued to deny labourers to Afrikaner settlers. In response, Afrikaners would raid Northern Sotho chiefdoms, seizing women and children. The children were "registered and indentured by officials of the Republic"[107] and became the post-1852 *inboekselings*.

As previously discussed, in the Northern Sotho federation, a chief derived power from its people. The provision of labourers from a cattle-based economy to an Afrikaner economy would have at some level, undermined the kinship ties and obligations which bound Northern Sotho communities. Settlers argued that they had liberated Africans in the region from Ndebele rule and in doing so, created a myth that the territories they settled on had been empty land.[108] However, the Afrikaners could not legitimise their claims to labour because they had not accumulated enough guns, cattle, or land to compel (or coerce) Sekwati and his subchiefs into labour. The federation remained – much to the dismay of settlers – unwilling to provide the much-needed labourers for Afrikaners because of the federation's internal labour structure. Production within chiefdoms was determined by each individual *kgoro,* which was responsible for the production of grain and other foodstuff. Women worked in their own *mašimo,* or their father's *serapa,*[109] harvesting grain. Women, according to Delius, were often coerced into unpaid seasonal labour for Afrikaner farmers in the region. However, Afrikaner farmers required labourers who would work for longer periods of time. Whilst Afrikaner demands for labour increased, Northern Sotho speaking men began to engage in migrant labour.

During the late 1840s, Sekwati initiated the first large scale flow of labour out of the region. According to Delius, Sekwati sent three regiments –two to the Cape Colony and one regiment

[104] P. Delius, *The Land Belongs to Us* , p.35
[105] P. Delius, *The Land Belongs,* p.136
[106] P. Delius, *The Land Belongs,* p.37
[107] H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaner,* p.167
[108] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond,* p.79
[109] A portion of land entitled to men. H. Mönnig, *The Pedi*, p.153

to Delagoa Bay – and they returned with firearms.[110] The opening of the diamond fields coincided with a period of mounting pressure on land as Northern Sotho populations had swelled due to constant streams of refugees entering the region.[111] The issues did not stem from a complete absence of arable land among the population. Instead, there was a scarcity of high-quality land, and acquiring grazing land, agricultural resources, and resilience to drought posed significant challenges for the Northern Sotho communities.[112] In response to local pressures, men who had undergone their initiation were 'sent out' to work in regimental groups.[113] According to Cherryl Walker, unmarried 'Pedi' men[114] became migrant workers, returning to the Lulu mountain region after acquiring currency, which could then be used to buy ammunition, firearms, and hoes from general stores in Kimberly and other towns. These goods were used as a new form of exchange for bride-wealth (*lobola/bogadi*). By the end of his reign in 1861, Sekwati commanded between 60 000 to 70 000 subjects with an army of 12 000 – a third of which were armed with firearms from migrant labourers.[115] Unmarried men also migrated to the Kimberly mines for reasons outside of marriage: mines "offered higher wages than the farms."[116]

In Kimberly, a wide range of black African labourers working on diamond fields created a need for the creation of a list of 'tribes' from which black African labour was drawn. Digging fields such as Dutoitspan and Colesberg Kopje created an archive of the different 'tribes' from these lists.[117] The first Native Registrar W.J. Coleman, kept a record of labourers according to "a rough tribal division, which reflected the tribe to which the servant belonged rather than the place from which he came."[118] This is important to note because colonial officials such as Lieutenant governor Richard Southey and Colonial secretary John Currey used Coleman's records "authoritatively in discussion and policy making."[119] The first returns of "Servants registered" list was published in December 1872 (recording registered black Africans from 1 August until the 31 October 1872) reflected the following:

[110] P. Delius "Migrant labour and the Pedi, 1840-80", p.305
[111] *Ibid,* p.304
[112] P. Delius "Migrant labour and the Pedi, 1840-80", p.305
[113] *Ibid,* p.306
[114] C. Walker, 'Gender and the Development of the Migrant Labour System c.1830 – 1930: an overview' in *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945* ed. C. Walker, London, 1990, p. 172
[115] H. Mönnig, *The Pedi,* p.25
[116] W. K. Storey, *Guns, Race and Power in Colonial South Africa,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2008, p.122
[117] R. Siebörger, 'The Recruitment and Organisation of African Labour for the Kimberly diamond mines, 1871 -1888', MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1975, p.3
[118] R. Siebörger, 'The Recruitment and Organisation of African Labour', p.3
[119] *Ibid,* p.3

> Hottentots 273; Basuto 814; Soshanganas (Zulus from North of Delagoa) 476; Mahawas 6350; Colonial 722; Kaffrarians 106; Mantatees 383; Batlapin 55; Swazi 6; Coolies 6; Baralong -not given; Griquas 13; Mozambique 2.[120]

Siebörger's notes the term 'Mahawa' was "used as a blanket term for tribesmen from the Soutpanberg [sic]"[121], a region which some Vhavenḓa and Vatsonga communities are found. Other terms such as "Seccoeni Basuto and Magata Basuto"[122] were used in earlier records (until the 1880s) but were discarded in favour of the "Mahawa" label. Siebörger shows that various communities played a significant part in the diamond fields but also how official records did not consider the ways in which labourers self-identified. As I have shown earlier in the chapter, the diversity in the region and the political structures within the Northern Sotho federation may have created a common culture. Early mining records do not specifically refer to the different 'subgroups' (local chiefdoms) of the Northern Sotho, instead it was assumed that 'common cultures' constituted a homogenous group – being the 'Pedi'. A common culture did not equate to a political alliance to Sekwati (or his successor Sekhukhune) but the idea of a 'tribe' called the 'Pedi' and (or) related labels such as 'Mahawa' began to emerge in both Afrikaner official records and mining records.

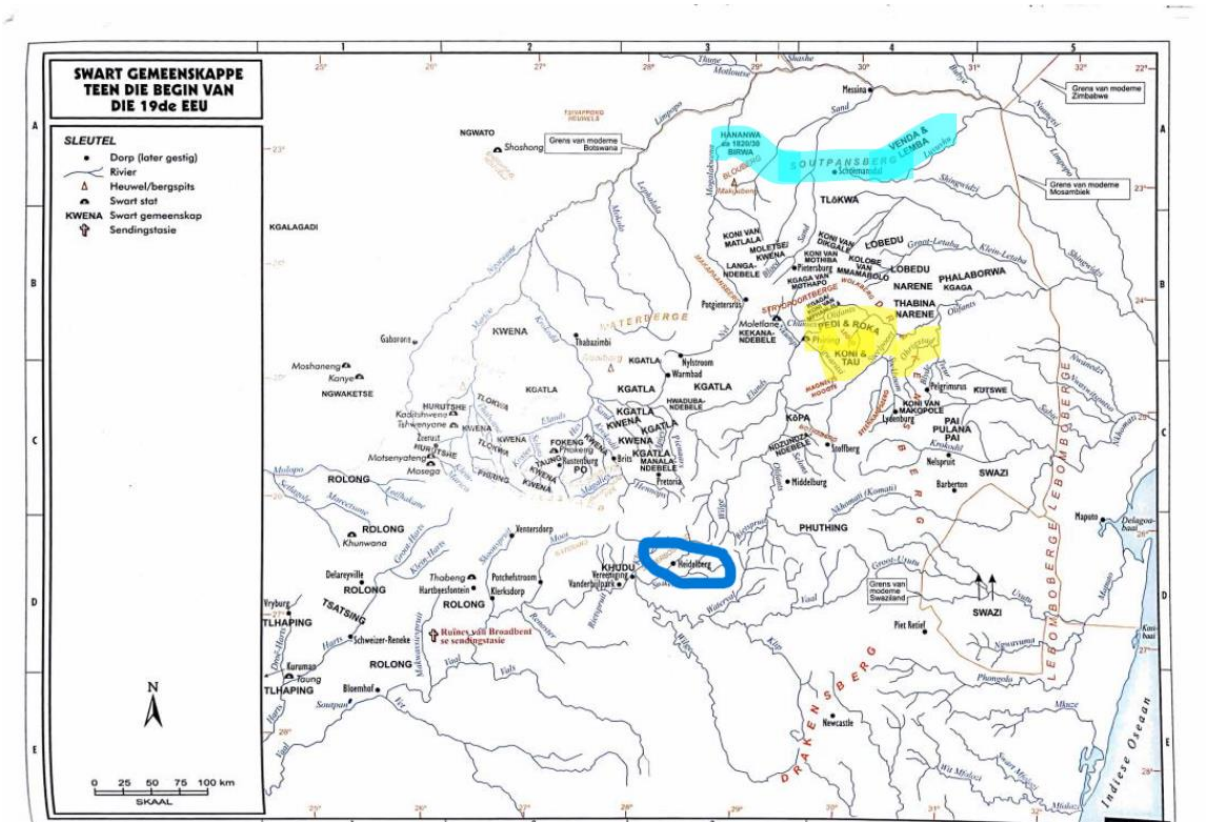
I place these two historical events – the development of Afrikaner settlement and Northern Sotho involvement in the migrant labour system – in conversation with one another for multiple reasons. Firstly, Afrikaner expansion into this region after the consolidation of the Northern Sotho federation created a need for the paramount and his subchiefs to defend their subjects, through the acquisition of firearms. Secondly, *Difaqane* refugees moving into the federation needed to secure resources such as firearms to integrate into the communities, without depending too heavily on the patronage of the *bakgomana*.[123] Thirdly, the federation was under threat from the Zulu, Swazi, Ndebele and Afrikaners who surrounded them.[124] Fourthly, there was an absence of accessible markets for firearms in the north-eastern Transvaal until the 1870s.[125] While trade for grain and ivory existed between Afrikaner and Northern Sotho communities, the paramount and his subordinate chiefs faced Zulu and Afrikaner cattle raids during the early 1850s into the 1870s.[126] The development of Afrikaner settlement and access

[120] *Ibid,* p.4
[121] *Ibid,* p.4
[122] R. Siebörger, 'The Recruitment and Organisation of African Labour', p.5
[123] P. Delius "Migrant labour and the Pedi, 1840-80", p.300
[124] *Ibid,* p.301
[125] *Ibid,* p.302
[126] *Ibid,* p.302

to firearms from the Cape can be seen as reasons which underpinned the decision to engage in migrant labour.

Lastly, the records produced by mining houses[127] and Afrikaner settlers do explicitly mention, the 'Pedi', and are black Africans referred to as belonging to a specific ethnicity. Additionally, these records reflect the beginnings of knowledge production on African communities in the Transvaal. To better understand the link between ethnicity, tribe, and nation, created on the diamond fields about black Africans and records produced by Afrikaner settlers forged a political, ethnic and(or) tribal link between the Northern Sotho paramount chief and all the inhabitants of the Northern Sotho region – making them his subjects *in the text*. To further illustrate this point, a map from The *Geskiedenisatlas van Suid-Afrika, die vier noordelike provinsies* edited by Johan Bergh, has been inserted the map illustrates African communities in the Transvaal at the beginning of the 19th century, two highlighted terms "Soutpansberg" and "Pedi" show that Bapedi lived in a very different part of the Transvaal as mining records suggest, which shows that at least according to record keepers, the 'Mahawa' who came from the north of Middleburg (encircled in blue) were from the 'Pedi tribe', regardless of the heterogeneity of the region – as illustrated by the map.

[127] According to the records by Siebörger, terms like 'Pedi' were interchangeable with the term "Mahawa" which "was used as a blanket term for tribesmen from the Soutpansberg, the great majority of whom were Sekhukhune's Pedi." p.4



[Figure 2: A map of the Transvaal and the African communities in this region, during the 19th century. From *Geskiedenisatlas van Suid-Afrika: die vier noordelike provinsies* by Johan Bergh, Pretoria, Van Schaik, 1998.]

However, these political, ethnic, and tribal links did not exist – especially along the peripheries and within independent chiefdoms, because until 1848 regions north of Middleburg were marked by political fluidity and shifting political alliances regardless of ethnic identity or language.[128]

The idea of ethnic and tribal division can be traced back to eighteenth century thinkers such as Gottfied W. Leibniz and Johann Gottfried von Herder, who both believed that language was a defining characteristic of a people (nation or people, *Völker*).[129] Afrikaner settlers, Native Registrars and (later) missionaries from the eighteenth century onwards adopted this thinking. Although Patrick Harries' study is centred on Swiss missionaries, one can use this study to observe how Afrikaner settlers, the Native Registrar, and later missionaries, "applied the political term 'tribe', derived from the classics, to a linguistically-defined community."[130] Thus, language was used to create order and the "reification of an idea (a linguistic category invented by human beings) into a social group (a natural tribe or race) had important political

[128] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond,* p.81
[129] A. Kirkaldy & L. Kriel, "Converts and Conservatives: Missionary Representations of African Rulers in the Northern Transvaal, c.1870 – 1990" *Le Fait Missionnaire (LFM) Social Sciences and Missions,* 18, 2006, p.111
[130] P. Harries, *Butterflies and Barbarians: Swiss Missionaries and Systems of Knowledge in South-East Africa,* Oxford, James Curry Ltd, 2007, p.164

consequences."[131] Thus, the development of Sepedi, which during the late nineteenth-century was only one of many Northern Sotho dialects, required ethnographic and anthropological proficiency which was usually found in missionary circles. This is not to suggest that Northern Sotho communities had not already been "deeply drawn into 'long conversation' with colonialism"[132] – and as discussed above –categorised into various groupings often associated with ethnographic work. It does, however, suggest that the missionary development of a Northern Sotho (Sesotho sa Leboa) orthography fused a linguistic category with the social group of 'tribes' to co-constitute 'Pedi' as an ethnic category.

Before discussing the work of missionaries and how missionary encounters facilitated the process of knowledge production on the Northern Sotho, it is important to note that migrant labour introduced Christianity to migrant men. Prior to 1865, when the BMS began establishing mission stations in the Transvaal, migrant men who became "converts did not automatically lose land and family rights or political privileges as long as they proved loyal to traditional authorities."[133] But in later years, especially after 1865, Christian conversion required "a break from the tradition [sic] of the past and it came more easily to those who had already endured disruption"[134] – namely the *Difaqane*. Early male converts acted as interlocutors[135] who engaged in dialogue with missionaries about themselves, a precolonial past and their immediate surroundings. Some of the first male Christian converts in the region were from the Bakôpa, Boleu and Pedi chiefdoms. During the early period of missionary expansion into the region, "Christianity remained a male and thus political concern."[136] Missionary expansion into the Transvaal brought these 'long conversations' into different parts of the Northern Sotho federation. However, whilst these 'long conversations' occurred,

[131] P. Harries, 'Anthropology' in (ed). N. Etherington, *Missions and Empire,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, p.244
[132] J. du Bruyn, "Of Muffled Southern Tswana and Overwhelming Missionaries: The Comaroffs and the Colonial Encounter", *South African Historical Journal,* 31, 10, 1994, p.301 Jean and John Comaroff, note that the 'long conversation' is a multiplicity of interaction which gave rise to "a conversation full of arguments of words and images-many of the signifiers of the colonising culture became unfixed. They were seized by the Africans and, sometimes refashioned, put to symbolic and practical ends previously unforeseen, certainly unintended. Conversely, some of the ways of the Africans interpolated themselves, again detached and transformed, into the habitus of the missionaries. Here, then, was a process in which signifiers were set afloat, fought over, and recaptured on both sides of the colonial encounter. What is more, this encounter led to the objectification of "the" culture of the colonised in opposition to that of the whites. The "natives," that is, began to conceive of their own conventions as an integrated, closed "system" to which they could and did attach an abstract noun (setswana). The most curious feature of the process, however, is that, notwithstanding the rejection and transformation of many elements of "the" European worldview, its forms became authoritatively inscribed on the African landscape. Not only did colonialism produce reified cultural orders; it gave rise to a new hegemony amidst-and despite-cultural contestation." In J. Comaroff & J Comaroff*, Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa,* Vol 1, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1991, p.17-18
[133] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond,* p.85
[134] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond,* p.85
[135] L. Kriel, 'Historical Context' in *Ethnography from the Mission Field: The Hoffmann Collection of Cultural Knowledge,* (ed). A. Joubert, G. M.M Grobler, I. M Kosche & L. Kriel, Lieden, Brill, 2015, p.17
[136] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond,* p.95

political and economic changes also arose within the region, especially after Sekwati's death in 1861. After Sekwati's death, his son, Sekhukhune I, became his successor. Throughout Sekhukhune's reign (1861 – 1882), internal political disputes and external economic and political changes created a new kind of entity– a localised chiefdom the 'Pedi' became a term used for all Northern Sotho speakers, thus according to colonial officials, Northern Sotho speakers were known as the 'Bapedi tribe.'

The Berlin Mission Society and the Nascent Development of Pedi ethnicity (1861 - 1900)

The BMS, initially called the "Society for the Promotion of Protestant Mission amongst the Heathen" was founded on 29 February 1824[137] in eastern provinces of then Prussia. It was created "by a group of pious scholars, including Johann Neander (1789-1859) and F.A.G Tholuck (1799- 1877), with support from the German Lutheran churches."[138] In 1833, the society sent missionaries to the Cape Colony to "work with the Koarana-Khoi."[139] After consultation with ZAR authorities at Lydenburg, the BMS was permitted to expand their mission activity amongst three Sotho chiefs: Sekwati, Mabhogo and Boleu.[140] Missionaries were initially advised to work with the Bakopa chiefdom ruled by *kgoši* Boleu at Thabantsho (near Groblersdal), and established the first BMS mission station in the Transvaal on the 14 August 1861.[141]

Missionary expansion also required the consent of African rulers, who according to Kirkaldy, allowed missionaries to operate in their domain for various reasons. Rulers thought missionaries would provide them and their subjects with firearms. Missionaries would act as intermediaries between Africans and encroaching settlers and would bring Western education and medicine to enhance traditional institutions.[142] In 1861, missionaries Reverend Merensky and Albert Nachtigal approached *kgoši* Sekwati at his capital in Thaba Mosega, where the two missionaries requested permission to establish a second mission station. According to the BMS mission reports entitled *Mission Reports of the Society for the Promotion of Evangelical Missions among the Heathen in Berlin for the Year 1861,* Merensky and Nachtigal were

[137] G. Pakendorf, "A Brief History of the Berlin Mission Society in South Africa", *History Compass,* 9, 2, 2011, p.107
[138] I. Hexham & K. Poewe, 'The Spread of Christianity among Whites and Blacks in Transorangia' in *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social and Cultural History* (ed.) by R. Elphick and R. Davenport (Berkley, 1997), p.130
[139] J. Arndt "Missionaries, Africans and the Emergence of Xhosa and Zulu as Distinct Languages in South Africa, 1800-54." PhD Dissertation, University of Illinois, 2015, p.27
[140] S. P.P Mminele, "The Berlin Missionary Enterprise at Botshabelo, 1865 – 1955: An Historical Educational Study", MA Dissertation, University of the North (Sovenga), 1983, p.21
[141] S. P.P Mminele, "The Berlin Missionary Enterprise at Botshabelo", p.21
[142] A. Kirkaldy, "The Missionary Impact: The Northern Transvaal in the Late Nineteenth Century", *History Compass,* 7,3,2009, p.604

expected to "gain friendly relations with Setwati, and then obtain more reliable information about the Peli, especially about the chief Setwati."[143] The missionaries did not establish a station in Sewati's capital, Thaba Mosego because Landrost Potgieter and Lydenburg General Joseph van Dyk informed them about the continuous battles between the Swazi and 'Peli.'[144] Instead, the missionaries established a mission away from Sekwati's capital and were permitted to establish Kgalatlou station in *kgoši* Mametše's village (currently known as Ga-Seopela).[145] In 1863 and in 1864, two further stations were established in Phatametsane under Rev. Carl Endemann, and Ga-Ratau under Merensky.[146] Within an estimated 20 years. The BMS established the following mission stations:

> Pretoria (1866), Waterberg, alias Modimulle (1867), Tshuaneng, later Neu-Halle, and Wallmannsthal (1869), Potchefstroom (1872), Heidelberg (1875), Woyenthin (1884) and Johannesburg (1887) – in the south and east of Sekwati's realm and the following rural stations; Ga Matlale (1865), Malokung and Tutloane (1867), Blauberg (1868), Makchabeng (1870), Ga Moletse (1877), Mphome (1878) and Medigen (1881).[147]

This cluster of mission stations covered a vast area of the Transvaal from the Blauwaberg to the Leolo mountains, along the Lewuwu River in the north and to the south along an "imaginary line connecting Pretoria, Botshabelo and Lydenburg"[148] loosely encircling Sekwati's 'Pedi' and other Northern Sotho groups. According to Rüther, missionaries were interested in "issues of ethnic homogeneity, nationhood and nationality"[149] which was underpinned by the influence of German linguist and founder of *Afrikanistik* (German African Studies), Carl Meinhof. Meinhof and his students (Rev. Merensky, Rev. Hoffmannn and N.J Van Warmelo) "saw language as a means not only to study individual African cultures, but also to chart African history and determine how different ethnic groups and 'races' were interconnected."[150] Thus, language, according to missionaries was a tool, linking individuals and kinship group members, learning a language inducted the youth into the broader 'tribe.'[151] Additionally, missionaries

[143] Berlin Mission Society, *Mission Reports of the Society for the Promotion of Evangelical Missions among the Heathen in Berlin for the Year 1861,* Berlin, Wilhelm Schultze, 1861, p. 298
[144] *Ibid,* p.298
[145] S. P.P Mminele, "The Berlin Missionary Enterprise at Botshabelo", p. 23
[146] P. Delius, *The Land Belongs,* p.108
[147] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond: Mission Strategies, African Conversion and the Development of a Christian Culture in the Transvaal,* Hamburg, Lit Verlag, 2001, p.101
[148] K. Rüther, "Through the Eyes of Missionaries and the Archives They Created: The Interwoven Histories of Power and Authority in the Nineteenth Century Transvaal", *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 38, 2, 2012, p.378
[149] K. Rüther, "Through the Eyes of Missionaries, p.378
[150] S. Pugach, "Carl Meinhoff and the German influence on Nicholas van Warmelo's ethnological and linguistic writings, 1927 – 1935", *Journal of African Studies,* 30, 4, 2004, p.827
[151] P. Kallaway, "German Lutheran Missions, German Anthropology and Science in African Colonial Education" in (ed.) P Kallaway and R. Swartz, *Empire and Education in Africa: The Shaping of a Comparative Perspective,* Pietermaritzburg, University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal Press, 2019, p.222

were geographically placed around the different Northern Sotho communities which reinforced missionaries' commitment to the idea of *volkskirche* (politically and culturally united national or ethnic church).[152] Missionaries did not only work amongst Northern Sotho communities, but also established mission stations amongst the AmaNdebele and Vhavenḓa. Berlin missionaries envisioned themselves as a 'Pedi mission' and cultivated this image by comparing and modelling the "characteristics of smaller Sotho and Ndebele communities with the 'national Pedi character.'"[153] This process began in Germany with the training of Berlin Mission missionaries.

According to Kriel, each missionary was expected to spend a year in Berlin (as most missionaries came from rural areas in what is now Germany) prior to taking up his studies, followed by five years of training at the seminary. After his final examination, while preparing for his departure to the mission, he had to secure a marriage partner and become engaged. The wedding itself could only take place two years later, when the missionary had been ordained.[154] Upon their arrival at the mission station, missionaries began to produce monographs on ethnography, geography, and politics with the help of their Northern Sotho interlocutors.[155] By engaging in the acquisition and documentation of Northern Sotho dialects, particularly dialects spoken by the Pedi and Bakôpa, missionaries, notably those stationed at Botshabelo, embarked on the process of standardising the linguistic framework of the Northern Sotho *volk*. In this endeavour, language was strategically employed as a delineator of ethnicity.

From 1861 until 1876, Berlin missionaries used the London Mission Society's 'Setswana' orthography in their BMS preliminary Northern Sotho orthography, because prior to 1862, the BMS "considered Pedi to belong to the Tswana language."[156] The 'Pedi' dialect, spoken by inhabitants of the Tšate village, was initially used "in writing by the missionaries and the Bible was translated into it."[157] However, after 1865, the Kôpa and Pedi dialects began to influence the written Northern Sotho language.[158] The BMS's reliance on the Kôpa and Nothern Sotho dialects reinforced the relationship between language and ethnic categorisation outside of mission station. However, the BMS missionaries' records do reflect that they thought of their

[152] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond,* p.102
[153] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond,* p.101
[154] L. Kriel "Historical Context" in *Ethnography from the Mission Field: The Hoffmann Collection of Cultural Knowledge,* (ed). A. Joubert, G.M.M. Grobler, I.M. Kosch & L.Kriel, Leiden, Brill, 2015, p.22
[155] K. Rüther, "Through the Eyes of Missionaries and the Archives They Created", p.381
[156] I. Kosch, "German-speaking pioneers in African linguistics", p.3
[157] D. Ziervogel, *Handbook of the Speech Sound Changes of the Bantu Languages of South Africa,* (ed). D. Ziervogel, Pretoria, University of South Africa, 1967, p.16
[158] *Ibid,* p.16

converts as individuals from different independent chiefdoms. Later, the various dialects and chiefdoms in which those dialects had been spoken, were co-opted into the blanket term "Northern Sotho."

