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HOW IS BAPEDI MARRIAGE VISUALISED IN THE HOFFMANN AND VAN WARMELO ETHNOGRAPHIC COLLECTIONS?

by

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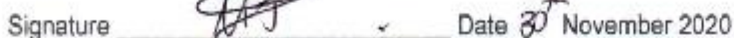
Signature  Date 30th November 2020

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We cannot know that which we were not there to see and hear and experience for ourselves. We must rely upon the words of others. Those who were there in the olden days. They told stories to the children, so that the children would know, so that the children could tell stories to their children and so on, and so on. But then comes the problem of conflicting stories. Whose stories do we believe then? We believe the one who has the power. He is the one who gets to write the story. So when you study history, you must always ask yourself, whose story am I missing? Whose voice was suppressed so that this voice could come forth? Once you have figured that out, you must find that story too. From there you begin to get a clearer, yet still imperfect picture.

Yao, from *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi.

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ABSTRACT

This study compares two sets of ethnographic resources which were produced a generation apart, by two different ethnographers with the assistance of different groups of interlocutors working in the same area, amongst people claiming to have an association with the Mamabolo community. The first collection to be assessed is that of a Berlin Missionary Carl Adolf Hoffmann who was stationed in the area from 1904 till 1934. The second set of material is that of Dr. N.J. van Warmelo who was the chief ethnologist in the Department of Native Affairs from 1930 till 1969. In its comparison, this study analyses the marriage custom of Bapedi and how the ethnographers visualised it. The study does so by reviewing the collections in depth, looking at: the role of interlocutors and ethnographers, and establishing what the information in these collections represents (its visuality), as well as Hoffmann's and Van Warmelo's portrayal of Bapedi marriage custom. The study seeks to find similaries or disparities between the two collections' rendition of Bapedi marriage, seeing that the ethnographers and interlocutors were from two different generations. The study addresses the limitations of the textual medium which seems, over the years, to have contributed to the misconception that tradition is fixed and rigid. Moreover, the study highlights how visuality is not only limited to images (pictures, drawings, diagrams, etc.) by advocating for orature as visuality. It does so by substantiating how words (especially written words) have the power and influence to create visuality.

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SUMMARY

Title of dissertation: How is Bapedi marriage visualised in the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo ethnographic collections?

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KEY TERMS

Culture, cultural customs, orature, oral history, Bapedi, Mamabolo, Carl Hoffmann, N.J. van Warmelo, interlocutors, marriage, *ilobolo/bohadi/magadi*, African marriage, Bapedi marriage, visuality, scenography, rite of passage, cultural translation.

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Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ... i
ABSTRACT ... iii
SUMMARY ... iv
List of figures ... viii
CHAPTER 1 ... 1
1.1 INTRODUCTION ... 1
1.2 BACKGROUND, AIMS, AND NEED FOR THE STUDY ... 2
1.3 REVIEW OF SCHOLARSHIP ... 8
1.3.1 Literature review ... 8
a. The case study: the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections ... 8
b. Bapedi traditions, rituals and customs ... 10
c. African marriage ... 11
1.3.2 Theoretical Framework: Visuality ... 12
1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ... 14
1.5 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS ... 15
1.6 CONCLUSION ... 17
CHAPTER 2 ... 18
2.1 INTRODUCTION ... 18
2.2 PROFILING THE INTERLOCUTORS ... 18
2.3 CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE ETHNOGRAPHERS ... 27
2.4 BRIEF HISTORY ON THE MAMABOLO ... 36
2.4.1 INTRODUCTION ... 37
2.4.2 MAMABOLO SETTLING JOURNEY ... 40
2.4.3 MAMABOLO CULTURAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS ... 47
a. Birth ... 47
b. Burial ... 48
c. Healing ... 49
d. Belief ... 49
e. Rites of passage ... 50
2.5 CONCLUSION ... 52

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CHAPTER 3 54
3.1 INTRODUCTION 54
3.1.1. The history of human marriage in Western societies 55
3.1.2. Mate selection 58
3.1.3. Forms of marriage 60
3.1.4 Romantic love marriage 62
3.1.5 Wedding ceremonies 63
3.2 African marriage 64
3.2.1 Mate selection 65
3.2.2 Ilobolo/bohadi/magadi 66
3.3 THE VISUALISATION OF THE MAMABOLO MARRIAGE AS REPRESENTED IN THE HOFFMANN AND VAN WARMELO COLLECTIONS 74
3.3.1 The engagement 75
3.3.2 The Wedding 81
a. *Go kgopela ngwetši* (Asking for a wife) 81
b. *Go beka* (daughter-in-law is led home) 84
c. Bearing children 86
d. Taking a second wife 87
3.4 CONCLUSION 87
4.1 INTRODUCTION 89
4.2 VISUALITY 90
4.2.1 Orature as visuality 93
4.2.2 Mental and Verbal images as visuality 97
4.2.3 Cultural translation, thick description, text and drama analogy and scenography 102
4.3 INTERPRETATION 108
4.3.1 Mamabolo marriage as social drama 109
4.3.2 Mamabolo marriage as a rite of passage 114
4.3.3 What do the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections represent? 116
4.4 CONCLUSION: 122
5.1 GENERAL SUMMARY 125
5.2 FINAL OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS 127
5.2.1 On Hoffmann, Van Warmelo and the Interlocutors 127
5.2.2 On marriage 130

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5.2.3. On translation and interpretation ... 134

5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY: ... 136

5.4 CONCLUSION ... 137

Appendices ... 139

SOURCES CONSULTED ... 141

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List of figures

1. Map of Mphome-Kratzenstein Mission station 45

2. Mamabolo area in map of Tzaneen 46

3. Two men at the *thitikwane* 50

4. Illustration of *go fološa mokgonyana godimo ga ntlo* 83

5. Translations and comments from the *Hoffmann Collection of Cultural Knowledge* 104

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

World-renowned Kenyan writer and academic, Ngugi wa Thiong'o indicated that "there is a way of life which through time reflects the sum of a people" (Ukadike 1994:21); this way of life is what comes to be understood as that people's culture. Similarly, critical and cultural theorist Chris Weedon (2004:10-11) states that "people make culture"; and not the other way around. This means that people, in one way or another, form and create their own culture, and through repetitive acts and being passed on from one generation to another, this culture becomes a norm and, tradition (Butler cited by Lloyd 2007:2; Schechner 2008: 228).

Culture, according to critical theorist Ben Agger (1992:2), may be anything that is expressive and educative that contributes to social learning. Agger (1992:8) elaborated that people learn most about themselves through identification, with culture being that firm foundation on which these identities are constructed. In his attempts to define culture, African sociolinguist Russell Kaschula (2001:15) quotes anthropologist Walter Goodenough's supposition that "the culture of a society consists of particular knowledge and beliefs that members of a community have which enable them to operate in a manner [that is] acceptable to the group, and in any role that the group finds acceptable".

Language is one of the components of culture; the beliefs and values as well as the needs of a particular society are reflected in the language spoken by that society. In addition, linguist and anthropologist Edgar Gregerson (1977:156) explained that "language can be studied not only with reference to its formal properties … but also with regard to its relationship to the lives and thoughts and culture of the people who speak it".

Language and culture are related. Kaschula (2001:17) explains the relation in the sense that the one could not be understood or appreciated without knowledge of the other. He further elaborates to say that:

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> a person must know enough about the culture of another person in order to communicate effectively in multicultural contact … culture, as a form of social behaviour which is explained in terms of societal values, cannot exist in a vacuum and has no life apart from language. Language is [therefore] the agent which is necessary to transfer culture from one generation to another (Kaschula 2001:21).

From this it is clear that one cannot speak of culture and language without giving some consideration to the notion of tradition. Historian Thomas Spear (2003:5) states that tradition has been the most constant word in African historiography. According to Spear (2003:6), traditions consist both of fixed precedents and principles and fluid processes of adaptation that enable the traditions to be continually renewed in an autonomous and self-regulatory process. It is to be emphasised that contrary to popular belief, traditions are not fixed and can therefore be adapted. As "fluid" and "continually renewed" practices, traditions can be found in writings/texts, institutions and concepts (Spear 2003:6). Steve Feierman (cited in Spear 2003:6) argues that traditions cannot die – and more especially so if they are deeply embedded in a people's language. Thus, as language transforms and as people deal with social changes, traditions are consequently also bound to adapt.

From the above, it is understood that language and culture are interrelated. If culture is reflected in the language as earlier mentioned, then it is safe to conclude that social change produces linguistic change which will ultimately result in an adaptation of traditions. Language then becomes a vital vehicle that carries the culture and the traditions of a people. Ngugi wa Thiong'o spoke of how language has its own musicality and rhythm; rhythm and musicality on which the traditions and culture of a people ride (Ukadike 1994:22).

1.2 BACKGROUND, AIMS, AND NEED FOR THE STUDY

In my Honours year I was looking for visual recordings of Bapedi[1] traditional dances or cultural performance on the Internet for my final Movement/Physical Theatre

[1] The discourse surrounding how one describes or refers to a group of people is one that is ongoing. The uncertainty can at times lead to confusion and sometimes, to a certain extent, offence. To avoid any confusion or offence, I have resorted to using Bapedi to refer to the Pedi group as a collective, unless specified and singled out to the Mamabolo. Bapedi is a Sepedi term equivalent to the English phrase The Pedi. Wherever the term Bapedi is used in this study, it should be understood to be referring to the Pedi as a collective group (including the Mamabolo).

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choreography exam. Self-identifying as a Mopedi,[2] I was interested in exploring the history and current traditional practices within my own community. However, I was troubled to find very little information on the Internet.[3] The information in the public domain seemed limited and unsatisfactory.

Until their encounter with the Europeans from the seventeenth century onwards, southern African people believed and practised oral tradition instead of literary or written tradition, which is a different mode of knowledge transference to literary recording or visual recording. This could be a contributing factor to the lack of internet information on traditional practices of Bapedi. "Orature" or oral tradition is the "use of utterances as an aesthetic means of expression … an oral system of aesthetics that did not need validity from the literary" (wa Thiong'o 2007:4). Artist and academic Pitika Ntuli (as cited in wa Thiong'o 2007:5) explains that:

> orature is the fluidity between drama, story, song, discourse and performance. A fusion of all art forms… the wholeness of all being bigger than the facts that contribute to it. Orature is the conception and reality of total views of life. It is the capsule of feeling, thinking, imagination, taste and learning. It is the flow of a creative spirit.

African Film scholar Nwachukwu Ukadike (1994:22) highlighted that orature is "dynamic and generative, that it is omnipresent; it permeates every aspect of life and the word itself". Thus, what can be visually and aurally recorded of this cultural transfer, is the orature as it is being practised and performed (Joubert & Biernacka 2015:23). Owing to limited access to audio and visual recording technology in previous generations, observers reverted to converting their observations and experiences into verbal images (Mitchell 1984:511). Furthermore, W.T.J Mitchell (1984:528-532) explains that these verbal images "leave behind both figural mimesis and literary

[2] In the Pedi language there are different classes with their own distinctions according to class prefix. The noun Pedi can be used in different contexts, e.g., Mopedi is a Pedi person and Bapedi are Pedi people, Sepedi is the Pedi language and Bopedi is Pedi country. "The importance of these prefixes lies not only in that they determine the class to which the noun belongs, but also they are used to derive the concords which link the noun to other clauses. Illustrated in a sentence: *Bapedi ba dula Bopedi ba bolela Sepedi*, which translates as: the Pedi people live in Pedi country where they speak the Pedi language" (Mönnig 1967:viii).
[3] I refer to the Internet not because it was the only source of information I consulted. Other sources were consulted, but because for the choreography aspect of the exam, I was searching for visual and motion (e.g. videos) references and stimulus. Hence, I only mention dissatisfaction of the Internet as an information source.

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features like narrative or allegory" which end up in outward experiences reflected in a dialogue, text (being written or typed in manuscripts), and/or even printed.

In my endeavour to find information on Bapedi traditions and culture, it quickly dawned on me that I would have to familiarise myself with the texts compiled by past observers – faint remains indeed of the actual observable orature of the past. In the mid-1960s, anthropologist Hermann Mönnig (1967:vi), who had compiled a seminal study on Bapedi stated that the studies conducted by researchers, anthropologists and missionaries from the second half of the nineteenth century up until that time, were scattered across journal articles and were not easily obtainable; moreover, they were "published variously in English, French, German, Dutch, Afrikaans and various Transvaal Sotho dialects".

It is my understanding that as life evolves, so does culture and traditions. Historian John Wright (2017:5) states that "archives of oral materials, recorded and unrecorded, are made up of 'oral traditions', that is, largely formal accounts of the past made by knowledgeable individuals and passed down from one generation to the next with little change to their 'core' meanings". He further explains that in some societies and institutional settings, "people may have had reason to preserve and transmit stories in this way [whereas] in other societies and circumstances … stories about the past were not made and transmitted in formal settings but were developed, argued about, and passed on by ordinary people in everyday discourses in informal surroundings" (Wright 2017:5). Wright concludes that "the notion of 'oral traditions' as histories that are largely fixed and have changed little over generations is misleading". Similarly, Spear (2003:6) states that "traditions do not last forever", instead they (traditions) are challenged by an alternative norm or reality and consequently adapt to it.

Adaption in this sense could arise by using technology to assist in archiving these oral traditions, customs and traditions which sociologist and philosopher Pierre Bourdieu motivates as "the notion of a fixed cultural rule [going] out, [and being] replaced by the idea of improvisation" (cited in Burke 2009:95). This improvisation Bourdieu terms 'habitus' – a term he borrowed from art historian Erwin Panofsky. Cultural historian Peter Burke (2009: 58,95) explains that Bourdieu's preference for the concept habitus surfaced as a reaction against the structuralist notion of culture as a system of rigid rules. As stated and quoted previously from Weedon (2004:10-11), "people make

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culture". In the present day, technology has become a big part of human life. Almost everything and anything can be digitised. The use of technology and specifically digitisation as an archival method is a possible improvisational tool that can be used today.

Because the human race is moving towards a more digitised world, I thought it would be useful to trace and archive the traditions, customs and rituals of Bapedi, for the sake of future generations and scholars interested in "the tribe"[4] – a long-term goal I would like to contribute to. However, for the purposes of this study, I began with the laborious task of familiarising myself with the characteristics of a particular sample of existing material, some of it already digitised, others still lying dormant in archival boxes – none of it subjected to critical scrutiny yet. I looked at two sets of recordings, and compare how two different groups of interlocutors, a generation apart, in the same area but under different circumstances, tried to convey their understandings of practices and beliefs around one particular kind of cultural performance – namely the marriage custom.

This particular demarcation of the topic and the choice to focus on this particular cultural practice, was largely determined by the nature of the archival material. The decision to bring two sets of textual recordings of orature simultaneously under the same spotlight, was directly related to the problem I sought to address: the limitations of the textual medium seem over the years to have contributed to the misconception that tradition is fixed and rigid. I juxtapose two sets of textual recordings of tradition and analyse them for what they are: two snapshots of orature (by definition dynamic, fugitive and defiant of fixity) captured in two particular moments in time; merely representing, in writing, two observation points of the same people and the same cultural performance – the marriage custom.

[4] "Tribe" is still commonly used in popular speech, even though the word had been widely appropriated and abused in the colonial era. In the book *Tribing and untribing the archive*, edited by Nessa Leibhammer and Carolyn Hamilton, Jeff Guy (cited in Leibhammer & Hamilton 2017:15) is quoted saying that the concept of "tribe" was brought into Southern African rather than found there. He explains that the word "tribe" was changed in significance from a concept denoting a group belonging together as people, to a group of people being associated with a particular sector of land. This continued to taint people's self-understanding as segregation and later apartheid tried to organise which South African people were allowed to stay where and tried to restrict and regulate their movements accordingly. In this study I use "tribe" to designate a group belonging together as a people.

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The two sets of textual material I identified for scrutiny were both collected amongst the Mamabolo people of what is today the Limpopo Province. The first set was edited, translated and published by the German missionary Carl Hoffmann between 1904 and 1930, and the second set was collected by the South African state's head ethnologist, Dr. N.J. van Warmelo between the 1930 and 1969.

This study thus aims to compare very specific selections from two significant corpuses of ethnographic material: the *Hoffmann Collection of Cultural Knowledge* and the Van Warmelo Collection, looking at the traditions, customs and rituals of Bapedi as they are visualised in these two collections. For the purpose of feasibility the study specifically investigates the marriage custom. The reseacher sought to study the collections in depth, vis-à-vis : the role of interlocutors and ethnographers, and thereby establish what the information in the collections represent; to compare the staging as well as the content of the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo renderings of the marriage custom; and finally to arrive at findings that may enable further research.

Carl Hoffmann's collection represents a recording of traditions, customs and rituals of the "Sotho people of the Woodbush mountain of Transvaal", predominantly the Mamabolo, Monyebodi and Mamatola people.[5] Similar recordings of indigenous culture from the same area had been elicited from local interlocutors by Dr. N.J van Warmelo. It is worth restating that Hoffmann and Van Warmelo's projects were conducted a generation apart (Hoffman from 1904-1920 and Van Warmelo 1930-1969). The sets of material collected by each of the two scholars thus invite an interesting comparison.

South Africa is a very diverse country, with eleven official languages and often identified with eleven corresponding ethnicities. Even within each language group there are differences. One language group (for example: Bapedi) can practice marriage (as a cultural custom) differently due to the linguistic differences. Language, as Lekgoathi (2009:71) notes, remains "a key determinant of culture and thus of [a] tribe". As already mentioned, language and culture are interrelated and therefore culture is reflected in the language. Because of this interrelation, language, to a certain

[5] This is how Hoffmann referred to this group of Bapedi in his written texts. This is the title that appeared in the original text published in the *Zeitschrift für Kolonialsprachen*, 1913 3/2 as well as in the book *Ethnography from the Mission Field: The Hoffmann Collection of Cultural Knowledge* (2015).

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extent, directs how culture is practised. The differences within the same 'tribe' are brought about by the environment and infiltration, contact and engagement with different cultures and people because "no living culture is static – a society's art, science and all social institutions including the system of belief and rituals that derives from the people's way of life changes as that way of life is modified or developed through the ages" (Ukadike 1994:21). This is what happened to South African cultures due to civil wars, colonial interventions, migration and development in the environment. Amongst the very same Bapedi there are different kinds of Sepedi[6]-speaking communities, among them the Balobedu, Bahananwa, Batlokwa, Bapedi ba Lebowa, etc.

This study compares Hoffmann's 1904-1930 and Van Warmelo's 1930-1969 collections of Bapedi narratives by looking at the beliefs and practices around marriage.[7] The study specifically focused on the Mamabolo and because the ethnographers and interlocutors were a generation apart, there were interesting changes that could be traced in the recordings. The study was guided by the understanding of images and visuality as inclusive of writings.This was informed by Mitchell's concept of genealogy of images and what he termed verbal/literary images.

The main question which guided the study was:

> How is Bapedi marriage visualised in the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo ethnographic collections respectively?

In order to achieve the main aim of this study, the following objectives had to be reached:

1. The collections and their respective ethnographers had to be contextualised, as well as their interlocutors and publishers;

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[6] Inge Kosch (2015:1049) notes that Sepedi has impacted the written language the most, "because this was the first dialect that was committed to writing by the missionaries who started working among the Bapedi people". It is with these that I chose to use Sepedi as a language of Bapedi instead of Northern Sotho.

[7] Anthropology has the tendency to fix things in time. Since this study jumps between different times (the past and the present) and follows different strategies to work with these sources and solve the research question of the study – it becomes challenging to work with these 1900s sources, and their relevance to the current practice of culture. To avoid falling victim to the very same misconception of the rigidity of traditions and culture, I have resorted to referencing sources from the 1900s in the past-tense, showing that this is what used to be, and not necessarily the case for the present. Sources from the 2000s are referenced in the present tense to highlight how relative they are to the present. *The Hoffmann Collection of Cultural Knowledge* (2015) is then referenced in the present tense, unless referred to together with an earlier dated source.

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2. The similarities and differences between Hoffmann's and Van Warmelo's ethnographic approaches had to be explored;
3. The origin and history of the Mamabolo had to be understood;
4. Marriage as a social and cultural practice in general as well as specifically in an African context had to be explored;
5. "Visuality" as it is understood by Nicholas Mirzoeff had to be explained;
6. The relationship between orature and visuality had to be explored;
7. Mamabolo marriage customs as a social drama had to be described.

1.3 REVIEW OF SCHOLARSHIP

A great deal of the study's enquiry was based on the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections.[8] Other sources and theories were also explored as detailed in the literature review on Bapedi customs (specifically relating to marriage), followed by a theoretical framework section.

1.3.1 Literature review

a. The case study: the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections

In *Ethnography from the Mission Field: The Hoffmann Collection of Cultural Knowledge* (Joubert, et al. 2015) the ethnographic work of Berlin Missionary Carl Hoffmann is introduced and contextualised. It contains translations from German into English, of 23 of the ethnological articles the missionary had published in the scholarly journal of the school of African Studies at the University of Hamburg between 1913 and 1958. Opposite each English version of the article, the book also features the Sepedi version in a present-day rendering and not in the older orthography which would have been less accessible to the twenty-first century users of the language. This

[8] When reading early-twentieth century ethnographic texts from South Africa, the immersion of the white ethnographers and the African interlocutors in a broader racial-hierarchical colonial context, is a given that the researcher can never lose sight of. In their lifetime, as segregation was overtaken by apartheid policies and legislation, Hoffmann and Van Warmelo observed and, through their knowledge production (in some respects intentionally, in other respects unintentionally), were complicit in the white state's increasing encroachment on African land, resources, and freedom of movement and expression. See Hammond-Tooke (1997,) Pugach (2004) and Pakendorf 2011).

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book was put together by Annekie Joubert, a specialist in African Linguistics, specifically Sepedi; together with Gerrie Grobler, Inge Kosch and Lize Kriel.

The articles in this book range from a recording of traditions, customs and rites of passage, to folktales of Bapedi, whom Hoffmann called the Sotho people of Woodbush Mountain as already pointed out. The material was collected by Hoffmann when he was doing his missionary duties in this region with the help of the local African missionaries. Hoffmann acknowledged his interlocutors as people he engaged with on a daily basis during the thirty years (1904-1934) he was stationed at the Mphome-Kratzenstein Mission station (today Masealama) (Kriel 2015:17). The book *Ethnography from the Mission field* is linked to a documentary film on Hoffmann's work and an online database of the archival and library material related to his career in the Berlin Missionary Society.

Dr. N.J. van Warmelo was the Chief Ethnologist in South Africa in the Native Affairs Department from 1930-1969. He collaborated with interlocutors and informants who were usually men; elderly men from ruling lineages, teachers, traditional healers and those considered experts on origins of their traditions. These interlocutors assisted him with information regarding their people and their practices, traditions, customs, rituals and ways of life. This information was used by the government and later the findings were archived as the "Van Warmelo Collection" reserved in the South African Archives in Pretoria (Lekgoathi 2009:62). Other sections of Van Warmelo's Collection are reposed in the archives of the University of Johannesburg and sets of photocopies of field notes and material sent to Van Warmelo by interlocutors from all over South Africa are housed in the Africana Library of the University of Pretoria. Amongst these are sets of practices and beliefs as written up by interlocutors, also from the Woodbush area, but of a later generation to Hoffmann's recordings. It is these sets of writings which have been identified for critical comparison in this study.

Unlike Hoffmann, Van Warmelo did not live among the people. He gathered information in the form of exercise book manuscripts of "tribal history" and customs sent to him, against payment, by local informants on the ground (Kriel 2015:35). Van Warmelo sent out a questionnaire to any volunteering informants willing to do the work, instructing them to ask very specific questions to reliable informants, then to listen to their stories, write up their actual words, and only ask questions afterwards. Van

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Warmelo was strict in letting the informants refer to actual events and cases, especially when talking about law and customs. Van Warmelo printed the manuscripts in their vernacular languages. He considered himself to be "the means by which the knowledge of others could be made public"; he believed that "the people should speak for themselves" (Hammond-Tooke and Coertze cited in Kriel 2015:36-37).

Because the two scholars are from different generations, the recordings of Van Warmelo's interlocutors are more "contemporary" in comparison to those of Hoffmann. The difference in time results in societal changes which affect the traditions and how they are practiced. These two collections are paired together with the interest to trace any changes in the representation of traditions, customs and rituals, particularly the marriage custom.

b. Bapedi traditions, rituals and customs

The Pedi by H.O Mönnig is a twentieth-century study that is referred to repeatedly when discussing Bapedi. The book fills in the ethnographic gaps left by the oversimplified method used by Van Warmelo in his work (Lekgoathi 2009:75). The book accomplishes this by looking at fieldwork against a background of literature. In its seven chapters, the author discusses the people and their country, as well as practices linked to religion, rites of passage, social, political and economic life and law. This information is useful in the sense that it brings an academic fieldwork perspective to the written literature available on Bapedi. Mònnig, in this book has only focused on a specific group of Bapedi – those situated in Ga-Sekhukhune region of Limpopo and has as a result neglected other groups such as the Mamabolo. The study conducted here does not only expand on Mönnig's research, but also takes a more nuanced position on Bapedi cultural practices by showing that traditions and cultural practices are constantly in flux.

A few years after *The Pedi* was published, in an Afrikaans publication, Hanekom (1972) contributed an article on the religious organisation of the Mamabolo. Here the author discussed the religious beliefs and practices of the Mamabolo and nothing on the other cultural and social practices.

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c. African marriage

Marriage as a discourse and a social practice has been of interest to researchers in anthropology, sociology and social sciences, and African marriage is no different.
Alfred R. Radcliffe-Brown (trained in psychology, philosophy and philosophy of science) "carried out survey-type research on the marriage and kinship systems of the Aborigines [of Australia]" (Hammond-Tooke 1997:23). In his introduction of the book *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage* (1987) (of which he was one of the two editors), he provided a refreshing, thorough, and detailed account of an African marriage. Radcliffe-Brown gave a candid account of the marriage practice relating the African marriage practice to an Anglo-Saxon English marriage practice. He detailed the similarities in these two marriage practices. Not only did he provide the prestation that needed to be observed in an African marriage practice. Radcliffe-Brown also highlighted the significance of the prestation to the set communities. His introductory article is helpful in drawing a logical and holistic understanding of the social practice of marriage, especially that of an African marriage custom.

Although there might be shared values in the practice of African marriage, the different South African ethnic groups also have specic ways in which they practise marriage.
Social anthropologist and scientist Harriet Ngubane accounted for the significance of cattle as a form of *ilobolo* and its implications for women. She also detailed the Zulu *lobolo* procedure, its significance and the symbolism of the gifts presented by the groom's family to the bride. Researchers M.L. Mokwana and M.M. Sefoka offer contemporary insight on Bapedi marriage. Their contributions on Bapedi marriage custom are not only contemporary but also challenge the rigidity of traditions and cultural practices. Both researchers, in their respective works, have pointed out that men and women can marry partners of their choice as opposed to marrying partners chosen by parents as Hoffmann (Joubert, et. al. 2015:91) and Van Warmelo (Ragoboya 1939a:17) noted. Ngubane, Mokwana and Sefoka's contributions give a balance of female voices on a matter that seems to have been primarily dominated by the voices of men. These researchers also explain the significance of some practices which are missing in Mönnig's and Radcliffe-Brown's research.

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Much like Hoffmann, Van Warmelo and Mönnig, Mokwana's research was not specifically on Bapedi marriage. The topic of Bapedi marriage is one that features in her chapter on *Bapedi social varieties*. Sefoka's research on the other hand was specifically on Bapedi marriage, focusing on *go beka* (taking the newly wed bride to her in-laws' home). This is discussed in depth in Chapter Three. Her research was particularly interested in the Matlala group of Bapedi. This study does not only add to the literature on Bapedi marriage, it also reflects on the changes this custom was subjected to, from Hoffmann's recordings of 1904 to the present day.

1.3.2 Theoretical Framework: Visuality

I am particularly interested in the ways in which the orature of Bapedi have been visualised in the ethnographic projects. In this endeavour, the study draws on *The Right to Look* (2011) by visual culture theorist Nicholas Mirzoeff. This text assists in establishing the visuality and scenography in the primary sources of the study. Mirzoeff (2011:474) explains that "visuality is not the total of all visual images and devices [but rather] it is an early nineteenth century term meaning the visualisation of history [of which] the practice has to be imaginary and not perceptual because what is being visualised is too substantial for any one person to see and is created from information, images and ideas". He further goes on to state that the ability to assemble a visualisation manifests the authority of the visualiser (Mirzoeff 2011:474). From the above definition it is understood that authority and visuality go hand in hand. The authority with which Hoffmann, Van Warmelo and Mönnig's renderings of Bapedi custom and culture were ascribed, calls for a critique of their respective visualities.

In order to interrogate the process through which these renderings of Bapedi knowledge were staged into an authoritative state, the study also draws on recent thinking around the concept of scenography. A most useful point of entry into this discourse is an introductory article entitled *The Simulacrum of Reality*, from a special edition of the journal *Passages* aptly entitled: *Staging Spaces: The Scenographic Imagination,* in which scenography is explored in the broadest possible way as "the art of staging scenes" (Aronson 2014:3). Scenography is interested in seducing the senses of the spectator. It is the same scenography that can be found in Aristotle's six

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poetics as spectacle.[9] According to the various contributors to Aronson (2014:22): "society needs images in order to understand itself better. That is apparent of every area of public life, with the result that the language of promotion and representation, of which scenography is a part, has become incredibly sophisticated". It is to be noted that in the case of the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections, the vivid and highly symbolic visual custom of marriage has been rendered into verbal or literary images, a concept taken from W.J.T. Mitchell's *What is an image?* (1984). In this article Mitchell spoke of the genealogy of the image, ranging from the graphic images (pictures, designs, statues), to optical images such as mirrors and projections, to perceptual images such as sense data, "species" and appearances, to mental images with the likes of dreams, memories, ideas and fantasmata, to, finally, the verbal images which refer to metaphors, descriptions and writing. It is the latter genealogy of images that is the focal scenography of this study.

Joubert and Biernacka (2015:23) state that "knowledge is rooted in the image, as much as it is in the text. Visual systems therefore play an indispensable role as methodological tools for the collection, preservation, analysis and representation of information". According to Joubert, et. al. (2015:5) and Joubert and Biernacka (2015:23), visual systems include new technologies such as filming, digitisation and visual data – archive material, field research data, ritual objects, performance events, photographs, maps, drawings and postcards – all of which seem to fit in with Mitchell's genealogy of the image.

The study purposefully adopted the concepts of visuality and scenography together with Mitchell's notion of verbal or literary images as analytical tools in the endeavour to understand what it is that had become visualised as Bapedi traditions, customs and rituals in the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections respectively. Only when

[9] Aristotle's six poetics also known as the elements of drama are: plot, thought/theme, diction, character, music and spectacle. Spectacle has to do with "all the visual elements of a production" (Brockett & Ball 2004:45). This includes the imagery and the mood. If we imagine the Mamabolo marriage custom, as presented by Hoffmann and Van Warmelo as a performance, with the writing (the descriptions, metaphors and imagery) as the tools that the ethnographers use to set their "scene", then we can see how the ethnographers visualised this custom with their chosen words. It is these same words that are going to help paint mental images in the implied audience/reader and thereby continuing that visuality. Here, Aristotle's spectacle is referenced as the origin which scenography is derived from. Chapter Four elaborates more on mental images and how they contribute to visuality.

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understood in terms of the visuality of the driving forces behind these ethnographic projects, and only when presented as staged in the particular conventions of scholarly print culture, can the information in the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections be appreciated as productions reminiscent of an irretrievable orature of almost a century ago.

1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Munro (2014:51) defines qualitative research as a method that "can be used from critical analysis of art and artwork on one side to interventions of social welfare, educational and political nature on the other". He further explains that what dominates this kind of research method is that it is interpretative. Munro gives two types of thinking that are most commonly associated with qualitative research, the first being; inductive thinking which looks at how the world is experienced. From that experience of the world a way of explaining what is going on is "induced" and the theory of answering the question comes from interrogating lived experiences. The second type is, deductive thinking, which firstly gives a theory and then secondly uses the very same theory to "deduce" an explanation for the given situation. The theory established can and/or cannot work (Munro 2014:53). According to Munro (2014:52) "The result of this research approach is to understand and describe how people experience the world and build and/or apply [a] theory to interpret that understanding or experience".

As a qualitative comparative study, this dissertation interprets how the two archives have visualised Bapedi marriage custom within a colonial visuality. The study makes use of Munro's "inductive thinking" in order to understand the representation of Bapedi in these two collections. Mason (2002:105) states that "people use verbal description to visualise particular moralities, activities and versions of social order …" It is this verbal description as portrayed in the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections respectively that the study uses as its object of enquiry. The study compares the content of the two sets of recordings for consistencies and changes. Rose (2016:22) advises that when interpreting visual images, one needs to consider the contexts within which the visuals were made. She further goes on to say that as much as it is necessary to consider the context, the critic must not make the mistake of not looking

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at the visuals themselves as they are not entirely reducible to their contexts; "visual representations have their own effects" (Rose 2016:22-23).

Following Rose, as much as it is important to contextualise the interlocutors as well as the representation of Bapedi, it is also important to scrutinize what the representations themselves depict about Bapedi. Lastly, the meaning and significance of valuing the content of the collections in contemporary society will be considered. Rose speaks of methodological tools such as sites and modalities to interpreting visual images. Included in these methodologies are the site of production, the site of the image and the site of audiencing. The study considered these three sites (excluding the fourth site – the site of circulation) and focus in-depth on the site of audiencing. Rose (2016:23) mentions that when interpreting visual images, it is necessary to consider one's way of seeing and looking as that reflects how the critic of visual images is looking. Furthermore, the audience, including the reseracher who is critical of the visual images, have "their own way of seeing and other kinds of knowledges" (Rose 2016:27) which are invoked when encountering an image. This is discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

In further analysis of the Mamabolo marriage custom as presented by both Hoffmann and Van Warmelo, the study interpretes this custom first, as a "rite of passage" performance using Clifford Geertz's "thick description" and "drama analogy". Secondly, the study interprets this custom as a "social drama" infomed by Victor Turner.

1.5 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

Chapter One introduces and conceptualises the study and details the background, aims and purpose of the study. In so doing, Chapter One foregrounds some of the key concepts pertaining to the study such as culture, tradition and language and highlights how these three are connected to each other. The chapter outlines a review of scholarship starting with a review of the two collections of enquiry along with a review of the seminal work on the topic of African marriage including but not limited to; Radcliffe-Brown, Ngubane, Mokwana and Sefoka. The review also includes seminal

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work on the theoretical framework on visuality as put forward by Mirzoeff (2009;2011) and Mitchell (1984), and on orality by Joubert (2010).

Chapter Two profiles the interlocutors from both the Hoffmann collection and the Van Warmelo collection. Furthermore, the chapter briefly profiles and conceptualises the ethnographers – giving a brief history into their lives, work and ethnographic methodologies. The chapter ends with a layered history on the Mamabolo as presented by the Van Warmelo interlocutors and the cultural practices of the Mamabolo presented by the Hoffmann interlocutors. Both the history and the cultural practices of the Mamabolo are supplemented by other written sources on these topics.

In Chapter Three the marriage custom is investigated. This investigation begins with an overview of the social practice from a generic perspective, then from the Western view, before narrowing down to an African marriage practice and finally, Bapedi practice, then through the lens of Mamabolo culture. The different ways in which the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections represent Mamabolo marriage practices are compared in this chapter.

The fourth chapter serves as the analysis and interpretation section. Here, visuality, which is the theoretical framework of the study, is unpacked and discussed in detail. The chapter first discusses visuality and argues for orature as visuality. The chapter then analyses the Mamabolo marriage custom as presented by both Hoffmann and Van Warmelo, and interpretes it first, as a rite of passage performance using Geertz's thick description, drama analogy, and secondly, as Turner's social drama. Moreover, the chapter briefly looks at cultural translation and critically discusses how the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections could have contributed to a particular kind of visuality.

