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# Adaptive translation of medieval morality plays for contemporary African audiences: A case study of the morality play *Everyman* in Sesotho<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This article is part of an ongoing project on scripture engagement in the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa to improve the liturgical activities and worshipping. The article builds on the previous work by Makutoane and Naude (2004), which concentrated only on the translation of *Everyman/Elkerlijk* into Sesotho by using adaptation as the main translation strategy. The play was performed by the older generation who welcomed the play as it is in Sesotho. The current article advances this initiative by redesigning a performative translation of the play into Sesotho with the main focus of adapting the strange Catholic theological terms into Protestant understanding. One must be conscious of the fact that the proposed translation was performed by the team of younger generation. To this new team of performers, the former translation was falsified because of its strange theological concepts such as “saints”, “*Adona*”, and “priests”. These theological concepts, according to this team of performers, would make their performance translation inappropriate and incomprehensible to their audience. Therefore, they proposed that the strange theological concepts be adapted into Protestant space first, before the performance can commence. Therefore, what makes the previous work different from the current one is that it addresses the concern of the performers: the strange Catholic concepts must be adapted into Protestant circles to enable an understandable performative translation of the play into Sesotho. This proposal by the younger performers was not raised in the previous work or during the dramatisation of this play by the older generation. As a result, there is an element of self-emergence by the respective younger generation of performers in this current article. This is the major contribution offered by this current work.

## ABSTRACT

*Morality plays such as Everyman were first produced in England during the latter half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Their fictional nature, however, clothed moral truths in line with Catholic doctrines. The main aim of these plays was to teach audiences lessons in Christian living and salvation. Although these plays initially have a Catholic background, this does not exclude them from providing valuable lessons in Christian teaching to Protestant believers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The major problem with these plays is their interpretation of theological concepts such as “saints”, “Adonia”, and “priests”, making it difficult for Protestant believers, the Sesotho audience, in this case, to understand Everyman translated in Sesotho and written from a Catholic perception of such concepts. This article seeks to address the most important question: How can a better translation of the morality play Everyman be offered to Sesotho-speaking Protestant believers? The answer to this question is that an adaptative translation of the morality play Everyman into Sesotho better addresses the needs of these Protestant believers. In addition, this kind of translation should also be performative. The study uses the research methodologies of translation adaptation, performance criticism, and the functionalist skopos theory within the broader theoretical framework of a complexity approach to translation.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In 2003, I had the privilege of translating the morality play, *Everyman*, into Sesotho. My main intention was to showcase alternative means of communicating the Scripture more effectively and efficiently through drama (Makutoane 2003; Makutoane & Naudé 2004). The Sesotho translation of this play was dramatised during Easter 2004; the Sesotho-speaking participants and audience were deeply moved by the religious concepts conveyed in the play. Fifteen years later, I arranged for this drama to be performed as part of a big project, “Scripture engagement”, to promote and advance Christian teachings to Sesotho speakers and other languages in Africa. I distributed the script to the performing group consisting of young Sesotho-speaking adults for rehearsals. During the day of the rehearsal, the group members were dissatisfied with certain theological concepts in the play, for example, “saints”, “*Adona*”, and “priests”, which appeared different from their interpretation and understanding. Their predominant question was: Why are these concepts found in this play and how can they be modified to suit our current understanding and context? I explained to them that this play emanates from a medieval background, but that should not be a reason to exclude the play from being performed in their context, because it embraces valuable lessons in Christian teaching to contemporary African audiences, especially to members of the the 21<sup>st</sup>-century Sesotho Protestant Church. By adapting these theological concepts of *Everyman* to the Sesotho Christian framework or theology, its

translation can be understood and it can be deemed helpful to the Sesotho community to promote valuable and memorable Christian teachings.

This paper starts with an overview history of morality plays; the background of the morality play *Everyman*; adaptation, performance criticism, and skopos theory as theoretical frameworks within the broader framework of complexity approach to translation; how the concepts 'saint', 'Adonai', and 'priest' are conveyed in biblical Hebrew and Sesotho; adaptation of the respective theological concepts of a medieval play *Everyman* into Sesotho, and conclusions.