In this chapter, I have referred to Pedi (Sepedi) as a dialect, instead of a language. This is because the surrounding the Transvaal hosted a multiplicity of regional dialects associated with independent chiefdoms such as Kôpa, Selebele-Sotho, Molepo, Mamabolo, Mothiba, Mothapo, Makgoba, Kone, Tau, Raka, Moletlane, Hananwa, Tlokwa, Matlala, Moletši, Lobedu, Palaborwa, Kgaga, Tswapo, Pai, Pulana and Kutswe dialects.[159] Mokgokong has classified the Northern Sotho dialects into four clusters: Central Sotho dialect cluster (Pedi, Tau, Kone, Mphahlele); Eastern Sotho dialect cluster (Pulana, Khutšwe, Pai); North Eastern Sotho dialect cluster (Lobedu, Phalaborwa, Kgaga or Khaha) and North Western Sotho dialect cluster (Hanawa, Matlala, Tlokwa, Mamabolo, and Birwa).[160] Mojela's study on the development of a Northern Sotho vocabulary emphasises the collaboration between BMS missionaries, such as Carl Endemann and the first generation of Christian converts – both men and women – who contributed to the development of the written language by participating in language boards and language committees.[161] As a result, the "standard Northern Sotho language is an amalgamation of dialects such as Pedi, Kôpa, and the dialects spoken in the areas around Pietersburg-Polokwane, Mokerong, Naboomspruit, Nylstroom and Warmbaths."[162] The language written by missionaries and their African interlocutors developed from the Central Sotho and North Western Sotho dialect clusters, unintentionally giving these dialects prestige, while unwritten dialects were regarded as inferior by missionaries and converts.[163] This idea of a 'superior' Northern Sotho language was reinforced by the schools established by the BMS in mission stations, where the orthographic system – based on Roman script was developed and disseminated to school-going converts.[164]

At the mission stations, grammatical rules were developed such as use of the "hl" (as in *hlaba* 'to stab') instead of the Tswana "tlh" (*tlhaba).*[165] Other alternatives are also used to create a distinction between the two speaking communities, such as the use of "š"; "tš"; and "tša"

[159] T. Rakgogo & E. Zungu, "The elevation of Sepedi from a Dialect to an Official Standard Language: Cultural and Economic power and Political Influence Matter", *Literator,* 43,1, 2022, p.3
[160] V.M Mojela, 'Prestige Terminology and it Consequences in the Development of Northern Sotho Vocabulary', Doctoral Dissertation, University of South Africa, 1999, p.164
[161] *Ibid,* p.163
[162] *Ibid,* p.163
[163] V.M Mojela, 'Prestige Terminology and its Consequences', p.164
[164] *Ibid,* p.163
[165] D. Zievergovel, *Handbook of the Speech Sounds,* p.17

instead of the Tswana, "s"; "ts" and "tsh."[166] The use of the suffix "go" or "ng" (as in *monna yo a sepelago* – 'that man who is walking'[167] also illustrates the difference between Sepedi and other Sotho speaking groups. The suffix "go" or "ng" is always used to indicate some sort of movement for example, *a re yeng toropong* ('let us go to town'). The word *torop* – without the suffix – means 'town'; adding the "ng" illustrates that a speaker is moving towards an object. Neither Tswana nor Sesotho make use of the "go" or "ng" suffix. The act of documenting and codifying the Sepedi script, along with its accompanying grammatical principles, established an orthographic system that could be employed by missionaries and adherents alike.[168] This illustrates how this newly transcribed language, referred to as Northern Sotho, laid the foundation for the constitution of a cohesive 'Pedi' community, whose constituents not only spoke and acquired proficiency in this language, but also acquired the ability to write in it. As missionaries implemented this orthographic system, it served to establish a connection between Sepedi as an abstract linguistic entity and the notion of a distinct 'Pedi' community.[169] This development facilitated the translation of religious texts into Northern Sotho for the benefit of the convert and for missionaries, "language unified their field of operation."[170]

A seminal goal for the BMS, like other mission enterprises in Southern Africa, was the creation of a vernacular Bible for converts. Missionaries "were obliged to commit the vernacular to writing as soon as possible after their arrival in the mission field so as to facilitate the learning process."[171] The process of translating the Bible into vernacular occurred within a larger "religious and national engineering"[172] project – a Northern Sotho ethnic project. The BMS' Northern Sotho identity hinged on three factors: "cultural broker[sic] (missionaries, anthropologist, historian and local intellectuals), the introduction of indirect rule, and the demarcation of ethnic boundaries and the search for 'traditional values'".[173] Thus, to understand how the Northern Sotho – as a 'tribal' group – manifested into an ethnicity and subject of knowledge, I have provided an outline of the texts produced by the BMS in the late 1860s into the 1880s. This illustrates how texts produced by BMS missionaries and local Christian converts "created a field of discourse that became the basis of a new collective

[166] *Ibid,* p.17
[167] *Ibid,* p.17
[168] P. Harries, *Butterflies and Barbarians,* p.167
[169] P. Harries, *Butterflies and Barbarians* p.165
[170] *Ibid,* p.166
[171] I. Kosch, "German-speaking pioneers in African linguistics and literature with special reference to Northern Sotho", *South African Journal of African Languages,* 13,2, 1993, p.2
[172] K. Rüther "Conversion and Religious Change in the Pedi Kingdom, South Africa: A world in Motion, at Home and Abroad" in (ed). K. Rüther, A. Schaser & J van Gent, *Gender and Conversion Narratives in the Nineteenth Century German Mission at Home and Abroad,* Burlington, Ashgate Publishing Company, 2015, p.123
[173] K. Poewe & U. Van Der Heyden, "The Berlin Mission Society", p.8

identity."[174] The texts existence, illustrates a collaboration between missionaries and black African interlocutors and the emergence of a new way of being Northern Sotho.

There are many ways in which this collaboration could have manifested. Although records do not reflect how Africans perceived this collaborative process themselves, we do know that Africans and missionaries had their own ideas about what they were recording and preserving in these texts. As Rüther suggests:

> Berlin missionaries not only described how people moved within *their* sight and out of it – they created for them a separate realm of detailed description, which they claimed was objective. Africans were not ignorant of this process and by the later nineteenth century, were struggling for the appropriate means to challenge this discursively fixed knowledge. Patrick Harries has discussed the distinct, yet similar, role of a Swiss missionary, Henri-Alexandre Junod. Junod, he writes, belonged to those 'European intellectuals [who] were brought by their vocation from a country without colonies to deep rural areas of Africa, [and] formulated and debated, ordered, and arranged knowledge about Africa'. [175]

Whilst Berlin missionaries co-authored texts on their subject the Northern Sotho for readers in Germany, for fundraising, and for the sake of creating knowledge, mission records do reflect that there was an awareness of the various chiefdoms in the Transvaal, as some records refer to groups such as the Boleu, Hanawa or the Mamabolo as separate political entities with very little (if any) ties to the Pedi. Outside the mission context, these various communities were seen as belonging to a single ethnic group, the Northern Sotho. Occasionally, missionaries, themselves could have abandoned a localised community name and used the collective term such as *Basotho ba Leboa* or *Baoth oba Transfala – Leboa.*

Texts produced for German readers included *Ledensbilder aus Südafrika* (Life Portraits from South Africa), published in 1871 by Berlin Mission Director Rev. Herman Theodor Wangemann. *Ledensbilder* recorded "a selection of stories of Pedi men and women who converted in the dramatically brief time span between roughly 1860 and 1864."[176] The lives of Jan Mafadi and Jacob Mantladi – two migrants who encountered Christianity in the Cape, Martinus Sewúshan – a *Difaqane* refugee who became Sekwati's gunsmith, and Josef Kathedi – a blind man who gained missionaries' admiration for his eloquence – were featured in this

[174] D. Maxwell, *Religious Entanglements: Central African Pentecostalism, the Creation of Cultural Knowledge and the Making of the Luba Katanga,* Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin Press, 2022, p.181
[175] K. Rüther, "Through the Eyes of Missionaries and the Archives They Created", p.381
[176] K. Rüther "Conversion and Religious Change in the Pedi Kingdom, South Africa: A world in Motion, at Home and Abroad" in (ed). K. Rüther, A. Schaser & J van Gent, *Gender and Conversion Narratives in the Nineteenth Century German Mission at Home and Abroad,* Burlington, Ashgate Publishing Company, 2015, p.111

text.[177] In the 1862 issue of *Berliner Missionsberichte* (Berlin Mission Monthly Reports), Rev. Merensky published reports on the *ethno*history of the inhabitants of the Transvaal. His "sources were largely oral traditions as recounted by elder members"[178] of the various communities amongst whom he conducted his mission field work.

Merensky published reports on Northern Sotho speakers, published in 1861 entitled "*Beiträge zur Geshichte de Bapeli*" (Contributions to the History of the Bapeli).[179] This article also refers to the inhabitants of this region as the "Bapeli" or "Bapedi." Rev. Hermann Wangemann, a contemporary of linguist Meinhof, developed his own specific linguistic methodology which was twofold: firstly, conversations with Sotho speakers were recorded in writing and secondly, missionaries were tasked with both learning the grammar and studying Northern Sotho drawings and music. This methodology resulted in Rev. Rudolph F.G Trumpelmann's translation of Biblical parables and German hymns into SeSotho between 1868 and 1869.[180] Rev. Carl Endemann created the "first authoritative grammar on Northern Sotho"[181] in 1876, entitled *Versuch einer Grammatik des Sotho* (An Attempt at the Grammar of the Sotho). Endemann was primarily concerned with creating a Northern Sotho orthography[182] and spent seven years studying Northern Sotho sound systems from black African interlocutors.

After developing a set of Northern Sotho grammatical rules, Carl Endemann complied "first Northern Sotho dictionary" entitled *Wörterbuch der Sotho-Sprache,* published in 1911 and consists of 727 pages.[183] Although, the standardisation of a Northern Sesotho orthography was a patchwork project after Endemann's initial attempts in 1876 and 1911. Kosch notes that there were "inconsistencies in the writing system."[184] Second generation missionary, Carl Hoffmannn's (1894-1943) writings were the most consistent texts, gradually tracing the changes in orthography from 1913 to 1958. The Northern Sotho grammar and vocabulary was in a constant state of flux but still used by missionaries to translate the Bible, and in other

[177] *Ibid,* p.121 [conversion]
[178] U. van de Heyden, "The Archives and Library of the Berlin Mission Society", *History of Africa,* 23, 1996, p417
[179] I. Kosch, "German-speaking pioneers in African linguistics and literature with special reference to Northern Sotho", *South African Journal of African Languages,* 13,2, 1993, p.3
[180] I Kosch, "Orthographic Developments and Grammatical Observation" p.1
[181] I. Kosch, "German-speaking pioneers in African linguistics, p.3
[182] I. Kosch, "German-speaking pioneers in African linguistics, p.3
[183] S. P.P Mminele, "The Berlin Missionary Enterprise at Botshabelo, p.254
[184] I. Kosch "Orthographic Developments and Grammatical Observations" in *Ethnography from the Mission Field: The Hoffmann Collection of Cultural Knowledge,* ed. A. Joubert, G.M.M. Grobler, I.M. Kosch & L.Kriel, Leiden, Brill, 2015, p.1050

literary publications. The language was taught in mission schools established by the BMS, namely Botshabelo.[185]

Prior to discussing Botshebelo as a site of knowledge production, I outlined the circumstances under which Botshabelo was established. In the 1860s, *kgoši* Sekhukhune saw missionary expansion as an existential threat as Christian converts challenged local religious beliefs – creating a fracture within the social contracts which once bound the *Basotho*.[186] Christianity created two types of Northern Sotho subjects: '*baheitenye*'[187](heathen) who practiced local beliefs and remained dependent on the royal patronage and '*bakrestse'*[188] (Christian). Converts posed a threat to chiefly power for two reasons: firstly, their refusal to participate in rituals; and secondly, their ability to evade diseases. By abstaining from participation in rituals or ceremonies, Christians were – according the *baheitenye* caste – leaving the polity vulnerable to 'malevolent magic.'[189] Additionally, access to missionaries and western medicine created panic within Northern Sotho communities because their ability to evade smallpox, diphtheria and syphilis, cemented the notion that converts had the same chiefly powers as the paramount chief and other subordinate chiefs. Christians also remained a valuable sector of the population. Not only did they participate in migrant labour which provided firearms, these individuals – especially those within the royal house – would have been bilingual, speaking both Northern Sotho and Afrikaans. It is likely that individuals with a knowledge of both Sesotho and Afrikaans, would have been useful to the paramount chief who could have employed converts as scribes, translators and envoys when dealing with Europeans,[190] but relations between Sekhukhune, missionaries and Christian converts soured.

This process began in 1862, when Sekhukhune's half-brother, Kgalema, was introduced to Christianity. Kgalema was baptised as Johannes Dinkwanyane. In 1864, Sekhukhune began imposing restrictions on Christians. This was an attempt to make Christianity less desirable. Christian women were forced to stand in icy rivers for hours and the belongings of Christian men (cattle, land and grain) were confiscated.[191] Lastly, on the 7 November 1864, Tlakale, Sekhukhune's principal wife was baptised. Increased encroachment on his authority resulted in Sekhukhune banishing all missionaries and Christian converts out of his territory. This group

[185] T. Rakgogo & E. Zungu, "The elevation of Sepedi", p.3
[186] P. Delius & K. Ruther, "The King, the Missionary p.600
[187] M. Goedhals, "Colonialism, Culture, Christianity", p.107
[188] M. Goedhals, "Colonialism, Culture, Christianity", p.107
[189] P. Delius, 'Witches and Missionaries in Nineteenth Century Transvaal', p.437
[190] S. C. Volz & P. T. Mgadla, "Conflict and Negotiation", p.162
[191] H. Mönning, *The Pedi,* p.29

of Christian converts and BMS missionaries established Botshabelo ('Place of Refuge') near Middleburg (present-day Mpumalanga) in 1865. [192] Botshabelo, according to Mminele, comprised many different Northern Sotho communities. This population included Christian refugees, placed under the personal responsibility of Rev. Merensky.[193] Additionally, the Botshabelo population also included the Boleu's Bakopa, the Bakone of Phokwane under Petrus Maserumule, the Batau of Ga-Masemola also known as the "education-seekers,"[194] under Petrus Mabowe and a fourth group of "refugee-seekers."[195]

Outside of Botshabelo, attempts at expanding the Christianising mission continued, but the BMS understood that the conversion of the paramount chief would not be possible because of the nature of his office. Sekhukhune's authority, like other Sotho and Tswana chiefs, "sprang from their exclusive access to the most important senior ancestors, *badimo*."[196] Chiefly power was also rooted in control over water and rainfall ceremonies and chiefs would "mediate between the wisdom of royal ancestry and the living community."[197] The office of the paramount and his subordinate chiefs was underpinned by "symbolical demonstrations of sovereign power."[198] Although Sekhukhune and other subordinate chiefs did not convert to Christianity, they did create a space for conversion among their people. However, conversion triggered latent political consequences: "patterns of loyalty, patronage and hierarchy were frequently affected regardless of whether people concerned or not."[199] The choices that individual Africans made to convert to Christianity created ruptures in traditional society and politics. During the early years of BMS expansion into the region, Christian converts were a small group, who had negotiated between Christian culture brought by missionaries and traditional customs and practice. But the Christianising mission, was viewed differently by converts and missionaries, as Rüther notes:

> Converts created the balance and bias which negotiated the terms of coexistence and confrontation between innovative Christianity and traditional forms of ritual practice. These terms were defined locally and depended on the new social constellations in the community made by certain people's conversion to Christianity. By negotiating the terms of Christianity and appropriating its assets, they made the beginnings of a Christian culture visible and the discussions in the new faith audible to the majority of non-Christian peers in the vicinity. On the mission stations Christianity as a religion

[192] N. Swanepoel, "Not Built in a Day: The Evolving Landscape of Botshabelo Mission Station, South Africa, 1865-2015", *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 44, 4, 2018, p.681
[193] S P.P Mminele, "The Berlin Missionary Enterprise at Botshabelo, p.29
[194] *Ibid,* p.40 - 41
[195] *Ibid,* p.41
[196] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond,* p.84
[197] *Ibid,* p.84
[198] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond,* p.96
[199] K. Rüther "Conversion and Religious Change in the Pedi Kingdom, South Africa", p.111

> developed two main faces. While to the missionaries it provided thought-patterns and imagery to see through their religious and political objectives, to the new believers it mainly bore implications for the socio-cultural and spiritual reorientation of their community. Why? Pietistic Lutherans were almost the only evangelical agents to be grasped in Transvaal buffer zones between African communities and the settler regime, and with regard to negotiations between African and white society they were the ones who claimed the authority to define Christianity as a device which stabilised the political superiority of the white community. The missionaries made this clear to African communities by not generally interfering with the realisation of African political and social emancipation when African rights and humanity came under pressure from farmer and Boer administrators. The missionaries used Christianity to argue for their own political visions – different cases in the case of Hermannsburg and Berlin – but in both cases a political vision that minimised the political rights of Africans. As a consequence this mission Christianity did not deliver the means to defend African political equality in the Transvaal. However, within the community itself, Africans were able to instrumentalise Christianity for the initiation of a new social, cultural and spiritual order.[200]

As a result, the BMS did not position themselves as allies of Sekhukhune, unlike the LMS which acquired considerable influence in Tswana-speaking communities situated in the Free State. The LMS provided converts with education, and these converts served as advisors for black African rulers, criticised Afrikaner expansion and advocated for increased British involvement in the region to strengthen Tswana chiefdoms while securing their spheres of influence.[201] The BMS, on the other hand, embarked on a double mission: firstly, "they intended to encourage the consolidation of a white republican state which would accept African Christians as loyal subjects, and secondly, they were prepared to turn Africans into the desired state of such loyal subjects by evangelization [sic]."[202]

Christian converts were treated like land tenants and Merensky acted as both missionary and missionary landlord on mission stations. Delius notes how Merensky developed an administrative system which was essentially "a highly modified form of chieftainship."[203]As the landlord, Merensky set specific terms of engagement for his tenants, like how traditional chiefs required a form of tribute for entry into the community. But unlike traditional chiefs, Merensky required his 'tenants' (converts), to "recognize [sic] their status as subjects of the ZAR"[204] and as subjects of the ZAR, they had to meet the labour demands of the Republic. Merensky was able to construct economic ties to the ZAR and retain some measure of good

[200] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond,* p.118 -119
[201] S. C. Volz & P. T. Mgadla, "Conflict and Negotiation Along the Lower Vaal River: Correspondence from the Tswana-Language Newspaper *Mokaeri oa Becuana*" in *European Expansion and Indigenous Response,* ed. P. Limb, N. Etherington & P. Midgley, Brill Publishing, Leiden, 2010, p.160
[202] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond,* p.100
[203] P. Delius, *The Land Belongs,* p.162
[204] P. Delius, *The Land Belongs,* p.166

favour with Afrikaner farmers and towns through "his ability to supply and direct labour."[205] Christian converts often replaced the older forms of labour such as the *inboekselings* – moving converts out of the traditional pastoralist economy, into a colonial cash economy. Furthermore, post-1865, black African converts were compelled to vacate areas conventionally affiliated with Northern Sotho communities, subsequently gravitating towards mission stations. This phenomenon underscored a steadfast dedication to Christianity, its attendant cultural norms, and the prescribed parameters of interaction with missionaries, superseding their prior political allegiance to a customary chief. This trend continues as I will show in Chapter Two. Merensky's ability to integrate Christian coverts into the ZAR's political and economic system depended on converts' political and economic alienation from their Northern Sotho kin and traditional political structures. Christian converts were further alienated from traditional Northern Sotho communities through institutions of learning such as Botshabelo.

The BMS erected 106 schools with 17 058 pupils in the Transvaal alone – surpassing other mission societies in the region.[206] The mission schools provided "elementary instruction in reading, writing, reckoning, while Bible Knowledge and Hymn singing were the main subjects."[207] Students were "taught to read and write so that they could be in a better position to read the Bible and other related literature."[208] In 1885, missionary wives were instructed to teach elder girls sewing and other domestic chores. Some notable teachers were first generation Christian converts such as Abrahams Serote, Hiskia Ramasodi and Timotheus Leutlane.[209] The education of converts was limited to "giving them [converts] experience of the joys of 'hard work.'"[210] According to Ashforth, the South African state would later encourage missionaries to create environments which would foster "virtuous habits of industrious labour and law"[211] in black African converts and thus Botshebelo can be seen as a model colonial institution. Mission education "placed minimal emphasis on high school education, but instead confined their curricula to biblical studies in the vernacular language, and the basics of literacy and numeracy."[212] Missionaries also provided students with reading material in Northern Sotho, as Mminele notes:

[205] *Ibid,* p.167
[206] S. P.P Mminele, "The Berlin Missionary Enterprise at Botshabelo", p.21
[207] S. P.P Mminele, "The Berlin Missionary Enterprise at Botshabelo", p.24
[208] *Ibid,* p.54
[209] S. P.P Mminele, "The Berlin Missionary Enterprise at Botshabelo", p.90
[210] A. Ashforth, *The Politics of Official Discourse,* p.38
[211] A. Ashforth, *The Politics of Official Discourse,* p.38
[212] A. Bank, "The Berlin Mission Society and German Linguistic Roots of *Volkekunde*", p.174

> Northern Sotho readers which were partly translation from German readers and partly had lessons of Northern Sotho origin. Recitation and songs written by the Black teachers were adapted to German melodies. Memorisation and repetition still remained the key methods. Readers, primers and Bibles were the amin manuals used. Frequent use was made of the 'Illustrated Bible' by Schnorr. The map of the world was used mainly in the First Class. There was still a shortage of reading and writing material and desks.[213]

Botshabelo as an institution also reinforced the use of linguistic categorisation "to classify people into manageable groups, or tribes – at the time presumed to be 'natural units.'"[214] We know this because, in early documents produced by the BMS there statements such as "old Basotho men from various tribes"[215] appear, but in other documents these converts are referred to as 'Sotho language teachers.' [216] Missionaries and their records highlighted the heterogeneity of their convert but outside of the mission station, the interactions between the Sekhukhune and settlers strengthen the link between Northern Sotho speakers and with the paramount.

Sekhukhune, the Afrikaners and the Colonial Office (1870 -1913)

In June 1876, Afrikaner forces captured several Bapedi strongholds with the aim of starving the population into submission.[217] As discussed earlier, animosity between Afrikaner settlers and Northern Sotho communities lay in claims to land, a labour shortage within Afrikaner settlements and cattle theft. While Sekwati sought a peaceful agreement with Afrikaner settlers, Sekhukhune made use of military means, aided by ammunition brought into the region by migrant workers. The South African Republic (ZAR) government declared war on Sekhukhune on 16 May 1876, although the Colonial Office in the Cape Colony condemned this declaration as "an act of aggression against an independent chief."[218] This sentiment did not last long as the Colonial Office soon grew fearful of Sekhukhune's ability to repeatedly defeat Afrikaner attacks. Individuals such as Sir Henry Barkly noted that "unless Sekhukhune's power was speedily crushed, other *tribes* (my emphasis) would gain the impression that the Europeans were unable to control them."[219] The Cape government, along with the ZAR government, joined forces to supress Sekhukhune.

[213] S. P.P Mminele, "The Berlin Missionary Enterprise at Botshabelo", p.91
[214] L. Kriel "Historical Context", p.23
[215] L. Kriel "Historical Context", p.47
[216] L. Kriel "Historical Context", p.48
[217] K.W Smith "The Fall of the Bapedi', p.241
[218] K.W Smith "The Fall of the Bapedi', p.242
[219] K.W Smith "The Fall of the Bapedi' p.242

Colonial forces entered the Leolo (Lulu) valley on 4 January 1877, with the aim of crushing Sekhukhune's forces. These additional military forces created food shortages, forcing Sekhukhune to sue for peace. Rev. Alexander Merensky of the BMS was asked to mediate between the paramount and the colonial state at Botshabelo. Sekhukhune signed the peace treaty in February, in which he acknowledged himself as a subject of the ZAR, was forced to pay a fine of 2 000 heads of cattle and had to agree to new boundaries to his territory.[220] On 12 April 1878, Sekhukhune was notified by Sir Theophilus Shepstone – a British statesman – that the Transvaal would be annexed by the British Crown. The annexation of the Transvaal meant that Sekhukhune and other Northern Sotho chiefdoms were regarded as British subjects and Sekhukhune's fine would be paid to British authorities, including any taxes collected in the region.[221] The annexation of the Transvaal posed an existential threat to the independent federation, as the paramount could no longer lay claim to land ownership, and this handicapped his patronage system. By becoming subjects of the British, Northern Sotho communities would subsequently be classified as 'Native' in the eyes of the colonial state and be forced to defer to a power greater than that of their chief and paramount chief. Ashforth notes that land "had become the property of the Crown and the people on them subject to lawful British Government."[222] The economic implications of the removal of land rights left the Northern Sotho, like many black Africans, as landless subjects who could be "strenuously induced and organised (as opposed to forced) to labour in the industrial undertaking of 'civilization.'"[223] Understanding the implications of surrender, Sekhukhune and his countrymen launched an uprising.