Chapter Five concludes the study by firstly, giving a general summary of the study and secondly, detailing comments and findings of the study. The chapter demonstrates how culture and marriage as a social practice evolve with times by providing an example of my own experience of the marriage custom.

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1.6 CONCLUSION

The information that eventually ended up on paper, stating what African customs used to be, besides often attaining the additional authority of implying what such customs still are, or ought to be, is indeed a faint and static shadow of the daily lived routines of the period during which they were recorded. Oftentimes, this relates to a very specific moment in time and particular circumstances under which the information had been staged for the recording interlocutor. The ethnographer, like Hoffmann, or Van Warmelo, in the process of collecting this ethnographic information, attains the aura of an overseer of the past, present and future of African communities, moulded into specific entities under their colonial gaze. This argument, along with the misconception the textual medium contributes to, of the rigidity of tradition and culture, is one that this study aims to challenge.

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CHAPTER 2

THE MAKING OF THE MAMABOLO: THE WRITERS AND THEIR CONSTRUCTIONS OF HISTORY AND CULTURAL CUSTOMS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the written material on the Mamabolo is approached as a scholarly discourse. In so doing, the chapter takes a closer look at the sources (the interlocutors, the ethnographers and publishers) who have contributed to the production of what has come to be known of the Mamabolo history and customs today. In achieving this, the chapter is divided into three sections: profiling of the interlocutors, contextualisation of the ethnographers and a brief history of the Mamabolo.

This chapter is a survey of the written material on the Mamabolo. The information presented here was gathered from currently available written material on the Mamabolo history and cultural customs. No interviews or any kind of fieldwork were conducted to gather information for this study and/or this chapter. Most of the material in this chapter was informed by what the interlocutors from the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections have already produced. There is, however, supplementing information from other sources and writers who are not interlocutors from the respective collections, that are used in conjunction with the interlocutors' information.

2.2 PROFILING THE INTERLOCUTORS

In order to understand the resultant narrative of the history and cultural customs of the Mamabolo, I find it important to first establish who tells this narrative. Hence, I begin the chapter with the interlocutors who had divulged their understanding of their community's knowledge systems to the ethnographers (Hoffmann and Van Warmelo).

An approach in which one foregrounds the interlocutors when investigating knowledge production serves to do away with positivism and gives a platform to let people tell

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their own stories, in their own voices, languages and expressions. As historian Sekibakiba Lekgoathi (2009:74) alludes:

> The data they [ethnographers] collected do shed some light on the contested nature of identity, the contradictory ways in which local people constructed images of the 'self' and how they understood their relations with others. Moreover, they provide perspectives which Van Warmelo [and before him, Hoffmann], as a white researcher, may not otherwise have been able to capture.

From Lekgoathi's explanation, it is understood that the interlocutors are not just mere informants, but history makers and co-producers of the knowledge making process. This section discusses the men[10] who co-authored the information found in *The Hoffmann Collection of Cultural Knowledge* and the Van Warmelo collection. Following Kgopa (1998:9) and Lekgoathi's (2009:76-79) suggestions, this section profiles the interlocutors' full names, the year the information was recorded, their occupation, the content of their information as well as their writing style. In addition to the writing style, Kgopa (1998:9) explained that one can include how the researcher experienced the interlocutor's information being relayed. Furthermore, he stated that an interlocutor's date and place of birth should be included in their profile, more especially if such

[10] In her book, *We spend our years as a tale told: Oral Historical Narrative in a South African Chiefdom* (1993) African literature professor, Isabel Hofmeyr lamented that there is a stereotype in southern African oral history studies, that of a woman-as-a-storyteller. She examples one study of Xhosa folklore that notes that the woman, in particular, is the one who keeps folklore tradition alive, yet the same study not a page later "states that men often volunteered enthusiastically to relate stories for the researcher" (Hofmeyr 1993:25). She substantiated that it is not that women could not 'speak', but that their 'speaking' was limited. Although women could tell stories, their repertoire, compared to the men, was limited. Women were to take care of the 'physical substance of society', men on the other hand "dominated the media and intellectual resources. They controlled words, ritual skills… judicial proceedings through which they could influence the representation of the world. Through this representation men, and the agnatic lineages into which they were grouped, became models of society, history and permanence" (Hofmeyr 1993:27).
It is not surprising then that the men would often volunteer to assist researchers because their socialisation and conditioning fed the assumption that they had the information that the researchers might need. According to Hofmeyr's research on oral historical narratives in the Transvaal (around the Sotho-Tswana and Ndebele), the storytelling was divided by gender. Within the circular-shaped houses they lived in, in the nineteenth century, "female storytelling was associated with the hut area while the male storytelling found its performance venue in the *kgoro* (The Sepedi term *kgoro* has multiple meaning; firstly, it can refer to the "enclosed, circular gathering place behind which homesteads of the dwelling unit are arranged in semi-circle" (Joubert, et. al. 2015:99); secondly, it can "refer to the entrance of this gathering place, which is referred to when said that men are in the *kgoro* (*kgorong*)" (Joubert, et. al. 2015:99). Thirdly, the word can also refer to "the whole dwelling place, including the gathering place and all the households comprising the unit", and lastly, it can refer to the people belonging to the unit" (Joubert, et. al. 2015:99). In this context, Joubert, et. al. state that it refers to within or inside the semi-circle enclosed gathering place of men which is usually attached to the cattle kraal and adjacent to the household and not the entrance/gate.). In general, "women tended to tell fictional stories, while men told historical stories" (Hofmeyr 1993:9).

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information is provided. The interlocutors profiled here are those whose information was consulted for this study. These interlocutors are profiled here, to aid in understanding the 'making' of the Mamabolo. With their presentations in the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections respectively, these interlocutors, as history makers and co-producers of knowledge, have helped authors and researchers usually stated as Hoffmann (Joubert, et. al. 2015), Van Warmelo (1935 1944, 1977), Mönnig (1967), Hanekom (1972) and Mamabolo (1994), to build their visuality of the Mamabolo history and cultural customs.

2.2.1 The Hoffmann Collection of Cultural Knowledge

Kriel (2015:45) reminds us that Hoffmann's conversations with his interlocutors were long and prolonged, maybe because most, if not all his interlocutors were his colleagues and friends. As such, he had a handful of interlocutors whom he featured in his writings. Kriel (2015:68) notes that "for the Woodbush articles the most likely interlocutors would have been Jonas Raubaas Mogashwa, Moses Mankopane Rakoma, Stephanus Mathibako and Philippus Makgobe Bopape".[11] It is these above mentioned interlocutors that will be briefly profiled here.

Jonas Raubaas Mogashwa was the first person Hoffmann relied on when he moved to Mphome-Kratzenstein (Kriel 2015:49). Interesting information about this interlocutor is found in an honours dissertation that was written by a student at the University of Limpopo (then University of the North) in 1994. M.E.R Mamabolo gave a bit of background on this author and explained that he (M.E.R Mamabolo) also got his information from local interlocutors. This reveals the community still maintained their own orally transmitted version of their history more than a century after Hoffmann's research.

According to Mamabolo (1994:15), Matšhemo – one of *Kgoši*[12] Maribe's warriors – named his son (Jonas) after Salmon Marais, commonly called Oubaas, whom Matšhemo dearly admired. Marais was one of the first white settlers amongst the

[11] These are articles 1-2 and 7-18 in Joubert, et. al. *Ethnography from the Mission Field: the Hoffmann Collection of Cultural Knowledge* (2015).

[12] *Kgoši* is a Sepedi word that can translate as ruler, king, chief, chieftain or gentleman. In this study, *Kgoši* will be used as a reference to a king or chief or ruler.

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Mamabolo. The Mamabolo community appropriated the Dutch name Oubaas – which means elderly master – and converted it to their own tongue, eliding the superiority implied in the title and domesticating it into an affectionate Sepedi rendering Rauwasa[13] (Mamabolo 1994:14-15). "Mogashwa, who must have been born in the 1840s" (Kriel 2015:49) was one of the first Mamabolo people to be baptised. He was converted by a fellow African before the Lutheran missionaries arrived in the Mamabolo region (Kriel 2015:49). He was trained at the Mphome-Kratzenstein station and served as school master for the local children.[14] Although he was never ordained, he converted Moses Rakoma who became a Lutheran minister later on (Kriel 2015:49).

Moses Mankopane Rakoma was baptized on 28 May in 1899 at the age of 34 (Hoffmann 1928:23) and thus it is safe to assume that he was born in 1865. He is from a royal lineage and was the body-guard of the Nare (Buffalo) Queen, Mamatola.[15] He was a community leader at his hometown of Mabeleke and came to be responsible for the congregation there (Hoffmann 1928:23; Kriel 2015:50). Hoffmann regarded Rakoma as a "rich source in as far as the history of his tribe, the Buffalo, was concerned, although he himself had the Warthog as totem" (Kriel 2015:50).[16]

Stephanus Mathibako, affectionately named "Kwiekbroek" (squeak-pants) by the Berlin Missionaries, because of the sound his Manchester pants made when he walked, gave Hoffmann "valuable literary material on the Buffalo people of Letsoalo" (Kriel 2015:51). Mathibako was Hoffmann's pack donkey driver for 24 years on the missionary journeys in the Wolkberge and the Thabine and Letaba mountains (Kriel 2015:51). Hoffmann revered him with fondness as a good storyteller (Hoffmann 1928:16).

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[13] Mamabolo (1994) has the name as Rauwasa whereas Kriel (2015) has it as Raubasa. I have not come across any information detailing the correct and/or the change of spelling of the name. I have quoted the name as is from the two different sources. Although Kriel cites Mamabolo in her explanation of Rauwasa/Raubasa's name, she makes no reference to the spelling.

[14] Neither Kriel (2015) nor Mamabolo (1996) mention the kind of training Mogashwa received at the Mphome-Kratzenstein Station. But because it was a mission station, one can assume that he was trained in the Christian religion.

[15] The Mamatola was *kgoši* of the Letswalo 'tribe'; Van Warmelo (1935:114) explained that the Letswalo were according to tradition *vaKaranga*. The Letswalo and Mamabolo are related by marriage (Van Warmelo 1944:5,11; Mamabolo 1994:9).

[16] Warthog refers to the animal that Rakoma and his clan revered as a totem.

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And lastly there was Hoffmann's close friend and colleague, Philippus Makgobe Bopape. Although Kriel (2015:51) advises that Hoffmann did not list Bopape as one of his interlocutors, he was well-regarded for his notary and organisational skills. Bopape was a resourceful and successful commercial farmer who accumulated land for his family as early as 1906 (Kriel 2015:51). He was trained at Mphome-Kratzenstein and was ordained as pastor in 1907 (Hoffmann 1935:2). Kriel (2015:53) further states that "Bopape must also be credited for the language editing of the Sotho publications used in the Lutheran liturgy".

Hoffmann did not specifically pin-point which interlocutors he had consulted for which information; and thus, in the *Hoffmann Collection of Cultural Knowledge* (2015) one does not get to read the interlocutors' renderings as one can with Van Warmelo's manuscripts. In her research, Kriel (2015:68) could merely identify the above individuals as the most likely sources of the information for the Woodbush articles, which constitutes the majority of the information in *the Hoffmann Collection of Cultural Knowledge* (2015).

Storytelling or narrating is the most used style of accounting for events amongst Hoffmann's interlocutors. This is palpable when one reads the Hoffmann collection. Kriel (2015:52) is of the same opinion; she observes that 'telling' or 'narrating' remained associated with accounting for stories relating to oneself or one's ancestors, even when it had to be written or literally recorded. This association with narrating one's history and stories that is observed amongst these interlocutors can be drawn back to their practice of orature as a way of imparting knowledge, a practice they had known before literacy, and that I will later show is a form of visuality in its own right.

2.2.2 The Van Warmelo Collection

Van Warmelo established this collection with no intention of interpreting it, leaving that to future researchers (Hammond-Tooke 1997:114). He rather collected the chiefly genealogies, local politics and tribal histories with the intent to resolve the endemic succession disputes over chieftaincies (Hammond-Tooke 1997:111-112; Lekgoathi 2009:75). This is evident from the questionnaire he sent out (elaborated on in the next section).

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Hammond-Tooke (1997:111) clarified that when Van Warmelo took office as government ethnologist in 1930, he was challenged by the question of what role the ethnological section would play in the Native Affairs department. This was because, "[t]he department at the time was innocent of any clear policy, apart from the maintenance of law and order ('good governance') and the agricultural development of the reserves" (Hammond-Tooke 1997:111). It was however, in indigenous law and succession disputes over chieftainships that Van Warmelo found the significance of the ethnographic information. This then led to "the production of the five volumes on Venda law with W.M.D. Phophi and the extensive body of official files on chiefly genealogies, tribal histories and the details of local politics" (Hammond-Tooke 1997:111).[17] Hammond-Tooke (1997:111) further informed that Van Warmelo encouraged "local historians, mainly school teachers, to record chiefdom histories and description of 'custom'".

Hammand-Tooke (1997:110) mentioned that, at the time Van Warmelo took office, systematic knowledge of the Bantu-speaking[18] people was diminutive. Publication-wise, he recognised Junod's *The Life of a South African Tribe*, and other "fairly extensive publications, but widely scattered in journal form. These were produced by missionaries of the Berlin Mission (for Venda and some North Sotho), the Swiss Romande Mission (Tsonga) and the Paris Evangelical Mission (on South Sotho)" (Hammon-Tooke (1997110).[19] Thereon, trained anthropologists such as Radcliffe-Brown, Dorothy Earthy, Issac Schapera, to name a few, published on various topics on the Bantu-speaking people but nothing on the Mamabolo specifically.

Van Warmelo's work as government ethnologist has led to two major publications: *A Preliminary Survey of the Bantu Tribes of South Africa* (1935) and the *Series of Forty-Four Ethnological Publications of the Department of Native Affairs.*[20] In the

[17] W.M.D. Phophi was a Venda historian and Van Warmelo's field assistant for many years (Hammond-Tooke 1997:118).
[18] The term Bantu is derived from the Nguni (Zulu, Ndebele, Xhosa, Swati) word *abantu*, meaning people or humans. It is usually used to refer to "a large group of peoples of Central and Southern Africa" (Soanes & Hawker 2006:68). Pre- and during the apartheid era in South Africa, the term was used by missionaries and academics to refer to black people. It is, however, not part of modern English. It is offensive in present day South Africa to use the term when referring to black people.
[19] Junod, H.A. 1912-13. *The Life of a South African Tribe.* 2 vols. Neuchâtel: Imprimerie Attinger Frères
[20] This series was a result of a major survey of African cultures called Ethnographic Survey of Africa, in which Van Warmelo was invited to handle the southern African side. According to Hammond-Tooke (1197:112), Van Warmelo opted out of the general approach and conducted a separate South African

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Ethnological Publication no. 10 (1944), the genealogy of the Letswalo (a 'tribe' related to the Mamabolo by marriage) is recorded. In this publication, Van Warmelo referred to and credited only one interlocutor's manuscript (U. Ragoboya) out of all his interlocutors. Of all Van Warmelo publications, this is the only one where he directly referenced one of his interlocutor's manuscripts. From the endnotes in this publication on the Letswalo, Van Warmelo mentioned that he did not utilise every item of information mentioned by his sources as "reconstructions of past movements and events from oral tradition is a thorny task" (Van Warmelo 1944:11). Van Warmelo's inclination to not being analytical, interpretative or speculative in his writing is something Hammond-Tooke confirmed. He observed that Van Warmelo was a gifted linguist whose penchant was for the lexicographical and taxonomic. His "publications were essentially descriptive and non-theoretical. They were also ideologically neutral (as far as post-modernist criticism allows this to be)" (Hammond-Tooke 1997:113-114). This is evident in his survey publication of 1935, the ethnological publications (1944), and in *Anthropology of Southern Africa in Periodicals to 1950* (1977).

Before this present study, there had only been a few researchers and authors who had utilised the Van Warmelo collection. Researchers, when utilising Van Warmelo's work, seem only to utilise his published work i.e. The Ethnological Publications, *A Preliminary Survey of the Bantu Tribes of South Africa* (1935) or his chapter *The Classification of Cultural Groups* (1974).[21] In his PhD study: *Ethnicity and Identity: Struggle and Contestation in the Making of the Northern Transvaal Ndebele, ca. 1860-2005* (2006), Lekgoathi mentions that he found the Van Warmelo ethnological publications to be useful because they contained valuable primary texts (Lekgaothi 2006:24). In this regard, Lekgoathi consulted the Northern Ndebele material relevant for his research. Other researchers who have written on Bapedi specifically, such as Mönnig, who produced *The Pedi* (1967), consulted Van Warmelo's ethnological publications (1944) and *A preliminary Survey of the Bantu Tribes of South Africa* (1935). Authors who have written on the Mamabolo such as Hanekom (1972), Mamabolo (1994), and Joubert et. al. (2015) have also only referred to the Van

survey. Of this series of forty-four, the University of Pretoria (where the present study was conducted) possess two ethnological publication copies; no. 10 – 16 and no. 17 – 22, all published in 1944 by Minerva Printing Works.

[21] This chapter appears in W.D. Hammond-Tooke. 1974. *The Bantu-speaking peoples of South Africa*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

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Warmelo 'official' publications mentioned above. My study not only references the 'official' publications, but it relies mostly on the interlocutor's manuscripts. It is the first to do so.

Hammond-Tooke (1997:110) mentioned that there were missionaries from the Berlin Mission who wrote on the Northern Sotho. Hoffmann was one of those missionaries. In the earlier mentioned publication on the Letswalo, Van Warmelo referenced Hoffmann's work of 1901: *Am Hofe der Bűffel, Schilderungen aus dem Leben einer Afrikanischen Fűrstenfamilie in Transvaal*, and "Sotho-Texte aus dem Holzbuschgebirge in Transvaal" in *Zeitschrift fűr Eingeborenen-Sprachen* passim, volumes 18 to 28. In these instances, as in Ragoboya's case, Van Warmelo cited information on the Letswalo and not the Mamabolo. Therefore, Van Warmelo has never cited Hoffmann or any of his Mamabolo interlocutors in any of his publications on the Mamabolo. Van Warmelo's Mamabolo interlocutors are being cited for the first time (for their information on the Mamabolo) in this study.

For the purposes of this study, only four interlocutors' manuscripts were consulted – those of J. Mamabolo, A. Letsoalo, U. Ragoboya and J. Malatši. These are the interlocutors whose manuscripts reported on the Mamabolo specifically. Unlike Hoffmann, who provided full names of his interlocutors and even went so far as to write biographies about them, Van Warmelo was not particularly familiar with his interlocutors. They sent their manuscripts, written in vernacular, in response to his official call sent out in his capacity as government ethnologist. Manuscripts that were accepted were paid for according to their value, based on Van Warmelo's assessment (Kriel 2015:36). The only personal information one finds of them in the collection itself, is their initials and postal addresses.

J. Mamabolo submitted a six page manuscript on the *History of Mamabolo Tribe and Place Names of its Country*. The manuscript was dated 23 October 1939. His manuscript did not have an address. Mamabolo wrote in a conversational tone explaining the background of the 'tribe', their chiefly genealogy and their settling journey. When looking at his account of events, especially the chiefly genealogy, compared to the already mentioned honours dissertation by M.E.R Mamabolo (1994) on *The Origin and Development of the Mamabolo Tribe*, interesting discrepancies are detected. For instance, Mamabolo (1939) gives credit to Mamabuduša as the first

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Kgoši of Mamabolo, whereas Mamabolo (1994) and other interlocutors such as Ragoboya (1939:1) credit Seolwana, Mamabuduša's husband, as the first *Kgoši* of Mamabolo.

A.S. Letsoalo wrote from Spitzkop school in Reekraal, Pietersburg. He sent in a hundred page manuscript on 13 January 1940. This manuscript is an in-depth explanation of the *Mamabolo History, Tribal Makeup and Certain Customs*. In his rendition, Letsoalo meticulously explained his knowledge of the Mamabolo origins, beginning with their dawn in what is today Zimbabwe, to their final settlement in Byatladi (Haenertsburg). In his narration he included the battles and disputes as well as the victories and accomplishments that made up the Mamabolo. He finished off his manuscript with the livelihood of the Mamabolo – the agriculture and beliefs.

U. Ragoboya is another author that sent Van Warmelo an in-depth account on the Mamabolo. He submitted three of the manuscripts that are cited: three pages dated 20 September 1928 on *Tradition about Maruruwele and Other Mamabolo law*; twelve pages on *Marriage Custom, Magic, Ancestor Worship and Other Information from the Sekwala* on 18 February 1939 and lastly, sixty-six pages on *Mamabolo History* on 3 January 1939. His manuscripts were sent from Hasekwala school in Segopye, Pietersburg. Ragoboya wrote with deep insight, much like Letsoalo, and expressed his knowledge with no hints of favouritism.

Lastly, there is J.P.M. Malatši, whose eleven page manuscript on *Married Life* was sent to Van Warmelo on 17 December 1943, from Makhušhune school in Mica siding, in Phalaborwa. His manuscript is intriguing and directly applicable to my study. Much like the other interlocutors, his manuscript is in a narrative style, giving detail and real-life examples where necessary.

Although there are inconsistencies in the interlocutors' information on the history and origins of the Mamabolo, there are correlations in much of the information as well. For instance, none of the interlocutors refer to the split[22] in the Mamabolo chieftaincy which Mamabolo (1994) speaks of, nor do the interlocutors state which side they belong to. From their rendition of events, also considering Mamabolo's (1994) information, Ragoboya was of the Sekwala (informed by his manuscript address) whereas

[22] The split between the Mamabolo chieftaincy is discussed further in the Brief History of the Mamabolo section of this chapter.

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Mamabolo (1939) and Letsoalo were of the Mankweng.[23] Even with the Hoffmann collection, there is no mention of the split. However, Mogashwa and Rakoma were of the Mankweng since they were the first Mamabolo people to be baptised and convert to Christianity (Mamabolo 1994:23). Bopape on the other hand was of the Sekwala (Mamabolo 1994:40). We know that the Mankweng were the first people (of the Mamabolo) to receive missionaries (Mamabolo 1994:14,22). Morton (2019:4) claims that the Sekwala division was not formally recognised by the government, hence more information can be accessed on the Mankweng and their development from government archives in comparison to the Sekwala. The Berlin Mission seems to report more detail on the Sekwala.

Having now identified the interlocutors, the custodians of Mamabolo knowledge, the next section takes an in-depth look at the people to whom this was divulged: Hoffmann and Van Warmelo as ethnographers.

2.3 CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE ETHNOGRAPHERS

Soanes and Hawker (2006:341) define ethnography as “the scientific description of peoples and cultures” and ethnology is defined as “the study of the characteristics of different peoples and the differences and relationships between them”. According to their definition, an ethnographer would be a person who studies the characteristics of different people and their cultures as well as the relationships between them. Historian Sarah Pugach (2004:825;840) states that, during the 1920s a handful of South African youths, mostly of Afrikaner descent, went to Hamburg and Berlin to study towards their PhD degrees in ethnography and linguistics, and amongst them was N.J. van Warmelo. Although Hoffmann did not formally study ethnography, he was familiar with Van Warmelo’s Professor, Carl Meinhof. Missionary Carl Hoffmann and professional ethnologist N.J. Van Warmelo thus had a theoretical and ideological foundation in common. They were both rooted in German ethnographic thinking of the early

[23] I based this deduction on the information the interlocutors provided. The interlocutors (Mamabolo (1939) and Letsoalo (1939) have correlating information on the Mamabolo settling journey (discussed in more later in this chapter). Mamabolo (1994) confirms my deductions in his reporting on the Mankweng ‘tribe’ in his study. The intermarriage between the Letswalo and the Mamabolo (Mamabolo 1994:24) is another reason I am presuming that Letsoalo (1939) was of the Mankweng.

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twentieth century. This section of the chapter serves as a contextualisation of the two ethnographers – Missionary Carl Hoffmann and Dr. N.J. van Warmelo. This section briefly looks at their methodologies, influences and the relationship between Hoffmann and Van Warmelo. I also offer a critique on their reporting method.

2.3.1 Carl Hoffmann

In the first instance, Carl Hoffmann was, of course, not a researcher, but a German protestant Christian missionary who came to be known as a notable anthropologist, ethnographer, administrator and author as well. In 1894 at the age of 25, Hoffmann completed his theological training at the Seminary of the Berlin Mission Society (BMS) in Berlin, and thereafter he was sent out to present-day Masvingo Province, in Zimbabwe, to start a new mission station (Kriel 2015:18). In 1904, Hoffmann succeeded Rev. Adolf Herbst at the Mphome-Kratzenstein mission station (present-day Masealama) (Kriel 2015:[sp]; Morton 2019:4). Here he continued with his anthropological and ethnographic work.[24] It is during his time in Masealama that Hoffmann perfected his Sepedi speaking and writing skills. In 1934 Hoffmann became the superintendent of the Synod of Southern Transvaal and moved to Botšhabelo. Thereafter, he was made the president of the Lutheran Berlin Mission Church in South Africa. He also served as the treasurer of the Berlin Mission until 1943 (Kriel 2015:29-30).

As part of his missionary duties, Hoffmann kept personal diaries and wrote articles and reviews for the BMS and its supporters in Germany (amongst these, were also

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[24] Differentiating between Anthropology and Ethnography, anthropologist Tim Ingold points out the objectives of these two practices and says, "the objective of anthropology is to seek a generous, comparative but nevertheless critical understanding of human being[s] and knowing in the one world we all inhabit" (Ingold 2008:69). Whereas the objective of ethnography "is to describe the lives of people other than ourselves, with an accuracy and sensitivity honed by detailed observations and prolonged first-hand-experience" (Ingold 2008:68). To further point out this difference, Ingold (2008:70) explains that the difference between anthropology and ethnography is that "ethnography is based on observation of living people rather written records or material remains attesting to the activities of people in the past. Anthropology to the contrary, is a field of nomothetic science – an inquiry to arrive at general propositions or theoretical statements", with the aim of providing acceptable generalisations. Essentially, ethnography is more particular and descriptive, whereas anthropology is more theoretical and universal. To arrive at their "theoretical statements", it is not uncommon for anthropologists to conduct ethnographic research. These two practices feed into each other, however, they are not the same nor can they be used interchangeably.

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biographies of prominent African Christians who had also doubled as interlocutors).[25] Hoffmann also contributed to the newspaper *Moxwero* and the annual Lutheran calendar *Tšhupa Mabaka a Kereke* (Kriel 2015:31). These were aimed at Sepedi readers in South Africa. Apart from the above, he also produced ethnographic writings, which would have been considered scholarly work at the time. Most of these were published in the *Zeitschrift fűr Kolonialspranchen* – a German journal edited by the German African studies professor, Carl Meinhof. Although Hoffmann did not study *Afrikanistik* (African Studies) under Meinhof's supervision, he was drawn into Meinhof's *Afrikanistik* as an ideological project, such that he contributed to Meinhof's journal since its inception in 1909, when it was still known as *Zeitschrift für Eingeborenensprachen* (Kriel 2015:24).

Explaining his methods to his German audience in the introduction to *Was der afrikanische Großvater seinen Enkeln erzählt* (1912), Hoffmann stated:

> Alternatively the white man, the missionary, listens… he sees the indigenous people in their element. Is it possible to paint the Word of God just as beautifully before their eyes, that they will listen to the Message with the same glistening eyes. And so the bringer of the faith also draws from the fairy tales and the fables: wisdom, how to use the language correctly and how to find the correct tone…

This methodology as explained by Hoffmann was leaning more towards Meinhof's project, i.e. African languages had to be used for European agents to access the African mental structure (Kriel 2015:33). Pugach (2004:827) explains that "Meinhof saw language as a means not only to study individual African cultures, but also as a way to chart African History …". Although this might have been the initial strategy, Hoffmann acquainted himself with the locals and formed friendships with the likes of *Kgoši* Sehlomola and Philippus Bopape who later became one of Hoffmann's trusted friends and interlocutors.

2.3.2 Dr. N.J. van Warmelo

In 1927 (long after Hoffmann had arrived in South Africa and by the time he had already published much of his 'fieldwork'), N.J. van Warmelo obtained his PhD in

[25] Hoffmann published the biography: *Der Wolkenbergpastor – Missionsgeschichte aus Nord-Transvaal* (1928), on Rakoma. He also published the biography: *Philippus Bopape erzählt sein Leben* (1935) on Bopape.

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Afrikanistik (African Studies) from the University of Hamburg. He was one of the young men who were under Meinhof's supervision at the Department of African and Pacific languages at the University of Hamburg. Pugach (2004:825) speaks of how the two were friends as well as colleagues. After completing his studies, Van Warmelo worked in Hamburg for a year, teaching African languages at the same institution. Thereafter he took the position of government ethnologist and head of the ethnological section at the Department of Native Affairs in Pretoria. He held this post from 1930 till 1969 (Hamond-Tooke 1997:109; Pugach 2004:825-826).

Because of his closeness to Meinhof, Van Warmelo leaned towards supporting the separation philosophy that Meinhof had. Van Warmelo indicated his interest "in solidifying South Africa's racially divided social system" (Pugach 2004:830). This interest, Pugach (2004:827-830) explains, was a reflection of Meinhof's belief in language as means to learning African cultures and charting African history. For him, language was also a way to determine how different ethnic groups and races were interconnected. This emphasis on language as a cultural determinant and marker for race permeated Van Warmelo's work. This could also explain why Van Warmelo was eager to take up the position at the Department of Native Affairs. The position gave him the opportunity to practically study South African ethnicities and as Lekgoathi (2009:18) and Hammond-Tooke (1997:116) noted, Van Warmelo was proficient in all South African "Bantu" languages.

Van Warmelo was interested in gathering information of "tribal history and customs" from local informants (Kriel 2015:35). For him, fixing South African 'tribes' and giving them "an overarching classification provided order to what, for whites, may have appeared as a jumbled mass of peoples whose relationships with one another were not immediately discernible" (Pugach 2004:825). Pugach (2004:839) explains that the impact of Meinhof and Van Warmelo's ideas was not only for the academic realm but for the wider social world as well.

Van Warmelo was not German. He was an Afrikaner South African. His ties to Germany were through his wife – Gerda Paula Giesekke – the daughter of a Berlin missionary (Hammond-Tooke 1997:115; Pugach 2004:845; Kriel 2015:35). They spoke German at home. The fact that Van Warmelo was heavily influenced by Meinhof's "separate development" theory could suffice as reason for his efforts to want

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to compartmentalise the South African 'tribes' (Hammond-Tooke 1997:114; Pugach 2005:845), which in turn explains why this kind of *volkekunde* suited Afrikaner nationalist thinking.

2.3.3 The relationship between Hoffmann and Van Warmelo

Although Van Warmelo claimed that the reason he took the position at the Department of Native Affairs was to have proximity to the natives, his method of archiving the African customs was far more distant and remote, especially in comparison to that of Hoffmann's. Where Van Warmelo sent a request out for information on a 'tribe's' history, customs and law, Hoffmann lived and worked amongst his interlocutors for years. As already mentioned, he even wrote biographies on some of them (Kriel 2015:38). Moreover, Van Warmelo's method enabled him to collect information from all over Southern Africa, while Hoffmann's 'fieldwork' was limited to the areas where he was stationed as a missionary. This sparks an interesting visual perspective because it had to do with (and to a certain extent, influenced) their way of 'seeing' – Van Warmelo 'oversaw' from the centre of government, and from afar, whereas Hoffmann looked from up close.

On the cover page of his 1934 publication, *Guides and Questions on History, Law and Custom*, Van Warmelo remarked that the information gathered was "intended to help in the collection of history and the traditions, and information on customs and law". He further listed suggestions or what rather looks like instructions to the interlocutors:

1. In the main, write only information obtained from the old and reliable informants.
2. Try to retain the original language or dialect of the informants and record words and phrases you do not understand, even if you cannot get their meaning.
3. If informants don't agree, write down what each one says.
4. If informants do not object, record their names, place of residence, age and other particulars.
5. Try to get stories of things that actually happened. Explain laws and customs by examples from real life. Always ask informants about actual cases.

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Record especially those cases in which law and custom were not observed, and trouble followed.

6. Ask about the things about you. Don't go after things that are far away. Other people will do that better.
7. Don't try to investigate matters that will be kept hidden from you. Let women collect facts about women's matters and men about men's.
8. Write clearly, and on one side of the paper only.[26]

Van Warmelo's task was to identify and fix 'tribes' based on language and as a result, he did not dwell on the complexities of social interaction (Lekgoathi 2009:79). Hoffmann on the other hand had a close relationship with his interlocutors (a friendship one might add). His interlocutors were not distant or detached – they were colleagues. Kriel (2015:41) gives an example of an interaction between Hoffmann and one of his interlocutors, Rakoma. After a long day's work, Hoffmann and Rakoma would open the fireside conversation with Rakoma stating: "you Europeans have no idea what our heathendom is", and this would be the start of the narration. Hoffmann had time to dwell in the moments and ask questions – demonstrating what Portelli (1991:x) defined as a dialogue between an interviewer and interviewee. Kriel (2015:39) further explains that Hoffmann regarded his interlocutors as fellow Christians and not "anonymised informants consulted as repositories of traditions and customs" but rather as "biographed individuals, agents capable of changing interest and shifting alliances" (Kriel 2015:39).

As different as their methodologies were, there were also similarities. The two ethnographers had Meinhof as their intellectual influence. In addition to that, they both started off with the linguistics approach and expanded to ethnography (Kriel 2015:38). Even though Hoffmann and Van Warmelo had no overt political intentions with their work, their writings were still "not politically innocent nor inconsequential" (Lekgoathi 2009:80).

Moreover, Hoffmann also found himself drawn to the elderly and experienced interlocutors whom he considered "the true bearers of their traditions" (Kriel 2015:37). His conversations were always intimate, establishing totems, customs, ethics, etc. Kriel (2015:38) indicates that Van Warmelo received information on the history,

[26] This list was extracted from the cover/front page of the abovementioned publication, as is.

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customs, traditions, law, proverbs, folklore and games of the Letswalo and Mamabolo who were inhabitants of Hoffmann's Mphome-Kratzenstein mission field. It is perhaps likely that Van Warmelo's informants were a younger generation of Hoffmann's informants since there is a generation gap between the two ethnographers' works.

I could not find any evidence of the two ethnographers ever meeting. However, they knew of each other's work. When Van Warmelo started his project, Hoffmann had already left his research site and was primarily working as an administrator. There is evidence of them acknowledging each other. As mentioned earlier, Van Warmelo cited Hoffmann's work in his 1944 publication, *Ethnographical Publications*. Hoffmann also thanked Van Warmelo for transcribing his articles that appeared in the *Afrika und Übersee* (1956-1958) (Kriel 2015:35).

Lekgoathi (2009:69) is of the opinion that ultimately the ethnographers (both Hoffmann and Van Warmelo) had authority to select and order the information. They still had to negotiate complicated power relations between them as white researchers and the African people they studied. This power relation had an impact on the understandings of cultural and racial differences yielded in their research, because at the end of the day, Hoffmann and Van Warmelo's approach to fieldwork reflected a like-minded selection from German missionary and scholarly traditions (Kriel 2015:36). As such, their lenses for viewing and interpreting the information were similar. Both collections consist of information from interlocutors in their vernacular, accompanied by German or English translation and their own commentary with the shared validation that they were establishing a way for "knowledge of others to be made public", giving a platform for people "to speak for themselves" (Kriel 2015:37).

However, much like most ethnographers, anthropologists and historians at the time, Hoffmann is guilty of silencing the very people he is trying to give a voice to. By not fully disclosing which interlocutor provided which information (as Van Warmelo did with his manuscripts) Hoffmann falls into a trap of semi-plagiarism by committing the mistake of taking full autonomy of the information collected from his interlocutors. The act of "not tellingness"[27] or revealing the identities of the interlocutors that historians source their information from, denies a process of knowledge co-production as Lekgoathi (2009:80) suggests. When reading the articles in the *Hoffmann Collection,*

[27] This term is borrowed from: Peniston-Bird (2009:108).

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one gets the sense that there is co-authorship of this material presented. However, nowhere in the collection does he address this point directly and as a result he silences the interlocutors as his voice is the only one that comes across.