## 2. OVERVIEW: THE HISTORY AND NATURE OF MORALITY PLAYS

Morality plays were first produced in England during the latter half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Rohrberger *et al.* 1968). The authors of these plays might have been monks or clerics. Actors do not portray actual people but rather personified qualities such as greed, humanity, and death (Clarke 1965). Unlike 21<sup>st</sup>-century plays, this kind of play contains no direction for settings or costumes; therefore, it is possible to set the play within any cultural context. The characters, who are personifications of good or evil, are locked in a struggle with a person's soul as the prize of victory or forfeit of defeat. As a result, morality plays are unrealistic and can expound a moral argument on stage. The historical events follow a structural pattern of innocence, fall, and redemption.

Sometimes this structure may follow an alternative generic pattern of narrative, namely innocence, fall (corruption), absolution, innocence, fall (corruption), absolution, innocence, fall (corruption), death, damnation, and merciful redemption (reconciliation with God). This means that a morality play may shorten the first narrative event structure or repeat this structure in terms of its second or alternative generic narrative structure. Still, its narrative closure should portray the efficacy of penance;<sup>2</sup> hence, the morality plays of 15<sup>th</sup>- and 16<sup>th</sup>-century England are termed salvation plays (Gilman 1989) or plays of conversion (Bert 1975).

The morality play *Everyman* is a moral allegory in a dramatic form (Perrine & Arp 1988). It was written before the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century by an unknown author and has been preserved in only four printed copies, dating between 1508 and 1537 (Cawley 1965). *Everyman*, which consists of 920 lines, is the most widely known play of the existing examples of morality plays. Its central theme is about recognising one's morality, which requires a reconsideration of

2 A penance is a punishment accepted by somebody as an expression of repentance, especially one given by a priest.

personal values and a search for salvation. Bert (1975) argues that this play provides a virtual guidebook to medieval concepts of conversion. It poses the question: "What should a person do to be saved?". The play offers an answer to this question as it unfolds and it identifies dead ends that do not lead to salvation.

Makutoane and Naudé (2004:159-185) summarise the storyline of this play as follows:

- God dispatched Death to command Everyman to take a journey from which he would return because he had to be prepared to account for all his deeds – either good or bad.
- Everyman decided to look for someone who would accompany him on the trip but he found no one.
- He asked different characters or values, including Kindred and Cousin, who operated as a pair, as well as Fellowship and Goods, who were so important to him in life, but no one was willing to do so.
- As a result, Everyman became disillusioned
- When Everyman despaired, Good Deeds, the first female character in the play, declared her willingness to go. Strength and Knowledge allowed her to accompany Everyman.
- In an attempt to change his life, Everyman asked for holy communion but Knowledge made him confess his sins first.
- Everyman performed a devotion to show his sorrowfulness and repentance and Good Deeds called Strength to pick him up from where he was lying.
- Knowledge and Good Deeds advised Everyman to call Strength, Discretion, Beauty, and the Five Wits together to assist him in visiting the church, where he received Extreme Unction, which is the sacramental appointment of a person who faces a hazardous situation in which they might lose their life (Deist 1984).
- Good Deeds and Knowledge promised to stay with him until the end. Everyman saw his troublesome accounts put in order and he experienced an entirely new dawn.

Given the above summary, one could assert the following. First, the theological importance and the dramatic potential of a conversion play such as *Everyman* show their main characters falling from innocence into corruption and then rising to salvation through transformation. Consequently, *Everyman* portrays the conversion of a figure that represents mankind. Secondly, Everyman's

fear of death is an emotion experienced by all. Still, his spiritual victory over death expresses a victory of Christian faith. Such teachings that deal mainly with conversion are still relevant to contemporary African Christian audiences.

The following paragraphs deal with the theoretical frameworks of adaptation, biblical performance criticism, and skopos theory within a broader theoretical framework of complexity and performance criticism.