Between 25 November 1879 and 9 December 1879, Sekhukhune attempted a series of military resistance against British forces. However, the British were supplemented by Ndebele (Matebele) forces, compelling Sekhukhune to surrender. After he and his subjects surrendered, Sekhukhune was detained in Pretoria.[224] Upon Sekhukhune's release in 1881, "he did not regain his former status as paramount chief of the Bapedi."[225] Mampuru II – Sekhukhune's political rival, sent an armed party to murder Sekhukhune in August 1881. According to Ramushu, this was the customary way of removing a political adversary. However, as a new British subjects, Mampuru II was detained by authorities and tried for murder.[226] Mampuru II

[220] K.W Smith "The Fall of the Bapedi', p.242
[221] K.W Smith "The Fall of the Bapedi', p.251
[222] A. Ashforth, *The Politics of Official Discourse,* p.35
[223] *Ibid,* p.35
[224] K.W Smith "The Fall of the BaPedi', p.252
[225] *Ibid,* p.252
[226] K.W Smith "The Fall of the Bapedi' p.252

was found guilty and hanged on 22 November 1883. Neither Sekhukhune nor Mampuru II left a successor. As such, the British Crown appointed Kgoloko, Sekhukhune's brother, as regent, along with a council of headmen (*indunas*) who would be responsible for tax collection, administrative duties and settling any disputes such as marriage or cattle disputes.[227] Succession disputes continue to plague the paramount house, although the House of Thulare (the ruling lineage) is currently recognised as the paramount royal house.[228] Thus, the relationship between paramount chief, headmen, subordinate chiefs and subjects changed throughout the twentieth century as they had been altered by colonial expansion.

In the aftermath of the Sekhukhune wars against British imperial forces, communal land was converted into Crown land and divided into privately-owned farms, mission lands and company farms.[229] From 1885, black African inhabitants were forced to pay labour rent or cash rent on privately owned land. Those who could not were resettled into either the Nebo district or the Sekhukhuneland district. Three additional locations were created for black African occupation, the largest being Geluk location.[230] The entire region was referred to as Sekhukhuneland by both state officials and missionaries.

In 1903, following the Anglo-Boer War, Colonial administrator Alfred Milner appointed the South African Native Affairs Commission (SANAC) to provide a "systematic and co-ordinated native policy for a future federal South Africa."[231] The report was released in 1907 and about 3% of land in the Transvaal was set aside for black African settlement.[232] The 1913 Natives Land Act did not extend the boundaries created by SANAC, although it did establish the Beaumont Commission which would demarcate 'scheduled areas' that were to be occupied by black Africans. 'Scheduled areas' were imagined to be areas in which black Africans could purchase and rent land.[233] Giliomee notes that from the 1890 until the early 1920s, black Africans who could not settle in the heartland of their territories, either lived in locations or they bought land through third parties, such as missionaries.[234]

Major Donald Hunt, the Sekhukhuneland Native Commissioner, established a 'tribal fund' in the early 1920s, to buy "farms in areas released for African land purchase under the 1913 Land

[227] K.W Smith "The Fall of the Bapedi", p.251
[228] *Ibid,* p.252
[229] *Ibid,* p. 10
[230] P. Delius, *A Lion Amongst Cattle,* p.11
[231] H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners,* p.229
[232] *Ibid,* p.300
[233] W. Beinart & P. Delius, "The Historical Context and Legacy of the Natives Land Act of 1913", *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 40, 4, 2014, p.670
[234] H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People,* Cape Town, Tafelberg Publishers, 2003, p.294

Act."[235] From 1922 until 1952, a levy of £1 per taxpayer was paid to the 'tribal fund.' The primary goal was to 'buy Sekhukhuneland back gradually'. By 1952, 29 farms had been purchased.[236] Hunt believed in preserving chiefly rule as a way of "maintaining the 'tribal discipline' which he cherished."[237] He was effectively the 'guardian' of the Northern Sotho throughout this period. Although Delius does not mention 'trusteeship' when discussing Hunt's work, preserving chiefly rule was in line with the idea of trusteeship.[238] Trusteeship, according to Hoernlé was the understanding that black Africans needed to be "protected against the impact of Europeans and European civilization."[239] Trusteeship supported the Union of South Africa's separation of land into 'European' land and 'Native'[240] land during the early 1900s.

The political unravelling of the Northern Sotho federation occurred in two parts: firstly, with the creation of permanent Afrikaner settlements from 1845 and secondly, through missionaries spreading Christianity which created new followers who viewed themselves as subjects of the ZAR. As Afrikaners settled and became farmers in the region, they built their own state in the Transvaal. Missionaries were able to access would-be converts through the ZAR.

Missionaries, once settled, were able to engage with the individual subjects of Sekhukhune and convert members, thus fracturing the community even further. Although conversions did not occur in large numbers, when they did, these individuals moved out of Phiring, and moved onto mission stations. Additionally, the BMS's Christian converts and Northern Sotho communities had to "recognised the authority of the Z.A.R"[241] during the early 1900s. At the level of the state, the differences between these groups would collapse into a new administrative category: the 'Native' category. This category, however, still relied on the concept of tribe and/or ethnic group.

[235] P. Delius, *A Lion Amongst Cattle,* p.18
[236] P. Delius, *A Lion Amongst Cattle,*p.18
[237] *Ibid,* p.16
[238] R. F. A. Hoernlé, "Lecture II: The Spirit of Trusteeship" in (ed). R. Hoernlé, *South African Native policy and the Liberal Spirit,* Johannesburg, University of Witwatersrand Press, 1945, p.71
[239] *Ibid,* p.71
[240] According to the Results of a Census of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope in 1892 three racial categories emerged from the early twentieth century, namely White or European, Coloured and Black Africa or *Kafirs Proper*. The White class included the descendants of European settlers, i.e Dutch, French and British. The Coloured class was constituted by the descendants of 'mixed' origins, namely the Malay, 'Hottentots' and the offspring of Europeans and indigenous people. The black Africa class consisted of Fingoes; a Bantu-speaking group, and "all the tribes south of Delagoa Bay." Results of a Census of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, Cape Town: Government Printers, 1892, p.xv
[241] P. Delius, *The Land Belongs*, p.153

Constituting the 'Native' Subject (1890 – 1905)

After the discovery of gold in the late 1880s, European colonies and black African societies began to change rapidly. After the failed Jameson Raid of 1895, tensions between Kruger's Afrikaner Republic and British Cape Colony arose over who would control and regulate the lucrative mining industry.[242] An armed conflict – the South African War – ensued between Imperial British troops and the Afrikaner Republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, between 1899 and 1902.[243] In the aftermath of the war, a modern South African state was formed, unifying the former Cape and Natal Colonies with the Boer Republics such as the ZAR.[244]

At the turn of the century, the South African state's primary concern was securing cheap labour for gold mines, alongside white unity, and the consolidation of whiteness. The question of recruiting labour from black African communities without coercion proved difficult. Officials had little understanding of the distribution of land, nor did they understand the political and economic workings of black African chiefdoms. Following the Bloemfontein Conference of 1903, the state focused on acquiring "true knowledge of social and economic conditions"[245] of black African communities. With this knowledge, policymakers could alter black African social structures in a way that missionaries had not been able to do during the nineteenth century. The state acknowledged the close contact between missionaries and black African chiefdoms. Missionaries were "considered specially authorized [sic] to speak on the 'Native Question': this is, to speak of, for and to the 'Natives'."[246]

The South African Native Affairs Commission (SANAC) of 1903 and its subsequent report in 1905 utilised the missionary accounts of black African chieftaincies as a blueprint "for administration of 'Natives' along 'traditional lines.'[247] According to the SANAC report the place of the 'Natives' was in the 'tribe':

> 2.12. A characteristic of the Natives of South Africa is their tribal organisation. The tribe is a community or collection of Natives forming a political and social organisation

[242] L. Thompson, *A History of South Africa,* New Haven, Yale University Press, 2001, p.115
[243] L. Thompson, *A History of South Africa,* p141
[244] *Ibid,* p.150
[245] J. Arndt "Missionaries, Africans and the Emergence of, p.24
[246] A. Ashforth, *The Politics of Official Discourse,* p.26
[247] A. Ashforth, *The Politics of Official Discourse,* p.36

> under the government and leadership of a chief who is the centre of the national or tribal life. It is through the existence of a Chief that the tribe is conscious of its unity.[248]

By cementing the place of the 'Native' in South Africa, the report outlines how the 'tribe' and Paramount Chief would be used as tools of administration through certain "modifications":

> 2.14 The tribal system has either been modified or displaced by or is being gradually brought under statutory and administrative European control. It was a form of government perfectly understood by the Native, carried with it mutual responsibility and suretyship and required implicit obedience to authority. It possessed a ready means of communication and control extending from the Paramount Chief to the individual Native in his kraal. It embodies an unbroken chain of responsibility – the responsibility of Headmen for his people, of the head of a kraal or family for its members, and of every individual of a tribe to the Chief.[249]
>
> 2.18. The Chiefs continue to be recognised as a means of government of the Native races, as it has not in general been deemed desirable to dispense with them, but their jurisdiction, more particularly in criminal matters, has been, and is being, gradually transferred to European Magistrates and Commissioners. In a few words, the abolition of the tribal system and chieftainship is being left to time and evolution towards civilisation assisted by legislation where necessary and administrative methods.[250]

The Report also collected information on the conditions under which black Africans lived throughout the Colonies: Cape Colony, Natal Colony, Orange River Colony, and the Transvaal. This information provided a basis from which the Union government could work to 'modify' existing black African political systems. The report recommended solutions to the 'Native Question' by reconstructing the power of independent chiefdoms or federations into a system known as 'indirect rule' under which paramount chiefs would be administered. Indirect rule, as Ashforth suggests, created the means "whereby, through recognizing [sic] the divided nature of its sovereignty, a state could be devised which instituted differential spheres of citizenship for 'European' and 'Native' populations within one territory."[251]

Conclusion

This chapter offered an exploration into the various discursive sites in which the knowledge on the Northern Sotho emerged, and how these communities overtime, became a tribal/and or ethnic category. The chapter underscores how the category 'Northern Sotho" took form through

[248] Report of the South African Native Affairs Commission, 1903 – 1905, Cape Town, Cape Times Limited Printers, 1905, p.41
[249] Report of the South African Native Affairs Commission, 1903 – 1905, Cape Town, Cape Times Limited Printers, p.41 - 42
[250] Report of the South African Native Affairs Commission, p.43
[251] A. Ashforth, *The Politics of Official Discourse,* p.36-7

the evolution of language and the state's conflation of language and the *volk*. I demonstrate in the following chapters how Northern Sotho texts and depictions of Northern Sotho womanhood therein were shaped by the knowledge produced by missionaries and their interlocutors.

Chapter 2: A New Christian Culture, Literature, and Christian Womanhood (1900 – 1935)

Introduction

Chapter 1 sought to describe the emergence of the Northern Sotho language as a marker of ethnic difference, by Afrikaner settlers and mining records to distinguish Northern Sotho speaking communities from other Sotho speaking communities. The chapter also discussed how Christian ideas around women and domesticity were not dissimilar to the ways in which converts saw the ideal of Basotho womanhood. The BMS' gendered education allowed male converts to begin authoring vernacular texts, which spoke to their own ideas around Christianity and had utilised missionary and traditional ideals of women in their own representations of women. However, as I demonstrate, by the 1930s, black African women more generally were increasingly gaining independence, illustrating that convert's representations of womanhood in vernacular text did not necessarily impact upon or reflect women's personal choices.

This developing literary culture whose readers were Northern Sotho speakers and were - according to the state - 'Pedi' did not necessarily see themselves through the lens of ethnicity. These diverging views on group belonging were explored to illustrate the ways in which the Northern Sotho speakers become associated with the term 'Pedi'. One of the major recurring motifs during the late 19th century is that Christian conversion "brought about a fusion of old and new identities, but also allowed for the accommodation of radically innovative elements in people's identities."[252] By tracing the development of the Bapedi Lutheran Church, we can begin to see how external changes in the Transvaal exacerbated the fractures between missionaries and congregants at Botshabelo, resulting in the exodus of a group of Northern Sotho converts who fused the traditional political system with elements of Christianity to form a new kind of Northern Sotho Christian community.

The BMS, Bapedi Lutheran Church, Ethnic Identities and the 'black sheep' Missionary (1870 – 1900)

The process began in 1872, when for the first time a Sesotho *Staatscourant* (Government Gazette) was made available - this was an amendment to the Native Act of 1870 from Ordinance No.2 of 1864.[253] The 1872 amendment was an extension of a set of laws, commonly

[252] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond: Mission Strategies, African Conversion and the Development of a Christian Culture in the Transvaal,* Hamburg, Lit Verlag, 2001, p.13

[253] This law was developed from the Ordinance No.2 of 1864 which sought "To prevent vagrancy, thievery and other irregularities by natives, to protect persons, property and possession, to better regulate and control native tribes and to impose

referred to as the 'Kafferwet' – and was published in the above-mentioned gazette.[254] The 'Kafferwet' included nine laws, in which the state sought to "control African settlement on state land and to impose broad limits on the extent of settlement on private land. It also contained a clause which stated that each farmer was entitled to the service of five families."[255] Delius notes how, from as early as 1870s, the ZAR faced a shortage of fiscal revenue and labour. Consequently, ZAR authorities promulgated a series of statutes to formalise the taxation of black Africans in 1864 and 1866. The aim of these laws was to furnish essential revenue for the state while addressing the labour needs of ZAR citizens.[256] The 1872 laws stipulated that all Africans have to carry a pass. These passes were both instruments which controlled black African mobility and induced black Africans to work on farms, which historically paid less than mines.[257] If one obtained a pass from a missionary, chief or ZAR official, they would be permitted to gain an additional pass which would allow black Africans to travel to the diamond fields for work.[258] In the previous chapter, I noted how black Africans in the Transvaal depended on diamond fields to assert their political independence and gain access to ammunition for military purposes. Although Christian converts did not necessarily need ammunition as they were under the 'ward' of missionaries, they still depended on migrant labour to provide them with currency to accumulate livestock and purchase clothing which would allow them to visibly present as Christian.[259] In the 1870s, converts saw clothing as a way to express their Christian identity.[260]

This 1872 publication sparked outrage amongst Botshebelo Christians,[261] specifically Johanness Dinkwanyane and his councillors, Salomo Motlane, Timotheus Maredi, David Mpayane and Koni chief Phassoane – literate coverts who all began to doubt "missionaries' capacity to protect them from settler exploitation."[262] BMS missionaries did not criticise these

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a return tax upon the natives and other coloured persons", in J. Bergh "To Make Them Serve": The 1871 Transvaal Commission of African Labour as a Source for Agrarian History, *History in Africa,* 2002, 29, p.54

[254] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond,* p.111

[255] P. Delius, *The Land Belongs to Us: The Pedi Polity, the Boers and the British in the Nineteenth-century Transvaal,* London, Heinemann, 1983 p.150

[256] P. Delius, *The Land Belongs to Us* p.148

[257] *Ibid,* p.151

[258] P. Delius, *The Land Belongs to Us,* p.151

[259] Rüther notes that "men bought clothing and other symbols of success which they would be able to turn into value of different kinds when they arrived back home. The new forms of availability of good, including clothing, transformed older patterns of exchange. From the late, 1880s onwards, European clothes became a mass commodity, available not only to traditional status groups but to the young aspiring to form the new local elites… Migrants spent enormous sums on clothing, even though from missionary evidence it is hard to determine how much of the migrants' earnings were invested." from, K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond,* p.214

[260] *Ibid,* p.211

[261] When mentioning this group, I am referring to a variety of Christian chiefdoms who could be linguistically classified as (Northern) Sotho. In the previous chapter, I mentioned the different communities which gravitated to Botshabelo such as the Bapedi Christians, the Boleu Bakopa, Bakone of Phokwane, the Batau of Ga-Masemola, the 'education seekers' and refugees.

[262] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond,* p.130

laws as they sought to integrate themselves into the ZAR settler society and to make their congregations subjects of the ZAR. Instead of acting against the ZAR, missionaries acted as agents of the state. While they issued passes to male congregants, missionaries also barred those considered as 'unfit' from working on diamond fields and prevented them from accumulating currency (livestock, capital or clothing).[263] This posed many problems for congregants who were not only being taxed by the state but also had to perform mandatory unpaid labour on mission stations for missionaries – receiving less wages from Afrikaner farmers and being legally barred from owning land.[264] These doubts, about missionaries' ability to protect its congregants against Afrikaner demands, prompted the Botshabelo Christians to rethink their ideas of community and Christianity. Bapedi Christians – residing in Botshabelo, were (since their exodus from Sekhukhune) under Rev. Alexander Merensky's leadership. This group was dissatisfied with Merensky and decided to reinstate "Sotho chieftainship"[265] by naming Dinkwanyane – a literate convert and interlocutor – as their Pedi Christian chief. By reinstating Sesotho chieftainship, these congregants were drawing on traditional forms of legitimacy as a framework for a new community.[266]

Dinkwanyane attempted to work with missionaries to temper the labour demands set by ZAR authorities, but missionaries could not safeguard Christian converts from Afrikaner demands. This situation was exacerbated by the conflict over 'Pedi' Christian culture in which Merensky forbade Dinkwanywane to use "chiefly prerogatives"[267] when an argument over 'Pedi' women's hairstyles emerged. According to Rüther, the Kôpa women living in Botshabelo stopped shaving their heads and let their hair grow under a headscarf. 'Pedi' women began to do the same but "Pedi men who were proud of their inherited culture disapproved of it because long hair according to older traditions"[268] was a sign of mourning and would make non-Christians hesitate to visit Christian kin. However, when Dinkwanyane instructed Bapedi women not to imitate Kôpa women, Merensky warned him that he could not introduce such laws, "thus directly challenging Dinkwanyane's traditionally legitimate authority."[269] Here, we can begin to see what Rüther describes as a "tug and countertug of innovative Christian culture and older Pedi customs"[270] as Botshabelo Christianity was blended with traditional Sotho

[263] P. Delius, *The Land Belongs to Us,* p.165
[264] *Ibid,* p.152
[265] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond,* p.130
[266] P. Delius, *The Land Belongs to Us,* p.170
[267] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond,* p.131
[268] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond,* p.131
[269] *Ibid,* p.132
[270] *Ibid*, p.132

chieftainship. These conflicts allowed for Dinkwanywane and his estimated 400 followers to reimagine a community headed by a Christian (Northern) Sotho chief. This did not mean that the community reverted to traditional ceremonies or polygyny. Instead, they adopted "consciously appropriated Christianity and turned it into a basic feature of the community".[271] The community was not comprised of strictly 'Pedi' members. Instead, community members "fell within a broad North Sotho/Pedi cultural tradition and almost all (including the Kôpa) came from societies which had been at some point subject to the Maroteng paramountcy"[272] or at least allies of the paramountcy. This community offered an "alternative form of Christianity attractive to a considerable number of especially Lydenburg Pedi Christians."[273] By selecting Dinkwanyane as their chief, this community "proclaimed themselves to be subjects of Sekhukhune."[274] This was also an economic decision as their new chief could issue passes which would enable male congregants to continue working on diamond fields. By 1873, the Lutheran Bapedi became a new community that could seek to defy the ZAR's land legislation, defy the ZAR's taxation and labour demands and seek out military protection from Sekhukhune's polity[275] since their 1865 expulsion from the Northern Sotho federation.

Thus, Lutheran Christianity was inadvertently able to link people's religion and the ethnic category of 'Pedi'.[276] The formation of the Bapedi Lutheran Church away from Botshabelo highlights how the category of 'Pedi' – after being forged in three different discursive sites – was further subject to complex interactions between Christianity and a 'traditional' Sotho cultural and political ways of knowing. Additionally, the Bapedi Lutheran Church leaders' ability to ask Sekhukhune for refuge would have been further evidence for the state to continue conflating the Northern Sotho language and its speakers, with a Bapedi tribe. Throughout the late 19th century, we begin to see how traditional systems engage with Christianity, further strengthen the link between Northern speakers and the paramountcy.

For example, one missionary, Rev. Johannes Winter, attempted to fuse Christianity and traditional authority. Winter, the son of BMS missionary, August Wilhelm Winter, was stationed at Botshabelo in 1872. He was later dubbed the 'black sheep' of the BMS due to his role in the formation of the Lutheran Bapedi Church alongside Johannes Dinkwanyane's traditional leadership. Winter attempted to create a relationship between the church and

[271] *Ibid,* p.133
[272] P. Delius, *The Land Belongs to Us,* p.171
[273] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond,* p.171
[274] P. Delius, *The Land Belongs to Us,* p.174
[275] *Ibid,* p.153
[276] P. Delius, *The Land Belongs to Us,* p.146

Sekhukhune's entire political federation through marriage began in May 1881, after the birth of his daughter, Anna Winter. The church, according to Winter, would be placed at the centre of the Northern Sotho federation. It was envisioned that Christianity would support traditional authority.[277] Both parties had to reconcile their followers and redistribute spiritual power, linking the Christian and 'heathen' factions into a unified political base. Christian converts who were exiled from the federation had their membership 'reinstated' as subjects of Sekhukhune.[278] The church was used as a "means to modernise" the Northern Sotho federation, through the provision of schooling for Christian converts and 'heathens' in Sesotho.[279] Sekhukhune saw missionary medicine and land as a "potential source of power and support that could be vital"[280] during uncertain times. In a 1900 letter to the Native Commissioner, Christian Fourier, Winter notes that he was "on intimate terms of friendship with old Sekukhuni [sic] and his followers."[281] The close relations between Winter and the rulers of Bopedi illustrates the transition from an independent 'heathen' federation to one which incorporated Christianity into its existing political structures. It also demonstrates how, at the end of the nineteenth century – being 'Pedi' became increasingly associated with both cultural forms of knowledge and Christianity (even for those who were not converts). After the annexation of the Transvaal in 1879, the federation had an ineffective army with few firearms with which to protect themselves.[282] In addition, the British allocated land to the BMS for their services during the Sekhukhune wars of 1876-1879, making Winter a powerful mission landlord in the region.[283] The region was stricken by a drought in the same year, leaving Sekhukhune to turn to the BMS for support. Initially, Winter insisted that members of his congregation "respect the authority of the chief and more broadly chiefs,"[284] which reduced tensions between 'heathens' and Christians in the region. Winter then suggested a marriage between Sekhukhune and his daughter. In 1882, Anna, age 1, was engaged to Sekhukhune. As Harries notes, it was a "well-established custom of the Bapedi, and most other Bantu tribes, for parents to give their daughters in marriage whilst the latter are still infants."[285] Anna was eventually spared from marrying paramount *kgoši* Sekhukhune, due to the paramount's death in 1883. There was no

[277] P. Delius & Kristen Ruther, "The King, the Missionary and the Missionary's Daughter", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 39, 3, 2013, p.606
[278] *Ibid*, p.607
[279] *Ibid*, p.608
[280] *Ibid*, p.608
[281] J. Winter, The Last Rising in Sekukhuni's Land: Cause and effects by one who knows. 8 September 1900, Collection: Donald Hunt Papers, Historical Papers, The Library, The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 2013, p. 1
[282] P. Delius & Kristen Ruther, "The Kind, the Missionary and the Missionary's Daughter", p.606
[283] *Ibid*, p.606
[284] *Ibid*, p.606
[285] C. L Harries, *The Laws, and Customs of the Bapedi*, p.6

Christian marriage between Anna and Sekhukhune, nor did the two produce children. However, by passing or 'paying' of the *lenyalo* cattle (*bogadi* or *lobola*) to her father Winter, Anna became "legally bound to her husband."[286] According to custom, she was Sekhukhune's wife and their union held symbolic value. The union also cemented the alliance between son-in-law and father-in-law[287] and their respective followers. Sekhukhune's brother Kgoloko was appointed as regent in 1883.

The incorporation of Christianity into Northern Sotho communities illustrates that 'Pedi' as an ethnicity was never a fixed (among the 'Pedi' themselves) but rather a label used by both Christians and non-Christians which added cultural, political, and legal weight to the 'Pedi.' The emerging South African state, however, interpreted the category as more fixed, conflating language with nationality, thus Northern Sotho was seen as synonymous with Sepedi. The idea of a more stable category was however, created through interaction with those Christian converts who had blended Christianity and traditional authority. These forms of interaction would give rise to the production of vernacular texts that, while not explicitly 'ethnic' in character, were certainly shaped by Northern Sotho writers' understandings of what it meant to be Northern Sotho.