Somewhat in his defence, Hoffmann titled his articles as follows (*article 1* in the 2015 Joubert, et. al. publication is used as an example)*: "Engagement and Marriage Among the Sotho People in the Woodbush Mountains of the Transvaal* by Missionary C. Hoffmann. Original text of Several Sotho Missionary Assistants" (Joubert, et. al. 2015:87). Here Hoffmann had the opportunity to name the "Sotho Missionary Assistants" from whom he sourced the information, but yet again he neglected doing so, making him guilty of not revealing his sources. Van Warmelo on the other hand, distanced himself and *per se* covered himself as he called the manuscripts of the different interlocutors and named them. The manuscripts in the Van Warmelo Collection contain each author's (i.e. interlocutors') initials, surname and date of submission. Therefore, one can read the material/manuscript knowing very well that it is not Van Warmelo who wrote this but rather the interlocutors. Thus, the reader is able to blame and critique the author (interlocutor) for any misrepresentation or misinformation, something which is not possible in the case of Hoffmann. As a result, Hoffmann gets all the blame and critique for any misrepresentation, mis-integration or misinformation found in his collection even though the reader understands that this is not entirely Hoffmann's information – merely because he failed to give the necessary autonomy to the rightful sources.

The "not tellingness" or revealing of sources probably comes as a result of Hoffmann's lack of training in either ethnography or anthropology. Had Hoffmann trained in either anthropology or ethnography (as Van Warmelo did), he would have had knowledge of how to treat the information, as well as the ethics around knowledge co-producers and interlocutors. It needs to be made clear that Hoffmann's primary job, as far as training is concerned, was missioning. All the other titles he acquired i.e. ethnographer, anthropologist and author, came about as a result of his missionary work. Hoffmann received these titles as a result of his good deal of archiving on and literalizing the information of the "Sotho people of the Woodbush Mountains". However, that was not his trade. Furthermore, because he lacked interviewing skills and knowledge in how to interpret interviews, Hoffmann inadvertenly took all the authorship.

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As a twenty-first century researcher working with the Hoffmann material, one needs to identify by name, the different voices, and give accountability where it is due. Frustratingly, when reading the material, one can hear the different voices in one paragraph. However, it becomes difficult to distinguish those voices by name because they are not revealed. See for example, in the following extract from Article 1 on Engagement and Marriage: [28]

> … the relatives of the bride reply to the negotiator: "Yes indeed, but we first have to announce it to the owner of the girl!" The parents give their consent with the words: "Here is your wife; we have given her to you!" That is the 'taking down from the roof' as far as we know it. It is unknown among us (the Mamabolo) that the bridegroom sits on the roof of the house while this is going on. However, old Tsholo says: "In my home country, among the Letswalo it was custom in old times: The son-in-law and his friends sat down on top of the roof after the completion of the hut, and the wife came and called for them to climb down. This was a sign of receiving the woman, and the bridegroom could prepare to lead her home". But this is only customary among the Letswalo because the customs differ according to the different countries. In contrast, they do not sit on the roof among us, the Mamabolo; it is just a manner of saying; they convey information to the negotiator, and the negotiator speaks to the relatives of the girl: They of so-and-so say: "take us down from the roof, take us down through the bride!

In the extract above, there is reference to the Mamabolo and the Letswalo. For the reader, the challenge becomes how to differentiate the voices and opinions. Reporting on this matter becomes another challenge because the researcher is unable to precisely identify the different voices. In addition to that, Hoffmann has given the entire text one umbrella term, "Sotho Missionary Assistants" or "the Sotho people of the Woodbush Mountains". This implies homogeneity in thoughts and opinions and thus leaves no room for differences. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the Mamabolo are by no means a singular homogeneous group. They are mixed with other 'tribes' (due to wars and land battles as a result of the current affairs of the time) such as the Thema and the Letswalo who might have a slight difference in practising certain customs although they adhere to the Mamabolo way out of protocol and respect for being on their land and being under their *Kgoši*. These other 'tribes' retain their own practices

[28] This is an extract taken from *Article 1: Engagement and Marriage among the Sotho people in the Woodbush Mountains of the Transvaal, under the sub-heading "Go fološa mokgonyana godimo ga ntlo (taking the groom down from the roof"* (Joubert, et. al. 2015:103). This extract is Joubert, et. al's translation of the Sepedi text. The Sepedi text indicates a spoken account (which I think is traceable even in this English translation). Both texts (the Sepedi and English one – used here in this extract) demonstrates multiples voices in one paragraph.

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and in (as seen in the extract) subvert the Mamabolo slightly. Because the interlocutors are not named, one is unable to pick up by whom specifically the subversion is being done. Hoffmann could then not highlight these nuances in his "not tellingness" of his interlocutors. This denies the fluidity of culture and traditions as one is restricted from naming a specific author (interlocutor) who showed this moment of fluidity by subversion that is noted in the extract above. By not naming his interlocutors, Hoffmann is guilty of silencing the very same people to whom he wishes to give a voice.

The ethnographers' knowledge is shaped as much by the interlocutors' perceptions of their identities as by the ethnographers' understanding of "tribal subjects under the authority of chiefs" (Lekgoathi 2009:80). The following section discusses the work of Hoffmann and Van Warmelo together with their interlocutors on the history of the Mamabolo.

2.4 BRIEF HISTORY ON THE MAMABOLO

Now that we know who the narrators of the Mamabolo history and customs are, and who they divulged the narrations to, it is fitting to render the narration as we have come to know it.

The information in this section is from the Van Warmelo interlocutors. I discovered from my research that the Hoffmann collection reports more on the cultural side and as a result, the collection does not feature information on Mamabolo history and chief genealogies. Joubert, et. al. (2015:4) explain that "the material in the Hoffmann Collection comprises linguistics, oral literature, cultural anthropology, religion, mission history and visual culture", whereas Van Warmelo's interlocutors send manuscripts on chief genealogies, history and description of cultural customs as requested by Van Warmelo (Hammond-Tooke 1997:111). Besides the Van Warmelo interlocutors, I have also consulted later historical reconstructions, so that what I offer here, is an account of what we know today about the Mamabolo history based on written material produced to this day. Likewise: his section fills in the gaps in what has already been written about the Mamabolo in Hanekom (1972), Mamabolo (1994) and Joubert, et. al. (2015) by consulting Van Warmelo's interlocutors.

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In compiling his findings for his research, Mamabolo (1994) conducted oral interviews with different sources (both, men and women) between 1993 and 1994.[29] Mamabolo also consulted Van Warmelo's ethnological publications and the preliminary survey (1935). Mamabolo did not mention consulting and he did not reference any interlocutors' manuscript for his research.

I begin this section with an introduction of the Mamabolo based on their origin, and how they derived their name. I then move on to their settling journey, informed by Van Warmelo's interlocutors: Letsoalo (1940), Mamabolo (1939), and Ragoboya (1939), with additional information from Mamabolo (1994). I then conclude with a brief discussion on the Mamabolo belief system and cultural practices, informed by both collections – Hoffmann's and Van Warmelo's. This section does not only serve as the background information of the Mamabolo, but also renders the Mamabolo history and cultural customs narrative, as narrated by Hoffmann's and Van Warmelo's interlocutors.[30]

2.4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Mamabolo are one of the dialect groups of Bapedi. The 'tribe' is split into two chieftainships – the Sekwala and the Mankweng (Mamabolo 1994:1). Mamabolo (1994:1) explained that the split of the "tribe occurred around the 1860s as a result of internal quarrels". Letsoalo (1940:3) acknowledged a split or "difference" in the Mamabolo nation but stated that it happened in the "olden times".[31] He did not specify

[29] Amongst Mamabolo's interlocutors was Mr. A.S. Letsoalo from Mongwaneng, whom he interviewed on 11 Novemebr 1993. This interlocutor shares the same initials with one of the interlocutors referred to in this present study. I doubt this is the same person because Mamabolo's interview was conducted 53 years later. Mamabolo also interviewed Mrs M.E. Letsoalo from Spitzkop on 13 July 1994. Mrs Letsoalo is from the same area as Letsoalo from Van Warmelo's interlocutor. However, there is no evidence that these Letsoalos are related.

[30] As already mentioned, Van Warmelo's interlocutors submitted their manuscripts in their vernacular languages. For this section and the following section on the Mamabolo cultural beliefs and customs as well as the visualisation of the Mamabolo marriage in Chapter Three, I have had to transcribe Van Warmelo's interlocutors' information from Sepedi into English. *The Hoffmann Collection of Cultural Knowledge* (Joubert, et.al. 2015) already has the English translations of Hoffmann's interlocutors' information. I have had to gather the information from Van Warmelo's interlocutors (in its raw Sepedi state) and compile it into a chronological survey that is presented in this current study as Mamabolo settling journey and Mamabolo cultural beliefs and customs, respectively. This process was repeated in compiling information on Mamabolo marriage from Van Warmelo's interlocutors presented in Chapter Three.

[31] Letsoalo used '*pharologanyo*' which according to the *Popular Northern Sotho Dictionary* (1997:129) means difference or characteristic. Letsoalo (1940:3) used the phrase "*pharologanyo e hlolexile…"* which could mean the difference occurred or the split happened.

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a date or a reason for the split but stated that the Mamabolo were divided between Seolwana and his wife, Mamabuduša.

The Mamabolo "trace descent from the Venda and particularly from the Lobedu with whom they share the kolobe (wild boar) totem" (Mamabolo 1994:1). According to Mamabolo (1994:4), the Mamabolo are originally of non-Sotho origin; "these Kolobe had been Sotho-ised and classified under the Northern Sotho or Transvaal Sotho language group".

Their name – Mamabolo – is derived from the term *lebollo* which means circumcision. This is because the Mamabolo people identified as the people practising circumcision (Mamabolo1994:6). It was a common trend to name places or 'tribes' after chiefs or significant landscapes as well as current events or circumstances.

Mamabolo (1994:7) quoted a praise poem that suggests Seolwana as the founder of "the House of Mamabolo". The praise-poem purports that Seolwana is the one who led the Mamabolo when they deviated from the Lobedu 'tribe'. The quoted praise-poem, *Mamabolo a' Seolwana sa Mataladi Sekgopa banna matolo*, does not seem to give any recognition to any other *Kgoši* who might have ruled before Seolwana (Mamabolo 1994:7).

As orature practitioners, Bapedi used praise poetry as one of the mediums to record history, lineage and a people's identity. Joubert (2004:385) explains that a "praise poem commemorates important events from the past"; they are "praises that honour past and present rulers and warriors". Joubert (2004:388) further explains that "praise poets make use of references to glorious people or their lineage, important locations of ancestors, historical events or great deeds accomplished by rulers." Taking the above explanations of praise poetry into consideration, we can then safely accept Mamabolo's (1994:7) usage of the praise poem as a credible source in stating that Seolwana was the father of House Mamabolo.

This is corroborated by the earlier interlocutors as sources. Ragoboya (1939) and Letsoalo (1940) also refer to Seolwana as the first *Kgoši* of the Mamabolo. Only Mamabolo (1939:3) reported that Mamabuduša was the first *Kgoši* of the Mamabolo and that she was succeeded by Seolwana. In the same breath, Letsoalo (1940:3)

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reported a "difference" in the Mamabolo nation, as explained before, which could verify Mamabolo's (1939:3) claim of Mamabuduša being the first Mamabolo *Kgoši*.

There are further inconsistencies in the reporting by the interlocutors of the 1940s and Mamabolo's research in the 1990s regarding the split that happened between the Mamabolo and consequently who the first *Kgoši* of the Mamabolo might be. Work covered on the Mamabolo refers to the split but not in detail. For instance, Letsoalo (1940) referred to the split happening earlier during the formation of the Mamabolo. He reported that the split happened between the husband and the wife, Seolwana and Mamabuduša (Letsoalo 1940:3) whereas Mamabolo (1994:17) and Ragoboya (1939:7) reported that the split happened in the 1860s during Maribe's rule, leaving the Mamabolo split as it is currently known – between the Mankweng and the Sekwala. There are no clear reports as to what could have been the cause of the split or any sources that clarify the details around this event.

Peniston-Bird (2009:108) states that "individuals compose memories in such a way as to be able to live with them, to permit a feeling of composure. Individuals also compose or construct memories using the public language and attitudes of their culture". Alister Thomson (cited in Peniston-Bird 2009:108) pointed out that

> our memories are risky and painful if they do not conform with the public norms or versions of the past, we compose our memories so that they will fit with what is publicly acceptable, or, if we have been excluded from general acceptance, we seek out particular publics which affirm identities and the way we want to remember our lives.

In addition to that, Peniston-Bird (2009:108) explains:

> Factors relevant to the ability to remember include the amount of emotion attached to the event at the time (heightened emotion increasing the likelihood of recollection, although conversely, great suffering may be resistant to recall).

This last statement could explain the discrepancies in sources regarding the Mamabolo split. It is possible that the Mamabolo find the split being an embarrassing or painful moment in their history, hence the choice to suppress it in memory and never speak of it again. This is what Peniston-Bird (2009:108) terms conformity through self-censorship – the silencing of certain memories. No clarity thus far has been obtained regarding this detail.

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2.4.2 MAMABOLO SETTLING JOURNEY[32]

This section of the chapter will briefly sketch the Mamabolo settling journey as discovered in the different sources. The information presented here is provided by different interlocutors (Letsoalo 1940 and Ragoboya 1939) from the Van Warmelo collection as well as Mamabolo's research of 1994, centred on the Mamabolo 'tribe' – their origin and development. It is important to re-emphasise that the interlocutors relay different versions of events, which is one of the criticisms against oral tradition. However, oral historian Alessandro Portelli comes to the defence of orature by explaining that "the stories that interviewees [or interlocutors] tell are not fixed or easily replicated forms of information" (Portelli cited in Field 2001:254). He continues that no story will ever be the same: even if the questions are repeated to the same interviewees and/or interlocutors, they will not recall in the same way (Portelli cited in Field 2001:254). Peniston-Bird (2009:107) states that:

> Rather than setting sources up against each other, however, more usefully oral and documentary sources can be used in juxtaposition so that emphases, silences and interpretations can be cross-referenced, and the different contexts of their creation used as an advantage. Rather than being dismissed for contradicting each other or being positioned in a hierarchy of authenticity dependent not on content but on genre, these sources should instead be used for mutual illumination.

In this way, instead of critiquing oral histories as lesser in comparison to textual records, they can be used as an addition to written work.

With that in mind, this chapter is not a critique of the sources or the information provided but rather serves to give background information on a people of interest to the study. Portelli (1991:x) warns that "the situation [in the field, between an interviewer and an interviewee/interlocutor] is a dialogue, in which we are talking to people, not studying sources; it is a learning situation, in which the narrator has the information we lack". And it is from this point of view that this section of the chapter is presented.

It is known, as informed by Mamabolo (1994:3) and Letsoalo (1940:9) that the Mamabolo, as descendants of the Lobedu and Venda, originate from Bokgalaka – what was then Rhodesia, present day Zimbabwe. It is, however, unknown, when they started travelling south (Ragoboya 1939:1; Letsoalo 1940:9; Mamabolo 1994:2).

[32] Refer to Figure 1 and Figure 2.

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Letsoalo (1940:11) reported that the Mamabolo first settled in Seepe, which Mamabolo (1994:7) explained is derived from the Lobedu term *Kheepe* meaning an axe. From Seepe, Letsoalo reported that Maribe, Seolwana's brother, led the Mamabolo to Byatladi. It is from Byatladi that they went to settle next to the Lethšetele River. However, Mamabolo gives a different account of events. According to Mamabolo (1994:5-8), from their break-away from the Lobedu, the Mamabolo "led by a warrior of repute known as Manamela" first settled in Letshitele[33] and then moved to Seepe and then Thotlwe. Mamabolo (1994:8) alluded to the fact it was a long journey of battles and disputes before the Mamabolo could eventually settle at Byatladi. In support of Mamabolo's account of events, Ragoboya (1939:1) reported that the Mamabolo settled near Lethšetele River in Tswetla. He further indicated that this was where the Mamabolo diverted from the Balobedu. From Lethšetele, the Mamabolo moved to Mokgokonyana next to Molokobye mountain, and it is from here that Seolwana led them to Byatladi.

Although Mamabolo (1994:5-8) has mentioned that the Mamabolo moved from Letshitele to Seepe and then to Thotlwe, Letsoalo (1940:11) has it the other way around. From Lethšetele, Letsoalo (1940:11) reported that the Mamabolo moved to Thotwe and this was where they were known for their intelligence and power. From here, the Mamabolo moved to Ga-Mongatane. Letsoalo (1940:11) explained that the Mamabolo were led to Ga-Mongatane by Mankweng I as their queen – Seolwana's wife, Mamabuduša had already passed. Mankweng then led the Mamabolo back to their land of milk and honey, Byatladi.

Ragoboya (1939:2) refuted Letsoalo's account of events and stated that from Byatladi the Mamabolo travelled to Ga-Mongatane, where a quarrel over cattle emerged between the Mamabolo sons and the Mongatane sons. Ragoboya informed that the Mamabolo daughter failed to come forth and explain how she obtained some of the cattle she had brought with her. It was later discovered that they were stolen from Mongatane. As a defence, Mongatane plotted to kill Seolwana, thus leading the Mamabolo to flee across the Odi River.

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[33] Due to the different times that the information was collected, the spelling of names varies. This is also attributed to the development and evolution of the Sepedi orthography. I cite the names as spelled by the different sources.

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According to Ragoboya (1939:2), it was only after this that Selowana's brother, Ramohubidi, led the Mamabolo to Thoto where they settled. Ragoboya (1939:2) explained that their stay here was short-lived as they found Thoto to be too hot leading them to move to Mphogodiba. In Mphogodiba, the Mamabolo encountered *Kgoši* Thema with whom they had another dispute over cattle. Ragoboya (1939:2) reported that the Mamabolo guided the herd of cattle from Makgalaka and took it back to *Kgoši* Ramohubidi under the herdmanship of Lekau – Ramohubidi's son. This resulted in a battle where Mamabolo defeated the Thema and took all their cattle. The Thema had nowhere to go, but a woman as Ragoboya (1939:3) explained, was offered to plead their pardon. Mamabolo was gracious and allowed the Thema to live at Mphogodiba under the kingship of Mamabolo.

Lekau then took his turn at the throne and led the Mamabolo to Mahlalwe,[34] which came to be bestowed as the Mamabolo ancestral land. Lekau reigned until his elderly years. He died at Byatladi and was buried at the Mahlalwe – the ancestral land (Ragoboya 1939:3).

In his account, Letsoalo does not seem to give credit to Lekau's rule or Mamabolo's stay at Mphogodiba. Letsoalo (1940:19) believed that under the leadership of Mankweng I, the Mamabolo went back to their land of milk and honey, Byatladi, which Mamabolo (1994:11) noted, was at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Mamabolo (1994:12) and Letsoalo (1940:18) seemed to agree as they both reported that it was here in Byatladi that the Mamabolo people were attacked by the Zulu.[35] The Mamabolo fled to Kgware. After the attack by the Zulu, or Mapono as they were called at that time, the Mamabolo went back to Byatladi (Letsoalo 1940:18; Mamabolo 1994:12). Mamabolo (1994:12) explained that when the Mamabolo returned to Byatladi, they found there the Kgopa and the Mampa 'tribes', whom they subdued and lived happily with for many years.

Letsoalo (1940:19) continued that the Mamabolo moved to Rakopi, lured by the stream of water. It was here that *Kgoši* Dikgale tried to lodge a fight with Mamabolo. Although

[34] Ragoboya (1939), Letsoalo (1940), Mamabolo (1939) and Mamabolo (1994) do not indicate when, in terms of time, Lekau took his turn on the throne.
[35] On the interaction of the Nguni (Zulu) and the Sotho, see Wilson & Thompson (1969:97-99).

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Kgoši Dikgale lost, it was reported that Mamabolo was yet again gracious. Dikgale and Mamabolo remained good family friends nevertheless, Letsoalo (1940:19) reported.

From Rakopi, the Mamabolo moved to Mafarane by the Hwiti Mountain. It was at Mafarane that *Kgoši* Mankweng I passed and was succeeded by his son Nkoshilo. Nkoshilo led the Mamabolo to Sebokhung as they found the mountainous Mafarane to be too cold. Nkoshilo's reign was free of any wars, poverty or disease (Letsoalo 1940:19). It was during his reign that the prominence of Christianity rose in the Mamabolo nation with Kamela Raphela and Mamadimo Mamabolo being the first to introduce Christianity to the Mamabolo (Letsoalo 1940:19-20; Mamabolo 1994:26; Morton 2019:6). Nkoshilo, however, wanted nothing to do with Christianity. Mamabolo (1994:26) explained that *Kgoši* Nkoshilo saw Christianity as "paper sorcery" – witchcraft brought by the Bible.

Nkoshilo was succeeded by his brother Sehlomola, who led the Mamabolo to Ga-Lethapameetse. With Christianity taking deep roots within the Mamabolo nation, Sehlomola was the first Mamabolo *Kgoši* to be baptised and he was named Kaiser[36] (Mamabolo 1994:27). Under Sehlomola's reign, Letsoalo (1940:29) reported that unfortunate events such as famine and a plague fell upon the Mamabolo. Apart from the famine and the plague, Mamabolo (1994:27) reported that it was *Kgoši* Sehlomola who gave his blessings for Rev. William Mpamba of the Free Church of Scotland to open the Donhill Mission station in 1896 (Mamabolo 1994:27; Morton 2019:7). This was because *Kgoši* Sehlomola preferred a black priest, Mamabolo (1994:27) maintained. Following the Donhill mission station with its Free Church of Scotland congregation, other churches also opened,[37] such as the Bantu Presbyterian Church and the other Zionist churches, with the Zion Christian Church being the biggest to emerge out of Mamabolo (Morton 2019:10-12). By the time the Donhill station was opened, Rev. Carl Knothe had already established the Berlin Mission in Mphome-Krantzenstein in – the 1878 (Letsoalo 1940:25; Mamabolo 1994:24). Although, as previously mentioned, *Kgoši* Sehlomola preferred a black priest, his overtures to the Free Church of Scotland in the 1890s were also because of the political and land disputes that had occured between the Mamabolo, the Berlin Mission Society and the

[36] German for ruler.
[37] Also annotated in a footnote by Joubert, Grobler, *et. al.* (2015:28).

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Boer government (Morton 2019:6-7). As Mankweng II – Sehlomola's son – was still young and at school, his uncle Samuel Makegeng took regency as Sehlomola's brother until Mankweng II was of age and ready to take the throne in 1931 (Letsoalo 1940:35). Morton (2019:12) explains that Mankweng II was already baptised and named Athlone.[38]

As already stated at the beginning of this section, the Mamabolo are split into two chieftainships. Ragoboya (1939:7) explained that the split was caused by an assassination plot against Lekau – Maribe's son. Although Mamabolo (1994:17) mentioned that the split happened during Maribe's rule, he referred to different causes. The inconsistency between sources regarding the Mamabolo split has left the matter inconclusive, because at this present moment, no one can verify the matter as a result of all those with the information having passed on.

It is to be noted that the split between the Mamabolo does not mean that there is any bad blood amongst the Dikolobe. Mamabolo (1994:44) made it clear that the nation has brotherly relations as they reside on two different ends of Byatladi – presently known as Haenertsburg. Mamabolo (1994:44) pointed that many accomplishments emerged from the Mamabolo nation, such as literacy. The Mamabolo were one of, if not the first, Bapedi communities to become textually literate, thanks to the settlement of missionaries in their region. As a result, schools were established in the area, and Mamabolo (1994:44) argued that the later founding of the University of the North (currently named Turfloop Campus of the University of Limpopo) can be considered a subsequent step on this long established trajectory. Mamabolo (1994:44) concluded the list of accomplishments of his people with the fact that they are home to one of the largest Africanist churches of South Africa ever known – the Zion Christian Church founded by Engenas Lekganyane, a descendent of the Dikolobe.[39]

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[38] The eldest son of the Prince of Wales was titled the Earl of Athlone and died in 1892. The British royal who became the Governor-General of South Africa in 1923/4 also had the title Earl of Athlone.

[39] Morton (2019:12) corroborates Mamabalo's (1994:44) contention and comments that, "Starting in 1910, the Mamabolo region slowly and ineluctably became the centre and hotbed of Zionism in southern Africa, [with] some 3 million members of the Zion Christian Church visit[ing] the headquarters of the church at Zion City Moriah, just south of the Mamabolo location, each Easter for its massive annual conference". Morton also acknowledges that ZCC was founded by the prophet Engenas Lekganyane (c.1885-1948), in 1925.

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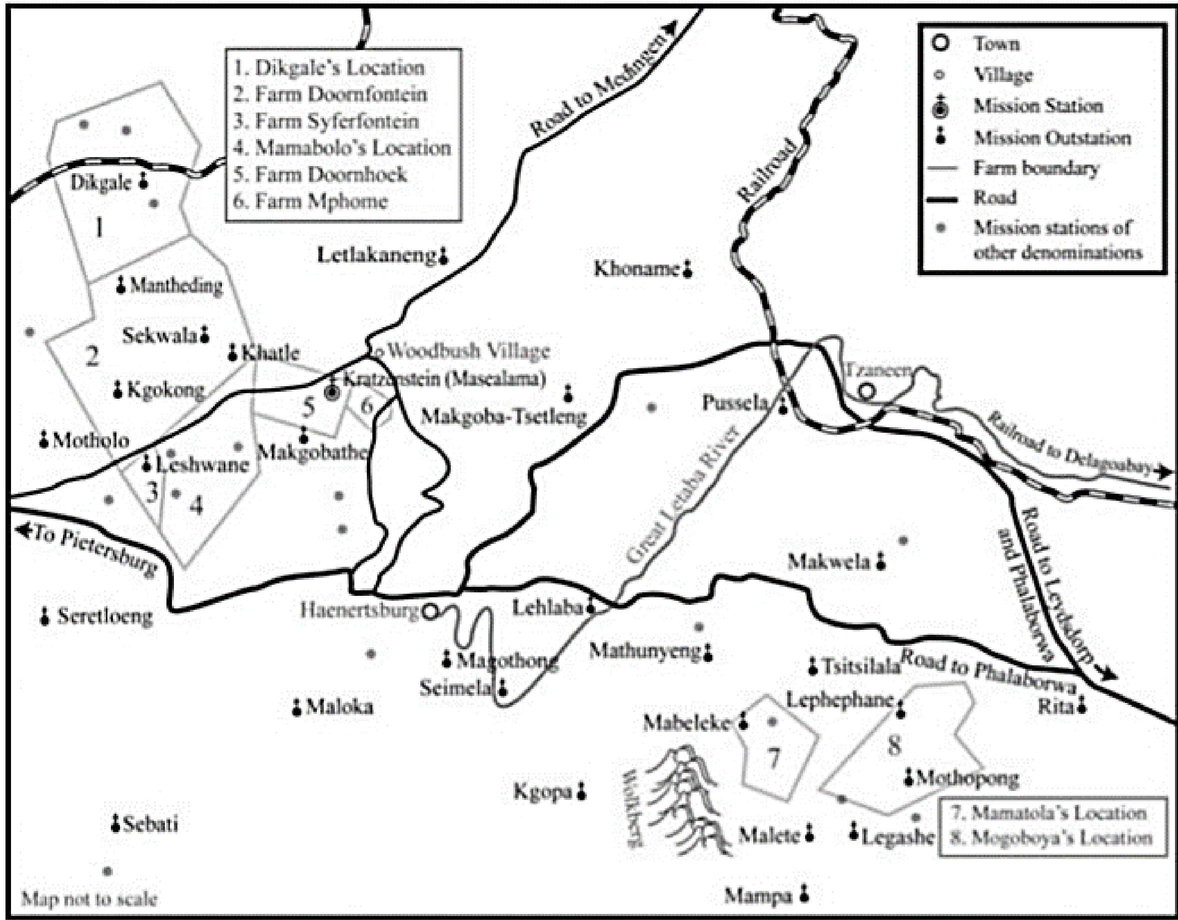

Figure 1: Map *of Mphome-Kratzenstein Mission field (1904-1934)*
(Map by Helen Garnett, extracted from Joubert, et. al. 2015:1088).

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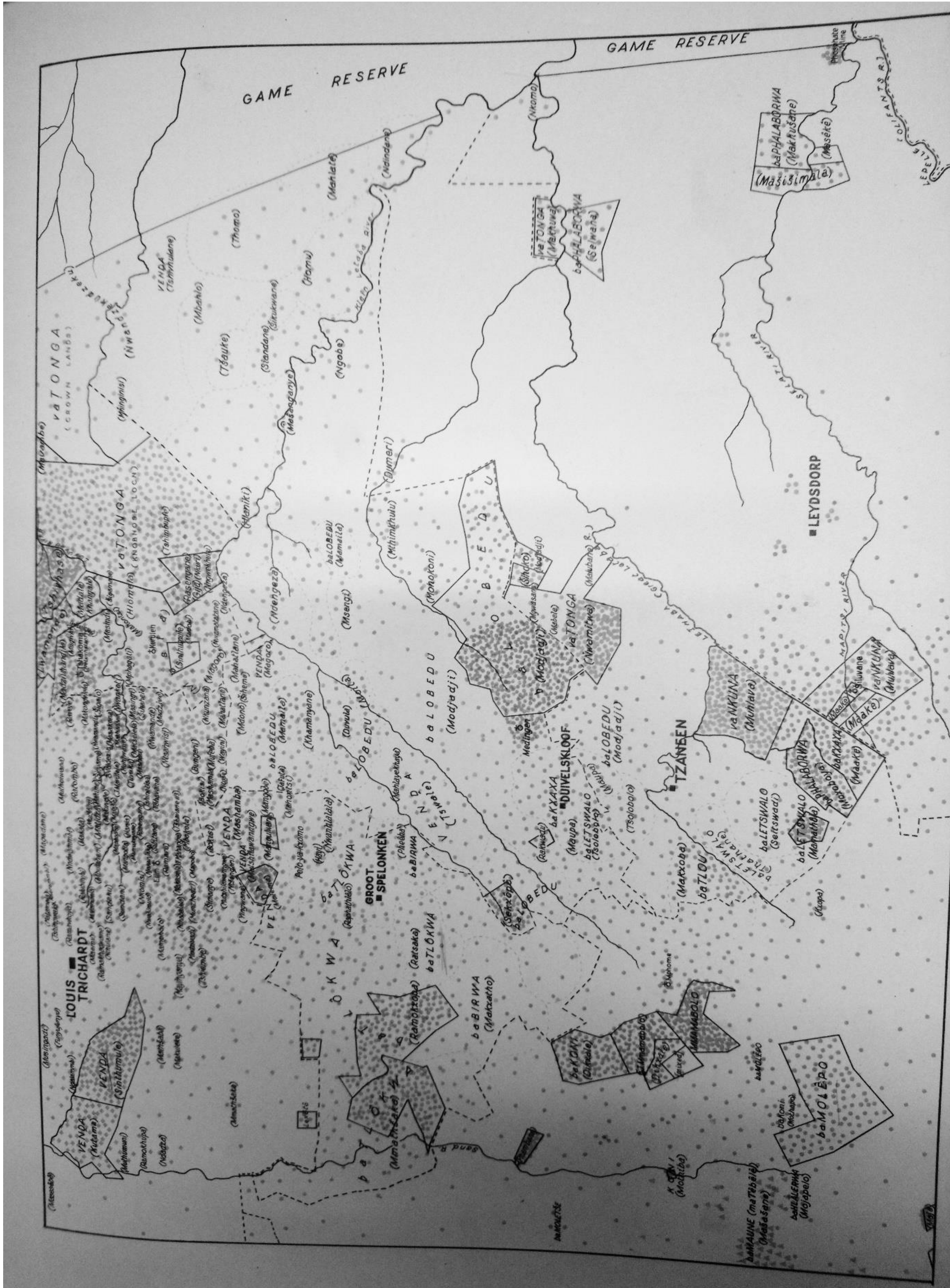

Figure 2: *Mamabolo area in map of Tzaneen*. Van Warmelo (1935).

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2.4.3 MAMABOLO CULTURAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS

Bapedi pride themselves in their cultural beliefs and customs and the Mamabolo are no different. This section will briefly highlight and discuss some of the common, yet important cultural beliefs and customs practised by the Mamabolo. The information in this section was gathered from both collections, Hoffmann's and Van Warmelo's – mostly contributed by Ragoboya. His manuscript provided enough information to juxtapose with the Hoffmann Collection. Letsoalo [sa] submitted a manuscript on *Herbal Doctors* which corroborates with Ragoboya (1939). Other sources such as Mönnig (1967) and Hanekom (1972) are cited in support of the interlocutors' information.

In the case that only one interlocutor or collection is cited, it means the other interlocutors, or collection, did not report on the topic. As mentioned earlier, the Hoffmann Collection reported more on the cultural aspect of the Mamabolo and the Van Warmelo Collection reported on both history and customs. I refer to important customs relating to: birth, burial, healing, belief and rites of passage. In so doing, I illustrate how the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo interlocutors accounted for them, where they differ and where the one is silent and the other elaborates.

a. Birth

According to Hoffmann (Joubert, et. al. 2015:357), after being married, the month that the woman stopped her menstruation marked the beginning of her pregnancy. It was reported that from that time, the pregnant woman would not shave her hair. In the sixth or seventh month she would be taken to her parents' home so that her stomach could be clothed with a "small greyish blanket of sheep skin or cattle skin" (Joubert, et. al. 2015:357). When she returned to her in-laws a sheep would be slaughtered and a divining bone hung on her neck and from that day on, she shall not be bothered (Joubert, et. al. 2015:357). In the seventh or eighth month, the woman would then be taken to her parents' house to prepare for the delivery of her child.

According to Ragoboya (1939:19), when the time had come for the pregnant woman to give birth, she would be taken into a room with elderly women who served as midwives and helped with the delivery of the child. If there were any difficulties being experienced, elderly men were consulted to give advice based on their experiences. Ragoboya (1939:19) continued: after three days of the child being born, a doctor was

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called to assist with taking the new born child outside to be seen by the community. The family would prepare beer for the doctor as a token of thanks for his services.

It was customary that the child's birth be reported to the royal house and get announced as the new member of the community. The father was also informed of the birth of his child together with the rest of his family. According to Hoffmann (Joubert, et. al. 2015:361), after two months, a head of a cattle was slaughtered which they called "the homebringing" of the child, and the child and the mother returned to her in-laws'. It is here that the older father-sister (the child's aunt – his/her father's sister) would be called to give the child a befitting name. If the father of the child was the first-born of the household, then his child would be named after his parents, depending on the child's sex.

b. Burial

The burial processes differ from that of a *kgoši* to that of a civilian. According to Ragoboya (1938:2), when a *kgoši* had passed on, his passing was communicated through a melancholic sound of a *komana* (a sacred musical instrument). Some members of the community were sent out to neighbouring communities to inform them of the passing of their *kgoši*. When *dikgoši*[40] arrived for the funeral, they came bearing cows – a black one for a male *kgoši* and a lighter one [either white or light brown] for a female *kgoši* (Ragoboya 1938:2). Ragoboya (1938:2) reported that *Dikgoši* were buried at a site called *Badimong* meaning the ancestral place. Not everyone who came for the funeral went near *Badimong*. Ragoboya (1938:2) explained that everyone, including the other *dikgoši* stood at a distance to *Badimong* and only his councillors went near his grave. Ragoboya (1938:2) also explained that the *kgoši*'s grave was not six feet deep like every other grave. He informed that his corpse was put on big calabashes so that its rotting flesh fell into the calabashes. This flesh was believed to bring rain.

On the other hand, when a normal civilian passed on, Ragoboya (1939:18) explained that the deceased was laid on his side facing their place of origin, Byatladi, with his/her knees bent. He further elaborated that if it were an elder who had passed, a cow was slaughtered so that they could use its skin to cover the deceased's body. The cow's

[40] *Dikgoši* is a plural for *kgoši*.