### 3. ADAPTATION, PERFORMANCE, SKOPOS THEORY, AND THE COMPLEXITY THEORY

#### 3.1 Adaptation

Adaptation is a translation strategy or technique that replaces the original word or concept with one that is better suited to the culture of the target language (Baker 1992/2018; Baker & Saldanha 2009; Chesterman & Wagner 2002; Halladay & Hassan 1976; Raw 2012). According to Newmark (1988:64),

Adaptation is the 'freest' form of translation available. It is used mainly for plays (comedies) and poetry; the themes, characters, and plots are usually preserved, while the source language culture is converted to the target language culture and the text rewritten.

In this proposition, Newmark (1988) and Khazrouni (2017) support the notion that adaptation is a cultural substitution translation. In the current research, certain medieval theological concepts with a Catholic background such as "saint", "*Adona*", and "priest" are adapted to meet the understanding of the Sesotho Protestant readers. In this case, adaptation happens not only on a word level but also in the interpretation/meaning of the story. The problem of conveying the theological meaning behind these medieval linguistic aspects is the main focus of this research.

#### 3.2 Complexity theory

An overview discussion of Marais' (2014) work on the complexity theory needs to be delved into, in order to demonstrate how adaptation fits into the complexity model. Complexity theory emanates from chaos theory. This approach of the 1970s and 1980s deals with nonlinear things, with things that are not properly arranged, and with things that are viewed as impossible to predict or control such as turbulence, weather, stock market, and brain states. This theory is a supplement or a response to the limitations of reductionism.

Reductionist paradigms propagate what Marais (2014) refers to as binary thinking, which sees parts and wholes but cannot understand how these parts and wholes interrelate. In other words, it does not recognise interrelationships

between the elements and the wholes or between individuals and societies. It can see phenomena, but it cannot theorise or conceptualise the interdependence among all the aspects. It cannot know that difference is similarity; that universality is unique, and that complexity involves a paradox. In other words, simplicity is a significant aspect of a reductionism paradigm that cannot deal with complexity or mystery.

Contrary to the above, complexity theory helps solve this binary interpretation of concepts as understood from a reductionism paradigm. Complexity theory assumes that reality may be simple and complex but the theory refuses to describe whether a simplistic or complex reality could be predominant. Simplification as a translation strategy of this study is appropriated when an adaptation of complicated theological concepts from an unfamiliar Catholic background is simplified to meet the context and the needs of the prospective Sesotho audience.

Complexity theory is a catalyst that brings together insights from different areas of study to other fields and analyses how these insights relate to each other with the sole purpose of understanding reality as a complex phenomenon. With its philosophical background, complexity theory views truth in its wholeness and interrelatedness. In other words, complexity propagates a shift from analysing the parts of a fact to exploring how these parts relate to each other. For the sake of the study, complexity translation studies and performance studies are combined to fulfil the needs of the prospective Sesotho audiences.

Complexity theory holds to complex views of reality, whereas paradoxically, it conceptualises a hierarchical idea of truth. According to the complexity model, hierarchy is not a separate or isolating hierarchy but a connecting agent or hierarchy. What seems paradoxical at one level can be resolved at a higher level. In addition, hierarchy involves other distinctive features, namely simple laws that may generate complex behaviour, complex systems that are self-organised, and complex systems that require explanation rather than reductionist ones.

For the sake of the study, complexity theory brings and explains the relationship between religion and culture. People can understand their religion and its teachings when the Bible is translated into their languages. Furthermore, their faith will be nourished even better if their Scripture readings encapsulate their cultural knowledge, which exhibits oral principles and performance.

When delving more into the interrelatedness of different elements in the translation process, one could argue that these components complicate the translation process. These are the initiators, a performing group who are

viewed as reductionists in their initial idea of proposing changes or adapting unfamiliar linguistic aspects of the play, the performance translation, the congregants or the society at large. What holds these components together is how they interrelate. The performance translation has an impact on the church and communities through its message. The audience's response before the performance was uncertain but it was afterwards. In other words, by watching a play that was initially viewed as very strange and senseless, the play and its religious teachings gained a valuable and memorable status through its performance. The complex realities are the truths and the Christian values embedded in the play. This performative translation illustrated Christian teachings during outreaches in the streets of Mungaung's informal settlements. This showed that the church of Christ is a God-sent-entity that unites societies, regardless of their social status. In this instance, the complexity theory brings about an element of self-emergence and self-reliance to the respective communities.