Adaptions to Change: Education and Gender

According to Rüther, mission education was – for both Christian and non-Christian black Africans – an "institution which provided intellectual and practical skills to get desired jobs and communicate with employers and colonial authorities."[288] Black Africans in general took an interest in education to gain a source of cultural power: the ability to read. Where books were not available "individuals had to resort to religious courses"[289] provided in mission schools. In mission schools and in churches, individuals could learn "new stories, hymns and prayers, and certain communicative techniques were reinforced while singing and learning the catechism in question-and-answer style."[290] Amongst black Africans, a trend emerged where learning to read was more popular than learning to write, and reading and writing did not necessarily go together.[291] This desire for education was motivated by black Africans encountering urban employment where they "developed notions of respectable, or well-paying

[286] C. L Harries, *The Laws, and Customs of the Bapedi,* p.3
[287] P. Delius & Kristen Ruther, "The Kind, the Missionary and the Missionary's Daughter", p.609
[288] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond,* p.222
[289] *Ibid,* p.228
[290] *Ibid,* p.228
[291] *Ibid,* p.229

jobs,"[292] and where being literate was perceived as a skill which would enable them to get the best paying jobs. Teaching a convert to write usually depended on a "person's social position, missionaries decided whether writing skills were essential and useful to people's lives"[293]

Mission stations – of all denominations – communicated with one another and exchanged ideas on how their specific denomination would educate their congregants. For the BMS, this occurred as early as 1867 when (then) director Rev. Wangemann's visited to Lovedale, Zonnebloem and Genadendal institutions. After his visit, he concluded that those institutions' educational curricula were "not 'ethnic' enough."[294] Wangemann's vision for African education took a distinctly BMS character, as Lutheran schools emphasised "notions of culture and *Volk*."[295] Missionaries themselves viewed schools as "the platform on which missionaries and Africans would devote themselves to the creation of Christian communities rooted in African culture."[296] Thus, as a cultural tool, mission schools were "the place where missionaries would find access to an unknown culture and its language" (i.e. the language of their converts.[297] This process reinforced missionaries' commitment to the "correlation between territory, language and ethnic or national identity."[298] Mminele also notes that "the Botshabelo personnel concentrated mainly on the development of Northern Sotho and Luvenda, including the culture of these people."[299] In particularising a Northern Sotho culture, Northern Sotho converts produced a discourse on 'Pedi' ethnicity – a term utilised by the state. As previously discussed, in the theoretical framework, ethnicity is "grounded exclusively in cultural, in the realm of shared language, specific customs, traditions, and beliefs."[300]

Missionaries depended heavily on the help of black African (mission educated) teachers such as Jonas Pudumo, who often translated Albert Nachtigal's and Rev. Trümpelmann's sermons into Sesotho.[301] Similarly, second-generation missionaries such as Carl Hoffmann, also made use of black African teachers for linguistic and cultural knowledge across different mission stations. Some of Hoffmann's "Sotho language"[302] teachers were Adam and Eva Mokoane

[292] *Ibid,* p.232
[293] *Ibid,* p. 230
[294] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond,* p.234
[295] P. Kallaway, "German Lutheran Missions, German Anthropology and Science in African Colonial Education" in (ed.) P Kallaway and R. Swartz, *Empire and Education in Africa: The Shaping of a Comparative Perspective,* Pietermaritzburg, University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal Press, 2019, p.205
[296] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond,* p.222
[297] *Ibid,* p.222;p. 225
[298] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond,* p.226
[299] S.P.P. Mminele "The Berlin Missionary Enterprise at Botshabelo", p.253
[300] S. Hall, *The Fateful Triangle: Race, Ethnicity, Nation,* Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2017, p.108
[301] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond*, p.227
[302] L. Kriel, 'Historical Context' in *Ethnography from the Mission Field: The Hoffmann Collection of Cultural Knowledge,* (ed). A. Joubert, G. M.M Grobler, I. M Kosche & L. Kriel, Lieden, Brill, 2015, p.48

from Mankutsane.[303] –Eva was an exceptional case as she was a literate woman – very uncommon at the time because of the BMS's gendered education programme (discussed below). Other black African teachers included Abraham Serote from the Bakôpa,[304] Raubass Mogashwa, a member of the Mamabolo (Mankweng) community[305] and Moses Rakoma from the buffalo (*nare* of queen Mamatola) community.[306]

Mission education under the BMS was gendered. Missionaries justified not teaching women how to write because it was "considered useless as it would distract them from more important chores."[307] While mission schools in general saw "domestic science was a core subject, even in academic courses,"[308] Mminele's study on the Botshabelo also highlights that the wives of missionaries instructed "girls in sewing and other domestic chores."[309] Mission education introduced girls to a Christian society and a new kind of domesticity, while 'Native Girls Schools' were used to introduce girls into Sotho society. Ethnographic texts such as Charles Harries' study on the 'Pedi' provides more insight into the ways in which Sotho girls were educated in the following extract:

> Firstly, all girls are obliged to attend school as soon as they have reached the age of puberty. Secondly, although girls' school is treated with contempt by men, it owes its establishment to the chief and his indunas, and all the duties performed by them in this respect are carried out secretly. The first duty the chief imposes upon his indunas to perform in connection with the establishment of a school, is a construction of a large pot drum, about four feet high and ten feet in circumference. This drum is called *mashupjoane*, and it is not supposed to be seen by other men. When the school is established, the drum is beaten for the purpose of warning the men of the kraal to avoid the spot where girls have been summoned to attend. Thirdly, the school is opened, each girl is given a corn-stalk with the outside pared off, leaving only the pith. With this fragile wand, which she carries in her left hand, she is made to climb a mountain. The girl whose wand is first broken is considered to be under a bad spell, which will affect her in her matrimonial affairs; for it is held that such a girl will not enjoy the society of her husband for a longer period than two months after marriage, as the latter may either die or desert her…. Fourthly, the girls attend their school for a year. They move about the village freely when not receiving instruction, and, unlike the boys, they return to their respective homes at night, except when a chief's daughter attends the term, when

[303] L. Kriel, 'Historical Context' in *Ethnography from the Mission Field: The Hoffmann Collection of Cultural Knowledge,* (ed). A. Joubert, G. M.M Grobler, I. M Kosche & L. Kriel, Lieden, Brill, 2015, p.48-9
[304] E.M Ramila, *Tša Bophelo Bja Moruti Abraham Serote, 1865 – 1930,* Pretoria, Minerva, 1945, p.5
[305] L. Kriel, 'Historical Context", p.49
[306] *Ibid,* p.59
[307] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond,* p.230
[308] Ena Jansen, *Like Family: Domestic Worker in South African History and Literature,* Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2019, p.47
[309] S.P.P. Mminele "The Berlin Missionary Enterprise at Botshabelo, 1865 – 1955: An Historical Educational Study", MA Dissertation, University of the North (Sovenga), 1983, p.90

> the girls proceed to the hill, where they spend their time idling for a month out of the year…. Fifthly, the woman to whom has been assigned the duty of looking after and instructing the girls, and who has been called the matron, is obliged to make them thoroughly conversant with the following principles.[310] Sixthly, after a term of a year has expired, a breaking-up ceremony, which consists of drinking and feasting, is held by the women. No men attend this function, and even the beer does not offer sufficient inducement to cause them to demean themselves to such an extent. As soon as a girl has passed through this school, she is considered ready to be given in marriage, and, if already betrothed, the marriage ceremonies are forthwith commenced.[311]

Where traditional education sought to integrate female students into traditional life and introduce them to customs, Christian education provided female students with a new set of "Christian moral ideas."[312] Christian moral ideas sought to demarcate the confines of "appropriate behaviour"[313] within a mission school context. The BMS curriculum was less focused on the acquisition of writing skills for female students and instead it emphasised Christian domesticity, morals and behaviours. This is not to suggest that all women who went to Botshabelo and other BMS educational institution were unable to write. Eva Mokoane is an example of one who could. Rather, I would like to highlight that the ways in which the records discuss women's education suggests a bias towards teaching men to write which meant that black African women were "largely absent in the burgeoning public sphere that accompanied print culture, both literary and newspaper based"[314] in the early 1900s. Black male converts' education – through the acquisition of writing– provided entry into the production of the Northern Sotho literature and representations of ideal 'Pedi' womanhood long before 'Pedi' women could write about themselves. As such, while the BMS missionaries' education for women was orientated towards missionary notions of Christian womanhood. It is this Christian womanhood which appears in the representations of 'Pedi' women in Northern Sotho literary texts and newspapers from the 1930s onwards. However, this representation of 'Pedi' women was also the result of the Christian culture which Northern Sotho men, as converts, had also

[310] (a) the girls are advised never to reject the overtures of any man should their future husbands be neglectful. (b) All native with whom the writer has conversed upon this subject authoritatively state that if a woman be pregnant, and she allows any man, other than the man by whom she is pregnant, to have sexual intercourse with her within two months after conception, the man is sure to die. They say he dies from a disease peculiar to natives. Of course, such extraordinary superstition receives no credence from a civilised community, but the natives so firmly believe in it, that it is an important duty of the matron of the school to explain this matter to the girls, and also to exhort them to guard against the danger of causing the death of any man in this manner. In *The Laws, and Customs of the Bapedi and Cognate tribes of the Transvaal*, Johannesburg, Hortors Ltd, 1929 p.77-78

[311] C. L Harries, The Laws and Customs of the Bapedi, p.76-78

[312] N. Erlank, *Convening Black Intimacy: Christianity, Gender and Tradition in Early Twentieth-Century South Africa,* Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2022, p.109

[313] *Ibid,* p.98

[314] *Ibid,* p.137 -138

forged by the end of the nineteenth century. As such, BMS missionaries' views of women and the representations produced by literate male converts did not look vastly different from each other.

The Emergence of Northern Sotho Print (1900 – 1935)

Missionaries worked together with black African converts to not only create an orthography – as described in the previous chapter – but also began creating texts, such as books and newspapers. In 1880, the BMS began their own regional printing press.[315] The Botshabelo Book Depot produced their "own primers and collection of stories"[316] among both Vhavenḓa and Northern Basotho. In 1882, the printing press functioned as an independent entity with a printing and bookbinding section.[317] Prior to the establishment of the BMS printing press, literary material was imported from Berlin and London because it was cheaper to produce overseas.[318] Christian converts Abraham Serote, Lucas Mamososo and Hezekiel Kgang worked together with Rev. Rudolph F.G Trumpelmann and Rev Gustav Eiselen to translate the Bible into Northern Sotho, which was published text in 1903.[319] In 1908, the BMS began distributing a Northern Sotho monthly newspaper entitled, *Mogoera ao Basutho* (later changed to *Mogoera ao Babaso* meaning "Friend of the Sotho People").[320] This publication was printed in Middleburg close to Botshabelo and was initially edited by Trümpelmann[321] but later by Epaphras Magagabise Ramaila.[322] Between 1912 and 1929, the BMS also published *Almanaka ea Mission ea Berlin* (Calendar of the Berlin Mission), which included illustrations from the Bible, "could include astrological tables, periodical and prophecies, the days on which to celebrate religious holiday, important fairs and the setting of court laws."[323] There was also a series of biographies of Christian converts written by Rev. Carl Hoffmann entitled, *Am Hofe de Büffel* (meaning, "The Court of the Buffalo,"1909) and *Der Wolkenbergpastor* (meaning "The Wolkenberg Pastor", 1928) on Rev. Moses Rakoma.[324] Hoffmann contributed to Carl

[315] N. Manyike, "Seeing Beyond the Cover: A Critical Analysis of the Missionary Periodical *Tshupa Mabaka a Kereke* 1931-1935", MA Dissertation, University of Pretoria, 2019, p.34
[316] K. Rüther, *The Power Beyond,* p.228
[317] N. Manyike, "Seeing Beyond the Cover", p.34
[318] N. Manyike, "Seeing Beyond the Cover", p.34
[319] S.P.P. Mminele "The Berlin Missionary Enterprise at Botshabelo", p.254
[320] N. Manyike, "Seeing Beyond the Cover", p.36
[321] *Ibid,* p.34 -36
[322] Epaphras Mogagabise Ramila was born in 1897, in Lehlakaneng near Botshabelo. He received his education from the Botshabelo Training School where he qualified as a teacher in 1915 and continued to teach for another 44 years. in T.D Mweli Skota, *The African Who's-Who: An Illustrated Classified Register and National Biographical Dictionary of the Africans of the Transvaal,* Frier and Munro Ltd Johannesburg, 1966, p.54- 55
[323] N. Manyike, "Seeing Beyond the Cover", p.34
[324] L. Kriel, 'Historical Context', p.50

Meinhoff's *Zeitschrift* (meaning "Magazine", 1912), which published folktales in Sesotho. These stories were later translated from German into the Northern Sotho text, *Padiso* (meaning "Stories").[325] Hoffmann also wrote a biography on other church members, such as Jonas Mogshwa entitled *Der Meister von Kratzenstein,* (meaning "The Master of Kratzenstein", 1920).[326]

From 1900 until the late 1930s, the BMS worked together with black African converts – who doubled as their teachers – to produce texts which were religious in nature. These texts had many purposes such as "distributing religious publicity, carrying religious messages and cultivating a homogenous religious distinctiveness amongst those who consumed these publications."[327] Therefore, the readers of Northern Sotho texts, were through language and text forming part of a "language field,"[328] in this case a 'Sepedi' language field. Those with a command of the Northern Sotho language were, through religious and non-religious text, connected in a "nationally imagined community."[329]

This was an *imagined* community that missionaries emphasised more than their converts as black Africans envisioned themselves as Christians and only as ethnic subjects only when social mobility was in question. For BMS missionaries, the connections between the BMS' congregants (an 'imagined Northern Sotho community') was reinforced by the establishment of a BMS Northern Sotho newspaper, *Tshupa Mabaka a Kereke* in 1931. This newspaper replaced *Almanaka ea Mission ea Berlin* and *Mogoera ao Babaso* and combined features of the almanac, popular local news stories and information on the BMS in the Transvaal. Manyike notes that all contributors to the publication were men, ensuring that only Christian men would be placed in a position to "construct ideas about society for society."[330] This is not to suggest that women did not construct ideas about society or for society, but that in this new community (based largely on Christianity), they were relegated to the formal role of helpmate. It was black African male converts who were more likely to be taught to write – a skill which enabled them to contribute to notions of culture and society in text. Women, who had systematically been

[325] *Ibid,* p.30
[326] *Ibid,* p.40
[327] N. Manyike, "Seeing Beyond the Cover", p.38
[328] B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* London, Verso, 2006, p.44
[329] B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* London, Verso, 2006, p.44
[330] N. Manyike, "Seeing Beyond the Cover", p.67

ushered towards the domestic sphere, through mission education, would have constructed notions of culture and society through orality or dance or an alternative medium.[331]

Manyike's study on *Tshupa* illustrates how women in this text were constantly portrayed within the context of family and relegated to domestic roles.[332] While men assumed leadership roles, women were "depicted kneeling, holding their babies or standing next to their husbands."[333] The portrayal of 'heathen' women and Christian women was also very different: while 'heathen' women were often portrayed as not fully clothed and kneeling, Christian women were usually clothed and considered more 'dignified' and yet, "she was usually not given a name."[334] These portrayals of 'heathen' and Christian women, illustrate how missionary Christian ideals formed the foundations of women's representation in early (Northern) Sotho print media.

The emergence of Northern Sotho print must be seen in the general publishing context across South Africa. During the 1930s, various missionary presses and church publishing houses began developing literature in both English and African vernacular languages. Transcripts from the Conference on Literature for the South African Bantu, held in Bloemfontein in June 1936, illustrate a conscious shift by missionary presses and publishing houses away from the translation of the Bible towards the creation of "Christian vernacular literature."[335] Although hymn-books and school books were profitable, these stakeholders sought to "raise a fund, say £5000, to make possible the publication of suitable works of African authors, some of which are at present held over for lack of funds."[336]

In October of the same year, black African authors held a conference of their own in Johannesburg. Writers from various ethnolinguistic groups were present, including Northern-Sotho writer R.V. Selope Thema.[337] According to the minutes of the conference, Thema was the only Northern Sotho speaker in attendance. The main obstacles faced by these writers was

[331] N. Erlank, *Convening Black Intimacy,* p.138
[332] N. Manyike, "Seeing Beyond the Cover", p.117
[333] N. Manyike, "Seeing Beyond the Cover", p.117
[334] *Ibid,* p.119
[335] Conference on Literature for the South African Bantu, Bloemfontein, Lovedale Press June 1936, Cory Library, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa, p.6
[336] Conference on Literature for the South African Bantu, p.7
[337] Thema Selope was born in Pieterburg in 1886, he attended Lovedale College in 1906. He worked as the chairman of the constitution committee in the African National Congress from 1912 and later became a member for the Government Native Representative Council for the Transvaal and Orange Free State. He also contributed to the *Bantu-Batho, Umteteli* newspapers. in T.D Mweli Skota, *The African Who's-Who: An Illustrated Classified Register and National Biographical Dictionary of the Africans of the Transvaal,* Frier and Munro Ltd Johannesburg, 1966, p.53

that publishers would not "publish meritorious material because it can only command a small reading public, and the reading public is not being extended because of the lack of reading matter."[338] African writers were also concerned with the increasingly racialised nature of employment in urban centres which closed off other avenues of employment.[339] The writers in attendance looked to employment in missionary presses as book-binders or writers as a means to support their livelihoods.[340]

Among the major challenges faced by black African writers was the issue of standardised orthography. Languages such as Northern Sotho (Sepedi) and Southern Sotho (Sesotho) were still undergoing a process of standardisation until the late 1940s, although writers did produce texts in these languages such as E.M Ramaila's *Tša Bophelo Bja Moruti Abraham Serote, 1865 – 1930* (meaning "The Life of Abraham Serote", 1935) and Phala's *Kxomo'a thswa* (meaning "The Burning Cow", 1935).The distribution of these texts was limited, and the Committee of African writers sought to "ask the Education Departments to consider the possibility of distributing copies among schools."[341] These conferences illustrate how black African men were thinking of vernacular literature outside of mission newspapers, almanacs or biographies. As mentioned above, this literature reinforced connections between readers, bonding an 'imagined Northern Sotho community' through language, but the writers of these texts were more committed to their Christian culture (although influenced by elements of tradition) than an ethnic nationalism. An example of this is Ramaila's biographical text, *Tša Bophelo Bja Moruti Abraham Serote, 1865 – 1930*, centred on the life of Rev. Abraham Serote of the BMS. Ramaila's protagonist is the embodiment of a Botshabelo Christian: educated and Christian. Ramaila's text is also an example of how early vernacular literature represented the 'housewifization' of 'Pedi' womanhood.

Tša Bophelo Bja Moruti Abraham Serote and Early Vernacular literature and the 'Housewifization' of 'Pedi' Womanhood (1920 – 1935)

Tša Bophelo Bja Moruti Abraham Serote was published in 1935 by the BMS Northern Sotho Book Depot in Edenvale. The author, Epaphras Mogagabise Ramaila, was a second-generation

[338] African Authors Conference, Johannesburg, October 1936, Lovedale Press, Cory Library, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa, p.11-12
[339] *Ibid*, p.17
[340] African Authors Conference, p.17
[341] African Authors Conference, p.19

Christian convert. He was trained at the Botshabelo Training school[342] and became teacher and minister.[343] Ramaila was a member of the 'Pedi' BMS Bible Commission and published several books, such as *Borwa bo a foka* (meaning "the South Blows", 1929) and anthologies of short stories; *Molomatsebe* (meaning "the Source", 1951) and *Taukobong* (meaning "Lion in a Blanket",1953).[344] Jeremiah Tsholo's study on Northern Sotho literature suggests that during the early 1930s, books written by black African writers were concerned with understanding a period of change as more people began adopting Christianity.[345] Ramaila's audience was both educated Christian converts and non-Christians who wished to learn to read. His work was heavily influenced by his missionary education.[346] Tsholo suggests that Ramaila was predominately concerned with writing about modernity, migrant labour and Christianity.[347] These themes are invoked in *Tša Bophelo Bja Moruti Abraham Serote.*

The text begins by describing Serote's childhood at the Botshabelo mission station after Serote's Bakôpa parents – along with other Christian converts – were exiled from Sekhukhune's domain. Ramaila also describes Serote's journey to Germany to translate the Bible into Northern Sotho in 1902 and provides three moralising parables taken from Serote's church sermons. In *Tša Bophelo Bja Moruti Abraham Serote* there are three named characters identified as women: Malope, Sarona and Mmapitsa.

Malope, is Rev. Serote's mother, she is initially, described as a she is 'heathen' in the following:

> "*Lebakeng la xe ba huduxêela Bothšabêlô ké xe mohumaxadi wa xaxwe Malope yêna á sešo a kolobetšwa*."
>
> "When the couple relocated to Botshabelo because his wife; Malope, had not yet been baptized [sic]."[348]

But Malope later adopts Christianity:

[342] S.P.P Mminele's study on the BMS's educational enterprise in the Transvaal notes that the BMS established "ten different types of schools such as congregational schools, catechumenal schools, confirmation schools, Evening schools for adults, a youth school, Sunday school, elementary schools, trade schools, evangelist schools and evangelist seminary schools, the Botshabelo Training school was a seminary school." From S.P.P. Mminele "The Berlin Missionary Enterprise at Botshabelo, p.54
[343] T.D Mweli Skota, *The African Who's-Who,* p.54
[344] T.D Mweli Skota, *The African Who's-Who,* p.54
[345] J. P Tsholo "Phetogo Ya Setšo Dingwalong tša Sepedi (Traditional Change in Sepedi Literature)", PhD Dissertation, University of Pretoria, 2015, p.2
[346] *Ibid,* p.2
[347] *Ibid,* p.11
[348] E.M Ramaila, *Tša Bophelo Bja Moruti Abraham Serote, 1865 – 1930,* Pretoria, Minerva, 1945, p.6

"*Xe Abraham a šetše a n'e ngwaxa le seripa, mm'axwe, Malope, le yêna a kolobetšwa ka la Helena*."

"When Abraham was a year and half, he was baptized [sic] along with his mother, Malope, who was renamed Helena."[349]

There is very little information about Malope other than being a woman and a mother. In my discussion on *Tshupa*, I noted how Christian women were often depicted as wives and mothers, and Ramaila's depiction of Malope is an example of black African writers reproducing these representations.

Sarona Motswelaruri Segome was Abraham Serote's wife but Ramaila's descriptions of her are limited as is demonstrated in the following passage:

"Ke ratana le mosetsana Sarona Sexome, eupya batswadi ba ka ba a mo xana. Xwa hwetšwa Monere le yêna a rata mosetsana yó ka xo mo tseba medirô le mwkxwa ya xaxawe, le xôona a rata be lapa la bô-mosetsana yó" (Abraham to Rev Nauhaus)

"I fancy Serona Segome, but my parents do not approve. Rev Nauhaus, do you approve of this match? Sarona comes from a good family and was well mannered."[350]

Sarona is initially introduced to the reader as the domestic worker of Rev. Nauhaus – this illustrates how women were increasingly cosigned into performing domestic duties in a Christian home. Although she was educated and Christian, she only exists in the domestic sphere. Sarona is not mentioned in the text again, but she is described as the 'dignified', 'well mannered' and 'respectful' – the ideal characteristics of a Christian partner.

Lastly, Mmapitsa, the wife of Ramosego Mokunyane, a character in Serote's parable *Ramosêxo ô a nyaka, xomme ô a bôna,* (meaning "He seeks, and he will find") is described the quintessential 'heathen wife.'[351] Ramaila states that,

"*moheitene a kxôlwa xore monnna wa-ka ó loilwe, puku e mos sentse."*

"She thought her husband was bewitched. The book (The Bible) made him crazy."[352]

Mmapitsa tries to convince her husband to stray from Christianity by using herbs from the village healer, but her husband remains resolute in his Christian faith. To the dismay of

[349] E.M Ramaila, *Tša Bophelo Bja Moruti Abraham Serote,,* p.9
[350] E.M Ramaila, *Tša Bophelo Bja Moruti Abraham Serote,* p.14
[351] E.M Ramaila, *Tša Bophelo Bja Moruti Abraham Serote*, p.35
[352] *Ibid*, p.35

Mmapitsa, Ramosego changes his name to Petrus upon baptism. Mmapitsa finally begins her journey from 'heathen' to Christian as described in the following passage,

> *Mosadi was Petrus, ditabatas mohlang woo die mo hlabile pelo. Mo tseleng a se kê a bolêela selô ka tsôna; kxwedi y aba ya féla. Le xe xo le byalo e be e le motho o šele, le yêna ó belaela xe a ka dirwa ngwana was Modimo. Xa a hlwe a e-ja xó sešo xwa kxopêlwa; bosasa le mantisbua ó letêla thapêlô. Ó lewa ke dihlong ka medirô ya xaxawe ya pele, ó šia xo kxopêla tebalêlo xo monna. Fêla, ka mafêlêlo, a bá a tlêma pelo, a khunama pele xa monna ka mexôkxô, a re: Hlê se xopolê 'taba tsa mabaka a fetileng, ke be ke sa lemoxe se ke se dirang; ntebalêlê: Le nna ke rata xo dirwa ngwana wa Modimo, a kê O nthušê fao. Petrus xontsi o felexetsa mosadi xo ya klaseng Mosadi a tiisa mtal xo fhla xe a kolobetswa. A fiwa lebitšo la Yohanna. Mohlong woo le bana ba babedi ba bôná ba kolobetswa, Maria le Yohathan.*
>
> "Watching the baptism, Petrus's wife was stunned. The pair returned to their home; she was silent. She remained silent for an entire month. Silently, she too wished to convert. She began by not having a meal without praying day or night. She began listening to her husband's prayers and recited them. She stopped resisting and apologised to her husband. She fell to her knees and said 'Forgive me for all I have done. Please help me be like you and become a child of God.' Petrus accompanied his wife to Bible study. She attended every class, then she was baptized [sic]. She was given the name Johanna. Their two children were also baptised, Maria and Johnathan"[353]

Mmapitsa's story illustrates how in both traditional and Christian spaces, womanhood was often associated with domesticity. As a 'heathen', Mmapitsa can be read as "primitive and lacking maturity."[354] Her immaturity is shown when she throws bread at her husband's feet[355] after hearing him converse with a priest about his baptismal. Her home is described as "*ntlo ya tlala lerole"* (a house filled with dust), suggesting that Mmapitsa cannot maintain a household up to a Christian standard of cleanliness.[356] Her acts of defiance are neither customary nor do they align with what would be considered appropriate behaviour for a Christian woman. The short parable ends before mentioning how Christian conversion has altered Mmapitsa's behaviour. We can only assume that after her conversion, her home is no longer filled with dust and she does not throw bread at her husband's feet. The character Mmapitsa illustrates how both Christian and traditional womanhood was centred on a Northern Sotho proverb, *Mosadi ke tšhweni o lewa mabogo* meaning "a woman is a baboon, her hands must be eaten."[357] Malesela Montle suggests that this proverb means that "the beauty – and charm of a woman is

[353] E.M Ramaila, *Tša Bophelo Bja Moruti Abraham Serote,* p.36-8
[354] N. Manyike, "Seeing Beyond the Cover", p. 111
[355] *Xemarole ao a sa fêla a kubeletsa ka mo ntlong, ké xe mosadi a tliša maxobê a a kxoromeletsa xo bôná. Dita tsa bôná tsa senyêxa,* (meaning "While the dust was still in the air, she brought them bread and threw it at them. The men were dumbfounded.") from *ibid,* p.37
[356] *Ibid,* p.36
[357] M.E. Montle, "Misogyny in African Oral Literature through the lense of Northern Sotho Proverbs", *South African Journal for Folklore Studies,* 31, 1, 2021, p.4

found in her labour (that is in her daily household chores) and in her ability to take care of her husband."[358] This illustrates how writers were through their text, conforming to the ways in which missionaries envisioned women.