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meat was cooked and consumed by the elders (Ragoboya 1939:18). The funeral took place at night with the corpse leaving the home from a newly bored exit at the back of the home. Ragoboya (1939:19) maintained that children were not told directly of someone's passing. They were told that so-and-so was taken by a hyena; and hence, children became afraid of death.

c. Healing

When a person was considered sick, a herbalist or traditional doctor would be consulted. Before the doctor could start with his consultation, he would request a goat or sheep used to diagnose the illness (Ragoboya 1939:20). The patient would be asked either to sleep with the goat or sheep or to smell it. From here on the doctor would use his muthi to get the illness diagnosed out of the sheep or goat, after this it would be killed. The doctor would use his skills to verify the illness from the dead goat or sheep to that of the patient. Once the patient was healed, the patient would pay the doctor with a sheep or goat (Ragoboya 1939:20; Letsoalo [sa]:1). In fact, Ragoboya clarified that the doctor who was paid with a sheep or goat was one who was from faraway lands, but a local doctor was paid with beer.

d. Belief

According to Hoffmann (Joubert, et. al. 2015:401-403), the Mamabolo believed both in the "Great God" whom they referred to as Hobeane, a name Hanekom (1972:97) also acknowledged, or Khutswane or Lebepe or Thobela Mma-ke-etla-ke-atla. The Mamabolo also believed in ancestors. Each community had its own individual ancestors. "These are the deceased rulers and distinguished men. Their burial place is called 'at the ancestor's spirits' [*Badimong*]" (Joubert, et. al. 2015:413); however, these ancestors were "insignificant" to Great God (Joubert, et. al. 2015:402). The Mamabolo, according to Hoffmann's interlocutors, believed that Great God sits in heaven and is the creator of the heaven and the earth as well as human beings (Joubert, et. al. 2015:403). It is said that when Great God left the earth, he promised to return (Joubert, et. al. 2015:405). Although he has multiple names, there is only one Great God to whom the Mamabolo *kgoši* calls on to make rain (Joubert, et. al. 2015:409).

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Ancestors, Hoffmann explained, served as mediators through which the people could access and have their pleas presented to the Great God. They hoped Hobeane would hear their pleas through the ancestors as mediators, since the ancestors were already close to Hobeane (Joubert, et. al. 2015:411). It was also believed that the Great God was immortal – that he does not die. Although the humans die, "the rulers and the distinguished men after their death turn into ancestors through whom one can find access to the Great God" (Joubert, et. al. 2015:413). Hoffmann made it clear that there was no festival or special song honouring Hobeane, that people turned to him through the ancestors (Joubert, et. al. 2015:415). When people turned to the *thitikwane* – a sacred plant where ancestors are revered, and call the ancestral praises, as illustrated in Figure 3, that is when they are calling unto Great God (Joubert, et. al. 2015:417). Only after the introduction of Christianity was a different way of worship introduced and going to the *thitikwane* was considered "heathen" – according to Hoffmann's interlocutors.

Figure 3: Two men at the *thitikwane*, Hoffmann (1927).

e. Rites of passage

Initiation

As was mentioned earlier in the chapter, the Mamabolo derived their name from the term *lebollo*, meaning circumcision. This is because the Mamabolo identified as people practising circumcision (Mamabolo 1994:6). The initiation rite of passage is one

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reserved for the boy child. Nowhere in the Hoffmann and/or the Van Warmelo collection is there mention of female circumcision. Hoffmann explained, when the time came, boy children were called to serve their *kgoši* to show that they were ready for the circumcision school (Joubert, et. al. 2015:109). This serving period could take two to three years. It was said that if the boys saw that the *kgoši* was taking too long to circumcise them, they would start beating up men and raping women because this was acceptable behaviour for an uncircumcised man (Joubert, et. al. 2015:109). Because it was the *kgoši*'s responsibility to protect his people, he would open the circumcision school to avoid any more people getting hurt.

There are different stages of the circumcision rite of passage. The first one is *bodika*. This is the start of the initiation school where a diviner would be called to make the school immune to any witchcraft. This would be done by slaughtering a duck and marking the location of where the initiation school will be. "The diviner will mix the previous initiates' foreskin with *tšhidi*" – which is a protective medicine against witchcraft. Mönnig (1967:114) commenting on Bapedi initiation rite of passage, said that this mixture would be used to treat the initiation site. After this, the diviner would stand at the entrance of the initiation site with "two magic canes that have been smeared with black medicines in his hands. The one on the left had a broken tip, as its tip has been fashioned into a wreath. The one on the right was straight" (Joubert, et. al. 2015:111). When the initiates went through the entrance, the servant of the *kgoši* would take the lead. The diviner would wave the cane on the left towards him and beat him with the one on the right. The councillor of the *kgoši* followed and so would the rest of the initiates. Once everyone had been through, then they would be protected. From here on, the custodians would search for clay called *kgetli* to smear on the initiates from that day onwards (Joubert, et. al. 2015:113).

The second stage is *lebollo* which is the actual circumcision (Joubert, et. al. 2015:113). This ritual was done by men who were experienced and understood the task. The servant's son was the first to be circumcised, followed by the councillor's son and then the *kgoši*'s son. The other initiates were tasked to sing loudly so they could not hear the screaming of the other initiates and become fearful. According to Hoffmann (Joubert, et. al. 2015:113), this ritual had to be done before sunset.

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After the initiates had been circumcised, a kraal was built where the boys would reside for the duration of the initiation school. The Mamabolo initiation took two years. In the second year the initiates were given initiation instructions where lessons which could not be discussed with women or any man who has not been circumcised were taught. (Joubert, et. al. 2015:133). This is the third stage of the initiation school.

The stage that followed is called go *tšwa ga bodika.* This happened over three months before the homegoing ceremony. *Go tšwa ga bodika* served as the preparation for the homegoing ceremony. The last stage is the homegoing, where a song of rejoicing is sung. The initiates were commanded not to look back until they got to their homes (Joubert, et. al. 2015:135). After they had left, the men burnt the place where the initiates resided. When the initiates were close to home, they were then rubbed with fat and given leather aprons to wear (Joubert, et. al. 2015:135). Hoffmann explained that the initiates were covered by blankets after entering the capital gate and were kept at the men's gathering place for a month. And finally, on the day that the initiates went home, their parents would adorn them with beaded jewellery (Joubert, et. al. 2015:137).

Marriage

After a boy had been circumcised and completed the initiation rite of passage, he was considered a man and ready to marry. Marriage is another rite of passage the Mamabolo take pride in. This is will be discussed in depth in Chapter Three.

2.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter gave a survey and conceptualisation of the study's subject of enquiry. In positioning the Mamabolo as a 'scholarly discourse', those responsible for producing the knowledge of the Mamabolo i.e. the interlocutors, and ethnographers, needed to be foregrounded in order to understand the context within which the knowledge was produced. Moreover, the method in which this knowledge was produced was discussed. I thought it was important to highlight the gender dimension in this knowledge production, so as to show whose voice was heard and whose was silenced. All the interlocutors profiled in this present study are men, giving them the dominant voice in contributing to and shaping what is known of the Mamabolo. There is no

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representation of female interlocutors in either of the collections. This leads to the conclusion that women's voices were silenced in producing knowledge of the Mamabolo. This chapter demonstrated the history and cultural customs of the Mamabolo. In the following chapter, the specific custom of Mamabolo marriage is discussed in greater detail.

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CHAPTER 3
THE MARRIAGE CUSTOM

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Two profiled the interlocutors, contextualised the ethnographers and provided detailed background information on the Mamabolo in terms of their origin and their settling journey, and highlighted some of their cultural practices. This chapter looks at some specific explanations of specific marriage practices. I understand that the concept of marriage is universal and the possibility of misunderstanding the different and changing meanings over time and from place to place is enormous. Hence, this chapter starts the discussion on marriage with a broader socio-cultural-historical overview of what marriage has entailed and still entails.

When Hoffmann encountered the Mamabolo people, he came with his 'cultural backpack' of what marriage is and (possibly) ought to be. From this vantage point, he had expectations and made observations. As a researcher today, one arrives at these recordings with one's own cultural backpack of knowledge and assumptions. How can one then arrive at some generally applicable parameters when studying marriage?

Before delving into Hoffmann's observations and Van Warmelo's interlocutors' recordings on marriage, I find it necessary to unpack at least a few of these backpacks, to establish an awareness of the general and the specific of what marriage can entail, has entailed and may still entail. I offer a summary that shows at least some of the variety that we recognise as marriage. I funnel this summary from the very general Western perspective down to an African perspective, ending with the specific case study of the Bapedi (Mamabolo) marriage custom.

The institution of marriage is one that has been practised for many years and it has evolved over time. The customs and traditions regarding this institution vary from community to community and according to changing conditions over time. Different communities hold different perspectives on what is culturally appropriate concerning premarital behaviour, who one can marry, how the marriage custom ought to be carried out and so forth (Vaughn 2010:162). This chapter looks at marriage as a social

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and cultural practice, briefly discussing its earliest conception through to how it has been practised in Africa, specifically by Bapedi over the past century. After sketching this background, the chapter then focuses more specifically on how Hoffmann and Van Warmelo visualised Bapedi marriage custom, specifically, that of the Mamabolo.

3.1.1. The history of human marriage in Western societies

Sociologist Edward Westermarck's work is of particular interest for this study because he was a contemporary of Carl Hoffmann, and as such his work provides a glimpse into the range of assumptions and perceptions that pervaded the Western scholarly frame of reference at the time that Hoffmann started enquiring into African marriage customs. In the first three chapters of his book *The History of Human Marriage* (1901), Westermarck gave an in-depth analysis of animal behaviour and insisted on relating human behaviour and relations to those of animals, such as birds, fish and mammals. He traced how the family set-up (i.e. a mother, father and children) of these animals seemed to resemble those of humans, implying that the "savage men of earlier years" must have picked up these behaviours from them (Westermarck 1901:1).

While today, sociologists take a more sceptical approach towards Westermarck's understanding of familial relationships, Westermarck was of the opinion that family life and subsequently marriage life, started with the animals and that humans drew from that to set up their family relations. With regard to marriage, he said: "the idea that a man is bound to maintain his family is indeed so closely connected with that of marriage such that sometimes even rejected wives with their children are at least to a certain extent, supported by their former husbands" (Westermarck 1901:19). The behaviour of a man's family responsibility being taken over by another male in the family is not unfamiliar to humans. Much closer to our time, social psychologist Lisa Vaughn informs that in some societies the levirate remains an acceptable custom: where a man would marry his brother's widow to ensure his brother's family is taken care of (Vaughn 2010:164).

When it comes to defining what marriage is, Westermarck was of the opinion that marriage definitions are of "mostly a mere juridical or ethical nature, comprehending either what is required to make the union legal, or what in the eye of the idealist, the union ought to be" (Westermarck 1901:19). He gave an overarching definition of

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marriage as "… nothing else than a more or less durable connection between male and female, lasting beyond the mere act of propagation till the birth of the offspring" (Westermarck 1901:19). According to him, marriage implied not only sexual relations but also the living together of the couple. He stated that marriage is rooted in family, rather than family being rooted in marriage and motivated this with the example that in some cultures such as those of the Eastern Greenlands, having a child out of wedlock obligated the parents to get married (1901:22). Writing about a century later, sociologist Gwen Broude (1994:189) seemed to follow the same conservative thinking as Westermarck. She (Broude 1994:189) spoke of the evolution of human-kind and the co-dependency between man and woman and explained that as a result of carrying, giving birth to and nursing babies, women were inclined to be caregivers and the man the hunter/provider and defender/protector. "The evolutionary story suggests that the tendency to marry is carved deeply into the human psyche and social order", she concluded (Broude 1994:189).

Westermarck's definition of marriage clearly does not include same-sex marriages. Traditionally, as Vaughn explains, "marriage was defined as a union between a man and woman with children born to the woman being recognised as legitimate off-springs to both parents" (Vaughn 2010:162). This definition was provided by the Royal Anthropological Institute in 1951, which is just as conservative as Westermarck's. Since then, the broader practice of marriage has expanded and anthropologists have noted that – hence Miller (as cited in Vaughn 2010:162) gave the definition of marriage as "a more or less stable union, usually between two people, who may be, but are not necessarily co-residential, sexually involved with each other and procreative with each other". This definition is inclusive of the complex diversity of practices that currently fall under the umbrella term 'marriage' (Vaughn 2010:162).

Human development and family studies researcher Heather Helms (2013:233) is of the opinion that marriage is a "desired goal, even by those who may be less likely to marry". According to Broude (1994:90), this is not only because marriage is seen as a vehicle for obtaining children, but also because, for some people, marriage is a personal fulfilment associated with a home, a partner and children, which symbolises permanence and security.

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Writing from the perspective of social anthropology, Radcliffe-Brown (1987:43-45) explained that the modern English marriage is an event that concerns primarily the man and the woman (who are forming the union) and the state (which gives that union its legality). The couple can dissolve the marriage by divorce. Unless the couple are minors, their parents' consent is not required to officiate the marriage. He continued to say that religion plays a role, but a religious ceremony is not essential, although in Anglo-Saxon England, marriage was a "compact" between the man and the woman and God or the church, making a religious ceremony essential.

Radcliffe-Brown (1987:44-45) detailed an early English[41] 'wedding account' as such:

- The marriage is between the couple – no concern of state or political authorities.
- The woman, her kinsmen and the man and his kinsmen agree to marry and pledge themselves that the terms of the agreement will be carried out.
- The man (and his kinsmen) must promise to make a payment (marriage payment) to her father or the legal guardian. He must also state the 'marrying gift' – a present for the bride (from the groom) for permitting the physical consummation of the marriage paid after the bridal night. Also, in the agreement is the dowry amount, [and] inheritance. The agreement concluded by the *wed* – i.e. the symbolic payment made by the groom (and kinsmen) to the woman's kinsmen.
- In modern England a ring is given to the bride at the wedding ceremony.
- The giving away of the bride is a survival of something which at one time was the most important feature of the ceremonial of marriage.

Radcliffe-Brown (1987:45) advised that the end of the Middle-Ages came with the struggle for power between the church and the state. However, Radcliffe-Brown did not indicate when exactly the practice of marriage moved from the hands of the church to the hands of the state. He further explained that, to legalise a marriage, regardless of whether a religious ceremony has taken place or not, an authoritative figure, licenced by the state, needed to register the marriage with a certain fee being paid. Additionally, the state decided on the conditions to dissolve the marriage by a divorce granted by a court of law – a state entity (Radcliffe-Brown 1987:45).

[41] Radcliffe-Brown does not give a date or time for this period. By estimate, early English corresponds to the late twelfth to the thirteenth century. Early Modern England corresponds to the fifteenth to the seventeenth century and Late Modern England corresponds to the nineteenth century till present.

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3.1.2. Mate selection

The freedom to choose whom one marries is another aspect that is of importance when discussing marriage (in both western and non-western societies). The choices include exogamous,[42] endogamous,[43] arranged, cross-cousin, and/or levirate[44] and sororate[45] marriage. From his conservative perspective, Westermarck argued that "among many people the female children are usually engaged in their earliest youth" (1901:213). Not mentioning any specific society, Broude (1994:193) commented that this was a common practice especially with royal families and prestigious families who preferred to keep the descent line pure (of royalty) and maintain wealth relations. Arranged marriages are marriages "arranged by parents of the bride and groom based on whether they believe the families are a good match" (Vaughn 2010:163), although parents are not the only matchmakers. Friends, relatives or even professional go-between or matchmakers can be assigned the task to betroth children (Vaughn 2010:192). Some of the criteria used are the family's reputation, wealth status, value system and unlikelihood of family scandals (Vaughn 2010:164).

Broude (1994:194-195) explained that in societies or cultures where arranged marriages are practised, there are other cultural beliefs to accompany and soften the attitude of boys and girls so that they would comply. In parts of India for example, a girl would have been nurtured from a young age into the idea of being married so that when it finally happens, she becomes the wife to a man who is, besides being chosen for her, also the concrete manifestation of her dreams. Westermarck (1901:215-216) warned against the mistake of thinking that women were always married without their consent. He reported instances where the young maiden had to give consent before the marriage arrangements could proceed. He gave the example of the Chippewas[46] whereby, although the mother settled the groundworks to marriage without consulting

[42] Vaughn (2010:163) defines exogamy as "the practice of seeking a husband or wife outside of one's own defined social group".
[43] Endogamy is the opposite of exogamy. According Vaughn (2010:163), endogamy is the "practice of marriage within a particular group so that the spouse comes from a specific social category. Sometimes based on geographic location".
[44] "Levirate is the custom of a man marrying his brother's widow" (Vaughn 2010:164).
[45] Vaughn (2010:164) defines sororate as a custom "when a woman marries her deceased sister's husband".
[46] The Chippewas or the Ojibwe lived in Michigan, Minnesota,

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the children; the pair was not considered husband and wife until they gave their consent.[47]

In their chapter on dating and mate selection, behavioural science researcher Catherine Surra and human development and family studies researcher Jill Boelter (2013:215) refer to Becker's theory (1991), a conservative theory on mate selection, which posits:

> men and women decide whom to marry on the basis of a complimentary exchange of specialized resources based on gender i.e. men's contribution to the exchange is economic resources and as a result, men's economic potential should affect their attractiveness as marriage partners, and more importantly, their likelihood of marriage. In exchange for economic benefits, women contribute childbearing, child-care and domestic help to the maintenance of the home. Hence a women's economic contribution to marriage is of less importance; she might work, but her child-care and domestic responsibilities mean she earns less than the man and invests less in market capital so that the traditional gender-based exchange will prevail.

It goes without saying that since the Becker theory, there has been a massive shift in how people think of gender roles and how they play out in marriage. Surra and Boelter (2013:216) report that "changes in women labour force participation, educational attainment and earnings have eroded the influence of the traditional marital exchange in mate selection". Teachman, Tedrow and Kim (discussed in Peterson and Bush 2013:44) add to this and explain that the:

> changes in economics have yielded alternatives with the likes of pre-packaged foods, dishwashers, women being able to support themselves outside marriage have made the legal status as well as the co-dependency of men on women for household production and women on men for market specialization less of a privilege.

Broude (1994:214-251) stated a rather controversial and problematic explaination that in cases where marriage is not arranged, women choose a spouse for his economic status and men choose a beautiful woman who is hard-working and can run the

[47] The issue of consent in arranged marriage is an on-going debate, with concerns that arranged marriages violate the human rights of women and girl children. Be that as it may, societies that practise arranged marriage do so in terms of customary law. Mtshali (2014:53) defines customary law as referring to "customs and usages traditionally observed among indigenous people" … Or "activities which form part of the culture of those people". I am of the opinion that there are societies such as the Chippewas, as Westermarck (1901:215-216) has exemplified, where women consent to their arranged marriages (either voluntarily or out of a cultural/moral or even status (i.e. royals) obligation). And there are societies such as the Zulus or Basotho, as Mtshali (2014) discusses, where under-aged girls are forced into marriage for various reasons. However, the practice of arranged (or forced) marriages and the issue of consent concerning this practice is not the primary focus of this study.

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household. Apart from economic and co-dependency, Surra and Boelter (2013:222) state that similar characteristics such as race, education and behavioural, social and moral values play a contributing role in mate selection.

According to Vaughn (2010:163), exogamy is the practice of marrying outside one's social group whereas endogamy is marrying within one's social group. The social group could either be geographical, religious or even political. The reason for endogamous marriages is to keep a strong kinship whereas exogamous marriages encourage expanded kinship networks (Vaughn 2010:163). A common endogamous marriage is royal endogamy, as well as cross-cousin marriages. Cross-cousin marriages are a preference among many societies such as Bapedi (Mönnig 1967:198-201) because they serve to consolidate ties between the families and keep property within the family (Broude 1994:196). This is a marriage that can happen between matrilateral cousins or patrilateral cousins i.e. the children of either one's father's sister or one's mother's brother (Vaughn 2013:164). Cross-cousin marriages have been common because the cousins belong to different descent groups regardless of whether descent is traced through the mother or the father (Radcliff-Brown 1987:151; Broude 1994:196). As much as cross-cousin marriage is common and preferred among some societies, it is not compulsory, and the cousins still need to consent to becoming husband and wife (Broude 1994:197; Mokwana 2009:74; Joubert et. al. 2015:91).

In most societies there are restrictions regarding whom one can and cannot marry. The most common prohibition is marriage with blood relations such as siblings, parents and children, although royal siblings could marry in certain societies (Westermarck 1901:300; Vaughn 2013:165).

3.1.3. Forms of marriage

There are multiple forms of marriages and multiple ways one can get into marriage. One of the oldest and possibly most objectionable ways to marry, at least from our present-day perspective, was through capture. Not being specific to a time period, Westermarck (1901:383) explained that the men of Bonaks of California usually captured women from the communities of those they defeated in war. Although he noted that it would be rare for a woman to be captured from another community,

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among the Maoris,[48] the ancient way to obtain a wife was: “a man would gather a party of his friends and carry off the woman either by force, apparent or actual” (Westermarck 1901:385). After capturing the woman, the man would come back and offer compensation to her family. Some of the reasons why a man would marry a woman by capture, according to Broude (1994:39) are: (i) if the man has no monetary resources required to obtain a wife, (ii) when the civil wedding cannot be afforded, (iii) if the family of the woman disapproves of the man and their union, and lastly, (iv) to sabotage the matching of the woman to a man she dislikes. Broude (1994:39) further explained that:

> In Indonesia, if a girl has already been betrothed but she is attached to someone else, then she can have her suitor kidnap and marry her secretly. If the father is satisfied with the new son-in-law then no compensation is required but if the father is not satisfied or disapproves of the marriage, the groom must then pay for compensation for the anger that the father-in-law feels.

Another way to obtain a wife was through services rendered to her father in what is known as bride service (Broude 1994:44). Westermarck (1901:390-391) and later Broude (1994:44) explained that if a man was too poor and did not possess any materiality but sought a wife, he would then go to her father’s house and work as a servant until he had given an equivalent of bride price in labour service. This would be a practice common in societies that did not typically accumulate material resources and therefore had no wealth to use for “bride price” (Broude 1994:44).

According to Broude (1994:41), “among the East European Abkhaz, the size of the [bride price] payment is determined by personal characteristics of the bride such as virginity and family status”. Bride price, Vaughn (2013:167) explains, “is the transfer of goods or money from the groom’s family to the bride’s … [this could be in the] form of money, livestock, or even food”. In some parts of India, dowry is given to the groom’s family by the bride’s family (Vaughn 2013:167). In Bunyoro, West of Uganda, if the man was unable to secure the required bride price, Westermarck (1901:394) clarified that he could arrange with the bride’s father to pay in instalments. However, any children born from their marriage belonged to the wife’s father and the husband had to redeem each child with a cow.

[48] Westermarck was referring to the aboriginal people of New Zealand.

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3.1.4 Romantic love marriage

Vaughn (2010:166) asserts that historically people got married for influential status, for political or economic reasons, and to form family alliances. To this Coontz (cited in Vaughn 2013:166) responds by saying that for thousands of years the economic, political and social functions of the institution of marriage have cost the needs and wishes of individuals. This was until the Enlightenment and individualistic emphasis during the American and French Revolution made the 'love marriage' idea more acceptable (Vaughn 2013:166). Levine, et.al. (cited in Vaughn 2010:166) comment that romantic love marriage is becoming the widespread choice. According to Vaughn (2013:166):

> In many Western cultures, marriage is viewed as the culmination of romantic love represented by the idealistic and somewhat "fairy-tale" notion that people meet their soul mates, fall in love, marry and live "happily ever after" proving that "love conquers all".

History and religious studies researcher Arno Haldemann (2018:56) explains that the concept of romantic love came about as a result of romantic theatre and novels, which faced a lot of backlash in the eighteenth century.[49] This concept of romanticism constituted part of bourgeois modernity that structured Europe's nineteenth century socio-culture (Haldemann 2018:56). Furthermore:

> The bourgeois disposition of romantic culture raised passionate love to its own end. Thus, passionate love became the essence of the modern martial relationship. Henceforth, according to the ideal of romantic love, no one was to marry for convenience; one should marry for "pure", which is to say self-referential and unique love. As a result, love came to be thought of as something singular, self-determined, individual and liberal as a matter between two individuals who establish family and household on the basis of romantic love.

It is because of the abovementioned reasoning, that societies practising arranged marriage look down on marriages based on romantic love. The understanding is as Coonz (cited in Calrson 2005:46) explains, that the 'love revolution' transitioned to a state where "marriage became more joyful, loving, and satisfying; and more optional and brittle" leading to her conclusion that marriage as an institution has become

[49] Haldemann (2018:56) explains that during the eighteenth century, there was a critical backlash against "aristocratic and agrarian traditionalism that had culminated in the romantic theatre and novel" which had led to the normative concept of romantic love becoming a "constitutive part of bourgeois modernity". Haldemann (2018:56) further explains that from this "individualistic aestheticisation" concept of romantic love, "sentimentalist ideal of love became central".

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obsolete. Marriage as the primary centre of commitment and caregiving disappeared and became more about love, honour and negotiation with the disadvantage that should any of the three fail, divorce and moving on were options (Carlson 2005:46). The singularity, self-determinedness and individuality of romantic love is what arranged marriage enthusiasts such as Elias Monhla criticise the most. Monhla is of the opinion that romantic love, as explained by Haldemann, is usually individualistic and "implies that one seeks their way or the highway" (Monhla 2004:54-55). Radcliffe-Brown (1987:45) complemented this by stating that at first, romantic love was not within but outside marriage. The idea that marriage should be a union based on romantic love leads logically to the view that if the husband and wife find they do not love each other anymore, they should be permitted to dissolve the marriage. He further cautioned that this "Hollywood practice" conflicts with the control of marriage by the church and the state.

Divorce is not an issue in modern society only, the dissolving of marriage also varies according to societies. Kottak (cited in Vaughn 2010:169) comments that marriage is much easier to dissolve in societies where the marriage is individualised (such as romantic love marriages) with common reasons like "loss of love, lack of individual fulfilment or absence of mutual benefit" (Vaughn 2010:169), whereas, in societies where marriage is political and communal or based on family alliance, divorce is much more difficult. Practices such as bridal wealth and replacement marriages (levirate or sororate) preserve group alliances and thus decrease divorce rates. True as this may be, romantic love and marriage have also presented a liberating alternative to restrictive social and cultural expectations that are associated with arranged marriages (Vaughn 2010:167). With romantic love and marriage, one is at the liberty to choose one's own mate as opposed to arranged marriage where a mate is chosen by parents or a match-maker.

3.1.5 Wedding ceremonies

The marriage ceremony is celebrated differently in different cultures. However, eating and drinking together is the most common form of celebration with the purpose of bringing two families together (Westermarck 1901:419; Vaughn 2010:166). Marriage ceremonies are not just a celebration of a couple's public intention and declaration of

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the permanence of their relationship, but also permits the community to acknowledge the status of the couple as married (Broude 1994:200-202). Vaughn (2010:166) notes that in Kenya rebuilding a house in the bride's village is an important part of the marriage ceremony. In Western culture a wedding band or ring is worn (Broude 1994:204). In other cultures, Westermarck (1901:420) explained that the couple would just sit down together and receive their friends for dinner or a feast. According to Westermarck (1901:428), it was in 1563 that the marriage ceremony was made a religious ceremony by the council of Trent. As already discussed by Radcliffe-Borwn (1987:45), an early English marriage was not essentially a religious ceremony but a union between the couple.

3.2 African marriage

Broude (1994:189) stated that the meaning of marriage is differently elaborated in different societies, as I have tried to show above. This section takes a closer look at how marriage has been understood and practiced in an African context more specifically. In Ghana for instance, marriage unites communities, kin groups, 'tribes' and similar groups. This sentiment is one that is shared by most African societies. Broude (1994:190) elaborated that marriage is regarded as a contract between not only the bride and groom but also the clans of the two marital partners. This philosophy is shared by many African theorists such as Isidore Okpenho (1987:338), Mokwana (2009:74), Monhla (2014:39-40), and Sefoka (2017:16).

Historian and Reverend Thomas Price (1954:12) together with Radcliffe-Brown (1987: 46) observed some similarities between African marriage and the early English marriage detailed earlier in this chapter. Firstly, in both contexts, the marriage is "not regarded primarily as the concern of the spouses, but as a centre of the interests of the kinsfolks on both sides" (Price 1954:12). Secondly, even though "dowry or the dower does not exist in African marriage" (Radcliffe-Brown 1987:46), there is the phenomenon of 'marriage payment' (though some writers unwittingly use the term 'dowry' inappropriately to refer to it)[50] (Radcliffe-Brown 1987:46). In African societies,

[50] According to anthropologist Jack Goody, "dowry is the transfer of parental property, gifts, or money at the marriage of a bride … [it is] wealth transferred from the bride's family to the groom or his family" (Goody 1976:6). Bride price or 'marriage payment' on the other hand, "is a payment by the groom or his family to the bride's parents [and her family]" (Goody 1976:6).

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it is usual for the bridegroom to give gifts to his bride and her family. The issue of bride price is discussed in more detail later in 3.2.2.

According to Radcliffe-Brown (1987:46) more factors of early English marriage can be found in African marriage. The first is that, in both cases, the marriage has no concern of any political alliance but only that of the couple and their families, the common interest between these families being the continuance as a result of offspring coming from the marriage. Secondly, like the early English marriage and marriage in other societies in ancient and modern times around the world, a marriage involves the making of an offering (bride price or service) by the bridegroom or his kin to the father or guardian of the bride.

Furthermore, Radcliffe-Brown (1987:46) explained that in modern England a marriage is legal if registered by a state licenced official whereas in most African societies (until the formalisation of civil marriage) the state would hold no political bearing on a marriage. For children to be legitimate, both the husband and the wife need only to be involved in a series of transactions and formalities. As in early England and other societies, an offering of goods and services by the bridegroom to the bride's kin is an essential part of the establishment's legality.

3.2.1 Mate selection

Mokwana (2009:74) notes that "the choice of a spouse was traditionally the task of the parents but, through the passage of time the tradition is gradually fading away because of the obvious influence of modern tendencies". The older work of Price (1956:41) already shares Mokwana's sentiments when commenting that, "in the townships and locations, where people are constantly coming in or moving on, the choice of partner is enormously extended; and the old directions of choice to particular groups do not apply for all are equally isolated individuals".

According to Radcliffe-Brown (1987:46), an "African man" apparently does not base marriage on romantic love, although beauty as well as character and health are supposedly influential when seeking a wife. In a study conducted 30 years later, Sefoka (2017:14) contests this reductive understanding in her recording of Bapedi

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marriage. Sefoka (2017:14) emphasizes that marriage is a result of two people who have fallen in love and want to get married to build a family together.

3.2.2 Ilobolo/bohadi/magadi

The concept of *ilobolo/bohadi/magadi* is one that is integral to most African marriage customs, however, it is not only Africans that practise this. Vaughn (2010:167) explains that roughly 75% of societies have some form of economic transactions and exchanges between partners and families, be it goods or services. Vaughn (2010:167) further explains that bride price is common in horticultural and pastoral societies, even though this is a global phenomenon. African societies are known for this cultural practice. Although the practice is not homogeneous in all African societies, there are however, some commonalities. From here on, *magadi* (the Sepedi word for bride price) will be used as an inclusive term for *ilobolo* (which is the Zulu word for the custom) and *bohadi* (the Sesotho word for the custom) as well as all protocols observed in abiding by this traditional/cultural custom including, but not limited to, 'bridal wealth' and exchange of gifts.

In their research, African philosopher Mojalefa Koenane and educational specialist Moeketsi Letseka (2017:89) caution against the misuse of language regarding the phenomenon of *magadi.* The biggest misconception is that *magadi* is paid, which leads to the misunderstanding that a man purchases a wife, like when one buys a house or a car. Radcliffe-Brown (1987:46-47) pointed out that, not only is this ignorant, but it is also blind prejudice which is inexcusable. As mentioned in Chapter One, culture is embedded in language, and language and culture are inseparable. Thus, by using a misnomer such as '*magadi* is paid' one then distorts its intended meaning. Moreover, "distorting certain aspects of language compromises and undermines people's culture" (Koenane & Letseka 2017:90-93). When language is used with negative connotations, the effects will also be negative. The word *price* denotes value, a monetary amount or worth associated and normally referenced with buying and/or paying for material goods, whereas *magadi* is a moral, cultural and symbolic gesture and custom (Koenane & Letseka 2017:96).

Koenane and Letseka (2017:89) clarify that *magadi* is "given as an expression of gratitude and as a symbol of respect for culture"; *magadi* is an assurance that a woman

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is honoured and respected (Koenane & Letseka 2017:90). Columnist Mupotsa (cited in Semenya 2014:1) explains that *magadi* "is a means to a goal, a process or negotiation that results in the coming together of two families – a means to legitimising the union between two people". It is however, a common understanding and belief that *magadi* is not just about the couple but the beginning of an alliance between the groom's and bride's families (Radcliffe-Brown 1987:52; Ngubane 1987:338; Broude 1994:90; Mokwana 2009:74; Mtshali 2014:52; Sefoka 2017:16). Price (1954:15) asserted that *magadi* is not originally for the purchase of a wife, but rather an offering to her kin for the children she is expected to bear who will reinforce the husband's group. Moreover, *magadi* secures her well-being once she has left her own family group (Price 1954:15).

In South Africa, the Customary Marriages Act 120 of 1998, recognised *magadi* as:

> Property in cash or in cattle gifted by the bridegroom (or his family) to the bride's family in exchange for her hand in marriage. Traditionally, these gifts consisted of livestock in the form of cattle, sheep, horses or goats, and they may also be given to the family of the bride by the groom in the form of money, furniture, motor vehicles and even houses, depending on the wealth of the family (Mtshali 2014:52).

This custom Semenya (2014:2) explains:

> weaves a mutual respect and dignity between families… and that it is a formal process and requires strict adherence to protocol, whereby the negotiations must be conducted in writing and necessitate the physical presence of both families.

Radcliffe-Brown (1987:53) argued that *magadi*[51] is a complex institution with various forms and functions and as such it needs to be interpreted by reference to the whole society it is a part of. This institution has more to it than just the transference of goods and/or services from one family to another. There are also associated marriage prestation and rituals as well as moral and symbolic values to it (Ngubane 1987:174). For instance, among the Basotho, *magadi* has two forms of moral significance. Firstly, *magadi* shows respect to the family of the woman and secondly, for procreation (Koenane & Letsake 2017:91). Radcliffe-Brown (1987:51) stated that "an African [man] marries because he wants children…", explaining that "marriage gives the husband and his kin certain rights in relation to his wife and children born from that marriage". This Krige (1981:5) confirmed by commenting that *magadi* gives the husband rights to

[51] Radcliffe-Brown used the term "bride price".

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the children that resulted from their marriage. If it happens that full *magadi* has not been given, then children born from the union of that man and woman, would belong to her and her kin (Radcliffe-Brown 1987:51). *Magadi* serves as protection for the children born out of that marriage, that even if the parents pass on, the children would still be cared for and have a family – that being the man's kinfolks (Sefoka 2017:19). This is because "cattle beget the children – the effects and implications of the institution of *magadi* as entailing the use of cattle to create and affirm binding social relationships… emerges as an essential cornerstone to the whole structure of kinship… everyone should have parents, siblings and children" (Ngubane 1987:177).

Radcliffe-Brown (1987:49-52) detailed the symbolic value of *magadi* into three "aspects of African marriage". He listed firstly that *magadi* involves some form of rupture in the family structure. When a man marries a woman, he is consequently adding another member to his family. When the woman finally goes to her in-laws, her family loses a family member, breaching a family solidarity. Secondly, *magadi* begets children as already explained before, and lastly, *magadi* unifies two families. This alliance is solidified through gift exchange. Koenane and Letseka (2017:92-93) comment that the families will always acknowledge gifts given and the gift exchange seals the alliance between the two families – it establishes a permanent in-law relationship.