### 3.3 Biblical performance criticism

Various scholars have different interpretations of the concept "biblical performance criticism" (Esala 2015; Perry 2016; Rhoads 2006a; 2006b; 2009; Wendland 2008) and "orality" (Ong 1998; Maxey 2009). I have opted to choose Maxey's (2009) definition among these scholars because it is the most straightforward and comprehensive definition. Maxey (2009; 2015) views biblical performance criticism as a theory or rather a mechanism that reconstructs the role of Bible translation. The role of Bible translation in this regard is reconstructed when this mechanism is taking into consideration the existence of the oral nature of the source text and uses a performance modality for the target text. Although Maxey's emphasis is on Bible translation, for the sake of this article, the focus is on a religious translation that uses performance modality to reach its target reader. Furthermore, biblical performance criticism has distinctive characteristics that help target readers fully comprehend the text when it is performed in front of them, whether in the church or in a public space. Makutoane *et al.* (2015:156-174) summarise these features, at the heart of which orality is vivid, as follows:

- a. Biblical performance criticism places more emphasis on a great value on memory; in other words, it connects memory through a story.
- b. It not only involves storytelling, but it creates the story through performance.
- c. The audience not only hears the story, but they experience it; in this sense, the audience is not passive but active.
- d. Biblical performance criticism understands that performance itself is translation. This means that, if a translation occurs in performance, the

translation happens through sound, silence, gestures, and interaction with the audience. These aspects are not simply add-ons but are part of one integrated act of delivery – performance.

- e. Translation for performance can include the use of historical presence or homeostasis.

### 3.4 Equivalence and skopos theory

Prior to World War II, attempts to formulate translation theories were based on philological comparisons of texts. Post-World War II, a significant shift took place, namely the introduction and development of linguistic-oriented models. During that time, the notion of equivalence gained ground. Prominent proponents such as Nida (1964) in the USA, Catford (1965) in England, and Wills (1977) in Germany, who were influenced by the Structuralists, strove towards the promotion of equivalence, that is, the sameness or similarity between the source and the target texts as a means of bringing about translations that were faithful to the source text.

However, these scholars soon realised that the notion of equivalence was too limited when considering the linguistic and cultural differences between languages. The tendency to move away from equivalence was noticed. What followed was a huge pendulum swing away from equivalence to either prescriptive or functionalist approaches to translation.

Vermeer and Reiss (1984) proposed an alternative to equivalence. They introduced two main concepts, namely the functional category and the skopos theory of translation as their points of departure. Therefore, the intended function of the target text generally determines the translation method and strategies; this is not the function of the source text (Naudé 2000).

The functionalist approach to translation implies that the target text cannot mirror the source text. In other words, the *skopos* (intention or purpose) of the translation must be met while it remains loyal to the translation conventions in its social context.

In the current study, the *skopos* (intention or purpose) of the translation of the morality play *Everyman* into Sesotho would not be possible without an adaptative translation that would provide a functionalist translation of the theological concepts “saints”, “*Adonai*”, and “priest” in the play. In other words, this type of translation would function more appropriately when it is anchored in the play’s performance within a broader understanding of the complexity theory.

The following section deals with how the abovementioned theological concepts are conveyed in biblical Hebrew and Sesotho.



## 4. HOW ARE “SAINTS”, “ADONAI” AND “PRIESTS” CONVEYED IN BIBLICAL HEBREW AND SESOTHO

This section discusses medieval linguistic aspects identified when the morality play *Everyman* was translated into Sesotho. First, I examine how these aspects were conveyed in both biblical Hebrew and the Sesotho translations of the Bible and, secondly, how they could be adapted for the prospective Sesotho audience. Sesotho has two versions of the Bible, namely the old one of 1909/1961 and the new one of 1989, which is currently under review. The former imitates the form of the original text; the translation follows a literal, word-for-word translation, which could be labelled as formal correspondence or equivalence. The latter translation can be characterised as a semantic equivalence translation; a non-literal translation into current, idiomatic Sesotho, which is free and faithful to the meaning or dynamic equivalence. This section addresses two critical questions: What was the world view of the medieval context on these three concepts? How can they be adapted for 21<sup>st</sup>-century African or Sesotho audiences?