While Ramaila's representations of women are stereotypical, it is interesting to see how throughout this text there little is very said about the 'Pedi' as a homogenous ethnic group. Instead, he mentions the Kôpa, Bapedi, Matlatla and Masemola groupings[359] similar to Hoffmann and his interlocutors. This gives the impression that the ways in which missionaries thought of 'womanhood was not dissimilar to the ways in which Northern Sotho speakers tied womanhood to domesticity. What Ramaila's text demonstrates, however, is that literate converts tied domesticity and appropriate behaviour to Christianity. For example, when Mmapitsa's behaviour towards her husband is represented as 'inappropriate', her home was described as a 'house filled with dust'. Converts thus represented womanhood through "housewifization," [360] in which women were not only confined to the domestic sphere but were helped in "self-guarding their morals"[361] through conversion to Christianity.

This is where we can begin to see the ways in which literature – as a technology and a cultural tool – has been utilised for the construction of gendered Northern Sotho subjects. According to Teresa De Lauretis,

> Gender is not sex, a state of nature, but the representation of each individual in terms of a particular social relation which pre-exist the individual and its predicated on the *conceptual* (my emphasis) and rigid (structural) opposition of two biological sexes. This conceptual structure is what feminist social scientists have designated 'the sex-gender system.' The cultural conceptions of male and female as two complementary yet mutually exclusive categories into which all human beings are placed and constitute within each culture a gender system, a symbolic system or systems of meanings that correlate sex to cultural contents according to social values and hierarchies. Although meanings vary with each culture, a sex-gender system is always intimately interconnected with political and economic factors in each society… The sex-gender system, in short, is both a sociocultural construct and a semiotic apparatus, a system of

[358] *Ibid,* p.4
[359] *Ibid,* p.6
[360] According Mies, housewifization was the construction of the new image of the 'good woman' in the centres of capitalism in the 19th and 20th centuries, namely, woman as *mother* and *housewife,* and the family as her arena, the privatized arena of consumption and 'love' excluded and sheltered from the arena of production and accumulation, where men reign. Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour,* London, Zed Books Ltd, 1986, p.100
[361] K.A. Eales, "Gender Politics and the Administration of African women in Johannesburg", p.45

> representation which assigns meaning (identity, value, prestige, location in kinship, status in the social hierarchy, etc.) to individuals within the society.[362]

While these early literate converts forged a particular sex gender system in text – shaped by both traditional ideas and missionary ideas about womanhood[363] - black African women also began to exercise greater independence over their lives. However, these women came up against the constraints placed on them through the collusion of the colonial government and traditional authorities. Women who sought to exist outside of the "orbit of male authority"[364] – and thus undermine textual representations such as Ramaila's – were labelled as "undesirable and uncontrolled".[365]

The Union of South Africa, the 'Native' and the Category of 'Native Woman' (1900 - 1930)

Aside from creating a system of land reservation, separate spheres of representation and administration, the 1905 South African Native Affairs Commission (SANAC) and its subsequent Report defined the 'native' as male.[366] The Report was preoccupied with labour extraction and governance of the 'Natives' and thus there is a striking absence of women's labour. 'Native women' were however, a key concern for the state. According to Birchenough, the 'Kaffir bride' was "the most valuable ally the mine-owners could enlist in their struggle for labour"[367] because it was envisioned that her 'place' was to cultivate the homestead in her husband's absence. The principal of Lovedale College Rev. James Stewart, also "conceived of the African woman solely as an obstacle to the forcible transformation of African men into wage labour."[368] The SANAC Report also shared this logic because it was assumed that black African women were slaves in black African polygamous households, meaning that men could remain in 'idleness,'"[369] and thus absent from the mines.

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[362] T. de Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film and Fiction,* Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1987, p.7
[363] M. E. Montle, "Misogyny in African Oral Literature", p.233
[364] D. Posel, The Case for a Welfare State: Poverty and the Politics of the Urban African Family in the 1930s & 1940s, in ed. S. Dubow & A. Jeeves, *South Africa's 1940s: Worlds of Possibilities,* Cape Town, Double Storey Book, 2005, p.68
[365] D. Posel, The Case for a Welfare State, p.68
[366] A. Ashforth, *The Politics of Official Discourse in Twentieth Century South Africa,* Michigan Publishing, Ann Arbor, 1990, p.32
[367] V. Markham, *The New Era in South Africa*, p.153
[368] Z. Magubane, "A Pigment of the Imagination? Race, Subjectivity, Knowledge and the Image of the Black Intellectual" in ed. R. Mabokela & Z. Magubane *Hear Our Voices: Race, Gender and the Status of Black South African Women in the Academy,* Pretoria, University of South Africa Press, 2004, p.50
[369] *Ibid*, p.50

The SANAC report's preoccupation with male labour coincided with the racialised "invisiblisation of women and their work."[370] Where white women's work was considered non-work, the work of black African women was seen as cheap labour for black African men and thus a threat to the acquisition of cheap labour for South Africa's rapidly industrialising economy.[371] Oyeronke Oyeweumi suggests that within the colonial and capitalist project, black African women were an "identifiable category, defined by their anatomy and subordinate to men in all situations."[372] Therefore, women, so far as the SANAC report was concerned, had less autonomy within this new order as black African women had undergone a "process of racial interiorisation and gender subordination."[373] SANAC described the place of the black African women as follows:

> In the Cape Colony and the Orange River Colony a Native woman attains majority at the age of twenty-one years. This confers upon her rights and a legal status which under Native law and custom she could never attain. By these she is held to be under guardianship all her life and, strictly speaking may not hold property in her own right, even when such property is earned by her own labour. Moreover, by recognition of a Native women's right to attain majority, she is placed in a position to emancipate herself from a condition which may have become distasteful to her and be free to choose her own path in life. As Christianity and education spread a woman's endeavours towards a higher and more self-respecting position than that appointed to her by ordinary kraal life should not be thwarted by perpetual tutelage unsuited to present-day conditions. Experience in the above Colonies has not justified the fears sometimes expressed that this emancipation of Native women would have disastrous results on Native family life. Evidence is rather the other way. Reference has already been made to the increasing number of self-respecting Native women now to be found in the country. Moreover, the women and girls when free agents, go in larger numbers into domestic and other services. Many are teachers in schools, and others accompany their husbands or relatives to farms and labour centres, thereby promoting continuous instead of intermittent work at those centres.[374]

The above passage illustrates that black African women would be barred from property ownership and South African citizenship because they were subjects of their individual *kgoro*(s) and the traditional authorities. Authorities "complained that women – 'runaway wives', daughters and widows – were coming to the town without the knowledge or permission

[370] G. Bhattacharyya, *Rethinking Racial Capitalism: Questions of Reproduction and Survival*, London, Rowan & Littlefield International Ltd, 2018, p.41
[371] Z. Magubane, "A Pigment of the Imagination?', p.50
[372] O. Oyewumi, *The Invention of Women*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1997, p.122
[373] O. Oyewumi, *The Invention of Women*, p.122
[374] Report of the South African Native Affairs Commission, 1903 – 1905, Cape Town, Cape Times Limited Printers, 1905, p.45

of their families."[375] While European 'civil' law regarded white woman as adults at 21 years old, 'native' or 'customary' law "considered women to be minors until they got married, though even then they were subject to their fathers and husbands."[376]

Capitalist expansion occurred alongside increased parental and tribal control over black African women and their mobility. An example of this can be seen in 1912 when the Transvaal Provincial Council created regulations that would "assist black rural parents in controlling daughters who moved to cities."[377] These regulations were unpinned by a fear that parents would lose *lobola* payments from men who impregnated their daughters while their daughters travelled into the cities for domestic work. Erlank notes that the control of black African women's mobility was also tied to "white anxiety, urban control and the supply of labour."[378] Anxieties around black African women's mobility was not limited to traditional authority but was also linked to the rapid industrialisation of the Transvaal during the early 1900s.

Between 1911 and 1921, the number of black African women in Johannesburg increased from 4 357 to 12 160, which resulted in shared response by traditional authorities, black African men and the South African state.[379] Within rural reserves, old customary laws were increasingly replaced by new ones, which entrenched control over black African women in tribal authorities. Women had their customary protections steadily eroded as new customs were fashioned through the collusion of colonial authorities and chiefs, to the benefit of male interests. Charles Harris' study on the Bapedi shows, that by the early 1920s, women were only able to gain an audience with the chief if her maternal uncle spoke *for* and accompanied her.[380] In the aftermath of colonial conquest, the idea of 'customary law' soon became a contradictory term because there was nothing 'customary' in the way it came into being."[381] The South African state bolstered tribal authorities who had adopted the "idea that men were the 'owners' and guardians or women."[382]

[375] K. A. Eales, "Gender Politics and the Administration of African women in Johannesburg, 1903 – 1939" Masters Dissertation, University of Witwatersrand, 1991, p.43
[376] E. Jansen, *Like Family: Domestic Workers in South African History and Literature*, Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2019, p.59
[377] *Ibid*, p.61-62
[378] N. Erlank, *Convening Black Intimacy,* p.135
[379] *Ibid,* p.136
[380] C. L Harries, *The Laws, and Customs of the Bapedi and Cognate tribes of the Transvaal*, Johannesburg, Hortors Ltd, 1929, p.5
[381] O. Oyewumi, *The Invention of Women*, p.146-7
[382] E. Jansen, *Like Family*, p.64

An East Coast Fever epidemic broke out from 1906 until 1911, and a drought at the end of the nineteenth century, was one of the main reasons why mission stations became a 'magnet' for young girls and women avoiding marriage or concubinage.[383] Women often sought prayers for rain and would move to mission stations to gain some material security.[384] Women from this period onwards can be divided into two categories: 1. 'native women' who remained in rural areas, 2. or urban 'undesirable women' who were a group of "'uncontrolled women and girls' outside the orbit of male authority."[385] Black African women's mobility created a need for the state and traditional authorities to use the "African family as an administrative solution to problems with housing and the control of women."[386] The 'problem' of black African women and housing would be 'solved' by "making suitably behaved urban families out of Christian families."[387] African marriage and black African coupling became a focus for traditional authorities, the State and missionaries as "African women and men embraced modern ideas about love and sexuality, they found themselves set adrift from traditional protections"[388] and needed to reconfigure courtship practices.

Polished Native and the 'Modern' Girl (1920 – 1940)

Delius notes that Northern Sotho male Christian converts[389] were described as 'polished natives.'[390] A 'polished native' was expected to reject most aspects of their cultural identity that did not align with Western norms or culture, except in their language practices. 'Polished natives' were usually teachers at mission schools but would pivot from teaching to writing like Ramaila and Selope. Traditionally, a 'polished native' man would couple and marry a 'modern girl.' According to Lynn Thomas, the 'modern girl'[391] was a young black African woman, with "some schooling, who had a panache for fashion and choosing their own lovers."[392] The 'modern girl' was the ideal counterpart for the 'polished native' as both were educated,

[383] D. L. Gaitskell, "Female Mission Initiatives: Black and White Women in Three Witwatersrand Churches, 1903 – 1939", PhD Dissertation, University of London, 1981, p.54
[384] D. L. Gaitskell, "Female Mission Initiatives: Black and White Women", p.57
[385] D. Posel, The Case for a Welfare State: Poverty and the Politics of the Urban African Family in the 1930s & 1940s, in ed. S. Dubow & A. Jeeves, *South Africa's 1940s: Worlds of Possibilities*, Cape Town, Double Storey Book, 2005, p.68
[386] N. Erlank, *Convening Black Intimacy,* p.136
[387] *Ibid,* p. 136
[388] *Ibid,* p.76
[389] Delius has recorded two men; Jan Masadi and Jacob Mantladi were both 'Pedi' and had travelled to Port Elizabeth in 1857, Masadi returned to Bopedi with 5 books of Moses in Nguni. Mantladi came into contact with the Paris Evangelical Mission Society and converted before returning home. P. Delius, *The Land Belongs,* p.111
[390] P. Delius, *The Land Belongs to Us: The Pedi Polity, the Boers, and the British in the Nineteenth- Century Transvaal,* Berkeley, University of California Press, 1983, p.109
[391] L. Thomas, "The Modern Girl and Racial Respectability in the 1930s South Africa", *Journal of African History,* 47, 3, 2006, p.465
[392] L. Thomas, "The Modern Girl and Racial Respectability, p.465-6

Christian and rejected tribal authority to some extent while single women, migrating into urban areas which were, according to the state and tribal authorities, "immoral"[393] women, who would 'lure' men into 'immoral acts.' It was ironic that unmarried Christian black African women were considered more 'immoral' than "their traditional counterparts and that a higher rate of premarital pregnancy existed among mission converts."[394] Regardless of a woman's 'immorality' or 'respectability', women had developed more autonomy than they had ever had before, which made it possible for individual black African women to either conform to missionary ideals of Christian domesticity or they could navigate their lives differently. Those who chose a life of domesticity usually coupled with a 'polished native'.

Coupling between the 'polished native' and the 'modern girl' created a new class of African petty bourgeoisie. This class held "monogamy, nuclear families and tea services"[395] as markers of Western-style family life. Both the 'polished native' and 'modern girl' sought to embody the "antithesis of savagery."[396]Although this class perceived of itself as modernised, it "stressed the continuance of traditionally deferential patterns of female behaviour and traditionally authoritative patterns of male behaviour,"[397] meaning that urban women could exist outside of the control of tribal authority but would remain under the guardianship of their husbands or fathers. The Urban Areas Act of 1923 added an additional layer of guardianship over black African women. Under section 12(a), black African women migrating to urban areas had to prove that they had accommodation.[398] Often, one's marriage certificate acted as proof of accommodation. Although it was difficult for the government to police this, the legal requirement illustrates the degree to which the state – in addition to husbands and fathers – sought to control the influx of black African women moving into towns.[399]

The 'modern girl' phenomena, while emerging within a context of control and guardianship, also illustrated the limits of patriarchal control of women's movement during the early twentieth century. Additionally, this phenomenon illustrates how representations of black African women in texts did not coincide with the ways in which individual African women exercised their own agency. The 'modern girl' was theoretically autonomous and yet her autonomy and independence were seen as a threat to 'proper family life.' According to Deborah

[393] D. Posel, The Case for a Welfare State, p.69
[394] N. Erlank, *Convening Black Intimacy,* p.82
[395] N. Erlank, "Gender and Masculinity", p.656
[396] *Ibid*, p.656
[397] *Ibid*, p.656
[398] E. Jansen, *Like Family*, p.67
[399] N. Erlank, *Convening Black Intimacy,* p.139

Posel, social reformists of the 1930s and 1940s thought urban black Africans, particularly the urban woman, were a subject who needed to be "morally 'uplifted', 'stabilised' by a secure family and sexually disciplined."[400] Additionally, women's moral and social wellbeing was thought to only be secured in rural 'tribal' heartlands. For the 'polished native', a suitable partner was 'respectable', educated and chaste. In precolonial 'Pedi' society, women were the bearers of rank, while within this new petty bourgeoisie context, "wives gave men the social capital to participate in middle-class society."[401] Within these households, labour was divided according to the "belief that men were the natural guardians and providers for their families while women cared for their domestic and moral needs."[402] The idea of a housewife was particularly applicable to urban Christians - in late nineteenth- century rural society in South Africa, the concept of a black housewife had not existed. Rural women had always been productive workers and continued to be involved in cultivation, helped in childcare and some domestic chores by children. In that sense, their life was more like that of pre-industrial women in seventeenth-century Britain. (In other ways, for instance polygyny, it was profoundly different). These 'modern' African families extended ideas that propagated in mission schools across South Africa, particularly ideas created by female missionaries who "instructed African housewives in domestic duties."[403] Given the economic needs of the period, the idea of an urban black African housewife was a myth, as urban couples often required women to work for wages.[404]

It is at this juncture where professions such as nursing, teaching and domestic work became 'appropriate' labour for 'modern girls' because these professions were a "natural extension of their labor [sic] as wives and mothers."[405] Terms such as *AmaRespectables* (respectable people);[406]*kholwa* (believers) and *badumaedi* (Christians),[407] illustrate how these literate elite families were perceived by those who were not as 'modernised' or 'urbanised.' Ideologically speaking, these African families utilised racial respectability, defined as "faith in Christianity, schooling, and law and order"[408] to set themselves apart from the 'tribal' black Africans. At its core, racial respectability was aimed at women, who had to internalise the dominant norms of

[400] D. Posel, The Case for a Welfare State, p.75
[401] N. Erlank, "Gender and Masculinity", p.657
[402] N. Erlank, "Gender and Masculinity", p.659
[403] *Ibid*, p.569
[404] N. Erlank, *Convening Black Intimacy,* p.135
[405] N. Erlank, "Gender and Masculinity", p.569
[406] L.Thomas, "The Modern Girl", p.466
[407] E.M Ramaila, *Tša Bophelo Bja Moruti Abraham Serote*, p.6
[408] L.Thomas, "The Modern Girl", p.466

"temperance, industriousness, thrift, refined manners, and Victorian sexual morals to counter racist images and structures."[409] By adopting these norms, the 'modern girl' attempted to counter the "widely held belief that most black women were either prostitutes or working in the illegal liquor trade."[410] The "black seductress"[411] trope was also tied to the idea that black African women were responsible for the spread of venereal disease in the Rand during the 1930s. It was thus in the interest of men of all races to "collude in establishing the contours of 'proper' female behaviour."[412] The 'polished native' was particularly interested in 'cleansing' the 'modern girl' through marriage and motherhood, although their efforts did little to shake the commonly held belief that black African women in urban areas were inherently immoral and unreliable.[413]

While 'polished natives' created boundaries on what was considered 'respectable' behaviour for educated black women in urban areas, it should be noted that ethnicity emerged in debates around women's conduct. The longest standing isiZulu newspaper *Ilanga lase Natal* (established in 1903), published complaints from male contributors over "out-of-control young women who cohabitated with men of other ethnicities."[414] Given the limited access to education available to women at the time, an educated and respectable woman – regardless of her ethnicity – would not have been an easy find and competition amongst 'polished natives' for suitable brides would have been inevitable. Although these men considered themselves removed from their 'tribal' roots, they were considered by the state as subjects of their 'tribal' leaders and had some stake in the rural reserve. For the 'polished native', partnering with a woman who shared the same ethnolinguistic background would have been ideal as she would have been familiar with the customs of her husband's ethnic group, but it was likely that coupling across ethnic lines occurred. This is because urban black Africans largely appropriate the terms '*AmaRespectables*', *kholwa* (believers) and *badumaedi* (Christians) and did not use ethnicity as a primary means of identification. The significance of ethnicity within an urban context was minimal as racial respectability and the 'upliftment' of black Africans was prioritised over the adoption of ethnic categories. A reason for the declining the importance of ethnic identification in urban areas such as Johannesburg could be attributed to the influx of

[409] L.Thomas, "The Modern Girl", p.467
[410] E. Jansen, *Like Family,* p.65
[411] *Ibid,* p.70
[412] *Ibid,* p.69
[413] E. Jansen, *Like Family,* p.71
[414] M. du Toit & P. Nzuza, "'*Isifanzane Sakiti Emadolobheni'* (Our Women in the Towns): The Politics of Gender in *Ilanga lase Natal,* 1933 -1938" *Journal of Natal and Zulu History,* 2019, 33, 1, p.466

men from various ethnolinguistic groups living and working in proximity, creating communities which were ethnically and linguistically diverse. Although urban black Africans had usually undergone missionary education taught in their respective vernaculars, in urban spaces, one's ethnicity could have been 'downplayed' to be perceived as 'modern.'

Conclusion

This chapter illustrates how the 'Pedi' ethnicity, from the late nineteenth century into the early twentieth century, was not a static construct, but rather a product of dynamic Christian cultural and historical processes, shaped by the interactions between missionaries and black African converts. Additionally, this chapter demonstrates that states' ideas about ethnicity as fixed did not alter the convert's primary form of identification as Christian. Furthermore, this chapter showed the intricate ways in which Christian converts contributed to the 'housewifisation' of women in Northern Sotho text. This representation of women was not too far removed from missionary ideas around woman and womanhood. The gendered education provided by the BMS not only influenced perceptions of women's roles as housewives but also enabled black African men to engage forms of authorship over women. Finally, this chapter contextualised these developments within the broader socio-political changes in South Africa from the 1900s to the 1930s, revealing a nuanced relationship between the growing independence of black African women and the mismatch in their representation in vernacular texts authored by black African men.

The following chapter will discuss the ways in which black African writers produced similar representations of black African women within an apartheid framework. Within an apartheid framework, ethnicity was increasingly emphasised by the state. However, black African writers, had not completely embraced the 'Pedi' ethnicity for themselves. Instead, they continued recycling the representations of Christian women penned by earlier writers.

Chapter 3: 'Good Bantus' Write in Sepedi and Listen to Radio Lebowa (1940 – 1990)

Introduction

The previous chapter examined how the emergence of vernacular literature by black African converts mirrored the changes in Northern Sotho communities brought on by Christianity and how Christianity informed the portrayal of women in early Northern Sotho literature. This chapter begins by tracing the creation of the Bantustan system as the political framework in which writers from the 1940s onwards published works in. These writers' work was inherently political because of its relationship to the Afrikaner nationalist ethnic project. Therefore, this chapter traces the state's discourse around retribalising the 'Bantu' and the creation of Bantustans followed by the implementation of Bantu Education. This chapter also explores how Christian black African writers from the 1940s published Northern Sotho texts, which at times did emphasise ethnic difference, however, ethnicity remained an ambiguous project among these writers as their work still overwhelmingly invoked the ideals of Christian womanhood. The works reviewed in this chapter, by writers from as early as 1940, are used to illustrate the 'Good Bantu' phenomena. 'Good Bantus,' as the chapter discusses, were, black African Christians who - to some degree, bought into the idea of ethnic difference but there is little evidence in their texts that suggests that they identified as an *ethnic* subject. The chapter ends with a discussion on the place of women in texts created by 'Good Bantus' and how representations of women built on a fusion of Christian ideals and the idea of the 'rural' as the appropriate place for black African women.

There were three main tenets to Verwoerd's 'Native Affairs' policy: the first was land rehabilitation through which the creation of a "truly economic system of farming;"[415] the second, was the full recognition of the "traditional community organization [sic] of the Bantu"[416] through the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951; and thirdly, the restructuring of 'native' education through the Bantu Education Act of 1953, which "emphasised the distinctiveness of place, society and culture, and the need to link curriculum theory and practice to the immediate geographic and cultural environment of the child."[417] This Act was followed by the Extension of Universities Act of 1959, which facilitated the creation of black universities, providing not

[415] H. Verwoerd, "Policy of the Minister of Native Affairs", p.36
[416] *Ibid,* p.38
[417] P. Kallaway & R. Swartz, *Empire and Education in Africa: The Shaping of a Comparative Perspective,* Pietermaritzburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2019, p224

only separate education according to race, but also according to ethnic categorisation. The University College of the North was established in 1959 to "educate students from Sotho, Tswana, Tsonga and Venda 'national units.'"[418] While the University College of the North (later University of the North) was "designed to be remote, and to focus student's energy and attention on the local areas and homelands they inhabited,"[419] Heffernan notes that the university was more ethnically diverse than other 'ethnic' universities such as the University of Zululand (for isiZulu speakers) and Fort Hare University (for isiXhosa speakers). The northern Transvaal, as mentioned previously, was linguistically and culturally diverse, making the state's desire to "create a single Northern Sotho territory out of a series of previously disparate and geographically non-contiguous areas"[420] complicated because of the changes in the region in the nineteenth century.