Radcliffe-Brown (1987:47) explained that marriage in many African societies involves a series of prestation and rituals such as *magadi,* gift exchange, services; normally with the groom and his kin gifting the bride and her kin, although the bride and her family do give gifts to the groom's family as well. It has been common in most African societies to give *magadi* in the form of cattle. Kauffman, de Wet and Stadlier (cited in Semenya 2014:1) state that the standard *magadi* in the olden days was twelve cows, although this "olden days" is not mentioned in terms of years or date.[52] Parkin and Nyamwaya (1987:10) concurred on this number and reported that among the Southern Bantu (Batswana, Basotho and Iteso of Kenya) twelve head of cattle is the standard *magadi.* Schapera (1987:150) gave a contrary report and stated that according to "old tribal" Tswana law, the bridegroom and his family can give *magadi* of between four to ten head of cattle to the bride's family.

[52] This may refer to a distant memory of Pre-European/pre-Christian times.

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In the chapter *Marriage, Affinity and the Ancestral Realm: Zulu Marriage in Female perspective*, Ngubane (1981:84) reported that in Zulu culture, ten head of cattle "in today's times" are given *for magadi*. However, in a later publication in which she investigated the Zulu *magadi* process in more detail, she stated that it is understood to be against the rules (Zulu rule in this instance) to announce all the cattle reserved for *magadi* (that being fifteen head of cattle) early in the negotiation, even if the groom's family had all fifteen ready (Ngubane 1987:174). This is because it would be considered insulting to the bride's family if the groom's family were to imply that they are wealthy and therefore behaving as though purchasing goods. It was preferred that the groom's negotiators should mention an odd number (of cattle). This was considered to show the highest level of respect (Ngubane 1987:174).

Hoffmann's interlocutors (Joubert, et. al 2015:95) mentioned that the acceptable *magadi* for Bapedi was ten or more head of cattle. They also highlighted that in the negotiation process, the groom's party would indicate a number below the required number. This back and forth would go on until a satisfactory number had been reached by both families.

Burnham (1987:44) lamented that "the monetisation and inflation of [*magadi]* are linked with the penetration of capitalism into African societies". As a result, cattle are seen as a custom of the past to which Semenya (2014:2) clarifies that it is symbolic and represents a certain amount of money. Moreover, even in instances where actual money (cash) is given as *magadi*, it is still referred to as 'cattle'.

Magadi is always accompanied by gifts and other items such as a knife, a jacket, a stick, a blanket and so forth. These can also be represented by money; however, their economic value is not of importance. It is the symbolical value that is essential (Radcliffe-Brown 1987:48).

For example, in Zulu custom the gifts include, *izibizo* – these are in response to the request for gifts required by the "mothers of the bride" who include all the women that played a maternal role in the bride's life. These gifts are conceptually connected to the bride's birth and early care (Ngubane 1987:178). These gifts are as follows:

i. The mother had to drink a lot of tea to encourage lactation, so tea, condensed milk and sugar are given.

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ii. The mother had to wash the baby and change her diapers at night, so candles, matches, washing and toilet soap, and a large washing basin are gifted.

iii. A large pot was used to heat up water for the mother and baby, to cook for all midwives/mothers, so such a pot forms part of the gifts.

iv. Perhaps midwives had to be called at midnight by the bride's father or brother, so an overcoat or jacket may be required for them.

v. Midwives had to sweat during the mother's labour, so headscarves are given to replace the worn-out ones, etc.

Ngubane (1987:178) further detailed that gifts provided by the bride and her family to the groom's family are given on the wedding day as part of the wedding ceremony known as *umabo* which also have to do with the conception of the groom. The groom's people name the gifts wanted as well as their quality and quantity.

The phenomenon of *magadi* or the exhange of gifts might be a global practice but the process is not necessarily similar for every society. Radcliffe-Brown (1987:49) cautioned that the African marriage must be understood not as an event but as a developing process. Starting with an engagement, which can be pre-arranged or by choice of courtship, followed by the various prestations of *magadi* or the exchange of gifts, ending with the bearing of children. Moreover, the diversity of these prestations should be studied together with their meanings and functions in relation to the society in which they are found (Radcliffe-Brown 1987:47). For example, for the Nkundo of Belgian Congo (today the Democratic Republic of Congo), the process of *magadi* begins with the presentation of *ikula* by the groom to the bride. Should she accept, the two are then engaged. *Ikula* was initially an arrow but has progressed to become two copper rings. Radcliffe-Brown's research informs that the traditional wedding can take place before the full *magadi* is given. At the wedding, gifts are given to the bride by her groom, his parents and his relatives. After the traditional wedding, the husband must present the *ndaga* – a knife. This is to signify the transference of the daughter's protection from the father to the husband, from hereon, the husband is responsible for the bride. In return, the bride's family gift their son-in-law with the *nkomi* – this can be in a form of food or whatever the family can manage (Radcliffe-Brown 1987:47-49). Radcliffe-Brown (1987:47) made it clear that the marriage is not fully established until

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the husband gives his father-in-law the *walo,* which is given in metal objects, to which the father-in-law would reciprocate with the *nkomi*. The husband is also expected to gift his mother-in-law, her siblings and other relatives. Finally, the husband gives his father-in-law the *bosongo* in the form of copper rings.

The Zulu on the other hand begin their process by sending two representatives from the bridegroom's family to the to-be-bride's home to initiate the marriage discussions. It needs to be made clear that although *ilobolo/magadi* is given, the discussions are there to create relationships, to continue what was started by their children. Firstly, the families meet and they are introduced to each other for the first time, especially in the case that the couple has not conceived any children together. Secondly, the discussions are there to take a step further (in the relationship of their children) to extend the relationship to the living relatives, the living-dead/ancestors (Monhla 2014:50) and finally, to the not yet born -– being the children to be born of this marriage (Krige 1981:5; Ngubane 1981:84; Radcliffe-Brown 1987:51). The phrase "*magadi/bohadi/lobolo* discussions" is used in English because there is no English equivalent for the isiZulu saying *ukukhiphi ilobolo* or the Sotho/Tswana saying *go ntsha magadi*, which loosely translates into "to take out *ilobolo/magadi*". Hence it was emphasised earlier that *magadi/lobolo* is given and not paid. The cattle, together with the gifts given to and by the two families are there to create and strengthen relationships throughout the marriage ceremonies and during the marriage (Ngubane 1987:177).

Ngubane (1987:174) detailed that during the discussions, the bride's family would try to delay the process while the groom's family tried to hurry the process. The aim of the delay is for the bride's family to make it clear that they are in no hurry to part with their daughter (Ngubane 1987:174; Radcliffe-Brown 1987:49).

In the discussions, the bridegroom's family would mention the number of cattle they are to give, indicating their colour and sex (Ngubane 1987:174). Ngubane (1987:174) explained that the discussions happen over several visits to the bride-to-be's home, with the bridegroom's negotiators trying to persuade the bride-to-be's negotiators that the wedding may happen sooner. It is to be noted that the bridegroom's negotiator persuades with the highest form of respect and deference, whereas the bride-to-be's family does not reciprocate this, rather coming across as rude.

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During this back and forth of visits, there are other rituals and ceremonies that take place, such as the bride-to-be's family visiting the bridegroom's home to present gifts. This is where the relations and the getting-to-know-each-other happens.

Like the Zulu, Bapedi also begin their *magadi* process by sending *bommaditsela* (negotiation representatives, usually the maternal uncle and paternal aunt) to the bride's home (Semenya 2014:3) to state their intent to marry or *go thiba sefero* which is the betrothal (Mokwana 2009:76; Mtshali 2014:52). If the family is capable, they can also bring *dipute*. These are initial gifts presented to the bride-to-be's family to deter any other person who might be interested in marrying the woman and to also acquaint the two families (Mokwana 2009:75).

Once the bride's family, including the bride-to-be, have agreed to the marriage proposal, then the bridegroom's family gather the cattle for *magadi*. Mokwana (2009:76) explains that contributions called *go tšwela ga magadi* (contributions made by the family) are key contributions taken out by the bridegroom and his family. Equally important is *kgomo ya malome* (cattle contributed by the maternal uncle). The uncle contributes cattle because of Bapedi's preference of cross-cousin marriage. It is tradition that the nephew is reserved for his cousin to marry. By contributing the cattle, the uncle either acknowledges that he cannot provide his nephew with a wife as promised or that he relinquishes the claim for his son/daughter to marry his/her cousin (Mokwana 2009:76; Joubert, et. al. 2015:91). Additionally, if the bridegroom has impregnated the bride-to-be, then the bridegroom must give *kgomo ya go thiba phirwana* – this head of cattle is to acknowledge guilt of impregnating the woman before marrying her and also serves as a gift of consent to marriage (Mokwana 2009:77).

Accompanying the *magadi* is *kgomo ya lerumo* (a head of cattle for a spear/assegai) and *kgomo ya mphaka* (a head of cattle for a knife) – these are symbolic for the actions to follow, i.e. the spear is to slaughter the cattle and a knife to skin the cattle (Mokwana 2009:77). This head of cattle is the one used *go hlabiša bakgonyana* (*bakgonyana* being the bridegroom's party – maternal uncle, paternal aunt and the accompanying groomsmen). *Go hlabiša bakgonyana* is done to thank *bakgonyana* for completing their task and complying with the demands of the bride (Semenya 2014:3). Semenya (2014:3) adds that "the purpose of this ritual is to spill blood of the slaughtered animal

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as a way to communicate with the ancestors informing them about the impending marriage". The ritual also strengthens the bond between the two families and their ancestors (Semenya 2014:3). Furthermore, the *bakgonyana* are the ones to slaughter the head of cattle. The bride's family will then cook it and feed it to the masses. They (*bakgonyana*) take the head and the skin as proof that they have complied with the bride's family's demands (Semenya 2014:4). Mokwana (2009:77) adds that the couple would then dress in clothes made from the cattle skin known in Sepedi as *apešwa legeswa*. Failure to present *kgomo ya lerumo, kgomo ya mphaka* and *go hlabiša bakgonyana* can result in the whole *magadi* process coming to a halt, Mokwana (2009:77) informs. Hence other families use either a goat or sheep *go hlabiša bakgonyana* (Semenya 2014:3).

Following this is *go kgopela ngwetši* – this is when the groom's family officially asks for the bride after *magadi* discussions have been completed. Semenya (2014:3) states that this sometimes takes place years after *magadi* has happened. The paternal aunt and women from the groom's family will then accompany the bride to her husband's home (Semenya 2014:3; Joubert, et. al. 2015:103-105). The groom's family must give *kgomo ya go beka* to officiate and finalise the bride's permanent release, which happens a day after the merry-making at the groom's home (Mokwana 2009:77-78).

Go beka is the final step of the *magadi* process, reserved for the family members only (Mokwana 2009:78; Sekoka 2017: 51). Sefoka (2017:50-53) adds that other societies preserve this custom for after the first child has been born and the bride is finally taken to her in-laws permanently. Mokwana (2009:78) details that the maternal uncle has two responsibilities on this day. Firstly, *go phapha hlogo wa mošwe* – this is when the uncle presents the bride's gift i.e. the slaughtered cattle. This head of cattle is given by the maternal grandmother together with a pot of home-brewed beer. The uncle will then retain the head of this cattle and take a tribute known as *sebego* to the grandmother.

Secondly, the uncle is trusted with blessing the matrimony which is known as *go tlema tšhima*. This, according to Mokwana (2009:78) entails that the uncle takes the bride's gifts (the beer and the meat) to be enjoyed by the in-laws. Furthermore, the uncle skins sinews from below the (cow's) fillet and prepares what is known as *tšhima* to be tired around the necks of the newlyweds to symbolise that they are married. This would be

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equivalent to the modern-day white wedding (Mokwana 2009:78). It is at this ceremony that the bride's paternal aunt would give her niece advice as to how to carry herself as a married woman (Mokwana 2009:78).

To congratulate their daughter, the parents present her with *kgomo ya letswele* – this is a head of cattle meant to supplement the rearing of the first child (Mokwana 2009:78). This is similar to the Zulu's *inkomo kanina* (mother's cow) (Ngubane 1987:176). Mokwana (2009:78) concludes:

> A few months after the bride has been transferred to the domicile of her in-laws, tradition has it that she must pay a temporary visit to her people known as *go tšhola bongwetši* (the going back of the bride after marriage) where she remains for approximately a week before returning to her in-laws for good.

As stated in the introductory chapter of this study, Bapedi are not a homogeneous group. As much as there are variations in the spoken language, the cultural practices also vary. Not all Bapedi describe or practise the Bapedi *magadi* process in precisely the same way as the above detailed outline. Besides differences from one community to another, adjustments are also made in the cultural transfer from one generation to the next. Below follows a summary of the visualisation of the Mamabolo marriage as represented in the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections.

3.3 THE VISUALISATION OF THE MAMABOLO MARRIAGE AS REPRESENTED IN THE HOFFMANN AND VAN WARMELO COLLECTIONS

According to Kriel (Joubert, et. al. 2015:55), Hoffmann's article about Engagement and Marriage[53] was compiled in Mphome-Kratzenstein, implying that the information was collected from the interlocutors I have profiled in Chapter Two. Unfortunately, the way that Hoffmann relayed the information makes it difficult to pin-point precisely who said what and when. Although it is clear from reading *Article 1: Engagement and Marriage among the Sotho People in the Woodbush Mountains of the Transvaal* that there are different voices and opinions, it is unclear how to distinguish between them. It is as if Hoffmann was carrying all the autonomy and responsibility. Consequently, probably quite unjustly, he is praised and blamed for everything, while one should actually,

[53] Article 1 in Joubert, et. al. (2015) was initially published in the German journal *Zeitschrift für Kolonialsprachen*. 1913, 3/2, pp 124-138.

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when reading the "Hoffmann" text, constantly keep in mind its construction during the narration, performance, note-taking, writing-up, typing-up, translation, editing and publishing. All of these processes, in fact, involved a whole team of African and German agents. It should be acknowledged that when referring to Hoffmann as author, this whole polyphonic process is implied. Hoffmann-the-author had divided the article into two sections; the engagement and the wedding. To complicate the authorial voice even further, when referring to the text in the subsequent sections, the source reference will be Joubert, et. al. – since the annotated version in this 2015 edition is the one that is cited.

In the Van Warmelo collection, however, it is clear to whom the voices in the respective texts belonged, because the interlocutors have been named and credited for their contributions. From the Van Warmelo collection, Ragoboya (1939a; 1939b) and Malatši (1943) are the only interlocutors that report on Mamabolo marriage. In his manuscript *Mamabolo History* (1939a), Ragoboya reported on the marriage custom and in his manuscript *Marriage Custom, Magic, Ancestor Worship and other Information from the Sekwala* (1939b), he briefly reported on the process of a king taking a wife. Malatši, on the other hand, reported on *Married Life* (1943), looking at behaviour and the duties of the married couple and their relations with their in-laws. It needs to be made clear that by referencing the two interlocutors I am not only citing them, but also referring to the Van Warmelo collection.

Following Hoffmann's sub-division, in the section that follows, I discuss, compare and critique the Mamabolo marriage as represented in these collections by looking at the engagement and the wedding.

3.3.1 The engagement

Peeletšo is a Sepedi word which means 'to reserve' or 'engagement', which is regarded as being important in the Bapedi marriage custom (Joubert, et. al. 2015:91). Both Hoffmann and Ragoboya reported that there were multiple ways in which a man could become engaged to a woman. Amongst those ways was the option to become engaged from the uncle's house (Ragoboya 1939a:18; Joubert, et. al. 2015:87). The practice of cross-cousin marriage, as I have discussed above, is one that has been observed by anthropologists as highly regarded, preferred and practised amongst

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Bapedi (Mönnig 1967:198-201). Ragoboya (1939a:18) explained that if one found himself with many children, the eldest child would marry from his uncles' house[54] and the rest could marry from whichever family they wanted.

Moreover, Hoffmann (Joubert, et. al. 2015:89-91) explains that cross-cousin marriage extends to children. For example, if a nephew could not engage his sister from the uncle's house because she was still young at the time that he required a wife, he could send his son to marry from the uncle's (the son's great-uncle) house "to make things right". Hoffmann explains, this is because by Bapedi law, the uncle's daughter has been reserved for the nephew.

Although this was a preferred practice, it was not compulsory. Hoffmann (Joubert, et. al. 2015:91) clarifies that should it have happened that a nephew was old enough and required a wife and the uncle's daughter was too young, the uncle could relinquish his daughter and take out a head of cattle and give to the nephew, so he could go seek a wife elsewhere. In this way, the cross-cousin reservation had been settled and the nephew could no longer lay any claim to the uncle's daughter.

Another way to become engaged to a woman was for the young man to ask his father to go and initiate a marriage proposal to the family of a young woman he had taken a liking to. The father would follow the process as detailed by Mokwana (2009:74) and Semenya (2014:3) by sending *bommaditsela* to the woman's home to initiate their son's intention to marry.[55] Hoffmann adds that after being informed of the acceptance of the proposal, the young man would arrange a meeting with the young woman. However, he would not go empty handed; he carried with him a gift, such as beads or a brass ring that the young woman would wear to officiate their engagement (Joubert, et. al. 2015:91).

Contrary to this report, a young man choosing his wife was something Ragoboya did not recognize nor speak to. He reported that the parents were the ones that made a match between their children – arranging their marriage. The young man's family would approach the young woman's family to propose and arrange for their children

[54] That is to say, to become engaged to one of his/her uncle's daughters/sons.
[55] Mokwana (2009) and Semenya (2014) referred to here and earlier in this chapter, did not conduct research on the Mamabolo marriage custom. In their respective research, they outline the ('general') *magadi* process. Mokwana (2009) featured the Bapedi *magadi* process in her MA thesis and Semenya (2014) wrote about the Basotho *bohadi* process.

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to get married. Once the young woman's family had agreed to the proposal then the young man's family would arrange for cattle to be given to the woman's family to honor and seal this agreement (Ragoboya 1939a:17). Furthermore, Ragoboya did not give details of how many heads of cattle would be given. He explained that once the cattle had been taken to the young woman's home, the engagement would be complete, and the young man would be given advice regarding visiting his in-laws.

Hoffmann described that as per tradition, from the bride-to-be's side, a *mmaditsela* was sent to the bridegroom's house to take a container of tobacco/snuff. She (*mmaditsela)* would be received and then leave the container there as an indicator to enter into an engagement (on behalf of the bride-to-be) and was expecting *magadi*. The one who received *mmaditsela* would take the container to accept the engagement (Joubert, et. al. 2015:93).

After the engagement had been confirmed by the couple and their families, the bridegroom's relatives were informed to prepare themselves to contribute towards marrying a wife for their son. Thereafter the relatives of the bridegroom would gather to discuss the cattle to be given. The bridegroom's sister was the first to give a head of cattle and everyone followed as a token of support. Hoffmann (Joubert, et. al. 2015:93) explained that the whole clan ought to give cattle. This was because a person married into the family and not just the individual. The more recent research by Mokwana (2009:75) confirms continuity in the tradition as reported on by Hoffmann in the early twentieth century, explaining that, still, "a Bapedi marriage is a communal affair". The married woman belongs to the clan and as such she would not be addressed as 'so-and-so's wife' but as '*mosadi wa kgoro ya ga…* (the wife of so-and-so's clan)'– hence the infamous Bapedi saying *ngwana kgomo tša rena* which means: you are our daughter because of these cattle taken from our clan/kraal for you to be part of our family. This acknowledges and verifies that every family member contributed towards her *magadi* cattle and as a result approves of the marriage and welcomes her into the family. This is part and parcel of the honour and respect bestowed on the woman by *magadi* that Koenane and Letseka (2014:91) still speak of in more recent research. The honour and respect are extended even after the husband's death. As also affirmed in more recent research, the next-kin brother of the deceased must take over his brother's family (Ngubane 1987:65; Vaughn 2013:164).

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It was also a known practice that the cattle that were used to marry a daughter would later be used to marry her brother a wife (Parkin and Nyamwaya 1987:10; Ngubane 1987:176; Sefoka 2017:15). This was how families were able to maintain this tradition even in tough economic times. When these traditions were recorded by Hoffmann and Van Warmelo, many men were already working in mines or as farm labourers. Burnham (1987:44) stated that young men were compelled to seek employment in the modern sector in order to secure money for *magadi*.

Once all the clan members had given cattle and had been counted, *bakgonyana* (the bridegroom's party) was delegated to lead the way. The cattle were taken to the maiden's home together with herd boys, as well as *bakgonyana ba mogobo* – being the bridegroom's party meant to entertain the girls who were there to receive the young man (now groom) and his friends at the maiden's (now bride-to-be) home (Joubert, et. al. 2015:93). According to Hoffmann (Joubert, et. al. 2015:93), the "married sister of the [groom] takes the little basket with the snuff and walks ahead of the cattle, which are being brought to the residence of the [bride-to-be] for the conclusion of the engagement".

It was detailed by Hoffmann (Joubert, et. al. 2015:95) that when the groom's delegation arrived at the bride-to-be's town, the women from the bride-to-be's family stormed towards them with hoe sticks and tried to drive them and their cattle back. However, the herd boys opposed them by trying to get the cattle into the kraal. When the herd boys had overcome the women, they could go home. This resistance at the delivery of the cattle, Radcliffe-Brown (1987:50) explained, was as a symbolic expression of the consequence: the loss of their daughter – the bride-to-be.

After this the *bakgonyana* could enter and receive a hut and only then would the bride-to-be's delegation family together with *bakgonyana* count and deliberate the cattle until an agreement of ten cattle was reached. Thereafter, a head of cattle was slaughtered, which *bakgonyana* would have to replace later, and then they were handed water to wash, given food, beer and meat from the slaughtered head of cattle. Once each of these prestations had been completed, *bakgonyana* returned home as the engagement would be complete.

Ragoboya spoke of the cousin marriage and the arranged marriage as the only two ways a young man could become engaged to a woman. However, Hoffmann also

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mentioned another way a young man could become engaged to a young woman, especially if that young man did not possess cattle. He detailed that the young man interested in becoming engaged to a young woman could ask a cattle owner to lend him cattle. In return the cattle owner lay claim on the girl child born from the marriage to be his wife (Joubert, et. al. 2015:95). Hoffmann (Joubert, et. al. 2015:95) clarified that the girl child did not necessarily need to marry the cattle owner himself but could marry the cattle owner's son.

Alternatively, if the young man did not have cattle, he could always become engaged to the young woman with goats (Joubert, et. al. 2015:97). This was because, as pointed out before, that *magadi* had no materialistic value but rather, it was (and continues to be) of symbolic, moral and cultural value; hence one could also become engaged with beads as according to Hoffmann (Joubert, et. al. 2015:95). However, if the goats given were not enough, there would be a residue debt. This debt remained until a daughter was born from the marriage, the daughter would be engaged to a wealthy man. The cattle received from the daughter's engagement would be used to settle the residue debt (Joubert, et. al. 2015:95). Otherwise, if the suitor did not have cattle or goats and had no cattle owner to borrow from, the Mamabolo would give the young woman to the young man for him to take to his home. Hoffmann (Joubert, et. al. 2015:97) explained that "For the rest of the debt, he is granted a delay to pay".

Neither Rogoboya nor Malatši mentioned the alternatives to engaging a woman that Hoffmann wrote of. It is possible that after 35-39 years, which is the time difference between when Hoffmann started his research on this topic (Kriel 2015:55) and when Ragoboya and Malatši submitted their manuscripts, the rules and traditions had changed.

It might have taken a while before the wedding took place and the groom could finally take his bride home. This is why the Mamabolo gave a leeway for the groom to visit his bride at her parents' home. Ragoboya (1939a:17) reported that when the young man went to his in-laws, he was to be dressed in his traditional regalia with his hair patterned into a lock. The young man carried his own blanket (to sleep on), a shield and an assegai.

Hoffmann offered more detail regarding this visit and elucidated that the young man had to be accompanied by a friend (Joubert, et. al. 2015:97). Both the groom and his

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friend had to be well-dressed with their heads shaved and smeared with black stone sand and fat. They were to wear bead chains around themselves and bead cuffs on their arms (Joubert, et. al. 2015:97). Hoffmann made it clear that the groom and his friend had to have girls accompanying them. The girls were to smear themselves with a mixture of fat and red ochre. These girls, Hoffmann (Joubert, et. al. 2015:97) further explained, were to cook for the groom-to-be and his friend while they were visiting his in-laws.

The Hoffmann and Ragobaya texts contradict each other on what was to happen when the groom arrived at the in-laws. Hoffmann reported that when they arrived, young girls of the bride's village would announce the arrival of the groom and his *bakgonyana*. They would remain at the *kgoro* until the food was brought by the girls delegated to perform this duty. Three girls, assumingly from the bride's village, would come to greet and welcome the groom and his friend, and thereafter leave. The groom and his friend would then follow the girls into the father-in-law's house where they would be given a room with food and water to wash. This was the room that they would sleep in together as *bokgonyana* i.e. the groom, his friend and the girls they came with (Joubert, et. al. 2015:99). Furthermore, Hoffmann explained, during their stay, the groom-to-be and the bride-to-be did not talk to each other (Joubert, et. al. 2015:99). The bride could speak to the friend but not her fiancé. Furthermore, the groom-to-be could not see his fiancée's face as she had to be covered with a blanket (Joubert, et. al. 2015:99). Should the groom want to see his fiancée's face, he had to present a gift of either a goat or beads and only then would the bride-to-be pull down her blanket for her fiancé to see her face (Joubert, et. al. 2015:99). Hoffmann wrote that the groom and his *bokgonyana* could not stay at his father-in-law's house until the beginning of a new month, otherwise he would have to pay a fine in the form of a goat or a sheep or something else (Joubert, et. al. 2015:99).

Ragoboya (1939a:17-18), on the other hand, had it that, upon his arrival, the groom would not go inside the house but rather sat at the *kgoro* and the men of the village would announce to the family that their son-in-law had arrived. Thereafter, the bride would come and greet them and take the shield and the assegai to the house. The groom would thereafter return home. Ragoboya (1939a:17-18) further explained that if the parents of the bride gave consent, then they would prepare red ochre to use for the cattle given by the young man's family for marriage.

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From these accounts, the groom and bride were not meant to have contact, although the reason was not stated. The difference in these accounts could be as a result of several reasons. For one, things could have changed over time. Hoffmann recorded these around 1904 and Ragoboya submitted his manuscripts 35 years later in 1939. Secondly, it is possible that the difference in accounts is because of family or regional differences – bearing in mind the split between the Mamabolo, it is possible that Hoffmann and Ragoboya reported on two different groups of the Mamabolo. It could also be that Hoffmann's interlocutors, as Christian converts, may have given versions of where certain adjustments have been made, whereas Van Warmelo's interlocutors may have been more sceptical of Christian ideas, or somewhat less affected by Christian influence.

3.3.2 The Wedding

The wedding process could only commence once the engagement process had been fully observed. The two processes (the engagement and the wedding) were part of the marriage custom, one preceding the other. This section will be divided into four sub-sections that outline the processes involved in getting married.

a. *Go kgopela ngwetši* (Asking for a wife)

Although the maiden had already been engaged, and all formalities had been completed as I explained above, the young groom's family still had to ask for her to be their (son's) wife. The groom's family would send a mediator to ask for a wife (Ragoboya 1939a:18). Ragaboya (1939a:18) wrote that the mediator had to be married. As a response to the mediator, the bride's family would say "give a female cow for the mother of the bride and a bull for the *kgoro"* (1939a:28), after which the mediator would go back to report to those who had sent him. Once the requests had been met, the bride-to-be's family would give away their daughter and say "here is your wife" to which the mediator would go back home and gather all the relatives to inform them that they had been given a wife and afterwards report to the royal house that the family of so-and-so had given them a wife (1939a:18).

The Hoffmann text confirms this account of events and provides more information on this than Van Warmelo's interlocutor. Hoffmann detailed that after the engagement

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process had been completed, the grooms' family would send *mmaditsela* to the bride's family to ask for a wife to which the bride's family's response would be to ask for cattle for the mother of the bride and an axe to be used for the entrance (Joubert, et. al. 2015:99-101). *Mmaditsela* would then go back to inform the groom's family and they would do as required. The groom's family would then send a representative (assumingly male this time) of the groom to the bride's home and he would declare that he was seeking a wife. The family would then ask for another cow and a heifer (Joubert, et. al. 2015:99-101). The groom's representative would then go to report back to his family. The switch from a female *mmaditsela* to a male representative was not explained. However, Hoffmann (Joubert, et. al. 2015:99-101) informed his readers that, should the groom's family not give the groom the cattle and the heifer, as a defiant act, he would go and live at the bride's home for a year. While staying there he would not work for the father-in-law, Hoffmann explained; he would instead continue working either for his own father or for himself. If he was offered food by his in-laws, he would refuse by saying "I asked for a wife and not food" (Joubert, et. al. 2015:99-101). Eventually his family would give in and give him what was required of him to receive his wife. Once the cattle and heifer had been received, the groom would go to his family to let them know that they had given him a wife and then women from the groom's family would be sent to fetch their daughter-in-law.

Hoffmann did not explain why the groom's family would be defiant and refuse to give the requested cattle and heifer, or why the groom would stop living with his family but with his in-laws. Hoffmann did not state the defiance as a norm but rather as a circumstantial event. By this he was implying that this did not happen in every case, and should the groom's family not refuse to give what was required for their son to take a wife, then the groom would not have to live with his in-laws for a year but rather he would be given his wife immediately after abiding by the bride's family's request.

Moreover, it is unclear whether the family would refuse because they did not have the cattle, or because they disapproved of the wife their son had chosen, even after confirming his engagement to her. If it was the case of not having the cattle and heifer that were requested, Hoffmann explained earlier that the groom could borrow cattle from a cattle owner (Joubert, et. al. 2015:97). Hoffmann (Joubert, et. al. 2015:97) further explained that a man could approach a cattle owner to lend him cattle to engage a woman. If eventually the man wished to take the woman home as his wife then the

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man could go back to the cattle owner to “give him the necessary cattle for this purpose and thereby becomes his father-in-law, to whom the man remains indebted” (Joubert, et. al. 2015:97).

Hoffmann mentioned another additional request from the bride’s family that Ragaboya or Malatši did not speak of. According to Hoffmann (Joubert, et. al. 2015:101), the bride’s parents could request the groom to build them a house and only then would the groom have his bride. This they called *go fološa mokgonyana godimo ga ntlo*, literally meaning to take down the groom from the roof as illustrated in figure 4. Hoffmann clarified that this was not compulsory or standard procedure but something seldom practiced by the Mamabolo people. The groom was not literally taken down from the roof, but rather this phrase was used to convey a message to the negotiator that their [the parents’] request had been completed and therefore they had released their daughter.

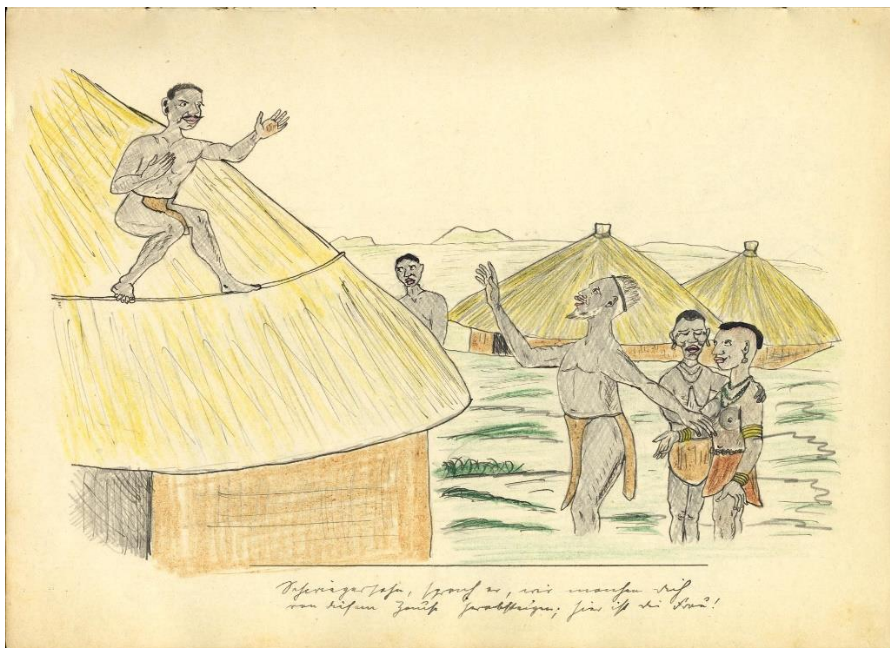

Figure 4: Carl Hoffmann’s Illustration of *go fološa mokgonyana godimo ga ntlo*. (HC-CK, UNISA archives, Hoffmann drawings diary 6)

This section of *Article 1: Engagement and Marriage among the Sotho People in the Woodbush Mountains of the Transvaal* shows the different voices of the different interlocutors that contributed towards this material in the Hoffmann Collection. There is a clear difference of opinion regarding this practice of *go fološa mokgonyana godimo ga ntlo* in the text. The text indicates a different voice (as a second not named

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interlocutor) stating that "this [*go fološa mokgonyana godimo ga ntlo]* is only customary among the Letswalo because customs differ according to different countries" and right next to this is another voice confirming that the Mamabolo did not practice this but only used it as a figure of speech (Joubert, et. al. 2015:103). This could also explain why Malatši or Ragoboya did not speak of it because it was not practiced in their communities.

b. *Go beka* (daughter-in-law is led home)

According to Ragoboya's report, once the bride's family's requests had been honoured, the groom's relative would select women who had to go and fetch their fellow woman – their daughter-in-law – and bring her to her new home, with her in-laws. When the women arrived at the bride's home, the bride's family slaughtered cattle "to melt the child's fat". Ragoboya (1939a:18) did not explain what this phrase meant or what its significance was.

After smearing her with the fat, her family spread a sleeping mat for her and gave her marital advice. Her in-laws (the women that had come to fetch her) gave a sheep or a goat and thereafter left with the bride. Ragoboya (1939a:18) clarified that the women did not travel during the day but rather at night. To welcome the bride, her in-laws would slaughter cattle and take an offering to the royal house.

Here Hoffmann once again gave more details than the interlocutors in the Van Warmelo collection. His account resonates with that of Ragoboya, but it is more nuanced. According to Hoffmann (Joubert, et. al. 2015:103), after all the requirements from the bride's family had been met by the groom and his relatives, they would then send women to go fetch their daughter-in-law. When they arrived at the bride's home they would then request for their daughter-in-law. With the bride's relatives' consent, they would call her and spread a sleeping mat for her. She would then be informed that "we, as your relatives, have given you off to the so-and-so family". Her relatives would then give marital advice and inform her that should her in-laws ill-treat her, she was welcome to come back.

Thereafter, the bride's relatives would take a bowl of fat and smear her (here again, the significance of this fat is not explained). She would resist so that a gift could be

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given in order for her for her to comply. Afterwards, they would spread a sleeping mat in the courtyard, to which she would refuse to step on, and another gift would have to be taken out. These gifts, Hoffmann reported, could be either a goat or head of cattle, beads, arm rings and "other things" (Joubert, et. al. 2015:103-105). This reluctance of the bride and her proceeding only once a gift had been taken out extended until the bride reached the groom's home. Hoffmann explained that the bride and women could even go backwards and forwards so that the gifts given were many (Joubert, et. al. 2015:103-105). In a more recent enquiry, Semenya (2014:3) found that her relatives could also gift her with utensils for her to use at her husband's home.

When they arrived at the groom's entrance, the bride would stand still and the father of the groom would come and plant an assegai, and another gift would have to be taken out before the bride could enter. The women who had accompanied her would ululate and accompany her further into the courtyard. When they arrived into the courtyard an elder woman would step out and sprinkle water on the bride and say: "Drenched snuff the rain falls on you, flee into the house" (Joubert, et. al. 2015:103-105). This served as the key to allowing the bride to enter her in-laws' home. A sleeping mat would be spread out for her, onto which she would only stand once another gift was offered and only then would she sit on the mat, together with her bridesmaids. At this point, Hoffmann (Joubert, et. al. 2015:103-105) explained, the march would be over, and the groom and his groomsmen could sleep together with the bridesmaids in the same room; however, the bride slept in a separate room.

After staying two to three days at her in-laws place, the newly-wed bride and her bridesmaids would go fetch wood while the men (the groom and his groomsmen) would slaughter a goat or sheep. The reason, according to Hoffmann (Joubert, et. al. 2015:103-105), was to obtain the fat to smear (for smearing). In the evening the goat or sheep meat was cooked and eaten, and the community was invited for a merry celebration with dances and ululations. In the morning the newly-wed bride and her bridesmaids took the head of a goat or sheep and returned to their home. When she (the bride) got home, she presented her elder sister with the head of the goat or sheep as a way *ya go tšholla bongwetši.* This, Hoffmann (Joubert, et. al. 2015:103-105) translated as "pouring out the daughter-in-lawhood".

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It was not clarified as to what this signified, however, gathering from the explanation of events, *go tšholla bongwetši* seemed as a way for the newly-wed bride to report to her family that she had been warmly welcomed by her in-laws and as a result she had just returned to say her 'final goodbyes'. Hoffmann further explained that, when the bride's sister had received the goat or sheep head, she herself presented a gift, be it beer or a goat or whatever she could give to her sister to take with her to her in-laws' (Joubert, et. al. 2015:107). This signified that the bride's family was fully satisfied and in a way, wishing the bride well with her in-laws and her marriage. The bride would then return to her in-laws, carrying whatever gift her sister would have given; accompanied by her bridesmaids, who would leave the following morning, as well as the groomsmen "because the bride had now been led home" (Joubert, et. al. 2015:107).

c. Bearing children

One of the reasons to marry, as explained by Africans and Bapedi – the Mamabolo in particular, is to have children and start a family. Monhla (2004:40) has stated that "marriage is a dynamic process [and is] not something that happens in a single moment. It begins with the promise of marriage at engagement and ends with the birth of the first child". This is a sentiment that Sefoka (2017:15) attests to as well. According to Sefoka (2017:19), "what is required of the newly-wed bride is for her to give birth to children". Moreover, "when talking of marriage, children born from the marriage is the prominence" (Sefoka 2017:19). These more recent convictions can be observed amongst the reports on the Mamabolo in the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections of decades ago, as well. Hoffmann (Joubert, et. al. 2015:107) reported that after a month of the newly-wed couple being together and the woman having her menstrual period, she would go to her parents' home and return to her in-laws once the cycle was done. If she missed her menstrual period for four months, she was then taken to her parents' home. Her parents would carry her and adorn her with green beads and tie a small container with medicinal powder to the beads. She would stay with her parents until she gave birth.

Malatši (1943:5) added to this and asserted that if it was discovered that the woman was struggling to conceive, then a traditional doctor would be called to evaluate the

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woman. However, this was the responsibility of her parents because even during pregnancy, it would be her parents who had to care for her. If, during consultation with the traditional doctor, it was confirmed that she was infertile, then *tlhatswadirope* would have to be 'given' to the man to bear children for her sister. *Tlhatswadirope* is a second wife, usually the sister of the wife married with the sole purpose of bearing children for the family (Sefoka 2017:16). Malatši (1943:5) and Hoffmann (Joubert, et. al. 2015:107) informed that the *tlhatswadirope* also had to be married with the same number of cattle that married the first wife. The first wife had to request the *tlhatswadirope* from her parents and they had to consent to this before the man could marry her (Malatši 1943:5).

d. Taking a second wife

Malatši (1943:9) stated that it was not taboo for a man to marry wives from the same clan and their seniority was dependent on the order of marriage. Only with the uncle's daughter was it a different cases: she was to be the primary wife even if she were the last to be married into the family. Malatši (1943:9) and Hoffmann (Joubert et. al. 2015:107) agreed that according to Mamabolo law, the uncle's daughter got seniority because her marriage was arranged in advance.

The first wife was the one who was supposed to seek a *mogaditšong* (co-wife) for her husband. As Malatši (1943:9) explained, the cattle used to marry *mogaditšong* were cattle received from marrying off their daughter(s). Malatši (1943:9) clarified that the first wife would rather use the cattle received from marrying off her daughter to get *mogaditšong* who would help her with her house chores instead of having the husband spend the cattle away frivolously. Malatši (1943:10) went on to say that if the man was lazy to seek another wife, his first wife would even go to the extent of hosting an event for the purposes of finding another wife for her husband.

3.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has highlighted the ways in which changes have occurred from early definitions of marriage, as well as different conceptions of how people should or do choose their partners. This chapter also detailed a summary of the Western

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conceptualisations of marriage funnelled through to an African conceptualisation of marriage. This was juxtaposed with the historical representations of the Mamabolo marriage custom as found in the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections.

In many present-day societies, marriage seems to be displaced from its earlier position in personal and social life with children being raised in alternative settings (Coonz 2007:15). People are no longer getting into (intimate) relationships with marriage as the end goal, but have other alternatives such as cohabitation, long-term dating, visiting couples, non-cohabitating partners and life partnerships which are becoming more and more viable as many people today live in a global society where there are many options. Be that as it may, according to Vaughn (2013:171): “the institution of marriage continues to retain popularity although many of the details of marriage are undergoing transformation”.

The establishment of marriage in the African context was based on the belief of its permanency, with divorce not even being an option. However, most African societies have been undergoing changes as a result of European administration, missionary influences, economic factors and so forth; and so the process of what Radcliffe-Brown (1987:84-85) described as change becomes inevitable. In the case of a dissolution of marriage in the African context, the bride’s family would return the *magadi* and retain the rights they surrendered when their daughter was married (Radcliffe-Brown 1987:50). However, if there were children born from the marriage, then the *magadi* was not returned at all or it was returned in parts. Furthermore, where *magadi* was given in the form of services, if the couple divorced then *magadi* was not returnable (Krige 1981:10; Radcliffe-Brown 1987:48).

Neither of Hoffmann’s interlocutors nor Van Warmelo’s interlocutors mentioned romantic (love) marriage. Both collections referred to cross-cousin marriage and arranged marriage as the only two forms of marriage among the Mamabolo. Although, Hoffmann’s interlocutors alluded to a young man “seeking” a wife, yet they did not specify if he would be seeking a wife out of love or otherwise. It is unclear as to why the interlocutors did not mention romantic (love) marriage in their manuscripts to Van Warmelo or in their conversations/interviews with Hoffmann. In Chapter Five, I show how the mate selection and other parts of the Mamabolo marriage custom have evolved.

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CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS: VISUALITY, CULTURAL TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter thoroughly discussed marriage as social and cultural practice. It started with a generic Western view of marriage and funneled it through to an African perspective of marriage. The chapter then showed how the Bapedi (Mamabolo) marriage custom was visualised in the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections.

This chapter has two interlinked aims. Firstly, it aims to explain the theoretical framework that guides this study, and secondly, it applies the framework in the interpretation of Bapedi marriage as represented in the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections. The theoretical framework is used as an analytical tool in the attempt to understand what had been visualised as Bapedi marriage in these collections.

As mentioned in Chapter One, this study is guided by the theoretical framework of visuality. The argument posited by this study is as follows: if visuality is a way of seeing, then orature, being a way of seeing, and a way of visualising as well, ought to be considered as a visuality-of-sorts too.[56] In its simplest form, my study claims orature for visual studies, arguing that orature ought to be included in the field of what is studied in visual culture. Orality as a precolonial African way of seeing, is not the sole domain of any single scholarly discipline. Perhaps visual culture studies offer a platform for the scholarship, theories and methodologies separately accumulated in the academic disciplines of drama, theatre studies, African literature, anthropology and folklore studies to be juxtaposed and integrated where necessary. My study argues

[56] I add 'of sorts' because there is a provision in pre-colonial conditions that, orature had been the way of seeing – the reality as endorsed by chiefly-nurtured and chiefly-authorised (although not static) tradition. My reading of Hofmeyr (1993:123-131) leads to the suggestion that chiefs/rulers told stories in a way that legitimated their authority. The authority in pre-colonial times was disseminated through chiefly networks, i.e. there were heads of families, heads of villages, and then heads of communities. The English translation usually refers to these chiefly networks as rulers or chiefs. Once Africans then encountered Western visuality, which was imposed on African communities through colonising endeavours, African orature, in a way became an African medium of assertion and response to Western visuality, which may be considered as a counter-visuality, in Mirzoeff's terms.

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that African visuality (ways of seeing) prior to colonisation was vested in orature,[57] which this present study maintains, is the meeting ground on the borderlands of drama (in the sense of performance) and visual culture.

This study, as mentioned earlier, is of a textual-visual representation whereby the archive (as mediated by the ethnographers Hoffmann and Van Warmelo) described what was seen/heard/experienced as Bapedi marriage. As such, Clifford Geertz's thick description, text analogy and drama analogy together with W.J.T. Mitchell's concepts of verbal and mental images (memories and ideas) are employed to drive this argument. Furthermore, the concept of scenography is added to highlight how the representation of Bapedi marriage is staged (verbally by narration) as a dramatised event, a ritual and a performance to be visualised by the reader.

4.2 VISUALITY

In 1988 art critic Hal Foster (1988:ix), referred to visuality as a way in which vision is constructed in various ways: "how we see, how are we able, allowed, or made to see, how we see this seeing and the unseeing therein". However, visual culture theorist Nicholas Mirzoeff suggests that this view of visuality is too narrow. Developed from historian Thomas Carlyle's heroic leadership, Mirzoeff's conception of visuality is more than just a way of seeing, it is a regime – a way of making the world, a way in which power and authority play out. According to Mirzoeff (2011:474), "visuality is not the total of all visual images and devices [but rather] it is an early nineteenth century term meaning the visualisation of history [of which] the practice has to be imaginary and not perceptual, because what is being visualised is too substantial for any one person to see and is created from information, images and ideas". He further goes on to state that "the ability to assemble a visualisation manifests the authority of the visualiser" (Mirzoeff 2011:474).

[57] To apprehend orature as visuals, I would like to revert to Ntuli's (cited in wa Thiong'o 2007:5) definition of orature as "the fluidity between drama, story, song, discourse and performance…". Also, according to Joubert *et. al*. (2015:5) and Joubert & Biernacka (2015:23) visual systems include performance events, films, archival material, photographs, etc. From the above definitions, it then becomes clear to see that Africans have always had visuals. Perhaps, their visuals were outside the scope of what was perceived to be visuals by Western scholars of visual culture.

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In his offer of a conceptual framework to think against visuality, Mirzoeff (2011:480) lists what he terms "complexes of visuality": plantation slavery, imperialism and the military industrial. These complexes are accompanied by "symbolic figures". In the plantation complex, "the slave plantation was monitored by the surveillance of the overseer, the surrogate of the sovereign. This sovereign surveillance was reinforced by violent punishment and sustained a modern division of labour" (Mirzoeff 2011:475). Mirzoeff (2011:481) further explains that, the slave, "by law and natural history, was a person relegated [to] the plantation, where she or he was under the surveillance of the overseer". This surveillance includes visualised surveillance of the plantation and the mapping of all plantations.

From the late eighteenth century onward, when "the battlefield became too extensive and complex for any one person physically to see" (Mirzoeff 2011:475), missionaries were deployed as symbolic figures of the imperial complex. According to Mirzoeff (2011:475), "British imperial visuality was organised by an army of missionaries bringing light to darkness by means of the Word, actively imagining themselves to be heroic subjects". The third complex, the military industrial, which Mirzoeff claims is currently ongoing, has counterinsurgency as its symbolic figure. Mirzoeff (2011:475) maintains that, these complexes "sustain autocratic autonomy" through the production of visuality, by means of which "the processes of history [are made] perceptible to authority". The process of visuality, despite its name, "is not composed simply of visual perceptions in the physical sense but is formed by a set of relations combining information, imagination and insight into a rendition of physical and physic space" (Mirzoeff 2011:476). This leads to the "modality of visuality", as Mirzoeff (2011:476) calls it. This can be summarised as follows:

> A given modality of visuality is composed of a series of operations that can be summarised under three headings: first, it classifies by naming, categorising, and defining – a process Foucault defined as "the nomination of the visible". This nomination was founded in plantation practice from mapping of plantation space to the identification of cash-crop cultivation techniques and the precise division of labour required to sustain them. Next, visuality separates the groups so classified as a means of social organisation. Such visuality segregated those it visualised to prevent them from cohering as political subjects, such as workers, the people, or the (decolonised) nation. Finally, it makes this separated classification seem right and hence aesthetic… the aesthetics of the proper, of duty, of what is felt to be right and hence pleasing, ultimately even beautiful.

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The opposite of this visuality, Mirzoeff (2011:473) maintains, is the right to look – a counter-visuality. This right to look "claims autonomy from this authority, refuses to be segregated, and spontaneously invents new forms … It refuses to allow authority to suture its interpretation of the sensible to domination, first as law and then as the aesthetic" (Mirzoeff 2011:476-477). The right to look is not about merely seeing, but a claim to independence, "not individualism or voyeurism", it is a "claim to a subjectivity that has the autonomy to arrange the relations of the visible and the sayable" (Mirzoeff 2011:473-474).

Explaining this, Mirzoeff (2011:474) gives the following example: "the right to look confronts the police that say to us 'move on, there is nothing to see here' ", when it is known, both to the policeman and the onlookers, that there is something to see. In challenging the sovereign's version of history, counter-visuality "is confronted with the need to apprehend and counter a real that does exist but should not, and one that should exist but is yet becoming … Simply the right to look acknowledges the patriarchal slave-owning genealogy of authority and refuses it" (Mirzoeff 2011:477-479).

Contrary to visuality that has complexes, counter-visuality has techniques, and just like the process of visuality, these techniques are not visual in the physical sense; they are "goals, strategies and imagined forms of singularity and collectivity" (Mirzoeff 2011:485). According to Mirzoeff (2011:484), classification was countered by "education understood as emancipation". There were efforts by the enslaved to achieve literacy because as Mirzoeff (2011:484) explains, "education was the practical means of moving on from the work allocated to you". Separation was countered by democracy – not just the representative elections, but a place, where there was none, in power. "Here the right to look is strongly interfaced with the right to be seen. In combining education and democracy, those classified as good only for work reasserted their place and title" (Mirzoeff 2011:484). "The aesthetics of power were matched by the aesthetics of the body not simply as form but also as affect and need" (Mirzoeff 2011:484), therefore aspiring for sustainability.

According to Mirzoeff (2011:485), "the 'realism(s)' of counter-visuality is the means by which one tries to make sense of the unreality created by visuality's authority while at the same time proposing a real alternative. It is by no means a simple or mimetic

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depiction of lived experience but one that depicts existing realities and counters them with a different realism". This is precisely what I perceive the interlocutors in the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections to have done. By telling their stories, using orature as a medium known to them, the interlocutors did not only claim their right to look, but by depicting their lived experiences, they proposed a real alternative to what had been previously visualised about them.[58]

4.2.1 Orature as visuality

Mirzoeff includes imaginary, what is visually perceived, ideas, information, and authority as key elements of visuality. Although his explanation might have hints of a political philosophy, it is also very valuable for analysing visual culture. It is known that the textual recording of history or any information for that matter, is a practice that Africans were introduced to by missionaries and other European encounters. Before this, orality or orature was the practice used to transfer information. Hence the argument put forward here is for orature (at least pre-colonially) to be regarded as a form of visuality in its own right (and post-colonially, as a form of counter-visuality), contra the colonial visuality underpinned by textuality, because orature was the practice of relaying information, sharing ideas, and even ensuring that one's history is known and seen. It is worth quoting academic and artist Pitika Ntuli (cited in wa Thiong'o 2007: 5) again to make this clear:

> orature is the fluidity between drama, story, song, discourse and performance. A fusion of all art forms… the wholeness of all being bigger than the facts that contribute to it. Orature is the conception and reality of total views of life. It is the capsule of feeling, thinking, imagination, taste and learning. It is the flow of a creative spirit.

Ntuli's explanation on orature gives a clear and precise idea of the practice of orature because contrary to common misunderstanding, oral history (referred to in this study as orature) is not limited to the oral narratives only. Even when consulting the two

[58] For this argument, I first want to establish that pre-colonial chiefly hegemony in Africa can also be considered as a visuality of sorts, firstly focusing on the colonial encounter. In the colonial encounter, Mirzoeff's notion of visuality is highly applicable. The colonisers were in a position of power, of authority and that authority gave them the ability to assemble visuality (of an African history) in a manner perceptible to their authority. Counter-visuality (as a challenge to the coloniser's visuality) – the process of claiming the right to look, can then aptly be assigned to African intellectuals i.e. interlocutor's intermedial responses, through orature, and the recording of oral material by whichever means, even if that implied the pen of the white ethnographer.

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collections (those of Hoffmann and Van Warmelo), there is information that is provided in praise poetry, songs, riddles, folklore and so forth.[59] From this quote, it becomes possible to trace the key elements of visuality mentioned by Mirzoeff. For Bapedi to claim their independence – their right to look, they had to use the one medium they knew, that being orature. Orature was their counter-visuality in Mirzoeff's terms, their way of seeing, to visualise their history and therefore be seen by others.

Understanding that the right to look is not merely about being seen but rather a claim of "independence, not individualism" as Mirzoeff (2011:473) has made clear, the interlocutors from the Hoffmann collection and the Van Warmelo collection used the platform provided by the ethnographers to tell their stories – to claim their right to look. The interlocutors were (re)claiming their identity, taking part in what came to be known of them. They were confronting the 'police' i.e. the ethnographers – both Hoffmann (who claimed, he was an agent of the all- seeing all-knowing God) and Van Warmelo (as an agent of the government) and saying, "you don't need to observe us, you don't need to have the exclusive claim to look and make (imaginary) assumptions about us anymore; here we are, this is who we are". And by so doing, they were claiming their independence and the right to tell their own stories, to tell their own history, to create knowledge, to co-produce history. Historian Sean Field (cited in Kaschula 2001:250) comments that orature is the art of the possible because it offers individuals the platform to talk about their past social experiences at the same time as talking about their present needs, wants and desire.

Lekgoathi (2009:69) comments that in agreeing to tell their stories about their history and the customs of their people, the informants "wanted to see everything committed to writing so that all the folklore [history, customs and traditions] of their people should be preserved for posterity". This is because, as Carolyn Hamilton (cited in Lekgoathi 2009:70) contends, "once written down, oral accounts become fixed and gain permanence, visibility and authority", and to a certain extent (by means of the far reach of print media) substantial, therefore visualising their history.

[59] These poems, praise poetry, songs, riddles and folklore are archived in a written form. In conducting my research, I have not come across audio or video formats of Mamabolo material. However, Annekie Joubert produced a film that accompanies *The Hoffmann Collection of Cultural Knowledge*. Her 2004 book *The Power of Performance*, includes a CD with video recordings she made of Hananwa and Lobedu interlocutors.

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If the aim of anthropology is to "arrive at acceptable generalisations" or "theoretical statements" (Ingold 2008:70) as mentioned in Chapter Two, then it is not surprising that historians and anthropologists of the pre-colonial tendered to visualise African history from an observational point of view. Mirzoeff (2011:475) mentioned that pre-colonial and colonial authorities wanted to be heroic in their visualisations of history as seen with missionaries in their respective publications (including the likes of Hoffmann). However, the interlocutors in taking the pen into their own hands, not only visualised their history from their own lived experiences. They also preserved that history and paid it forward for future reference. The interlocutors, through orature, challenged the pre-colonial and colonial authorities', the 'police's – in Mirzoeff's terms – exclusive right to visualise their history on their behalf, and they (interlocutors) got involved to contribute towards knowledge making and the co-production of their history.

African performance scholar Owen Seda (cited in Kaschula 2001:95) states that "the art of storytelling enables township folk to reclaim their voices and their culture as it *re-fuses* dialogue drama with elements of African forms such as song, drumming, mime, and dance…". This way of storytelling Seda (cited in Kaschula 2001:95) continues, "transcends mere voyeurism as it combines entertainment with utilitarian functionalism". Here, Seda brings to attention the fluidity of orature supporting Ntuli's stance but also suggesting that storytelling has multiple uses, either to inform and/or to entertain.

African drama and theatre scholar Kennedy Chinyowa (cited in Kaschula 2001:128-129) furthers orature when quoting Warren D'Azevedo (1998) in his definition of orality stating that orature is "an artistic way of doing, of behaving, and of seeing, having as its primary goal the creation of a product or the effect of a particular kind". Chinyowa further quotes Peter Amuka (1994) stating that "whatever knowledge people have originates in orality". Chinyowa (cited in Kaschula 2001:128-129) agrees that:

> human beings are either 'literate' or 'orate', if not both, for whatever they derive from written sources has to be oralised for it to make sense. No literary form exists until it is seen, heard or read. A people's expression of meaning, identity and other forms of knowledge are rooted in orality. It constitutes the whole repertoire of a people's communicative network by means of which they construct their culture through religious, artistic, political and other social arrangements. In other words, [orature] enables African society to create and recreate itself.

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From Chinyowa, the understanding is that “no literary form exists before it is seen” (for example: as observed from those being studied in this study, i.e. Bapedi), ‘heard’ (from those narrating it – the various interlocutors) and ‘read’ (from the writings of ethnographers, anthropologists and sociologists such as Hoffmann and Van Warmelo). This is how the Mamabolo interlocutors used orature to visualise their history, culture, traditions and customs as found in the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections. Following Mirzoeff’s (2011:484) counter-visuality techniques – education, democracy and sustainability – as aesthetics, the Mamabolo interlocutors used education – that is literacy obtained through the mission schools, to commit their history, culture, traditions and customs in writing. The emancipation of education elucidated an awareness of the authority that writing has. As Lekgoathi (2009:69) and Hamilton (cited in Lekgoathi 2009:70) mention, the interlocutors were aware that once in writing, their orature gained “visibility and new authority”. Once in writing, their visualization was accessible to those who could not access it through oral narration. Through their narrative style writings, the Mamabolo interlocutors were able to visualise an existing and alternative reality of themselves.

Victor Turner (cited in Kaschula 2001:134) was of the opinion that “orality, through its ritual mode, is not a static cultural entity, but an adaptive configuration of changing and developing elements”. Turner’s point speaks directly to Ntuli (as discussed in wa Thiong’o 2007:5) and Ukadike’s (1994:22) arguments that orature is fluid and dynamic, hence even in the written form as it is in the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections, the information is represented in its narration state. Although the narratives have been adapted from live performance to written recordings, they still maintained their essential narrative character. Wittgenstein (cited in Piper and Simon 2006:199) refers to this essence of orature (and narration) when he mentions the figures of speech such as similes and imagery found in language. He states that these figures of speech rest in the logic of representation; in order to understand the essence of the proposition (the totality of language), one needs to consider hieroglyphic writing, which pictures the facts it describes. When alphabets developed, they did not lose that essence of representation found in hieroglyphic writing and ultimately in language and orature. Therefore, even when adapted into written recordings, orature does not lose its (narration) essence because, orature is fluid.

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This leads to the transference of the oral material into written texts, as Peniston-Bird (2009:114) argues that the spoken word is often represented as written text – which is how Hoffmann and Van Warmelo represented their understandings of Bapedi marriage in their respective collections.

To understand how the ethnographers' textual representation of the orature received from the interlocutors constitutes as visuality,[60] Mitchell becomes a crucial reference, as will be discussed in the next section.

4.2.2 Mental and Verbal images as visuality

It seems fitting to start this discussion of visuality as a way of seeing with John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* (1972). Berger (1972:2) explained that seeing and recognition come first before words, that we make sense of what we see based on our beliefs, knowledge and past experiences, then we use words to explain what we see. In agreement with Berger, Mitchell (1996:82) added that vision is as important as language, especially in mediating social relations. What is seen is as important as what is said, communicated and represented – hence orature as visuality and visuality as a way of seeing. And this way of seeing is bound up with a particular visualisation of history rendered (in)visible by those in power, or the 'hero' in Mirzoeff's terms.

From Berger, Mitchell and Mirzoeff, visuality seems to determine representation. What is seen or shown, what is said or unsaid, all seem to play their part in the process of visualisation. As Mirzoeff (2011:476) argues, visuality is not limited to "visual perceptions in the physical sense", visuality is also shaped by "a set of relations combining information, imagination, and insight".

[60] The object of enquiry of this study is layered in such a way that it alludes to three different visualities. First, there is what had previously been said and done about the Mamabolo by those in power i.e. the pre-colonial chiefly networks. Second, is the counter-visuality of the interlocutors through their orature and then, thirdly is the textual representation (the ethnographers' collections) that this study is working with, which gave access to the interlocutors' counter-visuality. Through publication and accessibility of the ethnographers' textual representation, the ethnographers transformed the counter-visuality produced by the interlocutors (through their orature) into a visuality. The counter-visuality of the interlocutors can only be seen through the visuality of the ethnographers. It is almost as if the interlocutors are unseen and can only be seen through the visuality of the ethnographers.

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In his article *What is an Image?* (1984) Mitchell offered a vast array of what can and should be considered as images. One of his opening statements is a clarification that "images are not just a particular kind of sign, but something like an actor on the historical stage, a presence or character endowed with legendary status, a history that parallels and participates in the stories we tell ourselves about our own evolution from 'creatures made in the image' of a creator, who make themselves and their world in their image" (Mitchell 1984:504). This clarification alone shows that images cannot be limited to 'traditional' pictures, drawings, graphics, motion pictures and the likes. As Mitchell (1984:507) stated, proper images, those being pictures, statues, designs, etc. are not "stable, static or permanent in any metaphysical sense". Hence, the possibilities of what can be considered imagery, are widened extensively.

To further this concept, Mitchell (1984:504) spoke of the family of images, where he stated that the first thing we need to be aware of when dealing with images is that there are a variety of things that go with the name 'image', including but not limited to pictures, statues, optical illusions, memories and even ideas. The second is that "calling all these things by the name images does not necessarily mean that they all have something in common" (Mitchell 1984:504). Hence, he spoke of the genealogy of images – a concept used as a way to think of images as a family that has migrated through time and space and has thus mutated in the process (Mitchell 1984:504).

Mitchell's (1984:505) genealogy of images:

Images:

Graphic	Optical	Perception	Mental	Verbal
pictures	mirrors	Sense data	dreams	metaphors
statues	projections	'species'	memories	descriptions
designs		appearances	ideas	writing
			fantasies	

As can be seen in the diagram above, Mitchell (1984:505) argued that writing and ideas do form part of what are considered as images and consequently, 'the visual'. Mitchell (1984:507) stated that: "Mental images do not seem to be exclusively visual the way real pictures are; they involve all the senses". Moreover, "verbal images, not only involve all the senses, but may involve no sensory component at all, sometimes

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suggesting nothing more than a recurring abstract idea like justice or grace or evil" (Mitchell 1984:507).

From Mitchell's explanation, it becomes clear that verbal and mental images are far more complex than they appear to be and therefore should not be taken at surface value. Mitchell (1984:508) brought to attention Ludwig Wittgenstein's critique of Aristotle's comment that "the soul[…] think[s] without a mental image" (Manghani, Piper and Simons 2006:32). This statement implies that the mind is a blank mirror. Explaining Wittgenstein's attack on mental images, Mitchell (1984:508) stated: "we may have mental images associated with thought or speech, insisting only that these images should not be thought of as private, metaphysical, immaterial entities any more than real images are". Mitchell also explained that Wittgenstein insisted that mental images should be put in the same category as physical images. To do that, Wittgenstein suggested that:

> we can just easily replace what we call 'the physical manipulation of sign' (painting writing, speaking) with locutions such as 'thinking on paper, out loud, in images' and so forth [and vice versa,] replace every process of imagining by a process of looking at an object or any painting, drawing or modelling; and every process of speaking to oneself by speaking aloud or by writing (cited in Mitchell 1984:511).

The point here is, when looking at an image, the process of meaning-making is influenced by one's personal experiences and perceptions; that through association, the mind has already started to make connections to inform meaning making. Schirato and Web (cited in Waterton & Watson 2010:19) argue that "people's capacity to see and perceive has always been framed by norms, conventions and rules; dependent on cultural context and on training". Moreover, "if seeing is as much a social as a natural process, then how we see must be managed like all social practices by power and disciplinary practices" (Waterton & Watson 2010:21). As discussed earlier, Mirzoeff has made it clear that power and visuality go hand in hand, such that it requires authority to "assemble a visualization" (Mirzoeff 2011:474). Ways of seeing have become naturalized through socialization by means of disciplinary practices such as schools with disciplines like visual culture which Mitchell (cited in Van Eeden & Du Preez 2005:6) defines as "the study of the social construction of the visual field, and the visual construction of the social field". This process of (influenced) seeing, perceiving and meaning forming happens before vocalization or even writing.

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Essentially, what is vocalized or written down about a certain image, is a result of the idea/meaning thought of in the mind.

To understand Wittgenstein's critique, it is important to first of all understand that according to him, "a proposition is a picture of reality… a model of the reality as we think it is" (Mitchell 1984:512; Manghani, et. al. 2006:198). Mitchell (1984:512) further explained this about verbal images, in contrast to mental images, noting that "texts and speech acts are, after all, not simply affects of 'consciousness' but are public expressions that belong right out there with all the other kinds of material representations we create such as pictures, statues, graphics, etc.". However, "at first glance the proposition [as] it stands printed on paper – does not seem to be a picture of the reality of which it treats, nor does the musical score appear at first sight to be a picture of a musical piece, nor do letters seem to be a picture of our spoken language […] yet these symbolisms prove to be pictures of what they represent" (Mitchell 1984:512; Manghani, et. al. 2006:198). Mitchell (1984:513) cautioned that these representations must not be confused with graphic images (refer to images genealogy above) as they are just "logic sense", translations following a system of rules. According to this explanation, what is represented vocally or in written text is a direct translation of the mental representation of that subject/object.

To qualify this point further Mitchell (1984:513) stated that figurative language is what is meant when talking about verbal images; "a word is an image of an idea, and an idea is an image of a thing – a chain of representation that we may depict" (Mitchell 1984:514). Eighteenth century critic Joseph Addison is quoted by Mitchell (1984:514) for eloquently explaining it as follows:

> words, when well chosen, have so great force in them that a description often gives us more lively ideas than the sight of things themselves. The reader finds a scene drawn in stronger colors and painted more to the life in his imagination by the help of words than by an actual surety of the scene described.

For Addison, "verbal imagery is not metaphorical, rather it is the keystone of all language. Accurate, precise description produces images that 'come from the verbal expression' more vividly than the 'images which flow from objects'" (Mitchell 1984:515). These explanations by Addison as employed by Mitchell give a much clearer sense of verbal imagery and how verbal imagery has the power to "assemble a visualization", in Mirzoeff's (2011:474) terms.

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According to Derrida (cited in Mitchell 1984:520), "an image is nothing but another kind of writing, a kind of graphic sign that dissembles itself as a direct transcript of that which it represents, or the way things look, or of what they essentially are". Derrida's statements, together with those of Addison, speak precisely to Mirzoeff's visuality and how words, and more especially writings, are verbal imagery and consequently, can be regarded as a form of representation. As Mitchell (1984:520) phrased it, "knowledge is a copy […] or an image of reality imprinted on the mind". That is precisely the argument and point in case posited here; that Hoffmann and Van Warmelo, with the help of their interlocutors, used words (orature) and writing as visuality to represent Bapedi marriage. The interlocutors got the opportunity to raise the African voice as a counternarrative and consequently, a counter-visuality, in the medium of the written word, which purported to be the medium to project visuality. As a result, the interlocutor's counter-visuality helped to shape what has come to be known, understood and practised as Bapedi, specifically Mamabolo, marriage custom. Rose (2016:13) notes that:

> knowledges are conveyed through all sorts of different media … visual objects are always embedded into a range of other texts, some of which will be visual and some of which will be written and all of which intersect with each other … [because] … visual experience or 'visual literacy' might not be fully explicable on the model of textuality'.

Rose (2016:13) goes on to say:

> I find the debates about the precise difference between words and image rather sterile. What is important, I think, is simply to acknowledge that visual images can be powerful and seductive in their own right.

Scholars in the written tradition tend to give precedence to writing and not to orature in their arguments. Following their argumentation, this study, in this chapter, attempts to push back, not just from the picture, but to the written word, straight to the ephemeral, pre-recorded, fugitive, performed word (i.e. orature). The Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections are a good example of these intersections of knowledges and of visualities and counter-visualities.

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4.2.3 Cultural translation, thick description, text and drama analogy and scenography

It is not enough to say that Hoffmann and Van Warmelo and their interlocutors visualised Mamabolo marriage custom and contributed to how it is known, understood and/or even practised. Hence, I am, bringing in cultural translation, thick description, text analogy, drama analogy and scenography, to show how they achieved this.

From an anthropological perspective, Burke (2008:37) proposes that the more distant a culture is, the easier it is to treat its everyday life as an object of enquiry for a study. This is the point that both Hoffmann and Van Warmelo were coming from: as part of their training as anthropologist/ethnographer (and missionary in the case of Hoffmann) each had been studying foreign culture. And culturally, as Europeans, they entered the regions they studied and viewed the people and their culture through the lens of the "classical tradition or stereotypes" learned from their European backgrounds (and training) (Burke 2008:43). Hoffmann and Van Warmelo used what translation and intercultural studies researcher Anthony Pym terms "ethnography as translation" – when ethnographers describe distant cultures by translating the culture into their own professional language (Pym 2014:148). He explains that "the earlier Western ethnologists were generally unaware that their descriptions bring translation, since they assumed that their own language was able to describe adequately whatever they found" (Pym 2014:148). This cannot be said about Hoffmann and Van Warmelo because they were very aware of their language differences. Van Warmelo was also a trained linguist and Hoffmann took the time to learn the languages of the people he was living with. It just so happened, as Kaschula (2001:xi) maintains, that globalisation emerged with the common global language of English. Hoffmann can, though, to a certain extent, be considered guilty of this ignorance about language and its ability to translate cultures and their meanings since most of his publications were in German (because he was reporting to his German audience, the Berlin Mission Society). However, the collection being used here (*The Hoffmann Collection of Cultural Knowledge*) is published in Sepedi with English translations.[61]

[61] *The Hoffman Collection of Cultural Knowledge* (2015) is published in both Sepedi and English. The English translations are provided on the odd-numbered pages of the book with the Sepedi text provided on the even-numbered pages of the book.

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Pym (2014:149) elaborates that in the cultural translation, the ethnographers engage in a two-stage work mode – the oral and the written. Firstly, they interpret the spoken discourse of the interlocutors, and then adopt that interpretation for consumption in the dominant culture. This, Wolfgang Iser calls "untranslatability", not as resistance but rather as "the use of cultural difference to change the way descriptions are produced" (Iser cited in Pym 2014:149). According to Iser, "foreign culture is not simply subsumed under one's own frame of reference, instead, the very frame is subjected to alterations in order to accommodate what does not fit" (Pym 2014:149). Hence the use of translation and comments (in footnotes) by the ethnographers as found in their different collections (Figure 5).