The Northern Sotho federation situated between the Lepelle and Steelpoort Rivers had been partitioned by colonial officials in 1896. Partitioning this region meant that officials created two parallel chieftaincies ruling over the Nebo and Sekhukhuneland districts until 1953. Sekhukhune II became paramount of the Sekhukhuneland district in 1899 until his death in 1943. Morwamotše III was appointed as his successor in 1946.[421] In the Nebo district, Kgolane was appointed as paramount by colonial officials in 1904. Kgolane was succeeded by his son Kgoloko II who continued to rule the southern part of the region from 1939 until his death in 1953.[422] In the 1950s, the NP along with the NAD, sought to revive ethnic nationalism within these black African communities and began so by placing the two districts under a single chief.[423]

On 20 August 1953 at Malegale in the Sekhukhuneland district, Morwamotše III was installed as the official paramount of both the Nebo and Sekhukhuneland districts until his death in 1965.[424] According to Delius, this decision was informed by Morwamotše III's willingness to accept the department's Tribal Authorities and Land Rehabilitation programmes.[425] In 1954, Verwoerd alongside Werner Eiselen, held an *indaba* with senior chiefs from the northern

[418] A. Heffernan *Limpopo's Legacy: Students Politics and Democracy in South Africa,* Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2019, p.23
[419] *Ibid*, p.23
[420] D. James, "*Bagagesu* (those of my home): Women Migrants, Ethnicity and Performance in South Africa", *American Ethnologist,* 26, 1, 1999, p.73
[421] H. O Mönnig, *The Pedi,* J.L Van Shaik, Pretoria, 1967, p.38
[422] P. Delius, *A Lion Amongst Cattle*, p.xiv
[423] P. Delius, *A Lion Amongst Cattle,* p.80
[424] *Ibid,* p.80
[425] P. Delius, *A Lion Amongst Cattle,* p.79

Transvaal to convince leaders to accept the installation of Tribal Authorities and Bantu Education.[426] Although some communities rejected the Bantu Authorities, some influential regional chiefs, namely Mabowe James Sekhukhune, thought both Bantu Authorities and Bantu Education would "open up new avenues of opportunity and 'progress' within the reserves."[427] Other members of Morwamotše III's council, such as Godfrey Mogaramedi Sekhukhune thought the incorporation of the *dikgosana* into the Bantu Authorities would "defile the legacy of Sekhukhune I and sever the arteries of legitimacy and popular support for the paramount."[428] However, Morwamotše III chose to collaborate with the NAD (which had been renamed the Department of Bantu Administration and Development or BAD in 1958 but remained the NAD) to provide his territory with a railway, buses, schools, a clinic and a post office and telephone wires. Although officials agreed to the provision of said facilities, the NDA did not fulfil their promises.[429] Mr. Prinsloo, the Chief information officer of the NAD, began working towards appointing regional authorities and councillors who were nominated by the paramount. These individuals were from the *bakgomana* (royal lineage), and usually powerful headmen, teachers and shopkeepers were selected.[430] As the 1950s ended, the NP began hardening its policy of separate development specifically with regards to the 'native' reserves and their governance.

By 1956, the NADs land rehabilitation initiatives had been abandoned, heightening land shortages and forcing families onto even smaller plots, which limited livestock capacity and prevented the creation of a rural farming class.[431] Increasingly, more and more families began to depend on migrant labour to sustain their livelihoods, resulting in increased influx of control measures imposed by the state. After attending the 1959 Parliamentary debate on Bantu Self-Governance, Prime Minister Verwoerd outlined a new administrative system for black Africans in which "they will have rights in connection with their links with their homeland."[432] Both rural and urban black Africans would have their rights allocated to the reserves in which they would be allowed to "take part in the government of their Bantu homeland, of their *ethnic* [my emphasis] unit."[433] This legislation was envisaged as a means to 'retribalise' the 'Bantu' who

[426] P. Delius, *A Lion Amongst Cattle,* p.109
[427] *Ibid,* p.110
[428] P. Delius, *A Lion Amongst Cattle,* p.112
[429] P. Delius, *A Lion Amongst Cattle,* p.112
[430] *Ibid,* p.112
[431] P. Delius, *A Lion Amongst Cattle,* p.139
[432] H. Verwoerd, "Participation in the Debate Concerning the Bill Promoting Bantu Self-government, Senate, May 20, 1959" in (ed.) A.N, Pelzer, *Verwoerd Speaks: Speeches 1948 – 1966,* Johannesburg, APB Publishers, 1966, p.276
[433] H. Verwoerd, "Participation in the Debate, p.276

through conquest and urbanisation had to be 'reconnected' with their individual ethnolinguistic communities. The promotion of the Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959 created demarcated ethnic homelands based on existing rural reserves and "established a number of Commissioners-General to act as agents of the Central Government in homelands (or Bantustans)."[434]

In 1961, Sekhukhuneland was incorporated into the Lebowa Territorial Authority[435] marking the beginning of a 'Bantu' administrative system in the Northern Transvaal. The map below illustrates the Lebowa Bantustan. Lebowa consisted of two different tracts of land, encompassing communities such as Moletsi, Melebogo, Mokopane, Matlala to the north of Pietersburg (currently Polokwane). A separate tract of land, encompassed the Sekhunkhune, Mphahlele, Sewati and Zebediela communities south of Pietersburg. By the mid-1960s, the ruling house was in danger of collapse, marked by the death of Morwamotše III in 1965. Rivals of the ruling house departed from the region, leaving Morwamotše's wife, Mankopodi, as regent until her son, Rhyne, came of age. After assuming office, Mankopodi sought to use the NAD as an instrument which would buttress the weakening power of the ruling house, and in 1968, after co-operating and establishing a new Tribal Authority, Mankopodi was 'rewarded' with a "chairmanship of the regional authority and recognition as paramount"[436] of all the inhabitants of the region. From 1968 until 1970, 'traditional' political institutions of the region were altered to fit into the emerging Bantustan framework.

The 'tribal' chief, with the consultation of his council, was responsible for tax collection, the registration of births and deaths, preventing unauthorised departures of those classified as 'Bapedi' to the town, flora and fauna preservation, along with other administrative tasks.[437] Tribal authorities were supervised by regional authorities, composed of all the chiefs of the 'tribes' and at the helm of this branch was an elected chief-president. Tribal authorities were responsible for regional schools, roads, water resources, vaccinations, and regional budgets.[438] In 1970, the NP introduced the Bantu Homelands Citizen Act, which would remove 'black spots' from white urban areas and relocate black Africans into 'ethnic homelands' if they were considered 'surplus people' by the state. This legislation was followed by the Bantu Homelands Constitution Act of 1972. This legislation granted Lebowa self-governing status. The region

[434] B. Rogers *Divide and Rule,* p.42
[435] P. Delius, *A Lion Amongst Cattle,* p. 140
[436] P. Delius, *A Lion Amongst Cattle*, p.140
[437] P. Ginieski, *Bantustans: A Trek Towards the Future,* Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1961, p.154
[438] P. Ginieski, *Bantustans,* p.155

itself included Sekhukhuneland and areas north of Pietersburg (Polokwane). Under this new legislation, the apex of the 'Bantu' political system was the Bantustan Parliaments, which would supervise tribal authorities' judiciary powers, decide on the location of markets, dipping pools, buildings and when said infrastructure would be built.[439] The parliament had legislative power, but resolutions could not be passed without confirmation from the South African government in Pretoria.

The Lebowa legislative assembly, according to Delius, consisted of 60 chiefs nominated by various regional authorities and 40 members elected by public vote.[440] The parliament also consisted of an executive with a Chief Minister. From the 1950s, *Kgoši* Mokgomo Maserumula Matlala, a leading supporter and beneficiary of the Bantu Authorities, was "groomed to be

[439] P. Ginieski, *Bantustans*, p.155
[440] P. Delius, *A Lion Amongst Cattle,* p.172- 173.

Chief Minister."[441] The undemocratic nature of this institution, along with the political fragmentation of Lebowa, created a "hierarchy of *Makgoši* from tribal and territorial

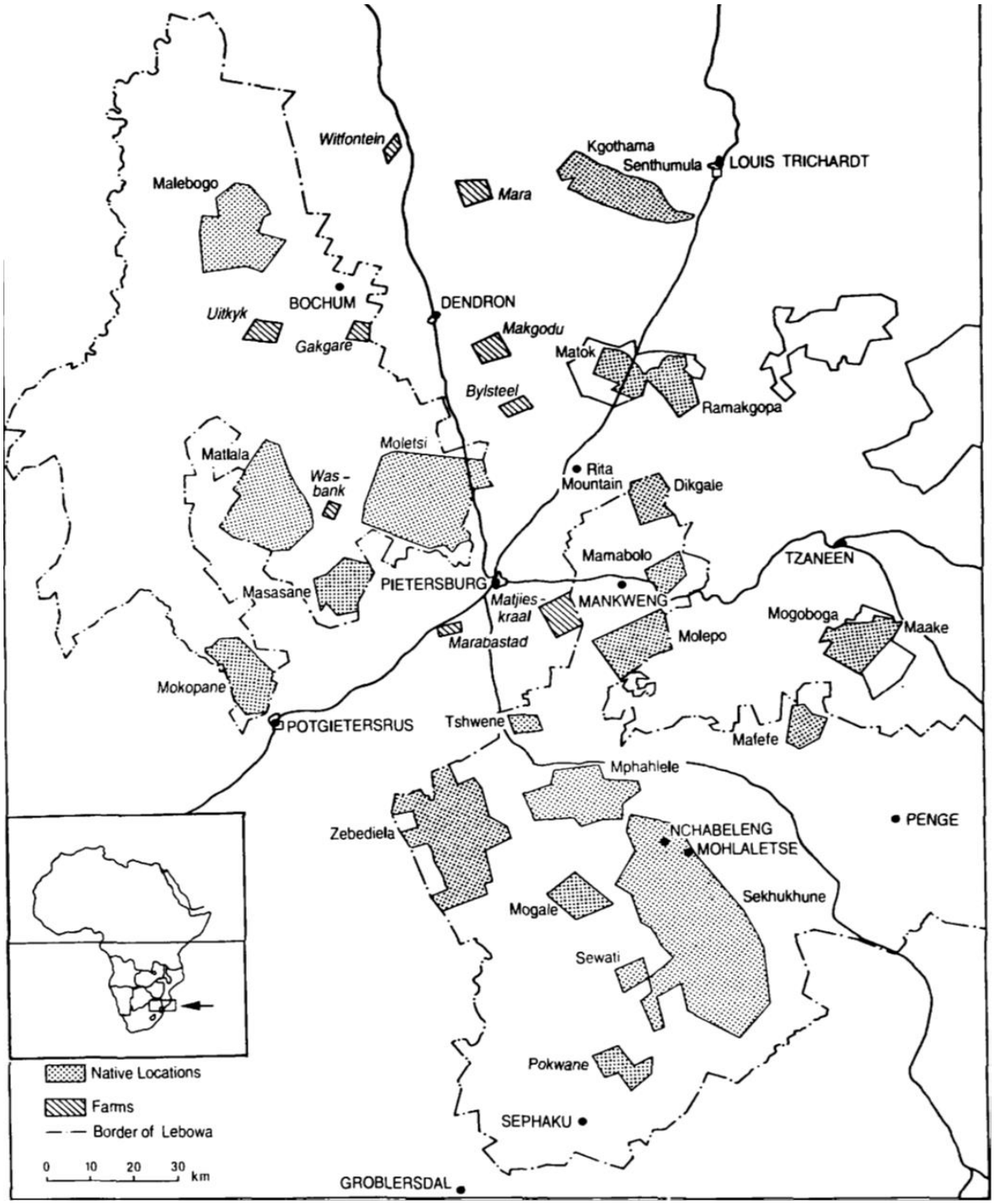

Figure 3 A Map of Lebowa (Leboa) Bantustan from D. James, "Bagagesu (those of my home): Women Migrants, Ethnicity and Performance in South Africa", American Ethnologist, 26, 1, 1999

[441] P. Delius, *A Lion Amongst Cattle,* p.173

levels who were made utterly dependent on the patronage"[442] of the Department of Bantu Administration and Development. Matlala's Lebowa 'National Party' and the Bantu Authorities system faced backlash in late 1972 and in the following year's elections, Matlala's administration was overthrown by Cedric Phatudi and his party, the Lebowa People's Party.

Despite Phatudi's career in translating Shakespeare into Sepedi and his subsequent literary texts, he was not an ethnic nationalist and did not necessarily adopt the state's retribalisation efforts. In the eyes of the state, the Bantustan policy had some symbolic value, providing black Africans with an "historical homeland."[443] Additionally, the State embarked on a "Verwoedian era of linguistic tribalizing [sic]"[444] which was fostered through the Bantu Language Board, under the Department of Bantu Education. From 1957 until 1969, the Board comprised of linguists such as Dirk Ziervogel and Theodor Endemann from the University of South Africa. This organisation published annual standardised Northern Sotho orthographies and distributed these texts to teacher training colleges and schools through the Department of Bantu Education. Publishing houses such as Van Schaik Publishers also began publishing Northern Sotho language handbooks and dictionaries. The emergence of independent publishing houses massified the availability of vernacular reading material which widened the net of the *imagined* 'Pedi' community. Despite the efforts made by the state, the degree of Phatudi's ethnic nationalism was far more moderate than other Bantustan leaders. This is evident in a 1974 interview, where Phatudi was asked if Lebowa was a Homeland for *only* the Pedi. Phatudi replied,

> Yes, it is a Homeland for my own Mphahlele people and other Sotho-speakers. But we also have many Zulu-speaking peoples. We have those who speak Sechuana - Chief Seleka's people - and we have Shangaans as well. We are all citizens of the Lebowa Nation.[445]

The inclusion of all ethnic groups – by political leaders and the University of Limpopo – destabilised the vision of an ethnically homogenous Lebowa. Throughout Phatudi's term, tribal authorities "lost its traditional meaning and therefore its existence and legitimacy became questionable."[446] While regional chiefs oversaw the migratory movement of inhabitants,

[442] A. Mokgwana, "A Historical Exploration of the Internal Factors in the Fall of the Apartheid System: The Case of Lebowa Bantustan, 1970 -1994", Masters Dissertation, University of Limpopo, Turfloop, 2008, p.32
[443] C. Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* David Philip, Cape Town, 1982, p.125
[444] N. Mkhize "Away with Good Bantus: De-linking African language literature from culture, 'tribe' and propriety", *Arts & Humanities in Higher Education,* 15, 1, 2016, p.147
[445] Chief Minister C. Phatudi of Lebowa and Chief C. Kapuuo of South West Africa, "South Africa's Homelands: Two African Views" in *Munger Africana Library Notes,* 22, 1974, California, p.7
[446] A. Mokgwana, "A Historical Exploration of the Internal Factors", p.34

punished disobedient villagers by withholding passbooks and work permits, imposed local taxes and tribal levies,[447] Lebowa never accepted independence unlike the Transkei. Phatudi's successor, Nelson Ramodike, denounced independence in 1988. Lebowa's punishment for its non-co-operation resulted in state sanctioned removal of tracts of land, which were 'gifted' to Bantustans that had accepted independence: Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venḓa and Ciskei. Later, Moutse was appropriated for the establishment of the KwaNdebele Bantustan.[448] Pretoria favoured Bantustans which accepted an independence status such as Venḓa, whereas the state sought to make Lebowa the smallest Bantustan[449] in South Africa. This can be attributed to the political climate of the 1970s, in which Lebowa Chief Ministers seem to have understood the corrosive nature of the Bantustan system, while other Bantustan leaders such as Zulu Prince Sithela Zulu, viewed the system as intended to protect the Zulu ethnic category. When interviewed by journalist Paul Ginieski about why he decided to co-operate with Pretoria, Zulu echoed the sentiments of the moralising vernacular texts of the 1930s:

> Here, in Durban, the family is being destroyed, morals are becoming corrupt, and the culture of the people is being impoverished. The men who work in the towns go back home for short periods. Some are lucky; they go for six months. Others go for a fortnight. It is impossible for a man to carry out all his duties in a fortnight. The roof of his hut has to be rethatched, the fields have to be ploughed, and each one of his wives must be given the hope of a new heir. When he leaves, they discover that they are not pregnant. They are unhappy. They follow him to the town, but they have only the right to remain there for three days, and besides, where could they stay, what means of subsistence would they have, what would become of the cattle and the fields in the village? And so they settle in Cato Manor. They become corrupt. The *tsotsis* turn them into prostitutes, and they learn to drink. I want to live with my family in my own Zulu country, just as you want to live at home in your own country. I want to be able to take care of my family, and see to the education of my children. I want my daughter to call me *ndabezitha* (Sir), but in Cato Manner she will learn to stick out her tongue and pull faces. I want to tell my sons the history of the Zulu. All this is impossible in the towns of the Whites. I am all for progress; I am for cars and telephones: but I want them made and used in my country, and not merely so that my people should come and help the Whites make them in their country.[450]

Pretoria also sought to recreate ethnic loyalists with the establishment of Jongilizwe College in Tsolo, Transkei which was dubbed the "Bantu Eton of South Africa."[451] College director, Mr.

[447] A. Mokgwana, "A Historical Exploration of the Internal Factors", p.35
[448] A. Mokgwana, "A Historical Exploration of the Internal Factors", p.40
[449] *Ibid*, p.45
[450] P. Ginieski, *Bantustans*, p.172
[451] P. Ginieski, *Bantustans*, p.173

Jansen van Rensburg, described the programme that in-coming chiefs would be expected to complete:

> [a]fter five years of study, they reach the level of a special matric which they pass at the school itself. They learn English, Xhosa, Afrikaans, Social Studies, Bantu administration, law, commerce, agriculture and typing. The lectures are given with the aid of films, and every effort is made to direct attention to the problems of history, administration and development in the underdeveloped territories. We attach importance to a knowledge of the great men of history, so as to give the Chiefs the conviction that man must dominate and mould the course of events.[452]

Education provided to the rest of the black African population was not as comprehensive as the syllabus at Jongilizwe College, however the creation of a Bantu education system did similarly foster ethnic loyalty through the provision of mother-tongue readers. Under government control, the number of black Africans children attending schools rose to roughly 3 million by 1979.[453] The steady increase of black African school children from 1950 onwards resulted in an increased demand for Northern Sotho texts for school children in the northern Transvaal.[454]

Making 'Good Bantus': Education, Radio and Literature (1940 – 1990)

In the previous chapters, I discussed the BMS mission education, this section illustrates an overlap between the BMS education policy and the NP education programme for black Africans. Between 1934 and 1939, the Director of Education in the Transvaal, Rev. G.A.C Kutschke of the BMS argued that a "total racial segregation was the only solution to the race problem"[455] in South Africa. This was unpinned by an existing precedent set by the BMS in 1865, where the church and its subsequent schools emphasised the use of mother-tongue language "to secure the induction of youth into the 'tribe.'"[456] These ideas formed the foundation for Bantu education which posited that black African children be provided with an education where "their cultural and linguistic backgrounds became fundamental factors in decisions about curriculum and pedagogy."[457] These ideas were articulated in the Native

[452] P. Ginieski, *Bantustans,* p.175
[453] L. Thompson, *A History of South Africa,* Yale University Press, New Haven, 2000, p.196
[454] M. Serudu, "Literary History: The Case of Northern Sotho" in (ed) J. Smit, J van Wyk & J. Wade, Y Press, Durban, 1996, p.100
[455] P. Kallaway, "German Lutheran Missions, German Anthropology and Science in African Colonial Education" in (ed.) P Kallaway and R. Swartz, *Empire and Education in Africa: The Shaping of a Comparative Perspective,* Pietermaritzburg, University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal Press, 2019, p.222
[456] *Ibid,* p.222
[457] *Ibid,* p.223

Education Commission (Eiselen Commission) Report of 1951. The steward of the Bantu Education policy and its implementation was assigned to Werner W.M Eiselen, the son of a Berlin mission family stationed in the Transvaal. Eiselen was also a student of Carl Meinhof and later became an influential figure in the National Party and the *Broederbond*. His most notable work comes from his ability to alter 'Native' education to "accommodate the culturalist view"[458] espoused by the BMS. Additionally, the BMS Northern Sotho language committee was, in 1978 replaced by the state's Northern Sotho Language Board, under the supervision of the Lebowa Minister of Education.[459] In the same year, the Department of African Languages replaced missionary institutions, by beginning to train teachers who wished to teach in Sepedi or Zulu in the Transvaal Education Department (TED) schools, and in 1981, African languages were included in black African teachers training college curricula.[460] However, the shortage of manpower (teachers trained to teach in vernacular), limited access to school books, and the lack of teaching posts hindered a total reconstruction of the education system along ethnic lines. Through education policies, the NP led government sought to replace the BMS Church and "its role as the dominant Ideological State Apparatus by the *school* (my emphasis)."[461] Althusser suggests that Ideological State Apparatus (ISAs) can be religious, educational, familial, legal, political, communication (radio, press, television) or even cultural (literature, art). ISA teaches its subjects "the 'rules' of good behaviour"[462] i.e. the 'rules' of the established order. In a NP-led society, ethnic difference and nationalism was naturalised and as a result, schools – across South Africa – sought to teach black African children how to be *ethnic*. Education was not the only ISA implemented by the NP as other 'cultural apparatuses'[463] were utilised to disseminate the NP's ideology[464] of separate development and ethnic difference, namely radio and Bantu literature.

Radio in South Africa began in the 1920s and by the 1930s, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) had developed into a national broadcaster. Initially, programmes were in

[458] P. Kallaway, "German Lutheran Missions, German Anthropolgy and Science in African Colonial Education", p.223
[459] B. du Goslin, "History of African Languages in Transvaal schools", *South African Journal of African Languages,* 7, 4, 1987, p.105
[460] B. du Goslin, "History of African Languages, p.106
[461] L. Althusser *On the Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,* (Translated by G.M. Goshgarian) London, Verso, 2014, p.252
[462] *Ibid,* p.235
[463] *Ibid,* p.250
[464] In this case, the word 'ideology' is "a system of the ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man (or woman/person) or a social group" in L. Althusser *On the Reproduction of Capitalism,* p.253

Afrikaans and English, and were targeted towards white listeners.[465] By the mid-1940s, broadcasting in African languages began with black African listeners tuning into broadcasts such as the isiZulu *Umsakazo* (meaning "the Radio"). The Broadcasting Amendment of 1960 allowed for the appointment of a Bantu Programme Control Board, enabling the Governor-General to "endorse the broadcasting of programmes for reception by black Africans and the employment of staff for service solely in connection with the roles of the Board and the compiling of African programmes."[466] Broadcasts were initially targeted at black Africans in urban areas. Radio broadcasts as well as the 'traditional' music aired by radio stations were given "prominence as it created the illusion of Africans' rooted-ness in the countryside and of ethnic distinctiveness."[467]

The Northern Sotho radio service was introduced on 1 June 1960, named "Radio Bantu Northern Sotho Service". In 1976, with the relocation of the SABC's regional centre to Polokwane, the radio service was re-christened *Radio Lebowa* named after the Lebowa Bantustan.[468] It aired Northern Sotho radio dramas such as *Ngwana'ka, a re ye gae* (meaning "Let's go home, my Child"), which followed the story of a black African family's disillusionment with town life and their return to the tranquil rural society.[469] Through radio, the SABC embarked on its own retribalisation efforts, and after the establishment of the Lebowa Bantustan. Broadcasts such as *Ngwana'ka, a re ye gae* coincided with the removal of 'black spots' from urban areas, which forced families to relocate into their 'homelands'. Programmes such as this sold the idea of an idyllic Lebowa to its urban audience and fostered feelings of nostalgia.

The Bantu Programme Control Board employed an Afrikaner superintendent "on the basis of Northern Sotho language understanding and fluency in order to monitor all form and nature of broadcasting."[470] Between 1973 and 1976, Dr. Pieter Schalk Groenwald acted as the advisor for radio and TV and remained a member of the Northern Sotho (Sepedi) Language Board from 1976 onwards. Northern Sotho texts were also legitimised by scholars such as Groenewald at the University of Pretoria, who published a repertoire of articles and books on Northern Sotho language and literature. Groenewald won the Stals Prize (African Languages) of the South

[465] S.P Lekgathi, "You are Listening to Radio Lebowa of the South African Broadcasting Corporation: Vernacular Radio, Bantustan Identity and Listenership, 1960 – 1994", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 35, 3, 2009, p.578
[466] S.P Lekgathi, "You are Listening to Radio Lebowa ,p.578
[467] S.P Lekgathi, "You are Listening to Radio Lebowa, p.589
[468] S.P Lekgathi, "You are Listening to Radio Lebowa, p.579
[469] *Ibid,* p.590
[470] A. Mokgwana, "A Historical Exploration of the Internal Factors", p.88

African Academy for Science and Art in 1996 for translating Oliver Matsepe's *Megokgo ya Bjoko* (meaning "Tears of the Brain") and was heavily involved in the shaping of the Department of African languages at the University of Pretoria until his retirement in 2012. Groenwald's role as superintendent came with its own set of ideological underpinnings, as Lekgoathi notes, "behind all the radio programmes was the promotion of Christian values, as under apartheid Christianity was seen as a major tool of control."[471] The state was – at least culturally – adopting the role the BMS had envisioned for themselves: reinforcing ethnic categories onto people. This can also be seen in the women's radio programmes that were developed.

Women's programmes such as *Bagešu Ditoropong* (meaning "Our People in Towns") were targeted at "North Sotho women and intended to reinforce a Bantustan identity."[472] This was an educational programme which discussed domestic subjects such as hygiene, sewing, childcare, and cooking.[473] Programmes such as this reinforced missionary's ideas of women as housewives in urban areas. A.P. Masedi, an advisor of another programme aimed at women, *Banhumagadi ba Lebowa* (meaning "Ladies from Lebowa"), emphasised self-help and self-reliance,[474]"which seemingly dovetailed with Separate Development policy."[475] Radio was also linked to the doctrine of Christian National Education. Several programmes were directed at school children, college, university, and correspondence college students. For instance, programmes such as *Baithuti kgothe-kgothe* (meaning "A call to students to Assemble") focused on "North Sotho grammar and analysis of prescribed high school texts."[476] The use of radio as an educational tool and a tool through which to create model Bantu subjects was accompanied by an expansion in vernacular literature. This, too, was a paternalistic exercise, beginning with missionary control, to the "Verwoerdian era of linguistic retribalizing [sic]."[477] Although the state sought to 'retribalise the Bantu', the work of Northern Sotho writers demonstrates little affiliation with 'Pedi' as an ethnicity.