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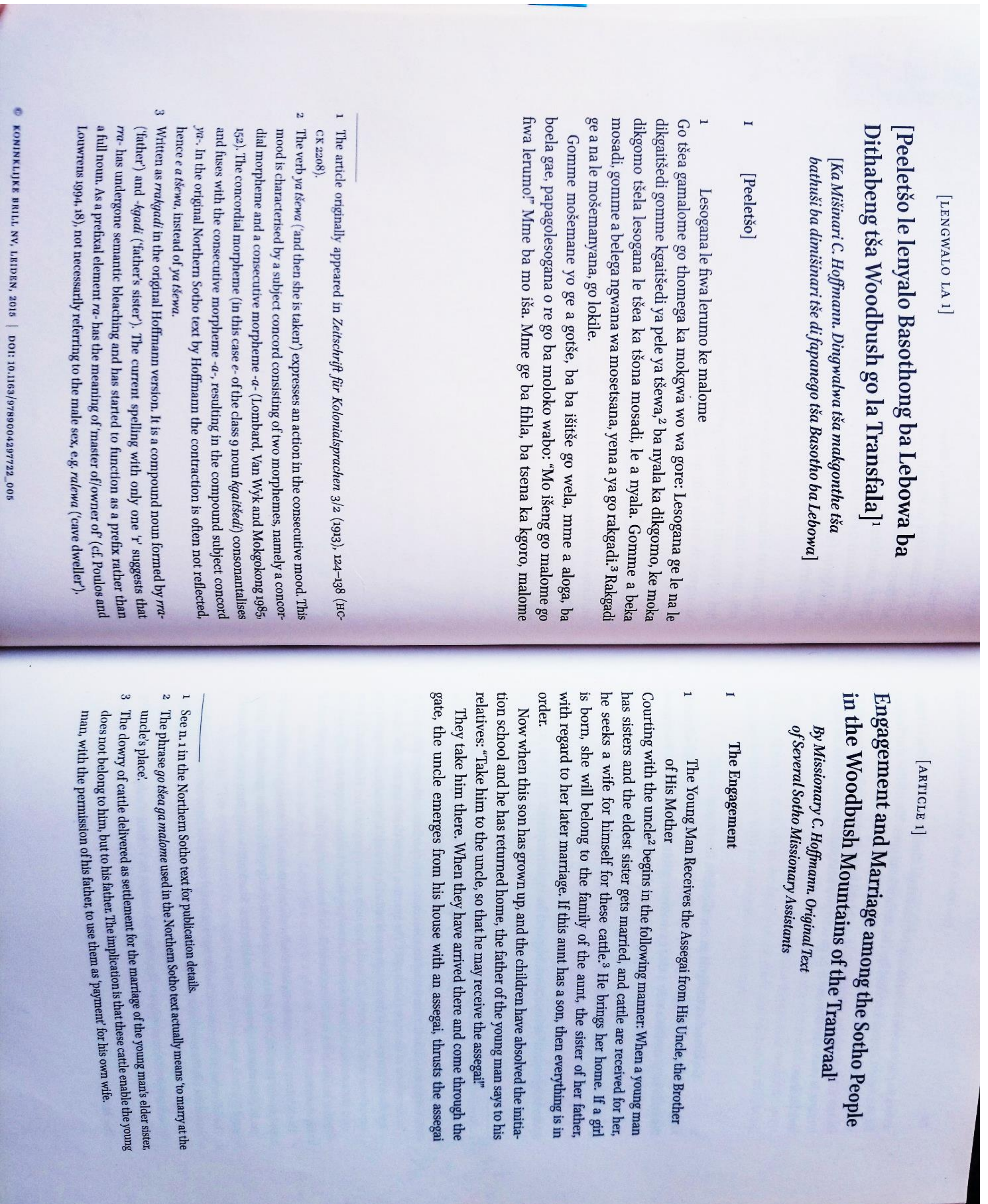

[LENGWALO LA 1]

[Peeletšo le lenyalo Basothong ba Lebowa ba Dithabeng tša Woodbush go la Transfala][1]

[Ka Mišinari C. Hoffmann. Dingwalwa tša makgonthe tša bathuši ba dimišinari tše di fapanego tša Basotho ba Lebowa]

1 [Peeletšo]

1 Lesogana le fiwa lerumo ke malome

Go tšea gamalome go thomega ka mokgwa wo wa gore: Lesogana ge le na le dikgaitšedi gomme kgaitšedi ya pele ya tšewa,[2] ba nyala ka dikgomo, ke moka dikgomo tšela lesogana le tšea ka tšona mosadi, le a nyala. Gomme a beka mosadi, gomme a belega ngwana wa mosetsana, yena a ya go rakgadi.[3] Rakgadi ge a na le mošemanyana, go lokile.

Gomme mošemane yo ge a gotše, ba ba išitše go wela, mme a aloga, ba boela gae, papagolesogana o re go ba moloko wabo: "Mo išeng go malome go fiwa lerumo!" Mme ba mo iša. Mme ge ba fihla, ba tsena ka kgoro, malome

1 The article originally appeared in *Zeitschrift für Kolonialsprachen* 3/2 (1913), 124–138 (HC-CK 2208).

2 The verb *ya tšewa* ('and then she is taken') expresses an action in the consecutive mood. This mood is characterised by a subject concord consisting of two morphemes, namely a concordial morpheme and a consecutive morpheme *-a-* (Lombard, Van Wyk and Mokgokong 1985, 152). The concordial morpheme (in this case *e-* of the class 9 noun *kgaitšedi*) consonantalises and fuses with the consecutive morpheme *-a-*, resulting in the compound subject concord *ya-*. In the original Northern Sotho text by Hoffmann the contraction is often not reflected, hence *e a tšewa*, instead of *ya tšewa*.

3 Written as *rrakgadi* in the original Hoffmann version. It is a compound noun formed by *rra-* ('father') and *-kgadi* ('father's sister'). The current spelling with only one 'r' suggests that *rra-* has undergone semantic bleaching and has started to function as a prefix rather than a full noun. As a prefixal element *ra-* has the meaning of 'master of/owner of' (cf. Poulos and Louwrens 1994, 18), not necessarily referring to the male sex, e.g. *ralewa* ('cave dweller').

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[ARTICLE 1]

Engagement and Marriage among the Sotho People in the Woodbush Mountains of the Transvaal[1]

By Missionary C. Hoffmann. Original Text of Several Sotho Missionary Assistants

1 The Engagement

1 The Young Man Receives the Assegai from His Uncle, the Brother of His Mother

Courting with the uncle[2] begins in the following manner: When a young man has sisters and the eldest sister gets married, and cattle are received for her, he seeks a wife for himself for these cattle.[3] He brings her home. If a girl is born, she will belong to the family of the aunt, the sister of her father, with regard to her later marriage. If this aunt has a son, then everything is in order.

Now when this son has grown up, and the children have absolved the initiation school and he has returned home, the father of the young man says to his relatives: "Take him to the uncle, so that he may receive the assegai!"

They take him there. When they have arrived there and come through the gate, the uncle emerges from his house with an assegai, thrusts the assegai

1 See n. 1 in the Northern Sotho text for publication details.

2 The phrase *go tšea ga malome* used in the Northern Sotho text actually means 'to marry at the uncle's place'.

3 The dowry of cattle delivered as settlement for the marriage of the young man's elder sister, does not belong to him, but to his father. The implication is that these cattle enable the young man, with the permission of his father, to use them as 'payment' for his own wife.

Figure 5: Translations and comments from *Ethnography from the Mission Field: The Hoffmann Collection of Cultural Knowledge* (2015:86-87)

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Anthropologist Clifford Geertz has made it clear that there is no such thing as "just description", especially in anthropology and when trying to understand "natives" and their culture. Geertz (1973:9) explained that what anthropologists call "data", is usually their constructions of other people's (i.e. other anthropologists' or interlocutors') constructions of a "particular event, ritual, custom [or] idea". He further explained that the constructions are then presented as "background information" to that said event, ritual, custom or idea before it can be directly examined. This, Geertz said, is done so that the event, ritual, custom or idea can be fully comprehended.

Essentially, when ethnographers and anthropologists describe another culture, their descriptions produce, perceive and interpret what the spoken discourse is. "In short, anthropological writings are themselves interpretations, second and third order ones … [as] a native's [interpretation] makes first order" (Geertz 1973:15). The anthropological writings are "thus fictions, in the sense that they are 'something made', 'something fashioned' … not [to say] that they are false or unfactual [just] merely thought experiments" (Geertz 1973). From Geertz's explanations, anthropological writings are thoroughly constructed based on the anthropologists' experiences and perceptions, as explained earlier about seeing, perceiving and meaning making.

The aim of anthropological and ethnographic thick descriptions seems to be "to draw large conclusions from small, but densely textured facts; to support broad assertions about the role of culture in the construction of collective life by engaging them exactly with complex specifics" (Geertz 1973:28). This is evident in how layered the ethnographic material is, both in the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections. Geertz (1973:19) further argued that with their (written, printed and published) interpretations, "the ethnographer 'inscribes' social discourse; he writes it down. In so doing, turning it from a passing event, which exists only in its own moment of occurrence, into an account, which exists in its inscriptions and can be reconsulted" – in this way, it becomes fixed (Geertz 1973:19, Geertz 1980:175). This is what Geertz later termed text analogy (1980:175). What is fixed is not the event of speaking, but the 'said' of speaking; what is written is the "thought, content, gist of the speaking" (Geertz 1973:19). Simply put "when we speak, our utterances fly by as events like any other behaviour; unless what we say is inscribed in writing … it is [as] evanescent as what we do" (Geertz 1980:175). What we do and say of course passes; however, when inscribed, when put in writing, its meaning – the said and not the saying – to a certain

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extent, remains for a while. The same goes for action. Inscription gives it longevity. It is this inscription (or writing), as Hamilton (cited in Lekgoathi 2009:70) contested, that gives written orature visibility, permanence and trustworthiness over those that remained in their oral performance state and are unwritten.

For Burke (2008:37-38), Geertz's thick description is as simple as a layered text – a story we tell ourselves about ourselves, in comparison to any other play, for example *King Lear* – a dramatized rendition about a certain cultural behaviour; something similar to what literary theorist Kenneth Burke in the 1940s called a "dramatic approach to culture", and what Geertz termed 'drama analogy' or what anthropologist Victor Turner (cited in Bell 2008:106,624) referred to as 'social drama'. What these concepts have in common is the ability to aid in explaining the "historical interest in rituals" (Burke 2008:39). Geertz (1980:171) stated that drama analogy is not a new phenomenon, reminding us of the Shakespearean quote that "all the world's a stage, and all men and women merely players; they have their exits and entrances". Drama analogy has come to be more evident in social life especially with anthropologists exploring 'native' regions. Reverting to Mirzoeff's terms, the counter-visuality lies therein, that the content (of the social drama being experienced through orature) is seen as part of, or within performance. The right to look is to see the content for the performance that it is and the meaning it wishes to convey, not as a prescriptive way in which the world ought to be seen.

Geertz was inspired by Turner's idea of social drama – a concept developed as a regenerative process that occurs at all levels of social life, from state all the way to family (Geertz 1980:172; Bell 2008:106; Burke 2008:38). Turner's social drama takes place in four phases; the breach, crisis, redressive action and reintegration or the "recognition of schism" (Geertz 1980:172; Bell 2008:106; Burke 2008:38). The breach is the beginning of all conflict, when a member of society breaks a societal rule or norm. This norm must be considered binding by the entire society (Bell 2008:107). As the conflict raised by the breach swells to a crisis, the community is challenged to find a solution to retain order (Geertz 1980:172; Bell 2008:108). Following the crisis, is the redressive action where the community must implement a solution to end the crisis, such as litigation and so forth (Bell 2008:108). Finally, is the reintegration, where the *status quo* is retained and all is well and back in order, or something resembling that (Geertz 1980:172) – or the exact opposite can happen, which is the *schism*. This is

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when the community is unable to retain the *status quo* and things fall apart. An example would be war, migration or even divorce (Geertz 1980:172; Bell 2008:109).

These phases have been applied by multiple anthropologists to many so-called 'native' 'rites of passage'. The same will be done here, where this social drama schema will be applied to the representation of Bapedi marriage as visualised in the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections. Further commenting on anthropologists studying distant culture, Burke (2008:40) points out that anthropologists did not take long to realise that what they recognised so easily as 'culture' and 'rites of passage' in 'foreign societies', is also recognisable in their own societies closer to home – once they began to look again at what had been taken for granted, because they had been so immersed in it. In analysing the Bapedi marriage as a social drama, my aim[62] is to "make sense of something I was already doing" (Stephen Greenblatt in Burke 2008:40). Being an insider as Mopedi, my knowledge and experience of the culture and the 'rites of passage' has had me immersed in them. By adopting a different visuality through the lens of social drama schema I then get to be an outsider looking in, "illuminating what I myself, had grasped" (Stephen Greenblatt in Burke 2008:40).

I earlier mentioned how the interlocutors helped in the visualisation of Mamabolo history, traditions and customs through their interactions with the ethnographers (Hoffmann and Van Warmelo). Moreover, I have also discussed how the ethnographers then, through cultural translation and specifically inscription, fixed those renditions. In applying the social drama schema, this chapter further employs scenography as one of the ways in which the ethnographers visualised the Mamabolo marriage custom.

Scenography is a theatre terminology derived from the word 'scene'. It is concerned with filling and creating a theatrical frame (Aronson 2014:14). This includes how the theatrical frame looks, aesthetically – set, décor, lights, costume and the mood of the entire scene, essentially staging the space (Aronson 2014:4). "The ultimate goal of scenography is the total sensory seduction of the spectator … scenography may be understood as the combined visual, spatial and auditory components of the theatrical

[62] I find myself in this conundrum, by participating in this (Western) academic system, I become so-to-speak 'guilty' of doing the same thing I am critiquing – I am 'guilty' of presenting a thick description of the Mamabolo marriage custom, 'observing others' as the (previous) anthropologists did.

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production" (Aronson 2014:3;14). According to Aronson (2014:22), "society needs images in order to understand itself better. That is apparent of every area in public life, with the result that the language of promotion and representation, of which scenography is a part, has become incredibly sophisticated". As already argued, the images referred to in the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections, are the verbal and mental images produced through the narrations of the interlocutors. Joubert (2015:23) states that "knowledge is rooted in the image, as much as it is in the text. Visual systems therefore play an indispensable role as methodological tools for the collection, preservation, analysis and representation of information".

As Rose (2016:13) notes, knowledges that emerge from visuals and text often intersect with each other; the scenography as staged in these collections is through words. Reiterating Addison (cited in Mitchell 1984:514), "words, when well chosen, have so great a force in them that a description often gives us more lively ideas than the sight of things themselves. The reader finds a scene drawn in stronger colors and painted more to the life in his imagination by the help of words than by an actual surety of the scene described". Here Addison reinforced that even on paper, a scene can be created with words. Although for Europeans such as Wittgenstein, Mitchell and Addison, the fixation is on words as writing and therefore misses the pre-paper scenography created through orature – the link between the writing, the word and the image is in the existing orature. Addison focuses on paper, emphasising the visuality of what is written and how this gains power. The literature preserved on paper in the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections began as orature. This orature in the form of pre-paper performativity, needs to be kept in mind.

4.3 INTERPRETATION

The interpretation of the Mamabolo marriage custom as a social drama is analyzed in this section by looking at the cultural behaviours specifically: asking for a wife, the engagement, bodies and/in space, and the exchange of gifts in relation to Turner's four phases of social drama. This interpretation will be based on the visualization of Mamabolo marriage as outlined in the previous chapter.

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4.3.1 Mamabolo marriage as social drama

a. Phase one: breach – asking for a wife

Based on the information from the previous chapter, Mokwana (2009:75), Semenya (2014:3) and Hoffmann (Joubert, et. al. 2015:91) recount that when a young man has come of the marrying age, he would inform his father of his intention to marry. If the young man does not wish to marry his cousin and has spotted a young woman, then his father would send *Bommaditsela* to the young woman's home to initiate their son's intention to marry. Radcliffe-Brown (1987:49) stated that marriage involves some level of rupture in the family structure. This rupture is the breach of a family structure.

The young man, by asking for the young woman to be his wife, is breaking the solidarity that unites the young woman to the family she was born and raised in (Radcliffe-Brown 1987:49). There is a loss of a person in the family of the young woman and this naturally causes a conflict; family structural conflict and emotional conflict as well. As much as her family might be happy for her that she is getting married, the marriage also comes with the sad reality of the young woman being removed from her maiden family.

b. Phase two: crisis – engagement

Consequently, the breach must be resolved, and the groom and his family suggest, as a resolution, the bringing together of the two families so that the young woman being married is not seen as a loss to her and her family. The two families can only come together through marriage and gifting of cattle from the groom's family to the bride's, alongside other rituals and prestation that need to be observed for this purpose. Both Hoffmann (Joubert, et. al. 2015:93) and Van Warmelo (Ragoboya 1939a:17) informed that once the proposal has been accepted and confirmed by the young woman and the two families, only then can the process of *magadi* commence.

c. Phase three: redressive action – bodies and (in) space

The process of *magadi*, as detailed more by Hoffmann than Van Warmelo, is one that involves different spaces and different bodies within those spaces. For one, the bride's

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family, after accepting the proposal and leading to the discussions of *magadi,* send a *Mmaditsela* to the groom's house to take a container of snuff to indicate to the groom's family that the bride's family is ready to receive *magadi* (Joubert, et. al. 2015:93).

On the day that the *magadi* is given, men and women have different duties and there are demarcated spaces for each activity. Hoffmann's interlocutors described (Joubert, et. al. 2015:94) (in Sepedi):

> *Ge di tsena gae gare ga motse, basadi ba phalalela ka mafeng ba di betha ka yona go di bušetša morago; bagapi ba tšona le bona ba di gapeletša go tsena lešakeng. Gomme ge ba fentše basadi, ba tla gae* (Joubert, et. al. 2015:93).[63]

This resistance at the delivery of the cattle, Radcliffe-Brown (1987:50) explained, is a symbolic expression of the consequent loss of their daughter – the bride-to-be. This activity is described to happen before the groom's men's delegation reaches the bride's gate. Women are the ones to resist the arrival of the cattle not as a sign to refuse their daughter marriage but as a resistance, because as according to Ngubane (1987:178), it is women who give birth, nurture and care for children. Therefore, assumingly, it is them who feel the loss the most; they are, after all, losing a child.

Once the staged resistance between the women and the herd boys has been won, the *bakgonyana* (groomsmen delegation) can be allowed to enter the yard of the bride's. However, they don't just go anywhere; they are delegated a room or hut. *Mmadistela* from the bride's family will then invite *bakgonyana* to another room or hut to discuss and deliberate *magadi* until the agreement of ten cattle is reached which will then conclude the engagement. According to Hoffmann's interlocutors, the deliberation goes as follows (Joubert, et. al. 2015:94) (in Sepedi):

> *Byale ba thoma go bala dikgomo. Gomme ge ba hwetša e le tše di šupago, ba tla re: "Le seke la re šupa!"[.] Byale bat la buša ba bolela ya seswai. Ba tla re: "Ga re bapetšwe!" go fihla ge ba ntšha ya lesome le go iša pele … Ge go fedile, ba ya gae; go fela tša lenyalo*.[64]

The phase of redress is also a liminal space, the 'in betwixt' as Turner (cited in Bell 2008:134) stated. The state of liminality or the liminal space is a space between the

[63] English translation: when the groom's delegation arrives at the bride-to-be's town, the women from the bride-to-be's family storm towards them with hoe sticks and try to drive them and their cattle back, however, the herd boys oppose them by trying to get the cattle into the kraal. When the herd boys have overcome the women, they can go home (Joubert, et. al. 2015:95)
[64] English translation: Now they start to count the cattle. When they find that their number is seven, they say: "You should not point at us"! Thereafter they promise an eighth head of cattle. If the parents of the girl want more cattle, they say: "That is not enough for us!" until they have taken out ten and more cattle. When that is done … the match-makers return home; then engagement has been completed.

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previous social status and the one in the process of attainment. The young man who just got engaged to a woman, should take a while before he can officially marry his bride; he has rights to visit her at her parents' house. Here too there is a specific demarcation of space and different roles played by men and women.

Although the interlocutors in the documentation of Hoffmann and Van Warmelo report on this matter differently, there are some commonalities. For instance, it was reported in both collections that the young man is supposed to be well-dressed. Hoffmann's interlocutors (Jourbert, et. al. 2015:97) added that he cannot visit his in-laws alone. He should be accompanied by a male friend and girls who would care for them at his in-laws (Joubert, et. al. 2015:97), whereas interlocutor Ragoboya (1939a:17) implied that the young man visits his in-laws alone. The one thing that is clear about this visit from both collections is that the young man and his bride are not to be in contact and most importantly, the young man must occupy a different room separate from his in-laws and his bride.

According to Ragoboya (1939a:17-18), upon his arrival, the young man does not go directly to his in-laws' house, he waits at the *kgoro* for his arrival to be announced by the men.[65] His bride will come to greet him and take the shield and assegai that he has brought with him, then he will return to his home. Hoffmann's interlocutors (Jourbert, et. al. 2015:97) also stated that the young man and his company (his friend and the girls) do not go directly to the house upon arrival, their arrival is announced by girls from the bride's side. The girls delegated to care for the young man and his friend (*bakgonyna*) would then be invited into the bride's home to prepare food. The understanding is that when the girls go to deliver food to *bakgonyana*, they are accompanied by three girls from the bride's house to greet *bakgonyana* and invite them into the house (Joubert, et. al. 2015:97). In the house, *bakgonyana* (including the girls) are given one room to occupy for the duration of their stay.

As with the *magadi* discussions, the *bakgonyana* and the bride are not yet to mix and share one space. They (*bakgonyna)* are, however, welcomed into the bride's home, but not yet completely. This is because the two families have not fully integrated. The groom's family has initiated to integrate the bride's family as compensation for the loss

[65] It is the men that receive and announce the young men's arrival because as Hofmeyr (1993:28) notes, the *kgoro* is demarcated as a male-dominated space.

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suffered by the bride's family (hence the *magadi* delegations). However, the process is not yet complete and there are still some rituals and proceedings that are to be observed to fully integrate the two families, hence the separation of spaces

The groom and the bride feel the liminality of their status because, although the two are recognized as a couple, they are not yet married man and wife. Therefore they are still subjected to the discipline of their parents, here indicated by the separation of rooms.

Another interesting demarcation of space and bodies in space occurs after all the rituals and prestation have been observed and the families are fully integrated, and the bride is being taken to her new family and home – to her in-laws. Here, Hoffmann's interlocutors (Joubert, et. al. 2015:103) and Van Warmelo's interlocutor, Ragoboya (1939a:18) detailed how the bride's female in-laws are the ones performing this duty. In this case there is a literal transference of space as the bride is officially removed from the home she was born and raised in, to a new home. Ragoboya (1939a:18) reported (In Sepedi):

> *Le xona ba be ba sa sepele mosegare be be ba sepela bošexo*.[66]

Hoffmann's interlocutors (Joubert, et. al. 2015:103) detail the journey from the bride's home to her in-laws as one filled with reluctance, where the bride can stop at any given point of the journey and she would have to be encouraged with gifts to continue. Her reluctance and resistance are not a sign of her negative attitude towards the marriage or the in-laws but rather a symbol that she is not in a hurry to leave behind her family. The gifts symbolise the eagerness of her in-laws to have her as a newly added member of the family and show her maiden family that she will be well-treated at her new home.

d. Phase four: reintegration or recognition of schism – exchange of gifts

Gifts, as ways of persuasion and encouragement are not only given to the bride but to the whole family as well. From as early as asking for a wife, Hoffmann's interlocutors (Joubert, et. al. 2015:99-101) and Van Warmelo's interlocutor Ragoboya (1939a:18)

[66] English translation: the women do not travel during the day with the bride to her new home, but travel at night.

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have indicated that there are certain gifts given to a bride's family to symbolise the groom's intentions and commitment, such as "a female cow for the mother of the bride and a bull for the *kgoro*"[67] (Ragoboya 1939a:18) or "cattle and the heifer" in Hoffmann's case.

During the process of *magadi*, there are other gifts that are exchanged between the two families as well, such as blankets, jackets, head wraps and whatever the families might want to give. The groom's family also receives hospitality through their son when he is visiting his bride, and as well as during the *magadi* deliberations.

The bride is the one who receives the most gifts during this whole process, from as early as courtship and initiating the marriage proposal. Hoffmann's interlocutors mention that she is given either beads or a brass ring (Joubert, et. al. 2015:91). Even during the visit, Hoffmann's interlocutors (Joubert, et. al. 2015:98) reported:

> *E tla re ge e ka be lesogana le rata go bona mosetsana, o tla ntšha selo, pudi le dipheta le ge e le se sengwe. Ke mo a tlago tloša kobo mahlong, gore a tle a mmone sefahlego.*[68]

The most gifts are given to the bride when she is being taken to her in-laws as explained previously. These gifts[69] vary from utensils, beads, cattle and goats, to whatever her in-laws can give.

The performance of the exchange of gifts ritual emphasises the symbolic meaning of this event. Hence, I bring forth the argumentative evidence from Ngubane and Semenya, respectively, to explain and to a certain extent confirm, this embodied, tacit knowledge that the interlocutors struggled to convey in their written records. According to Ngubane (1987:175), during the back and forth of the process of *magadi* (and when the bride is being taken to her in-laws), other rituals and events take place such as the bridal group visiting the groom's home to exchange ceremonial gifts. The back and forth of visits (and of movement of the travelling bride) is when the families get to know

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[67] This bull is to be slaughtered, prepared and eaten by the men of the bride's clan.

[68] English translation: Should the groom-to-be wish to see his bride-to-be's face, he would have to offer a gift of either a goat or beads for her to pull her blanket down (Joubert, et. al. 2015:99).

[69] Although I realise that cultural practices are never acted out exactly the same way twice, just as the telling of every story or the performance of each play is unique, I write in the anthropological present tense here. The interlocutors that divulged, and the ethnographers that recorded this ethnographic information, had been fixing a script of sorts – thus, whenever examples such as these are given, they refer to the 'nowhere' in time typical to anthropological presentism. Of course, this gives the wrong impression – that these are the gifts that are always given, even though the meaning of a utensil or a bead or a goat has long, since the 1940s, changed several times over. Agricultural objects such as goat or cattle were indicators of wealth and therefore, spoke to the currency of the time.

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each other and form relations. Moreover, Ngubane (1987:177) further explains that the cattle, together with the gifts exchanged by the two families are there to create and strengthen relationships throughout the marriage ceremonies and during the marriage. Adding to this, Semenya (2014:3) asserts that it is only when all the prestation and rituals have been observed, especially that of *go hlabiša bakgonyana* when cattle are slaughtered and their blood is spilt as a way to communicate and inform the two families' ancestors of the union of their children through marriage. This serves to confirm that the two families can be fully integrated, thus resolving the initial breach and retaining the *status quo* and ensuring the order of the family.

4.3.2 Mamabolo marriage as a rite of passage

Bell (2008:121) notes that human beings go through "life crises" and ceremonies exist as ways to assure safe travel through these "life crises", hence rites of passage. Rite of passage is a moving through cultural thresholds to cross from one social status to the next (Bell 2008:121). Ethnographer Arnold van Gennep innovated the term with examples such as initiation, childbirth, death/funeral and marriage; known to have three stages; separation, transition and incorporation (Bell 2008:121). In many instances, these rites of passage are performed, demonstrative and made seen, mostly in public, making these rites of passage a visual culture. The Mamabolo marriage as a rite of passage will be interpreted under these mentioned stages alongside Radcliffe-Brown's "three important aspects of African marriage".

a. Stage one – separation

The separation stage is the beginning stage where the individual is separated from their usual environment. This is where the individual will be initiated into the process of the ritual. In his "three important aspects", Radcliffe-Brown (1987:49) mentioned modification or some partial rupture in the family structure. In this case, the woman is being removed from her usual environment and is initiated into the process of being a married woman. This initiation is also applicable to the man, as he has a responsibility that he must adhere to as a man entering marriage.

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b. Stage two – transition

The transition stage is best explained by Bell (2008:121) as the liminality; the "in betwixt" where the two individuals are between two worlds. This is more evident with the Mamabolo if the man has engaged the woman and has not yet married her. The two families recognize the two as a couple, yet they are not married, therefore cannot enjoy married couple privileges like living together. Radcliffe-Brown (1987:51) explained that if the couple were to have children and the *magadi* had not been fully observed, the children would not belong to the man (and his kin) but to the woman (and her kin).

c. Stage three – incorporation

Bell (2008:122) states that it is in the incorporation stage where the rite of passage is concluded, and the initiate is fully incorporated into the new group or the social status. In the Mamabolo marriage tradition this would be when the process of *magadi* has been observed and both families are satisfied. This would be followed by the woman being officially transferred to her in-laws' home. According to Radcliffe-Brown (1987:52): "Marriage is not simply a union of a man and a woman but an alliance between two families" and this is symbolised by the exchange of gifts or services; a point supported by Turner (1969:95) when he stated that the incorporation stage includes symbolic actions which represent the return of the initiates to their newly, well-defined positions in society. All these symbolic actions are rituals that are made visual and performed for people to see and believe. Symbolic actions such as slaughtering of cattle are then performed to unite and inform the two families' ancestors. Turner (1969:96) further mentioned that, after being fully incorporated into their new social status, they are expected to behave according to certain customary norms, as it is expected of a Mamabolo wife to bear children for her husband as mentioned by Hoffmann's interlocutors (Joubert, et. al. 2015:106) (in Sepedi):

> *Gomme ge kgwedi e dula, a hlapa, a tloga a ya ga gabo. O bone kgwedi, a boa a dula. Gomme ge a fetilwe ke dikgwedi tše nne, ba mo iša ga gabo; ba mo hlakola, ba mo apeša pheta ye tala, ba kgothela thokgolo mo pheteng. A dula gona go fihla a belega ngwana.*[70]

[70] English translation: "When the new moon starts and menstruation begins, the young woman goes to her parental home. When the menstruation is over, she returns to her husband. If menstruation has not

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… and Van Warmelo's interlocutors, Malatši (1943:5) (in Sepedi):

> *Ge mosadi a sa belege bana go tla tsongwa molato ka ditaola.*[71]

… and affirmed by Radcliffe-Brown (1987:51), Monhla (2004:40), and Sefoka (2017:15).

4.3.3 What do the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections represent?

From the recordings of Hoffmann and Van Warmelo, there are three kinds of marriages that they refer to, namely: (matrilateral) cross-cousin marriage, which is the preferred one, arranged marriage by parents, and choosing own spouse (only mentioned by Hoffmann). In choosing his own spouse, Hoffmann only refers to the young man asking a cattle owner for cattle to engage a woman and does not mention why the young man would wish to engage the woman. Neither Hoffmann nor Van Warmelo's interlocutors mention a church wedding, even though some, if not most of them were Christian. Assumingly this is because the interlocutors might have thought the ethnographers were looking for the pre-modern/pre-Christian/pre-European influence versions. Alternatively, the interlocutors could have given versions of events that they preferred to have happened, instead of the reality of things. As Field (cited in Kaschula 2001:249-150) states:

> the peculiar strength of oral history lies in its potential to provide interviewees [interlocutors] with the space to tell stories about what happened in the past and what possibly happened in a more desirable past… giving them space to talk simultaneously about their past social experiences and their present experiences of needs, wants and desire.

The truthfulness of the interlocutors' versions of events and therefore the ethnographers' recordings go beyond the scope of this study. Regarding the credibility of interlocutors, Portelli (1991:51) maintained that:

> Oral sources are credible but with a different credibility. The importance of oral testimonies may lie not in its adherence to fact, but rather in its departure from it, as imagination, symbolism and desire emerge. Therefore, there are no 'false'

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taken place for four months, the young woman is led back to her parental home; they take her upon her arms and carry her, they decorate her with green beads; in addition, they tie a little container with medicine powder to the beads. The young woman stays in the parental dwelling until she has given birth to the child" (Joubert, et. al. 2015:107). Note that none of Hoffmann's interlocutors explain the significance/symbolism of using green beads. Here, I would deduce that since green is a colour associated with prosperity and growth, I would assume that is why they chose it – using the medicine powder and the energy of the beads to manifest growth and prosperity related to the pregnancy.

[71] English translation: If a wife cannot bear children for her husband, as expected of her, the couple would then consult a herbalist or traditional doctor to confirm if there really is an infertility issue.

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> oral stories … the diversity of oral history consists in the fact that 'wrong' statements are still psychological[ly] 'true', and in that this may be equally as important as factually reliable accounts.

Hence it is important to consider what the interlocutors said and not necessarily compare or "square" it to any other literary source to verify its validity. Breckenridge (cited in Brown 1999:145) argued that "this tendency of 'squaring' oral evidence with documentary records, inevitably tends to privilege the record that emerges from the archives, often doing so without subjecting the documents to the same kind of skeptical scrutiny". Henceforth, my argument is that the recordings of the Mamabolo both in the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collection is what the interlocutors wanted to be known as their (the Mamabolo) history, culture, tradition and customs. Moreover, in such cases, one has to give the ethnographers the benefit of the doubt that they did not edit the recordings to the point of censoring the interlocutors.

It is granted that this might be problematic from a hard-science perspective that wants to simplify history as one singular, homogenous fact, or for making legally binding rules (as had been the case with African common law). Portelli (cited in Field 2001:252) and Thomson (1994:228) have argued that there is a plurality in oral narratives. Moreover, Field states that

> … witnesses are social beings that must bring previous understandings of their lived experiences in order to interpret it and, when they try to proffer this experience in words, they turn to known formulations, modes and genres to do so (i.e. talking to ethnographers and anthropologists who are going to transfer their recordings into literary scholarly articles or published information in a form of books, etc.). This may mean that deeply felt experiences appear cliché-ridden, but even the most 'original' experience has to be represented through accepted rules of language and narrative production (Field cited in Kaschula 2001:252).

Field opened his chapter *Oral Histories: The Art of the Possible* with a quote from Portelli (1994:53):

> oral history approaches truth as much when it departs from 'facts' as when it records them carefully, because the errors and even the lies reveal, under scrutiny, the creative processes of memory, imagination, symbolism and interpretation that endow events with cultural significance (Field 2001:249).

Field (2001:253) further explains that "the oral histories' involvement in creating, documenting, interpreting, publishing and broadcasting the stories of life has the potential to affirm the open and creative possibilities of the past, present and future".

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Hence, Lekgoathi (2009:79-80) states that cultural knowledge is a co-production by African researchers and the ethnographer and anthropologists, noting that African researchers/oral narrators played a role in the making of the African societies. They contributed to the ideologies and systems, whether directly or indirectly, intentionally or not and for that they should be held accountable and responsible. Whether their narrations were truthful or not, is irrelevant. Commenting on truth and orality, African languages researcher Graham Furniss states that:

> the [oral] utterance participates in the establishment of a characterisation of the object [in this case being Bapedi/Mamabolo], an awareness of a truth value in the representation [that being the written document], and an evaluative framework within which that representation is to be understood (cited in Kaschula 2001:201).

It needs to be clear that there are two layers to the study's object of enquiry. Firstly, I investigated the oral utterances made by the interlocutors – the orature of the interlocutors claiming their counter-visuality, their right to look in Mirzoeff's (2011:474) terms (as found in the collections, although it is more so in the Van Warmelo collection than it is in the Hoffmann collection). Secondly, I explored the representation of these utterances in a written format by the ethnographers as seen in the collections (more so in the Hoffmann collection). As much as the ethnographic representation in the collections is of the interlocutors' utterances, the ethnographer had an influence over how the final product looks. The study is not necessarily working with the interlocutors' utterances per se but rather with what the ethnographers presented in their collections. The focus, therefore, is not on what the interlocutors said; the focus is on what is written down (and printed) as a result of Hoffmann and Van Warmelo's initiatives.

The collections have proven themselves to be poor, especially for this study, in the sense that the study focused on marriage, a topic that was not the focus of the collections. While the topic of marriage featured in both collections, the feature was somewhat lacking, as if too thin, in anticipation of the thick kind of description Geertz would have recommended. The feature was quite devoid of the scenographic indicators that one would expect for a ritual as symbolically significant, as publicly and socially displayed as marriage. There are several points and information that were presented in the collections that were not explained. In such instances, I had to rely on my own personal experiences or revert to other sources such as Mokwana (2009), Semenya (2014), and Sefoka (2017) for explanations. Although these sources, and

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myself included, are not of Mamabolo descent; I am familiar with the culture and some of the customs. The study nuances the Mamabolo marriage as Bapedi marriage; however, as illustrated by Mokwana (2009), the tradition is similar amongst the Sepedi speaking people.

To contextualise some events, let us take for example, the moment when the groom visits his bride after they have been engaged but have not yet married. Both Hoffmann's and Van Warmelo's interlocutors report on this event, but differently. Van Warmelo's Ragoboya (1939a:17-18), provided little information regarding this occurrence whereas Hoffmann's interlocutors detailed it more, even though their detailing is still cursory. Joubert (2004:130) cautions that "text makers should avoid underloading a text. In other words, conveying so little information that the implied audience (reader/s) cannot understand the message, or may even become bored, with too little information at their disposal". She maintains that they should rather aim to convey "the spirit and manner of the [oral utterance] and to produce a similar response in the mind of the implied audience (reader/s) to that created during the original [oral utterance]" (Joubert 2004:130). Both Hoffmann and Van Warmelo are guilty of underloading a text, especially the 'visiting the bride' event.