[471] S.P Lekgathi, "You are Listening to Radio Lebowa, p. 591
[472] *Ibid*, p.592
[473] S.P Lekgathi, "You are Listening to Radio Lebowa", p.591
[474] J. Thumbran, "The 'Coloured Question' and the University of Pretoria: Separate Development, Trusteeship and Self- Reliance, 1933 – 2012", PhD Dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2018, p.9
[475] S.P Lekgathi, "You are Listening to Radio Lebowa", p.592
[476] *Ibid*, p.593
[477] N. Mkhize "Away with Good Bantus", p.147

Instead, as was seen in chapter two, writers and readers of Northern Sotho texts were interested in Christian culture, Christian literature and a Christian way of life as opposed to a traditional way of life.

From the late 1950s onwards, the production of vernacular or 'Bantu' literature (fiction and non-fiction) had been "historically bent towards conservative themes, in which cultural pride, propriety and identity take[sic] centre stage."[478] Mkhize suggests that this literature spoke to 'Good Bantus'[479] a literate class of black African Christians in both the rural homelands and urban centres, who had been classed as ethnic but did not necessarily see themselves as ethnic. Therefore, a 'Good Bantu' was a man or woman who in theory held onto their "distinct Bantu culture"[480] worked on or owned land in Bantu areas, additionally, there were "rumblings of ethnic favouritism [that] were heard on the job market"[481] - making ethnicity an economic and political tool. 'Good Bantus' also did not consume alcohol and understood their racialised 'place' in the South African racial hierarchy.

This print and reading culture was not far removed from missionary-controlled textual production, which hinged on the "standardisation of dialects and their association with imagined tribal identity."[482] For Northern Sotho speakers, Sepedi served as the dialect of choice. According to Kosch by 1945 "Northern Sotho was accepted as a modern language for the curriculum of the intermediate school in the Transvaal"[483] This acceptance of Northern Sotho kept in alignment with the aim to utilise language a tool for retribalising black Africans, turning them into 'Good and Proper Bantus.'[484] Male black African writers, including those selected for this study, were all 'Good Bantus' as their writing "revolved around temperance, sobriety, and moral rectitude which are seen as antidotes to the corrupting influences of modern life"[485] but most importantly, ethnicity held a ubiquitous position in their writing.

In my analysis, I have identified three major characterisations across the selected texts, namely, the 'fallen woman', 'Christian womanhood' and ethnic subjects. The 'fallen woman' (in the text) encompasses women who have – to some degree – subverted missionary Christian ideals.

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[478] N. Mkhize "Away with Good Bantus", p.147
[479] *Ibid*, p.147
[480] H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners,* p.510
[481] A. Mokgwana, "A Historical Exploration of the Internal Factors", p.5
[482] *Ibid*, p.148
[483] I. Kosch, "A Survey of Northern Sotho Grammatical Descriptions Since 1876" PhD Dissertation, University of South Africa, 1991, p54
[484] *Ibid*, p.148
[485] *Ibid*, p.149

They act as a cautionary tale. In selected texts, 'Christian womanhood' acts as a catch-all term for women who usually remain in the rural areas, are Christian and embody 'traditional values.' Usually, these women are depicted as married or getting married. The last category, the ethnic subject echoes a separate development logic, emphasising ethnicity. Characters in the selected text held onto the belief that their community ought to remain 'pure.'

The depictions of the 'fallen' woman appears in the 1940 Moses Sehlodimela novel, entitled *Moelelwa* (the name of the protagonist). This novel follows the story of a woman who – according to the state – would be classified as 'Pedi' or Northern Sotho, marrying a Swati man, Janaware. Sehlodimela was born in 1904 in a village called Molema in the Transvaal.[486] He began his literary career as co-author of *Lesedi* (meaning "Light") a Northern Sotho reader's series for Sub-standard A to Standard 2 (Grade 1 – Grade 4) in the 1940s with BMS Rev. Trümplemann.[487] Sehlodimela worked as a teacher in Transvaal and served as a magistrate in the Lebowakgomo district, after publishing *Moelelwa* (1940), he went on to publish *Tša Maabane* (meaning "Yesterday" 1953), a collection of short stories, *Dithuto tša Sesomane* (1956) and *Bala o Tšebe* (meaning "Read and Know", 1964).[488]

Sehlodimela's debut novel *Moelelwa* is less concerned with the idea of a 'Pedi' ethnicity and more concerned with the ways in which women should behave. As Kekane notes, Sehlodimela's portrayal of 'Pedi' women is centred on a Christian womanhood, where women must respect their husbands and engage in housework.[489] There is, however, mention of Moelelwa adapting to her husband Janawera's Swazi culture, demonstrating an assertion of ethnic difference:

> *"Ke ge ba re go yena a tšola dikobjana tša Sesotho a apara tša Seswatše… Ba thoma le go nyatša polelo ya gagwe ya Sesotho."*
>
> "She was told to take off her Sesotho attire and put on Swazi garments… The community also began ignoring her if she spoke in Sesotho"[490]

While Sehlodimela does draw attention to ethnic difference, the text is overwhelmingly focused on protrayals of Christian womanhood as the embodiment of 'appropriate' behaviour.

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[486] Biblio at https://www.biblio.com/book/novel-pedi-northern-sotho-mollwa-thutla/d/1546462473 [Accessed 14 September 2023]
[487] S.P.P. Mminele "The Berlin Missionary Enterprise at Botshabelo, 1865 – 1955: An Historical Educational Study", MA Dissertation, University of the North (Sovenga), 1983, p.256
[488] Biblio at https://www.biblio.com/book/novel-pedi-northern-sotho-mollwa-thutla/d/1546462473 [Accessed 14 September 2023]
[489] M. I Kekane, "Moelelwa: Padinyana ya Boitshwaro" (Moelelwa: A Moral Story", MA Dissertation, University of Pretoria, 2000, p.3
[490] M. Sehlodimela, *Moêlêlwa: Thutêla -boxolo e a Rôba,* Bloemfontein, Nationale Pers, 1940, p.27

Moelelwa is an example of a woman who is not 'well behaved' as the novel begins with Moelelwa portrayed as a lazy woman who, in her own words, "will only start learning how to do house chores when I am married and have a house of my own."[491] One of Moelelwa's character flaws is her inability to look after the house. Sehlodimela goes to great lengths to describe how her inability to 'perform' as a good housewife in the following passage:

> *Ba bogadi ge ba bona tšeo, ba ngwalela morwa wa bona ka tšeo di dirwago ke mosadi wa Mosotho. Ba mmotša le gore ga a na tiro ye a e dirago, sa gagwe ke go ja fela. Mašemo a dutše ga a na molemi. Ga a hlokomele selo sa ka lapeng, o ka re ke motho yo a fetago. A robala o robetše, temana ye e ilego ya ngwapangwapša ke mannomogolo Shilling e tletše ngwang, o ka se bone a re ke a hlagola bjalo ka basadi ba bangwe.*
>
> When her in-laws saw her laziness, they wrote to their son about what the Mosotho woman does not do. They told him, she does nothing, but her mouth is constantly working. The fields have been left without a farmer. She doesn't care about any of her domestic duties, it's as if she were a passerby. She spends her days asleep, the field that was once ploughed by old man Shiling was now full of weeds, you will never hear her saying I'm going to plough with the other women.[492]

After her husband receives a letter from his parents, Moelelwa is kicked out of her marital home with her son and returns to her parental home. Moelelwa's hubris, her inability to perform household chores, is an early example of the emergence of a "chaste 'modern'-type of womanhood."[493] This kind of womanhood was not always overtly ethnic but instead, was modelled on Christian womanhood which, above all else, emphasised women's work in the domestic domain.

Depictions of 'fallen' women have also been found in texts produced in the 1950s. For this study, I have selected a text from E.M Ramaila's anthology of short stories entitled, *Molomatsebe,* (meaning "The Advisor", 1951) because the women characters Maria and Zodwa in the short story, "Sehlola ke sa Kgomo, sa Motho se a Itlholela" (meaning "Bad Luck is On the Way") illustrates a 'chaste' Christian womanhood. The story follows two miners, Mosomali (meaning "the Somali") and 'Mandla' Dlangamandla, who both work at Crown Mines in Johannesburg. Mosomali is partnered with Maria, and Zodwa is in a union with Mandla. Both pairs experience pregnancies outside the confines of formal matrimony. Where Mosomali is eager to get married to Maria, and gambles to raise money for her *lobola*, Mandla begins Zodwa's *lobola* negotiation but does not follow through. Instead, Mandla marries Phylis

[491] Original: "Moelewa o be a fela a ikgothtša ka la gore o tla thoma go šoma mola e le mosadi a na le lapa la gagawe" in , M. Sehlodimela, *Moêlêlwa* p5
[492] M. Sehlodimela, *Moêlêlwa,* p.29
[493] N. Mohlabane, "(Re)-Construction of womanhood in Lesotho: Narractives of 'Unmarried' Basotho women (Methapa)", PhD Dissertation, University of Pretoria, 2020, p.36

Ledwaba, and burns down Zodwa's family home with her and her family still in the home. In the story, Zodwa is the only women who ever speaks, and says the following:

> *"Zodwa a be a mo topile nta thekeng: 'Ka ge o le ngaka o reng o sae pe dihlare wa kgema way a dipereng Dunswart wa itekela mahlatse gona?' Zodwa o be a tsebile gore bothata ke tšhelete."*
>
> Zodwa notices a chip on his shoulder, "Since you are a traditional doctor, why don't you use your expertise to help you gain some luck and bet on a horse at the Dunswarts race track." Zodwa knew the problem facing the Somali was related to money. [494]

This is far from what is considered a 'good' Christian or even ethnic behaviour. Zodwa's inability to maintain her chastity[495] and her suggestion to partake in gambling is far from what is expected of women during this period. Her death and the death of her family is indicative of the kinds of consequences one should expect if they do not maintain their chastity. We can contrast this to other woman characters in the text, Maria and Phylis, who eventually marry their partners and attain "the respectable-type Christian womanhood."[496]

Another iteration of women who had 'fallen' into the ills of modern life is Tabana in J.T. Senoamadi's[497] anthology of short stories, *Ditsietsi* (meaning "Enigmas", 1974). In the anthology, I focused on a story entitled "*Molato ke wa mang*?" (Whose fault, is it?) because of the ways in which Senoamadi depicts Tabana – a 'fallen' woman.

Tabana's father, Morokolo, incorrectly assumes Tabana is courting her schoolmate, Alex who sent a letter to their family home. Her father physically assaults her, and she runs away to Johannesburg, but when she returns home, Senoamadi presents us with the image of a woman who has been so corrupted by the city, that she has effectively turned into the 'man' of the house:

> *"Tabana o feditše ngwaga e mebedi a tsense ka mong awa seloko. E be e le nakgong tša Matswalo a Morena, gomme go amogelwa makarapa a go tšwa kgole le kgauswi. Mesong ya tšatši le lengwe le lengwe makoloi a be a itia manthumelele le motse go fološwa ba ba tšwago nageng tša botšiditšana. Go bile bjalo le kau lapeng la Morokolo. Koloi e tsene ka kgoro gomme ya tšhotšhola kgomo le namane. Monna-mogolo ya be nka a tsoga mabitleng ge a bona ngwana wa gagwe a tsena ka kgore e bile a belege ngwana wa kgwedi tše pedi, wa mmala wa sekgoweng. Se se ilego sa mo tlaba ke go bona ngwana yo e se wa leswao la Sesotho sa gore tswe. Meriri ya gagwe e be e lekelela*

[494] "Sehlola ke sa kgomo, sa motho se a itlholela" in E.M Ramaila, *Molomatsebe,* Pretoria, Van Schaik, 1951, p. 161
[495] N. Mohlabane, "(Re)-Construction of womanhood in Lesotho, p.36
[496] *Ibid,* p.36
[497] In my research, I have found very little biographical information on Senoamadi.I will focus on my discussion on the text itself, as no verifiable background information was found.

bjalo ka ya Maindia. Morokolo a rothiša mahlodi a lethabo. Tabana o be a thakgetše mmeleng mo go tšerego mmaggwe nako a teletšana go kgolwa gore lekgowa leo a bolelago le lona ke ngwana wa mala a gagwe. E be e di bofile kgarebe e tloga e itaetša gore etšwa nageng tša botšididi. O be a apere borokgo bja go fihla kua dikgwakgwailaneng, gomme molomong a itšhatšitše ka setlolo se sehubedi. Hlogong a rwele "wigi", e lego yona meriri ya maitirelo. Sefahlegong o be a tagga boka mahlasedi a letšatši ge le sobela. O be a ntšhitše leino le lengwe mohlagareng wa ka godimo ka letsogong la nngele, mme ge a sega, sekgala sa gona ruri, o ka re ke leasetere la letorokisi la go rwala batho go kganya mabone bošego. O be a bolela Sepedi sa matswakakpotle, seo se tšhabego a fela a se khupa a meletša muši teng a fela a o ntšsha ka dinko. Di makgakga ditaba lapeng la Morokolo Ga go monna ga go mosadi. Go swana fela gobane papa o reka motsoko, morwedi a re: "Nkgogiše." Tate o apara borokgo, gomme morwedi a apara."

"Tabana was away for two years. It was during Christmas time, a time when people give thanks to God. Days passed, as cars travelled home, and she joined them on their journey home. It is on this day, that Morokolo's home witnessed a surprise. A car entered the homestead. The man of the house returned from a day's work to find his daughter had birthed a child, who was about two months. The child was light in complexion. It shocked him, the child wasn't African, his hair was soft like an Indian. Morokolo was taken aback. Tabana was elated, it was an odd sight; her dark skin and her white child, dressed well. She was wearing a pair of pants reaching her ankles, she applied red lipstick. Her head had a "wig" made of artificial hair. She looked like sunshine. She removed a tooth and put in a gold tooth; it was so bright it could help people see at night. Her Sepedi was different, a mixture of different dialects so much so, it sounded like Afrikaans. Between her fingers was a cigarette, she inhaled and exhaled through her nose. This news is shocking. There is no man, there is no woman. When the father buys cigarette, his daughter will say "I'll have some." A father will wear pants, and so will his daughter."[498]

Tabana's return is not described as a testament to her resilience in the city or a mark of her assertion of her own independence. Instead, Tabana's ability to move to urban centres is indicative of the decline in customary institutions in homelands which were "no longer capable of exercising sufficient control over the mobility of women"[499], especially in the late 1950s. This control had declined to such a degree that the state had imposed pass laws onto black African women in 1952 through the Natives (Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents) Act, which extended the carrying of 'reference books' to all black African adults.[500] Tabana returns home a masculinised subject and although she is a mother, she is not

[498] "Molato ke wa mang?" (Whose fault is it?) in J. T Senoamadi, *Ditsietsi,* J.L van Schaik Publishers, Pretoria, 1974, p. 10 – 11
[499] C. Walker, *Women and Resistance,* p.128
[500] C. Walker, *Women and Resistance,* p.126

the 'right' kind of mother; she smokes, and she is not a wife. Her 'Indian'-haired child suggests that she is not a chaste Christian woman. Additionally, her child is considered as 'illegitimate' because Tabana is unmarried. Tabana's story, according to the 'Good Bantus' trope, is a cautionary tale for young women about what happens when one steps outside of the bounds of rural Christian womanhood.

The 'fallen' woman is continuously invoked in Northern Sotho literature into the 1970s, like I.T. Maditsi's. Maditsi wrote an anthology of poetry *Monamolomo bolela, monatsebe o tlo go kwa* (meaning "The Mouth Speaks, the Ear Will Listen" 1968), three short story collections *Mogologolo* (meaning "Old",1970); *Monyane* (meaning "Young", 1974); *Sešegotheto* (meaning "Remedies", 1989) and one novel; *Bana ba gaMmatšhatšhe* (meaning "Children of the Moon",1980).[501] For this study, his 1974 text, *Monyane* has been selected and the short story, *Pheta ya dikhungwane* (Necklace of Ants) provides insight into the ways in which writers thought about the place and function of women in the following:

> *Bosadi ke ba bogale. Bogale bja bona bo patla le bja thipa gobane ba kgona go swara thipa ka bogaleng. Ba roba thipa ya molao, bo roba marumo tlhabano. Nageng yeo monna a ka se tsogego a dikeletšwe bona ba aga motse. Basedi 94 asa tsebe phapano magareng a mohumi le mogaga, gareng ga mogale le lepšhega. Go bona taba-kgolo ke ditedu. Ke ka lebaka leo le mehleng ya lehonour ya kgethologano magareng a bath oba mmala o tee ka lebaka la thuto, basadi bona 94 asa rego selo ka go tšewa ke monna yo a sa tsebego selo ka "A".*
>
> Women are strong. They can break a knife and hold onto the sharp edge of the knife without wincing. Women can break the law, they break whatever they see. Where men will fight and create destruction. The women will gather together and build from the ruins. Women don't know the difference between wealth and poverty, they are always prepared to build. To them, it is important to serve the man. That is why today, there are those who are educated or not. A woman does not care. She will proudly proclaim that she has married a man who does not know the letter 'A.'[502]

This discussion on the place of women is the opposite of the female character in the text. The story depicts a friendship soured by greed between Madileng and Setsoko, because Setsoko stole Madibeng's family heirloom. With the riches stolen from his friend, Setsoko begins an affair with a married educated woman, Seboko. Seboko is depicted as materialistic and malicious. According to Maditisi, her education has corrupted her, and this is depicted in the following passage:

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[501] M, C Aphane, "Kangelokopana Ya I.T Maditsi: Pheko Ya Pula" (I. T Maditsi Short Stories: The Rain Cure), MA Dissertation, University of Pretoria, 2005, p.1

[502] "Pheta ya Dikhungwane" [Necklace of Ants] in I. T Maditsi *Monyane* (Young), J. L. van Schaik Ltd, Pretoria, 1974, p.29

> *Setsoko o il a botšiša Seboko gore o tšwere kae sešupanako sa mohuta wa "Atlantic" seao matšatšing a no se sa bonwego gomme ka ntle le go bona gore o a kgopišana. Seboko a re: "Kei le ka se rekelwa ke bao ba sego ba nthata. E sego tše re di bonago lehono tša maratwana a soka"*
>
> Setsoko asked Seboko where she got her expensive "Atlantic" watch from, he did not buy one for her. Seboko said "I got this from someone who loved me. It wasn't anything like the 5c love you give me."[503]

At no point in the story is Setsoko redeemed for her actions, nor is she celebrated for her education, which suggests that if she had not received an education she would not have been 'corrupted' by education and influenced by modernity.

This is similar to another of Senoamadi's short stories, *Ngwana Magana-go-botšwa, o wetše dikomeng a re koma ke tšešo* (The Child Who Does Not Listen To Their Parents, Will Always Fall Upon Tough Times) portraying Sekedi, a newlywed bride, who is having an affair with protagonist, Ngwako. She is described as the following:

> *E be e šetše e le kgwedi mola Sekedi a bekwago. Monna wa gagwe o itše go mmeka, a boela Gauteng a gopotše go epa yona tšhipitshehla mpapatiana ya makgowa. Bogadi bja Sekedi e be e le bokgojana bjo Ngwako a ka fihlago ka sankolekole go tloga Motseng wa Eisleben. Sekedi o be agetšwe ngwankwana wa gagwe wa go robala gobane ngwetši tša sebjalebjale di gana go robala le mmatswale, di gana go apeela mmatswale was lethari, wa go apara 'melentse'. Go tle yo a kwago tlala o tlamegile go bea pitša iho. Ge e le ratswale wa gagwe, o be a tloga a tšhaba Sekedi tšhabitšhabi, gobane o be a šetše a ile a mo hlaba ka lentšu la gore yena ga a kwatamele monna e se wa gagwe.*
>
> It had been a month since Sekedi was married. Her husband had to return to Gauteng after their nuptials, so he could work in the town (white areas) His job was not far from their home. In the homestead, Sekedi did not want to stay in the family's home, so they built her own house in the backyard. The new bride refused to sleep in the same house as her in-laws, she refused to cook for her in-laws, and she refused to wear stockings. The best she could do was to place a pot on a fire. She was so disrespectful, her words hurt her in-laws when she proclaimed, 'she would not submit to her husband or his parents'.[504]

Unlike Sekedi, a 'good' wife was always preparing or serving her husband (or his guests). But in general, Christian womanhood was tied to the domestic sphere and one's ability to serve. This trend persists throughout ethnic literature produced during the twentieth century.

From the 1980s onwards, we begin to see a shift with the emergence of women Northern Sotho writers, answering the question; *basadi ba kae* (where are the women)? M.A Kekane wrote

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[503] I. T Maditsi *Monyane,* p.31

[504] "Ngwana Magana-go-botšwa, o wetše dikomeng a re koma ke tšešo" [The Child Who Does Not Listen To Their Parents, Will Always Fall Upon Tough Times] in J. T Senoamadi, *Ditsietsi,* J.L van Schaik Publishers, Pretoria, 1974, p.16

Nonyana ya Tokologo (meaning "Birds of Freedom", 1984), *Nnete Fela* (meaning "Only the Truth" 1989) and *Sesasedi sa katlego* (meaning "The Light of Success", 1990).[505] *Nonyana ya Tokologo* was selected for this study because of the main character, Taamane's, determination to remain independent (of a husband, a father and a chief). Yet, as the novel shows, women writers also conformed to Christian norms in their representations of women. The story begins with Taamane visiting her uncle and aunt in Mamelodi, Pretoria. Her aunt, Sibongile is excited to have her niece visit because Taamane helps with the domestic chores around the house, but Taamane does not want to be a housewife. Instead, she wants to become a model and fashion designer:

> *Kgahlego! Woo ... ke rata go bona gore nka ingwapeIa naa go tsa lefasela pontsho, ke rata go ba mmontshi wa diaparo tsa fesene, ...*
>
> Interest! Yes ... I want to try my luck in the world of modelling. I want to be a designer of fashion dresses ....[506]

The reader is constantly shown that Taamane in not interested in a Christian womanhood, but is instead interested in:

> *Ditlhologelo tša bona ke dife bophelong? Ke go šomela ka thata dilo tša go swana le nyalo le bophelo bja lapa tšeo di sa fego motho tlotlego le setumo. Tumo, tlotlego le lehumo ke dilo tše bohlokwa kudu go yena tše a ikemišeditšego go di kgathola le go orela borutho bja tšsona ka tšatši le lengwe.*
>
> What are their (Taamane's cousins) aspirations in life? Simply, working hard for marriage and a family life that does not give one honour and fame. Fame, honour and wealth are the most important things to her (Taamane), she is determined to snatch them and smell their warmth one day.[507]

However, Taamane's dreams are short-lived. She marries a policeman, Tšhaledi, who is not interested in having a wife who works. Taamane attempts to run away and starts an affair another character, Max, but after Max is killed mysteriously, Taamane returns to her martial home, stating the following:

> *Hle Tshaledi ga go sa le bjalo ke a tseba gore nkile ka re nna ke nonyanaya tokologo. Tokologo yeo ke rile go e humana ka hloka thabo go yona ....Tumo ke e kgathotse, fela e mphile kgotsofalo ya lebakanyana....*

[505] M. Nicol, "Who's Who of South African Crime Writing", 23 April 2023, Sunday Times Book Live at http://crimebeat.bookslive.co.za/whos-who-of-south-african-crime-writing/ [Accessed 13 September 2023]
[506] M.A Kekane, *Nonyana ya Tokologo* (Birds of Freedom), Johannesburg, Educum, 1985, p.27
[507] M.A Kekane, *Nonyana ya Tokologo,* p.15

> Please Tšhaledi it is no longer so. I know that I once said I was the bird of freedom. After acquiring that freedom I have no happiness. Fame I have tasted, but it gave me satisfaction for a short time....[508]

Although the story begins with a hopeful and ambitious Taamane, throughout the story, we begin to see her become increasingly disillusioned and her return to become a housewife is indicative of a return to a 'good' Christian woman. The readers of *Tokologo ya Nonyana, Monyane and Ditsietsi* are given the sense that, any deviation from the prescriptions of Christian womanhood, will not end favourably for a woman. If a woman has or had not received formal education or if a woman attempts to become independent, she is either masculinised or is forced to return to the ideal of the Christian mother and wife. This is not to suggest that all women reading these texts internalised this way of thinking, but rather the overwhelming representations of 'Pedi' women in Northern Sotho literature held fast to Christian ideals of womanhood, and censured women who sought alternative ways of living. These ideas about women and their place in society were, as Deborah Gaitskell notes, rooted in a missionary model which was based off a family model consisting of a "male breadwinner, dependent housekeeping wife and mother, dependent school-going children."[509] These ideas are constantly utilised by Northern Sotho writers – including women writers, and appear again in the 1990s.

As we will see, women who enter marriage and cannot fulfil the obligations expected of housewives are also punished for their inability to 'take care' of their husbands. For instance, in Motimele's 1994 radio drama, *Nkgatog E* (meaning, "Doing away with Oppression). Aletta Motimele was born on 11 April 1940 in GaLekgothoane. She wrote over thirty radio dramas and Northern Sotho novels.[510] In one of her most infamous radio dramas, *Nkgatog E*, Setena, the lady of the manor, begins the story as a wealthy woman but by the end of the drama she goes insane and is kicked off the farm by her husband, Malomane's exploited farm labourers. Setena is unkind and cunning and according to Malomane, is not a 'good' wife because she cannot do housework. While his workers are on strike, Malomane remarks:

> Malomane: *Le wena nke o leke go e hlewekiša, mosadi*. Setena: *Ke thome ka eke lese kae?* M: *Etša basadi ba bangwe. Na wena o mosadi wa mohuta mange wa go palelwa ke mošomo wa ntlo?* S: *O nthuthile wona neng mošomo woo?* M: *Le wena ithute o a bona batho ba metše meno.* S: *A ke re ke wena o rilego ke se sire selo o n le bao bat logo ntšohela. Ba kae bona?*

[508] M.A Kekane, *Nonyana ya Tokologo,* p.181
[509] D. Gaitskell, "Housewives, Maids, or Mothers: Some Contradictions of Domesticity for Christian Women in Johannesburg, 1903-39", *Journal of African History,* 24, 1983, p.241
[510] S. A Literary Awards at https://sala.org.za/motimele/ [Accessed 14 September 2023]

> Malomane: You should try cleaning the house, woman. Setena: How do I start? M: Just like other women. What kind of woman are you if you can't even do housework? S: Did you teach me how to do any housework? M: You should just teach yourself; you've watched others do it for you. S: You said I don't have to work. You'd have people work for me. Where are those workers now?[511]

Setena's character is another reiteration of the 'bad' women (or wife) trope found in Northern Sotho writing. She expects domestic labour to be outsourced and is unwilling to ascribe to the prescripts of a 'good wife'. One of the last iterations of 'fallen' women are found in, K.J Sekele's *Lehuto La Pelo* (meaning "Heartbroken", 1998) follows the lives of three sisters, Dirang, Oreng and Mpotšišetši who battle over their inheritance and whether their aging father should be given a share of the inheritance. Sekele was born in Lebowa. He published 17 novels and received the M-net literary award in 2011.[512] In his work, *Lehuto La Pelo*, the characters do not express a desire to move away from home or establish a career of their own. The three sisters; Dirang (to be discussed below), Oreng and Mpotšištše engage in a conflict, where the two younger sibilings – Oreng and Mpotšištše, attempt to work together to ensure their father does not get a share of their inheritance. Oreng – the 'problem' child is described as:

> *Ge e le Oreng yena ke motho wa mabifi, motho wa go dula a kgathotše, wa go se tlwaelege. Go kwala gore ngwana yoo o be a swabiša batho ba bantši bao ba bego a mo akela, a ešita le gona go mo kganyoga. Go ya ka pudiyatsela bontši bja batho ba duma go mmona a sega. O paletše le bao ba begob a mo hlaletša.*
>
> Oreng was the opposite of Dirang. She doesn't have a welcoming face, she never smiled. She was constantly unhappy. When people tried to make her laugh, she didn't react. Many people wanted to see a smile on her face. But to no avail.[513]

Their lastborn sister, Mpotšištše, is described as:

> *Ngwana yo o be a tloga a thantše mahlong. A bonagala gabotse gore o tlile go balabala ka mahlajana a phatleng. O ile a tšhoša batswadi ba gagwe ka ge ba se na le ngwana wa mahlale a mohuto woo. Dipelong tša bona bai le ba no ikgothtša ka la go re, a di golem mogo re tlo di bone mohlang wa puno. Ngwana o ile a fiwa leina la Mpotšištše.* The last born had large eyes. Large questioning eyes which scared her parents, she looked a child who would ask a lot of questions. This child was given the name, Mpotšištše.[514]

The story ends with their father receiving a portion of the inheritance. Mpotšištše can gain the forgiveness of her father and sister, after distancing herself from Oreng and asking (the literal

[511] M. Motimele, *Nkgatog E*, Pretoria, Actua Press, 1994, p.102
[512] S.A Literary Awards at https://sala.org.za/kobate-john-sekele-2/ [Accessed 14 September 2023]
[513] S.J. Sekele, *Lehuto La Pelo*, p.3
[514] S.J. Sekele, *Lehuto La Pelo* p.4

translation of her name) for forgiveness. While Oreng's story is left open-ended, as the story notes that she moved in with her boyfriend but was kicked out of his home. There is overwhelming evidence which suggests that both male and female Northern Sotho writers replicated an ideal Christian woman within their representations.

I would like to shift my attention towards the texts which illustrate the 'good' woman. A 'good' woman was often placed in a rural setting and her level of education was often left 'unsaid' but most importantly she was tied to the domestic space. Historically, a general trend emerged where Northern Sotho writers wrote about the lives of great men[515] with simple plots, "tracing the escapades of one main character from childhood to old age."[516] Characters in these novels were "religious characters"[517] and the texts were overtly moralistic. One example of characters who are not necessarily religious but rather embody religious values can be found in Oliver Matsepe's novel *Megokgo ya Bjoko*.

Matsepe, according to Groenewald, became a prolific and profitable writer. Matsepe was born on the 22 March 1932, he attended Botšhabelo High School in from 1950 to 1952.[518] He published 6 volumes of poetry, 9 narrative prose and his best novel, *Megokgo ya Bjoko* (meaning "Tears of the Brain").[519] Matsepe began publishing during the early 1960s after resigning as a clerk under the Department of Bantu Administration and Development.[520] His debut novel, *Sebata-kgomo* (meaning "The Beast") was awarded the S.E.K Mqhayi prize for black literature[521] by the Die Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns (the South African Academy for Science and Art or the Academy). In 1974, he was again awarded the S.E.K Mqhayi prize, making Matsepe the only black African writer to do so.[522] Following these wins, Matsepe was recognised by the Afrikaner academy as a model Northern Sotho writer. Matsepe was also able to benefit from the Bantu Education Act. As children categorised by the state as 'Pedi' or Northern Sotho received increased access to primary schooling, his texts were often used as setworks in both primary and secondary schooling. His writing style would later be imitated by students who had studied his work in during their basic school-going years.

[515] S. Serudu, "Place of Matsepe's novels in the development of the Northern Sotho novel", *South African Journal of Languages*, 5,3, 1895, p.97
[516] *Ibid*, p.97
[517] *Ibid*, p96
[518] S. Serudu, "Oliver Kgadime Matsepe" (Lecture) O.K Matsepe Memorial Lecture, Polokwane, 2019, p.2
[519] P. Groenewald, "The Literature in Northern Sotho: 1960 – 1982", *South African Journal of African Languages,* 3, 1, 1983, p.2
[520] S. Serudu, "Oliver Kgadime Matsepe" (Lecture), p.2
[521] P. Groenewald, "The Literature in Northern Sotho: 1960 – 1982", p.11
[522] P. Groenewald, "The Literature in Northern Sotho: 1960 – 1982", p. 3

However, the "Matsepe period"[523] during the 1960s ushered in an era where writers drew on themes from their traditional and urban lives. This means that although Matsepe came from a Christian background and was a Botshabelo alumni, his work sought to illustrate how "the Christian and traditional world co-exist without either of them causing friction."[524]

Matsepe's text *Megokgo ya Bjoko* was selected for this study because it reaffirms my earlier argument on the making of the 'Good Bantu.' The text is set in an imagined 'traditional' village, prior to the introduction of Christianity, where the characters are subject of a local chief. The plot is simple: the protagonist Leliane, is expelled from his home, under chief Lefehlo, for lying to the headmen and assaulting his wife (Mohlatša) and his father-in-law (Morara). He then moves to chief Nthumule's village, becoming a subject of Nthumule. He endeavours to instigate a conflict between Lefehlo and Nthumule, spurred by his perception of unjust accusation. Mastepe's prose provides little room for characterisation beyond the names: Leilane (the avoider) avoids conflict by moving from one village to the next, his wife, Mohlatša (the vomiter), vomits at the beginning of the story because she is disgusted by her husband and his father-in-law, Morara (the gossiper) is known for gossiping with his friends.

Throughout Matsepe's text, the Christian virtue of sobriety is emphasised. The consumption of beer is frowned upon, so much so that the chief Nthumule limits his own intake. In the following passage, Nthumule engages with a villager who warns against the effects of alcohol consumption.

> Villager: *"Gomme ke bošaedi. Bosasa ge o mmotšiša gore maabane anthe o dirile bjang, or re ga se nna, ke bjala."* Nthumulu: *"Seok e sephetho"* V: *"Le bjona bo a omana"* N*: "Bjala"* V: *"Ga se nke o bo kwa?" N: "Ke fahlogela taba yeo." V: "O a nwa?" N: "Digwana di se kae tšona ke tle ke nwe." V: "Yeo ya digwana di se kae re a tseba, ke yona ye e dirago gore bosasa o hwetše bjala bo omana" N: "Bo omana bjang, thobela?" V: "Bo re ntshenya leina ka go re o nkhwetša ke iketlile ke nkgong, o ntshwariše mehlamu, ke re ke go kwele sepela o ye go robala – o phegelele go toutela taba e tee." N: "Taba ya gago ke nnete ye e lešago dihlong mokgomana." V: "Ke 100at sea o kwago ke sola moisa yola a go tliša maduma. Taba ya mohuta woo e ištše monna wa gešo badimong ngwagola." N: "Ruri?"*
>
> Villager: "Anyway, I see it as reckless. If you ask him tomorrow what he did yesterday, he would blame the beer." Nthumulu: "Beer does have that effect." V: "Yes, beer also brings regrets." N: "Beer?" V: "Have you never experienced that?" N: "This is the first time I hear it." V: "Do you drink?" N: "A small calabash or so, not much. And only now and then." V: "Never mind, we know all about small calabash or so. It is precisely that which causes you to deal with regrets the next day." N: "Friend, how can beer be

[523] S. Serudu, "Place of Matsepe's novels, p.97
[524] S. Serudu, "Oliver Kgadime Matsepe" (Lecture), p.3

> blamed for bringing regrets?" V: Beer has the habit of saying: you vilified my name; you found me in the big pot where I was contented; you started a conversation with me, and when I said I have heard everything you had to tell and you should go to sleep, then look, suddenly you become bothersome." N: "What you say is the truth, my dear friend, and that plunges you in great embarrassment." V: "That is exactly what I told the young fellow when he gave me your greetings. The same sort of thing happened last year and cost one of our people his life." N: "Really?"[525]

The 'Good Bantus' in this text do not articulate concerns about ethnic categorisation, nor do they affirm the ethnic categories imposed by onto them by the state and missionaries. Instead, they are characterised as sober, some are Christian, but all are individuals who have the potential to become Christian and to maintain the 'traditional' cultures (embodied by the emphasis on the rural).

Texts from the 1940 until the late 1960s, continued the Christian tradition of creating women characters who were mothers and *basadi* (married women). Penned by 'Good Bantus', these women remained confined to the role of rural housewife or helpmate. These characters had no contract with urban areas where it was commonly assumed that women would 'learn to drink alcohol' and 'disrespect' their parents and chiefly authority. Those who had not married were still considered girls. Throughout all the texts selected, we can see how Christian norms were incorporated into what was deemed as 'appropriate' for 'Pedi' woman.

For example, in Senoamadi's short story; *Re yo Tšhabiša Ngwetši* [We're going to get the Bride], protagonist Rufus's mother is nameless, only referred to as 'Mmago Rufus.' She is like Helena in Ramalia's 1935 text, *Tša Bophelo Bja Moruti Abraham Serote, 1865 – 1930,* as both women are only mentioned when their sons are getting married, and their role is to prepare and organise the nuptials. In the short story, Rufus is caught in a love triangle between Rose and Dikeledi. He impregnates Rose, but his parents decide it would be best for Rufus to marry Dikeledi because he proposed to Dikeledi and paid her lobola before impregnating Rose. We do not get a description or understanding of Mmago Rufus's reactions to her son's promiscuity, but we do get a description of the lengths to which she goes to make the nuptials a success:

> *Mmago Rufus o tsogile ka maswiswana a gopotše do direla baeng difoofoo le go kgopela makgarebe a go tlo hlapišetša, le go tšama a kgopela dispitša le dipoto tša dinama*

[525] O. K. Matsepe, *Megokgo ya Bjoko,* Cape Town, Educum Publishers, 1968, p.55-56

> Rufu's mother woke up early to prepare for the nuptials. She first prepared breakfast for her guests, asked the neighbours for help cleaning up and asked for a big pot to prepare the meat.[526]

Mmago Rufus character is premised on what a *mosadi* is expected to do: get married, have children and then prepare one's own offspring for the marriage and procreation.

There are representations of women who do not procreate but are still tasked with rearing the young, in *Nonyana ya Tokologo* (1985), characters such as Lucy. Lucy who once had a flourishing career as a teacher, decides – or is convinced by her husband, to abandon her career and raise her deceased sister's children in the following:

> *Muthi re bokaone ke no fela ke sa hlokometse tsa ka mo lapeng ... lebana ba mohu …*
>
> Muthi says it is better that I should look after the household ... and the deceased's children....[527]

Lucy is also an interesting character in the novel because she suggests that Taamane returned back to her marital home – after Max's death and raised her children with her husband. But most importantly, Lucy is the only character in the novel who seems content with remaining as a housewife.

Other iterations of the 'good' woman emerge in *Lehuto la Pelo* (1998). The eldest daughter, Dirang is described as follows:

> *Direnga yoo a bego a tshepile matsogo a gagwe, ebile a dumela gore ke ona fela ao a ka mo išago mafulng a matalana. O be a homotšse ka thlago ya gagwe, ka mmele was go tlala le mmala wo mohlaba, ka meno a dikgero, empa a go mo swanela. Matho wa go segeg le lefeela, eupša wa sefahlego sa go tlwaelega. Ngwana wa go rata batswadi ba gagwe.*
>
> Direng loved working with her hands. She was quiet, with a slim figure and teeth that were as big as that of a horse, but they suited her. She was always friendly. This child loved her parents.[528]

It is interesting to note that Dirang, the more subservient daughter, marries while her sisters do not. This can be viewed as a 'reward' for her helping her father, who states the following:

> *Ge nka be e se be wena bophelo bja ka nkabe bo le kotsing. O bilel le nna mathateng a bholako bja mmele wa ka; o ikona dijo le mathabo a dithaka tša gago ka lebaka la go hlokomelana le nna. Ruri ngwakana, ga ke tsebe seo nka go direlago.*

[526] "Re yo Tšhabiša Ngwetši" [We're going to get the Bride] in J. T Senoamadi, *Ditsietsi,* J.L van Schaik Publishers, Pretoria, 1974, p.23
[527] M.A Kekane, *Nonyana ya Tokologo,* p.165
[528] S.J. Sekele, *Lehuto La Pelo*, Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter Publisher, 1998, p.2

> My child, I don't know where I would be right now if it wasn't for you. You've done do much so me, taking care of me, leaving your husband and your home to help me take care of my own home. I don't know what I could ever do for you.[529]

The implication here is that those who are obedient and take care of their parents will be rewarded with marriage, becoming *mosadi* (plural *basadi*). The institution of *basadi* was premised on one's ability to marry and procreate.

This 'good' trope is also replicated in texts that are explicitly ethnic such as Mminele's, *Ngwana wa Mobu*. However, prior to my discussion on the depictions of women, it must be made clear why I have categorised this specific text as 'ethnic'.

The protagonist, Phankga Mootli, is another iteration of the 'Good Bantu' in that he was educated at a NAD teacher training college in an unspecified urban area, but he has a deep desire to settle in his home village. The story begins as Phankga returns to his village to become an arithmetic teacher at Rethuše Primary School. He is a talented musician and is proficient in Afrikaans.[530] Conflict arises when Phakanga attempts to remove the headmaster of Rethuše, Lahlang (often referred to as *Lekomofefe* -alien/stranger). The conflict between Phankga and Lehlang is centred on Phankga's understanding of *ngwana wa mobu*. According to him (and the South African state), community leaders such as school principals should not be those considered as 'outsiders' but instead those who have returned home to 'uplift' the community. Phankga's logic is not totally removed from ideas put forward by Dr Verwoerd. As a 'child of the soil' he – one on hand, will "be acceptable to the community and on the other hand has the necessary knowledge and ability to carry out its duties efficiently"[531] because he is 'connected' to the community:

> *Nna ka engwa pele ke mofokodi yo mobjalo? Nna ka hlahlwa ke motho yeo ke mo hlahlago, wa thuto ya mogwapa ya matsatsi ale go sa busa Kgosi onkodi?- Na Kgoro ya Thuto ya Babaso e kgona bjang go kgotlelela dikoka tse bjalo ka se, di sa tsebego le''' ya mekgwa ye mefsa ya go bula hlogo ya ngwana ka ponyo ya leihlo?- Naa Seburu ga se sana senotlelonotlelo sa go bula mejako le mejakwana, dikgoro le dikgorwana tsa Kgoro ya Thuto ya Bahasa ya mehleng yeno?*
>
> How does the Department of Black Education tolerate weaklings such as this one, not knowing even 'A' of the advanced methods of opening a learner's mind as quick as

[529] S.J. Sekele, *Lehuto La Pelo,* p.32
[530] K. Nokaneng, "Naming as a Technique of Characterisation in S.P.P Mmniele's novel *Ngwana wa mobu*", Masters Dissertation, University of Johannesburg, 1997, p.6
[531] H. Verwoerd, "Policy of the Minster of Native Affairs, June 7, 1954" in (ed.) A.N, Pelzer, *Verwoerd Speaks: Speeches 1948 – 1966,* Johannesburg, APB Publishers, 1966, p.70

> possible? Isn't Afrikaans the real key to open up all the doors, all the fields of the department of Black Education nowadays?[532]

Phankga's goal to become principal is not rooted in ideas of 'racial upliftment' but rather in geographic and ethnic loyalties. Phankga stands in direct contrast to Lebowa Chief Minister Phatudi who was far more open to 'strangers.' The imagined reality created by Mminele indicates a degree of success as far as separate development was concerned as he – through his writing he demonstrates that black Africans aligned with Phankga and were as invested in the preservation of ethnically 'pure' communities. However, out of all the texts selected for this thesis, *Ngwana wa mobu* is the only text that overtly shows black African characters who are invested in maintaining ethnically 'pure' communities, while other texts are focused on the ways in which the 'traditional' (symbolised by the rural) and the Christian impact one another and these texts reflect on the changes brought on by Christianity and modernity. I would like to contrast Phankga's ethnic depiction with the ways in which Mminele has described his love interest, Lethabo.

Lethabo, is described as "*le kagrebe ya tšhuana mo Makgwareng*"[533] (an orphan) because her father has died. Her marriage to Phankga not only ushers her into the domain of *basadi* but in marrying Phankga, Lethabo is no longer considered a child but rather the ward of her husband. Lethabo is not a particularly assertive character. Instead, her meekness is a sign that she is a 'good' wife: Christian and subservient. This is made clear on her wedding day, when her mother presents her with a Bible in the following text:

> *Lethabo, ngwanaka, megokgo ya ka ke ya lethabo lehono ge o etšwa ka sefero se ke sa phela. Gape ke megokgo ya lethabo le bohloko g eke gopola boima jbj lapa, le bja bogadi. Lehono o šiela thaka tša gago bokoti, o ya lapeng la Mootli, eupša o tsebe gore lebitla la mosadi ke bogadi. Sepela, Nopgadi o ye o dule magala ao ka marago. Tseba gore mosadi o roka molomo ge monna a taufetše. O se ke wa tšshaba madimo a bogadi. Ge a tšutla a rutlolla, lethabo šele o tla koltana ka gare ga lona, gomme le tla ruthofatša, la thinyaolla pelo yeo e thinyegilego, la apeša lethabo. Sepela gabotse, ngwanaka" Ka menwana ye e thathaselago, o mo104at logou ye mpsha ya Bibele, o mo nea magetla.*
>
> Lethabo, my daughter if you see me crying, I am crying because I'm happy. You are leaving this house while I am still alive. These are also tears because of the hardships our family has faced and I am thinking of the pain you will have to endure at your in-laws. Today, you are leaving your friends and this house to be a Mootli bride, but you must know your grave is at your husband's house, you will die, there, so once you leave, don't come back. Go, and sit on those hot embers and know that a woman closes her

[532] S.P.P Mminele, *Ngwana wa Mobu,* Polokwane, Sharp Shoot Publishing, 1966, p.12
[533] S.P.P Mminele, *Ngwana wa Mobu,* p.60

> mouth when the man is like a lion. Don't be afraid of the tension when married, you must remain steadfast." With trembling hands, Lethabo's mother offers her a Bible.[534]

Throughout all of the texts selected for this study, an overwhelming number of texts represented women as housewives as opposed to 'ethnic' women. The women and their representations in these texts remain centred on a Christian womanhood, as these women are untouched by the corrupting 'influence' of modern life. However, if the women do – to whatever degree – engage in modernity, an urban environment or even education, she is classed as a 'fallen' woman. The representations of men may vary – albeit a limited scope of representations. The central focus of this thesis was the representation of women and the representations found in the text, illustrate how Northern Sotho writers often used missionary ideals as benchmarks for their depictions of women.

Chapter summary

Within the texts studied in this chapter, representations of women have reaffirmed mission discourse on womanhood: being that women were mothers, or wives, usually Christian, and were always subservient to a husband or father; and if a woman did not meet these prescripts and decided to leave the traditional homestead, that signalled the disintegration of their own womanhood, such as Tabana or Taamane. In the discursive site of state-funded radio dramas and literary texts, Northern Sotho audiences were thus far more likely to be inculcated into becoming obedient and disciplined Christian subjects than ethnic subjects. In these texts, women were discouraged from migrating into the cities which would 'corrupt' them. A women's place was in the homelands and those who returned from urban areas usually returned with an illegitimate and/or potentially mixed-race child (i.e. not 'Pedi'), or they had 'fallen.' Therefore, for one to be a 'good' woman, one had to be physically bound to the rural homeland which would 'safeguard' a woman's morality. For one to enter the realm of *basadi*, as the above texts show, women were expected to be subservient and loyal to their parents or husbands (wards).

The authors of these texts, 'Good Bantus', largely adhered to ideas about womanhood that were introduced by the BMS. Despite the BMS' and later the apartheid government's emphasis on ethnicity, early converts and later, 'Good Bantus' (with the exception of one writer in one text), represented Pedi womanhood through the ideals of Christianity and the place of the rural homestead. What this suggests is that these vernacular texts, written in Pedi for a Pedi audience,

[534] S.P.P Mminele, *Ngwana wa Mobu,* p.62

demonstrated little attachment to ‘Pedi’ as an ethnic category, but as a category shaped by engagements with Christianity over time and space. Pedi womanhood, as a discursive category, that in turn, was filled with notions of appropriate labour and behaviour.

Conclusion

This thesis has provided an exploration into the emergence of the term 'Pedi' as an identity marker for the Northern Basotho and the representations of black African women in vernacular text. Chapter 1 provided an exploration of Northern Sotho-speaking communities in general. This was followed by examining how mining records and the Transvaal Republics referred to all Northern Sotho communities and subjects of their paramount, who came from 'the Pedi' caste as Bapedi. The primary focus was on the collaborative effort between missionaries and converts, particularly in the evolution of language and the emerging state's conflation of language and the concept of the *volk* (or associated terms: tribe and/or nation). Throughout the first chapter we see how missionaries' views of their converts diverged from the ways in which the state and industry viewed black Africans and categorised them in the late 19th to early 20th centuries.

Chapter 2 contextualised the emergence of vernacular literature in the context of shifting political alliances in the Transvaal, through examples such as the development of the Bapedi Church, alliances between the BMS and Sekhukhune were, according to 'experts' at the SANAC markers of a single ethnic group, 'the Pedi'. These events are placed into conversation with the political and economic changes in South Africa from the 1900 to the 1930s. These changes in South Africa are reflected in Ramaila's book, *Tša Bophelo Bja Moruti Abraham Serote*. The chapter sought to discuss the context in which vernacular literature was produced and highlighted the complex relationship between the growing independence of black African women and their representation in vernacular texts.

Chapter 3 examined how black African writers, within an apartheid framework, continued with representations of women from earlier writers rather than fully embracing the 'Pedi' ethnicity emphasised by the state. Ethnicity in the twentieth century, continued to be viewed by the state as a static entity. But 'Good Bantus' – the writers of said texts – again did not necessarily self-identify as 'Pedi; instead, these groups prioritised Christian culture. Thus, the representation of women found in texts published between 1940 and 1990 reaffirmed mission and traditional discourses on womanhood, emphasising motherhood, marriage, and subservience to men. In state-funded radio dramas and literary texts, Northern Sotho audiences were encouraged to be disciplined Christian subjects rather than ethnic subjects. Women were discouraged from migrating to cities, reinforcing traditional roles. Despite the apartheid government's emphasis on ethnicity, vernacular texts demonstrate little attachment to 'Pedi' as an ethnic category. Pedi

womanhood, as depicted in these texts, is imbued with notions of 'appropriate' behaviour and shaped by Christian ideals in the rural homestead.

Throughout this study, I constantly asked, *Basadi ba kae?* (Where are the women?), and perhaps the answer to that question is that the 'pure Pedi' woman is a fantasy of womanhood informed by an incomplete ethnic project. Regardless of whether or not a writer was male or female, their depictions of womanhood point us towards an unfulfilling answer, *a ba gona* (they are absent). This is not to overemphasise the 'power' of missionary imagination and the colonial encounter but rather to suggest that further studies can investigate the ways in which women and ethnic womanhood presents itself outside of the archive. Perchance culture, especially 'Pedi' culture and womanhood are in such a state of flux that these identities become ephemeral, as opposed to fixed.

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