As explained in Chapter Three and reiterated earlier in this chapter, Ragoboya (1939a:17-18) only limited the visit to the *kgoro.* He explained that once the groom's arrival had been announced, his bride would come to greet him at the *kgoro* and take the assegai and shield that he had brought with and that would be the end of the visit. Hoffmann's interlocutors (Joubert, et. al. 2015:99) on the other hand, accounted of the groom being welcomed into the house. Hoffmann, however, presented this information in a way that seems out of context. The information does not make sense and hence, can be misleading.

Let us look again at this visitation event, as presented by Hoffmann and his interlocutors (because Ragoboya's account is extremely underloaded). It must be visualised as the groom and his friend, together with the girls who are there to help care for them, arriving at the bride's home. They are received at the *kgoro,* explained in Chapter Two as referring to: *within or inside the semi-circle-shaped enclosed gathering place of men*, which is usually attached to the cattle kraal and adjacent to the household – and not the entrance/gate. Consequently, as a man, the groom is

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received there, together with his friend, and he stays there while the girls continue on into the bride's house, because women are not allowed to stay at the *kgoro,* (as it is considered a 'men's space/place') unless they are summoned or are there to deliver food. Because the girls have proceeded to the house, it makes sense for them to then announce their (them and the groom's) arrival and then help to prepare food for the groom and his friend, together with the other women who were preparing food for the men at the *kgoro*. The girls will then go serve the groom and his friend (and all the other men) food. It is only after being fed that the groom can be invited into the house.

In his account, Hoffmann fails to mention these contextual details. Of course, one can speculate that these details were not told to Hoffmann by the interlocutors, or maybe, both the interlocutors and Hoffmann took this information for granted because they both understood the context as they were both accustomed to it and neglected the intended audience (reader) who might not be so familiar with the context. Or maybe, this is precisely the kind of information that can be insinuated in orature that cannot be conveyed in writing, unless the ethnographer explicitly works like a dramaturg and is mindful of such nuances.

Even in the house, the groom and his friend do not occupy the common areas. They are designated their own room which they will occupy for the duration of their stay. If this event was happening in a modern day, suburban area, the groom and his friend would be allocated the cottage house. The girls would be the ones moving between the cottage house and the main house, catering for the men. Naturally, the girls (because they are moving between the cottage house/the designated room and the main house/common areas) they will converse and get to engage with the bride, but the groom will not. And should he wish to see his bride's face, he will have to present a gift of any kind to see his bride's face. Unless visualized in the way that I have contextualised it here, Hoffmann and his interlocutors' accounts become misleading to any person who is not a Mopedi or even familiar with the event.

Montenyohl (cited in Joubert 2004:127) mentions that scientific objectivity "can encourage unconscious ethnocentrism"; that the implied audience (reader) sees the print of the ethnographer's writing of the oral text as the norm (Joubert 2004:127) which is the risk and danger of Hoffmann's representations and visualisation. For someone reading Hoffmann's representation/visualisation of a groom visiting his bride, they (the

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reader) will perceive the bride's family as being rude for leaving the guest (the groom and his friend) at the 'gate' for as long as food is being prepared. Hence, it is important as Fine (cited in Joubert 2004:78) maintains, to link a particular event to its social, psychological and physical surroundings - i.e. visual, situational context.

When looked at together, the two collections do appear to strike some sort of balance in the information they offer. As insufficient as they may be in invoking the visual, in some cases where the one lacks, the other supplements. This may have a lot to do with their generational difference. It is worth repeating that neither collection primarily focused on marriage. The Van Warmelo collection was merely interested in providing the government with information for its scheme of ethnic segregation and categorisation and proof for chieftainship claims (Lekgoathi 2009:80). That interlocutors managed to end up including information of this nature, is testament of their assertion to counter the colonial visuality. Hoffmann however, as a result of living among his 'subjects', surely had ample time to delve into issues and get details and nuances of events and practices. If he got those nuances, he failed to put them across in his writing. Thus, whereas the Van Warmelo interlocutors offered little information (as illustrated in the visitation event, for example), Hoffmann was able to give more details even though the details lacked context. Corinna Peniston-Bird's (2009:114) comments that spoken word, when transferred into written text, becomes flattened and loses its nuances is very important when analysing these collections.

This is a point Joubert (2004:28) mentions as one of the challenges when translating oral utterance into written texts, noting that:

> In an alphabetic notation system, letters are clustered into words, the boundaries of which are clearly marked by spaces. Words, in their turn, are joined into sentences, the boundaries of which are marked on the printed page by capital letter and other punctuation marks such as the full stop, the question mark and the exclamation mark. The commas, the colon and the semi-colon conventionally mark sentence-internal clause boundaries. The same kind of orderly physical segmentation does not occur in spoken language; … making this not entirely the fault of the ethnographer per se, but partly the fault of (cultural) translation as a practice.

Not only did the generation gap provide differences in the information in the two collections, seemingly, their different methods also added to the difference.

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4.4 CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this chapter I asked that orature be considered a visuality-of-sorts-too. This is because I wanted to argue for orature as a way of seeing and visualising. The appeal was based on my understanding of Mirzoeff's explanation of visuality and counter-visuality. As explained in the chapter, Mirzoeff's perspective of visuality expands from the narrow view that visuality is just a way of seeing. He extends visuality to being a regime – a way of making the world, "the making of the process of history perceptible to authority" (Mirzoeff 2022:475). According to Mirzoeff (2011:474-475), one can only assemble a visualisation from a place of authority, which Hoffmann and Van Warmelo held as bearers of their respective offices.

I argued that, for orature to be considered a visuality-of-sorts-too, orature had to be seen as a fluid art form as Ntuli (cited in wa Thiongo 2007:5) explained, and as part of the visual system, according to Joubert and Biernacka (2015:23). This study is of a textual-visual representation, where Hoffmann and Van Warmelo describe what they saw/heard/experienced as Bapedi marriage, in their respective collections, using descriptions sourced from written narrations (in Van Warmelo's case) and encounters and interviews (in Hoffmann's case) from (local) interlocutors. This made the task quite dense and layered as I found that I was working with two different mediums. It is for that reason that it was imperative to separate pre-colonial and post-colonial visuality.

In pre-colonial conditions, orature was the African's way of seeing. It was their way of making a world endorsed by chiefly authorities, hence, visuality. During colonial times, the power dynamics shifted. Chiefs no longer had sovereign power. The power was gradually shared with, for example, missionaries, who were now in a position to assemble a visuality using a different medium, writing. It is already known, as Mirzoeff explained, that authority enables visuality. Therefore, in pre-colonial times, chiefs had authority, hence they could "assemble a visualisation" (Mirzoeff 2011:474) through telling stories that legitimised their authority (Hofmeyr 1993:123-131). In colonial times, the "heroes", i.e. missionaries, had the authority to "assemble a visualisation". In postcolonial responses, orature was (and is still) then used as a counternarrative, a counter-visuality, a claim to the right to look, a claim to present an alternative reality and a claim to independence.

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In positioning this argument of the interlocutor's account of events in the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections as counter-visuality to the coloniser's visuality, I have had to apply Mitchell's concept of the genealogy of images (Mitchell 1984:505), which includes mental and verbal images. These mental and verbal images vary from dreams, memories, ideas and fantasies, to metaphors, descriptions and written texts. Mirzoeff (2011:476) when explaining visuality, alerted that visuality is not limited to "visual perceptions in the physical sense"; visuality also includes "information, imagination and insight". I have then furthered the point of visuality not being limited to visual perceptions by employing Mitchell's inclusion of writings as verbal images to demonstrate how the interlocutors' attempts at taking the white man's pen to write down their orature is testament of their counter-visuality. Addison expressed that words, especially when well chosen, have the power to draw a vivid picture in the mind of the reader. If scenography is the art of setting a scene in the theatrical sense, and seducing the senses of a viewer, then extrapolating that same thought, words, when well arranged on paper, have the very same power.

Essentially, when the interlocutors agreed to be interviewed by Hoffmann or to send in their manuscripts to Van Warmelo on the marriage custom, they participated in capturing one moment observed in performance and fixed it through inscription. Geertz (1973:19, Geertz 1980:175) explained inscription as the process of taking one moment of occurrence and writing it down as an account that can be reconsulted. This is what Geertz termed text analogy – inscribing a passing moment, like the narration of the marriage custom, and giving it longevity.

When speaking about counter-visuality, Mirzoeff (2011:483) mentions techniques that can be put in place in order to achieve a counter-visuality. One of those techniques is education. It is known (as already discussed in Chapter Two) that the missionary societies, the Berlin Mission Society included, established schools in the Mamabolo region. It is through these schools that the Mamabolo people were introduced to the practice of literacy, i.e. reading and writing. It is my stance that, after noting the value of literacy and the permeance and visibility of written accounts (Lekgoathi 2009:70), the interlocutors saw an opportunity to take that very practice of writing and used it to inscribe their history, culture, tradition and customs, so that they could have longevity. They used education, as a counter-visuality technique to assemble a counter visualisation of themselves. To a certain extent, they even pushed it further and took

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it upon themselves to educate the coloniser about themselves. The interlocutors were aware of the kind of power and influence the respective ethnographers they worked with had, and thus I am not convinced that the interlocutors did not consider the wide reach that the information they contributed was going to have. Hoffmann was writing for his German audience and fellow academics who had (and still have) access to his writings. Van Warmelo was reporting to the government. In participating in the ethnographers' work, the interlocutors educated the ethnographers' intended audience about themselves as well.

Commenting on visuality, Watson (2010:225) states that "looking is not a simple matter and seeing is related both to what is known and to what counts as available to be observed". He explains that visuality, seen in this context

> assumes a metaphorical status, no longer merely a way of seeing, not as the 'privileged sense' but a way of perceiving, of understanding and of knowing [and therefore] a metaphor describing social significance becomes both a source and a repository of cultural knowledge.

In this chapter, I have shown that through collaborations with the ethnographers, the Mamabolo interlocutors have become co-producers of their own history and cultural knowledge. By claiming their right to look through using orature as their medium, and taking on the practice of writing, the interlocutors assembled a counter-visuality through writing as verbal images. Furthermore, I have shown how orature, as a fluid art form should be considered as a visuality-of-sorts-too, and that verbal images can be used to visualize. Additionally, in interpreting the Mamabolo marriage custom as a drama analogy, I have shown again, how orature forms part of visual culture.

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 GENERAL SUMMARY

Marriage is one subject that can be discussed from various perspectives. In this study marriage was approached as a rite of passage from the viewpoints of various Mamabolo interlocutors. This study compared two different ethnographic collections, the *Hoffmann Collection of Cultural Knowledge* (2015) and the Van Warmelo collection, scrutinising their representation of marriage in one particular Bapedi community at different moments in time.

For this purpose, in Chapter Two, the study first conceptualised the role of the interlocutors consulted in the two collections together with the ethnographers (Hoffmann and Van Warmelo), giving a brief background on them as well as the differences and similarities in their methodologies. Subsequently, the chapter laid out the history of the Mamabolo as presented by Van Warmelo's interlocutors and the customs and practices of the Mamabolo as presented mostly by Hoffmann's interlocutors. The history and the customs laid out in Chapter Two are a summary of the interlocutors' accounts in relation to other written sources on these topics. This serves to illustrate the role of the ethnographers and the interlocutors scrutinised in the study, and how they shaped the production of 'the Mamabolo' as a scholarly discourse.

Chapter Three was dedicated to a discussion on marriage, opening with a generic overview of this social practice, taking it from sociologist Edward Westermarck's century-old explanation of human marriage (as preceding and mimicking animal behaviour and how the civil man adopted that behaviour into his current state); to the execution of marriage as it has come to be known today. In this overview of marriage, different definitions were investigated and Miller's (as cited in Vaughn 2010:162) was found to have a more inclusive umbrella definition that seems to be working for the twenty-first century. According to his definition, marriage is "a more or less stable union, usually between two people, who may be, but are not necessarily, co-

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residential, sexually involved with each other, and procreative with each other" (cited in Vaughn 2010:162).

Besides the definition of marriage, the process of mate selection, forms of marriage, romantic love and wedding ceremonies were investigated. These very topics were again discussed in relation to African marriages with a thorough coverage of the process of *magadi.* This provided context in the build-up to the discussion on the Mamabolo marriage as represented by Hoffmann and Van Warmelo in their respective collections.

In arguing for the significance of visualisation and visuality in studying this topic, visual culture theorist Nicholas Mirzoeff's approach served as a foundation for understanding visuality as a theoretical framework. To substantiate the argument for orature as postcolonial counter-visuality, artist and academic Pitika Ntuli's quote on orature was reiterated in support of other African scholars to highlight how the Mamabolo (interlocutors) were able to use orature as a medium known to them to claim their right to look. By telling their own stories, their history and customs – through inscription – they exercised their "independence", as Mirzoeff (2011:473) puts it.

Arguing for orature as counter-visuality was one part of the matter. The complementing part, which could be thought of as the bigger part, was arguing for mental and verbal images as constituting visuality. Although the study was comparing two ethnographic collections which were in written and printed form, it should be borne in mind that the writing in the ethnographic collections had drawn on oral narratives. However, the object of enquiry for the study was the written version of those oral narratives. For this aspect, W.J.T. Mitchell's (1984:505) genealogy of images came to be useful. Mitchell's elaborate explanation of mental and verbal images along with Aronson's (2014) application of the concept scenography were utilised to motivate how that which the ethnographers had written down (their power of selection and arrangement, translations and comments through thick description, cultural translation, text and drama analogy) contributed to how the Bapedi (Mamabolo) marriage is visualised.

Finally, a comparison of the two collections was drawn regarding the representation of the Bapedi marriage, looking at the mate selection process, the engagement, and the wedding. There were similarities in the collections with the main difference being that the accounts in the Van Warmelo collection, in most instances, were more lacking

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in detail than Hoffmann's interlocutors' versions. The information from Van Warmelo's interlocutors came across as "underloaded", giving little information (Joubert (2004:130), which is where the Hoffmann collection proved to be more helpful. His collection was more detailed in the recording of the Mamabolo marriage, although it lacked nuance and context and at times risked being misinformative and misleading.

Through a close study of both collections, it became apparent that the two collections had not been painted with similar brush strokes. While the interlocutors did not provide much information, Van Warmelo's collection nevertheless relied predominately on the interlocutors' manuscripts. Hoffmann's is more ethnographic – which is one of the differences that could be explained by a) the generational gap between the sources, b) the difference in methodologies and c) the intentions of the respective ethnographers. Van Warmelo as a state ethnologist was an employee of the government and thus, his collection was more loaded with historical content – concerned with indigenous law and succession disputes over chieftainship and other governing concerns of black people (Hammond-Tooke 1997:111-112). Hoffmann's collections (as per its title) was more cultural, and therefore more interested in the living experience of the people he integrated with and therefore he had time to dwell on narratives.

Taking anthropologist Clifford Geertz's thick description and drama analogy and complementing it with anthropologist Alfred Radcliff-Brown's (1987:49) "three important aspects of African marriage" and Aronson's scenography, the study demonstrated how the writings of Hoffmann and Van Warmelo and their representations of the Mamabolo marriage were staged and visualised as a rite of passage – a ritual event performance playing itself out for the intended reader.

5.2 FINAL OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS

5.2.1 On Hoffmann, Van Warmelo and the Interlocutors

Lekgoathi (2009:69) is of the opinion that ultimately, the ethnographers (in this case both Hoffmann and Van Warmelo) had authority to select and order the information. Yet, they still had to negotiate complicated power relations between themselves as

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white/European researchers and the African people they studied. This power relation had an impact on the understandings of cultural and racial differences yielded in their research because at the end of the day, Hoffmann and Van Warmelo's approach to fieldwork was a like-minded selection from German missionary and scholarly traditions (Kriel 2015:36). As such, their lenses for viewing and interpreting the information were similar. In their publications they both presented information from the interlocutors in vernacular accompanied by (English) translation and their own commentary (seen in footnotes in the Hoffmann collection) with the shared validation that they were establishing a way for "knowledge of others to be made public", giving a platform for people "to speak for themselves" (Kriel 2015:37).

Through their acts of collecting, the ethnographers succeeded in preserving information which made it possible for researchers such as myself to trace the ways in which earlier generations of community leaders articulated their historical consciousness while negotiating change. Van Warmelo had no interest in interpreting his collection and neither had Hoffmann gone far beyond translating (into German) what he had collected. As far as could be established, the two collections had never been put next to each other for scrutiny, so that the narrations of the two generations of interlocutors could be compared – and this is exactly what I have endeavored to do in this study.

The differences and similarities in the two collections are quite clear and as such need to be highlighted. For example, with regard to the interlocutors and their motives: as much as content is important, as Rose (2016:22) advises, when interpreting visual images, one needs to consider the contexts within which the visuals were made. The motivation of the interlocutors is important to mention and pay attention to. Lekgoathi (2009:69) mentions that the interlocutors Van Warmelo worked with wanted the information to be written down, well-aware that a) it had a promising effect (i.e. the power of inscription – what is written can never be lost) and, b) once it is written, it cannot be argued against.

By the time the interlocutors (consulted for this study) submitted their manuscripts to Van Warmelo, around 1930–1940, Hoffmann had already completed his ethnographic work. According to Hammond-Tooke (1997:110) not much South African ethnological work had been conducted by the time Van Warmelo took his appointment in 1930.

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However, there was work, scattered in literature journals, based on research by missionaries of the Berlin Mission for the Venda and Northern Sotho, making it safe to deduce that Van Warmelo could have stumbled upon Hoffmann's ethnographic work as a Berlin missionary who had worked on the Northern Sotho groups.

One must take into consideration that Hoffmann and Van Warmelo were white men studying black people. Moreover, at that time, the legal segregation of races in South Africa was in its early stages, so the relationship between white people and black people was of a superior-inferior dynamic. Aware of the government's intention to segregate and categorise them based on language differences, the interlocutors wanted their ideas to be considered, and to contribute to knowledge and history making. Another factor to be considered is the reality of the interlocutors. Life as they knew it, was changing. They were used to being in chieftaincies and being ruled by *dikgoši*, having a *kgoro*, and living in circular shaped houses instead of rectangular/square shaped ones; and now, traces of restorative nostalgia (Boym 2001:xvi) for this familiar past, can be picked up in their narrations. But above all that, was the desire to preserve something of themselves in this changing world. The interlocutors took the ethnographers' work as a platform to do so.

Interlocutors like Letsoalo and Ragoboya for example, handed in their labour in the form of manuscripts. The narrative style they perform is that of an elderly person sitting under the shade of a tree on a very hot summer's day and confidently, not aggressively or defensively, but calmly giving information like a grandmother relaying information to her grandchildren around a bonfire. That is the kind of meticulous, in-depth and thorough narration sense they exude, not one of caution or distrust, but rather, expertly relaying information as asked (by the Van Warmelo questionnaire/instructions).

Contrary to that, is the payment issue. Like Hoffmann, Van Warmelo gathered information from "local African 'experts' like teachers and religious ministers" (Kriel 2015:36), all of whom were men. Van Warmelo made it clear in his questionnaire that "manuscripts that are accepted will be paid for according to their value as assessed by the Government Ethnologist" (Kriel 2015:36). Thus, Van Warmelo created an opportunity for these breadwinners to relay any information and get paid for doing so. Most teachers during that time were teaching at mission schools, making it impossible for them to teach on the kind of information asked by Van Warmelo. In their capacity

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as teachers, they were not compromised by receiving payment for their ethnographic information since, as a teacher, you get paid for your expertise. The monetary incentive, in addition to having their (version of) history inscribed, were enough motivation for the men to write to Van Warmelo.

Thomas Spear (2003:7) warns that there is no such thing as the "invention" of culture. Such things as "tribes" and culture cannot be "invented". It is rather information that was produced by two entities – African interlocutor/informants, as well as the missionaries or ethnographers and anthropologists at that time. This means that the African interlocutors/informants played a fifty percent role as to how cultural knowledge as we know it today was constituted. This is a fact that needs to be acknowledged. Lekgoathi (2009:80) states that "cultural knowledge is fundamentally a result of co-production" between the interlocutors and the ethnographers. Furthermore, the information as we have it is the ethnographers' interpretation of the interlocutors' self-identity through the prism of the ethnographers' training in linguistics and ethnography and missioning, respectively (Lekgoathi 2009:80).

Knowledge can be appropriated and applied in many ways. Everyone had their aim; Hoffmann had his reasons as much as Van Warmelo had his and so did the interlocutors. How the cultural knowledge is used afterwards is not up to the knowledge creators. Theirs was to produce the knowledge and subsequently, how it would be perceived, was out of their control.

5.2.2 On marriage

According to Kgobe (cited in Joubert 2004:385) "tradition should not be perceived as something that only belongs to the past, but should rather be seen as 'a living and dynamic process that began in the past, flourishes in the present, and looks forward to the future as well'". As confirmed by Price (1954: 11), "few of these systems of law are fixed and absolute". Hence it is important to highlight the rigidity that these collections have the potential of contributing to. The collections only captured a single moment in time. It should never be thought that what the collections have recorded is the standard of how the Bapedi marriage is practised. In the same breath, perhaps it is important to highlight that such a fixity of inscription is typical of a colonial visuality.

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By inscribing their orature, the interlocutors' counter-visuality fell into the same trap. As much as there are key practices and prestation that need to be observed – they are not fixed on a specific way or a specific person.

The practice of *go fološa mokgonyana godimo ga ntlo* as discussed in Chapter Two and Three was only mentioned by Hoffmann and none of Van Warmelo's interlocutors spoke of it. Even in how Hoffmann reported on it, it is clear from his recording that it was neither a prestation nor compulsory; it was only done by a select few of the Mamabolo. As such, it reveals diversity and variety in practices and affirms the agency of the Mamabolo people in the way they decided to practise their tradition.

The recordings in these collections have provided a template of Bapedi marriage, one that could be (and had been) adjusted (at particular moments in time as well as) as times evolved. According to Price (1954:18), customary regulations can progress to meet the needs of the times. For example, when my partner and I got to a point where we were ready to move-in together, we knew what steps we needed to take to make that wish a reality and not come across as disrespectful to our parents and cultures. Being Bapedi ourselves, and him of Mamabolo descent, we knew our parents had to be involved. Our union was not arranged by our parents; ours is a romantic love relationship. The first step was introducing each other to our mothers (because both our fathers have passed away and we were raised in female-led houses) to inform them first of our union and secondly of our intention to cohabitate.

I need to make it clear that I particularly do not believe or subscribe to the marriage institution whereas my partner does. Although my intention was to find an amicable way that we can cohabit without disrespecting our parents and cultures, his intention was to initiate marriage talks with my mother. Subsequently, my mother and my partner were able to twist my arm, using what I wanted, to get what they both wanted – my mother, to have her daughter married and my partner, to marry 'the love of his life'.

As Rabogoya (1939a:17), Mokwana (2009:76), Semenya (2014:3) and Hoffmann's interlocutors (Joubert, et. al. 2015:91) illustrated, my partner initiated the process by sending a letter[72] to my family (i.e. my mother) to request a day to meet so that the

[72] Refer to appendix A.

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two families could be introduced to each other and for my partner's family to voice their son's intentions. Because my partner and I had already spoken to our parents and had already discussed our intentions, the letter sent was not a surprise, but rather something expected. Moreover, the date agreed on was a decision made between me, my mother and my partner without having to do the back and forth of deciding on the date of the meeting as Ngubane (1987:174) mentioned. This shows some modifcation to the Mamabolo marriage as recorded in the two collections. Namely: in the collections, a romantic love union is one that is not spoken of. According to the collections, I, as the one to be engaged, was not supposed to be involved in the process of arranging the families' meeting. Moreover, because of the ease of communication afforded to us by technological advancements, deciding on a date for the two families to meet was done instantly over the phone (again, something I was not supposed to be involved in, according to the collections).

On the agreed date, the families met and the process of *magadi* was initiated. My partner's family stated their intention to marry *ka go thiba sefero* and proceeded to ask what was required of them to fully have me as their bride. The number of cattle was mentioned in monetary value along with all the gifts and requirements needed.[73]

There are developments that need to be observed from this example. First was the adjustment of choosing a date, secondly the mate selection. Both Ragoboya (1939a:17) and Hoffmann's interlocutors (Joubert, et. al. 2015:91) reported that the parents are the ones that choose partners for their child. This was not the case in this example provided. Thirdly, cattle, in this case, were in monetary value. On this Semenya (2014:2) notes that even in instances where *magadi* cattle are in cash or monetary value, they are still referred to as "cattle". The last and probably most significant observation is that these *magadi* discussions were led by a woman from my family (my mother, who has attained the knowledge and experience through her representation as *kgadi* from her maiden family and her representation of *malome* in absentia of her deceased husband). Although the chief negotiator was a man from my partner's side, his mother and aunt were present and they contributed to the discussion, which is a rare, if not a forbidden occurrence. This is because, according

[73] Refer to appendix B. The amounts in this letter were covered to respect the privacy of the two families involved.

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to tradition as affirmed in both Hoffmann and Van Warmelo's records, there ought not be any presence of women in the *magadi* discussions unless as *Mmaditsela* or women fetching their new bride to accompany her to her new home, her in-laws'.

The presence and contribution of the women in their children's *magadi* discussions is for two reasons. Firstly, the women have led their households and are subsequently familiar with being in decision-making positions. Secondly, as Price (1954:18) had also observed, already some decades ago, the persons required for the traditional observances are not always available. In my own example, my uncles were inexperienced. Although tradition dictates that as men, the uncles, specifically, are meant to lead these discussions, my uncles were deprived of the opportunities to learn these procedures as a result of having migrated from their homesteads to urban areas in search of employment.

My own example not only shows that traditions and cultures are not as rigid as it is believed, but that the very traditions and culture can adjust to the evolution of the time. As pointed out by Weedon (2004:10-11), people are the ones that make culture and not the other way around, and as Monhla (2004:54) stated, the marriage custom is one that is organic and evolves. Going back to Geertz's drama analogy, people may know how to act their part, but people can also improvise their performances in accordance to the changing requirements of the occasion.

The evolution of culture and society is linked to other societal influences such as economics and currency. At the time when Hoffmann and Van Warmelo were collecting the information, cattle had cultural and economic currency. However, in the twenty-first century, moreover, in urban areas, cattle do not hold that much currency, if any – hence the transition of *magadi* being given in monetary value. Rey (cited by Burnham 1987:44) explained that the monetisation and inflation of bride-prices are linked with the penetration of capitalism into African societies.

The transition to *magadi* being calculated in monetary value has its own disadvantages, such as making the process of *magadi* "privatised, individualised, commercialised, secularised, and even trivialised" (Ngubane 1987:10). Furthermore, Ngubane (1987:10) argued that the substitution of cattle with cash might have the consequence that most likely, men will discuss the *magadi* individually without consulting the womenfolk and subsequently women would no longer receive cattle for

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themselves and no longer play pivotal roles in co-operative kinship networks. Burnham (1987:44) was of the opinion that monetisation of *magadi* opened chances for exploitation of the young men by the elders. This is something which Price (1954:17) already spoke to, stating the potential for the cash given for *magadi* as being readily spent by the recipient and not being used for what it was intended for (i.e. pay for the wedding).

Price (1954:17) went on to explain that the traditional receivers of *magadi* would tend to push the cash equivalents of *magadi* to the highest possible figures, making it difficult for young men to meet these demands and their kinfolk refusing to contribute to their *magadi* knowing that the money would be spent and placed beyond recall by the receivers. According to Semenya (2014:2), educated women are thought to be likely to be employed and earn relatively well, making them highly valued during *magadi* discussions. The highly priced *magadi* affects men negatively in the sense that it gets interpreted as “buying a wife” and thus leading to the misunderstanding that women are men’s property or, alternatively, leading to young men retaliating against marriage because of the high *magadi* price (Semenya 2014:2). Hence, many couples might resort to relationship models such as cohabitation. By developing their traditions and cultivating a culture that works as times evolve, “Bapedi are not deserting traditional practices for modern ones but rather creating systems of marriage and kinsfolk that apply resources of the past and the present, negotiating the tensions that emerge, and drawing on both traditional and modern moralities as they see fit” (Smith cited in Monhla 2014:55-56). The very use of “see” in the figurative sense here, affirms the counter-visual way in which ordinary Bapedi assert their right to look into cultural dictations on a daily basis.

5.2.3. On translation and interpretation

Rose (2016:xxii) asserts that “interpreting images is exactly that: interpretation”. It has nothing to do with discovering their “truth” and it is therefore important to justify your interpretation through an explicit methodology. In interpreting the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections, I made use of rite of passage and the drama analogy as methodologies.

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Translation, according to Joubert, does not only involve the usual interlingual translations – that is the translation between different languages; but translation can also be intersemiotic as Fine (cited in Joubert 2004:91) explains:

> an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems… since speech and writing employ two different kinds of symbolic systems, the former using not only acoustic signals but gestural signals as well, and the latter using only a sequence of visual signals arranged on paper.

In written communication, the words are fixed on paper and the reader can take them in slowly or rapidly (Joubert 2004:92). Continuing this thought, Joubert explains the difference between spoken and written language. She insists that the grammar, i.e. the capitalisation, punctuation marks and spaces of the written language create a physical segmentation of words on paper, segmentation that does not happen in spoken language.

Thus, Joubert (2004:86-87) states that the responsibility of the text-maker

> is to re-present a performance in another medium and, at the same time, to become a mediator between one mode of communication consisting of an oral-physical sign system and another, consisting of a visual-written sign system…

… ensuring that the print does not only record the aesthetic performance event but also supply necessary commentary, either to

> … be inserted between the lines of the main or transcribed text [or] the translation may also be put on odd-numbered mirroring the even-numbered pages of the original translation of the verbal utterance (Joubert 2004:123).

Regarding interpretation, there are multiple reasons why outside researchers explain and interpret fieldwork information incorrectly. For one, they perpetuate long held stereotypes of the researched culture and consequently succumb to colonial visuality. Secondly, they are not familiar with how folklore is used to comment on social and political situations. Lastly, they are unfamiliar with the multiple ways language communicates meaning (Joubert 2004:103). Hence Haraway (cited in Rose 2016:23) advises that, as researchers, it is important to consider one's own way of seeing the historical, geographical and social perspectives as those inform one's perception and interpretation (Schirato & Webb 2010:19).

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Joubert (2004:123) asserts that:

> In order to clearly grasp the cultural and social significance and meaning of verbal utterances, it is important for the textmaker to understand the semantic aspects of the vocabulary of a language, and the ordering of it into semantic fields.

One would have thought that Hoffmann, who learned Sepedi (of the Mamabolo) and Van Warmelo as a linguist, who was fluent in all Bantu languages of South Africa (Hammond-Tooke 1997:111;116) would yield a better understanding of the oral utterances of their interlocutors, its meanings and significance and henceforth a nuanced, contextualised representation.

Joubert (2004:92) shared that, while she was busy with her field work, she gradually became more aware of the difference between the oral and the written transmission of communication. She offered examples of how, when she asked the interlocutors to retell their stories or repeat songs or dictate poems, the interlocutors…

> took great care to eliminate errors and elaborate on the formal features of the written text. In some cases, interlocutors were arguing among themselves about the correctness of their dictations, because they were concerned about the fact that the material would be printed in a book for everybody to see and read … the written word acquires a more distinguished and greater cultural prestige than the spoken word.

5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY:

The nature of the study yields a few limitations. Firstly, the study could only investigate marriage within one community, the Mamabolo. Subsequent to that, is the collections the study enquired, the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections, were not collections on marriage, but rather, featured relevant information on the Bapedi marriage custom for the feasibility of this study. The collections themselves were limiting to the study in a way that the study could only focus on what the collections had to offer. Noteworthy cultural elements such as weddings processions, symbolism, and significance of the practices, and the material objects highlighted in some of the chapters were outside the scope of the study and thus could not have been explored further.

Material culture objects such as the gifts given at the *magadi* process and the *legeswa* (clothes made from animal skin), suggest an opportunity for further research in the

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domain of material culture and visual studies. One could look at the visualisation of these objects, describe their appearance and examine and discuss them so as to establish their significance and symbolism. There is also an opportunity to look at the wedding procession with actual images of objects from the National Cultural History Museum's collections.

There is also an opportunity in future research to look into the challenges the interlocutors (more so Van Warmelo's interlocutors) faced when collecting data for their manuscripts. These include: how the interlocutors and their questions were received by the communities, what the restrictions of data collection in these communities were, how the interlocutors traversed their study areas, and negotiated hostilities, if they may have faced any.

5.4 CONCLUSION

Foucault (cited in Rose 2016:190) highlights that:

> We should admit … that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations.

The ethnographers were in positions of power; one being a missionary holding a high spiritual position and the other having been a head state ethnologist. They also had power to decide, select and order how the information was arranged in their collections. The interlocutors who contributed to the collections were also powerful members of their communities, either as teachers, elders, or religious leaders. Their positions of power enabled them to be co-producers of the cultural knowledge.

> Foucault insisted that knowledge and power are imbricated one in the other, not only because all knowledge is discursive and all discourse is saturated with power, but because the most powerful discourse, in terms of the productiveness of their social effects, depends on assumptions and claims that their knowledge is true (Rose 2016:190).

Since they were powerful figures, the information provided by the interlocutors and written down by the ethnographers leaves the assumption that it is the norm. It

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contributes to a visuality – a way of seeing, an assumption that this is the reality. This is not to take away any fact or any measure of accuracy from the information, but to highlight the privilege of the position of power of those who produced this knowledge.

Geertz (1973:16) pointed out that anthropology is a scholarly endeavour existing in books, articles, lectures, etc., whereas culture is an everyday activity existing at trading posts, homes, social environments and so forth. Yet, anthropologists might not always be aware of this difference. According to Geertz (and note the aptness of the visual metaphor he chooses):

> to become aware of it is to realize that the line between mode of representation and substantive content is as undrawable in cultural analysis as it is in painting; and that fact in turn seems to threaten the objective status of anthropological knowledge by suggesting that its source is not social reality but scholarly artifice.

Be that as it may, by comparing the *Hoffmann Collection of Cultural Knowledge* (2015) and the Van Warmelo collection, the study eradicated the misconception of the rigidity of traditions and cultural customs. Through time and societal changes, tradition and culture also evolve as people evolve. This point was shown by the generational differences noted in the Hoffmann and Van Warmelo collections as well the example of my own experience. Marriage is a social practice and as such it will adapt and adjust to social statuses. Bapedi marriage is not immune to these adaptations. Its evolution has been demonstrated in this study. By having undertaken this study into the ethnographic collection, I too have, so to speak, exercised my right to look.

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Appendices

Le ya go: Baga Phala

Thobela

Thobela ka gae. Re le ngwalela lengwalo le, go le tsebiša gore rena re le baga Mthunzi, re le kgopela go tla mmogo le lena gore re tlo tseba ka gae. Re be re kgopela gotla ka di 3/11/2018 ge go kgonega. Re ka thabela go kopana le lena. Re leboga Modimo gore bana ba kgonne gore ba kopanye a amabedi.

Modimo a le dire ka go loka.

Gotswa go ba Mthunzi

Appendix A: Letter from the Mthunzis sent to the Phala family to initiate intentions to marry.

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Re kopane ka ga Phala rele baga Mthunzi re tlile go kokota.

Baga Mthunzi ba ntšhitše pulamolomo ya R[redacted],00

Ba ntšha R[redacted],00 ya go kokota.

Baga Phala ba e amogetše.

Baga Phala

Witnesses
1. [illegible]
2. Simon Phala
3. [illegible]

Baga Mthunzi

Witnesses:
1. Norman Buta
2. [illegible]
3. Bella Seneamodi
4. [illegible]

Baga Mthunzi ba kgopetše seroto, Ba boledišane le Baga Phala. Ba kgopetše gore go ba bowa ba bowe le R[redacted],00, Jase, Lepara, khiba le tjale ya Mmago Ngwana. le kobo tše pedi. le tuku ya hlogo ya mmago ngwana. le thipa.

Appendix B: proof of *magadi* agreement between the Mthunzi and Phala families.

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