### 4.1 Saint(s) or holy one(s)

Biblical Hebrew uses the word קֹדֶשׁ (holy one) or קְדוּשִׁים (holy ones or saints).<sup>3</sup> קֹדֶשׁ or קְדוּשִׁים can also be used to refer to something withheld from ordinary use, treated with special care belonging to the sanctuary, for instance, the priest and his garment (Koehler & Baumgartner 1988:313).

In other words, קֹדֶשׁ or קְדוּשִׁים refers to putting someone or something into a state of holiness. Tregelles (1909) echoes this explanation, stating that to be holy, sacred is a notion that can be used to describe a man who has dedicated himself to God, and thus considers himself more holy than other people, and to describe things meant for holy worshipping as in Numbers 17:2-3 and Exodus 29:21, and so on.

Sesotho uses *mohalaledi* (holy one) or *bahalaledi* (holy ones) to describe the saint(s) or the holy one(s). When attributed to God, the notion of holiness or *bahalaledi* in the Old Testament is used in two distinct ways. The first way uses the words “absoluteness” and “the majesty of God”. This generally demonstrates the notion of separation or cutting away from all things human and earthly. In other words, it seeks to show that the creator’s attributes of absoluteness, majesty, and awesomeness are different from those of his

3 For Greek ἅγιος/ἁγιῶν, which means the holy one(s) or reserved, and Hebrew קֹדֶשׁ holy one(s), Sesotho uses the words *mohalaledi* (saint), *bahalaledi* (saints) or *e kgethehileng* (holy one or something put aside).

creatures, as the “Holy arm of the Lord” in Isaiah 52:10 expresses. In this instance, both Sesotho translations translate זְרִיעַ קְדוֹשׁוֹ “His holy hand” as “*letsoho la hae le halalelang* (His holy hand).

In 1 Samuel 2:2, אֵין־קָדוֹשׁ כִּיהוָה (no one holy like the Lord) is translated as *ha hoya kgethehileng (ya halalelang) jwaloka Jehova* (there is no one sacred [holy] like the Lord) into Sesotho. In Psalm 98:1 and Leviticus 20:3, the phrase “holy name of the Lord” is prominent. Sesotho translations (1909/1961 and 1989) emphasise the definition of קָדוֹשׁ as “one or something being cut from the rest and being put aside” (*e (ya) kgethehileng*).

The second way of attribution is ethical holiness, which means that men cannot resemble God in his incommunicable attributes. They can reflect his likeness only along the lines of those moral qualities of righteousness and love in which true holiness exists (see Lev. 11:45; 19:2). In the Psalmists and Prophets, the divine holiness becomes, above all, an ethical reality that convicts men of sin and gives them hope with the coming of the Messiah (Isa. 6:3). Psalm 24:4 demands that those who would stand in God’s presence come with clean hands and a pure heart.

The concept of holiness (*bohaleledi* or *ho halalela*) does not only apply to God but also to places, objects, time, and men. For example, holiness refers to a place, where God manifests his presence. For instance, אֲדָמַת־קֹדֶשׁ, which means “holy ground”, is translated as “*sebaka (nqalo e) se halalelang*” in Sesotho (see the Bible in Sesotho 1909/1961; 1989: Ex. 3:5). The tabernacle or temple in which there is his glory is revealed as הַקֹּדֶשׁ, that is the “holy place”. In Sesotho translations, this word is translated as “*sehalalelong*” (holy place) as in Exodus 28:29 and in 2 Chronicles 35:5.

Furthermore, holiness refers to objects, as is evident from the fact that all temple sacrifices were holy. For instance, in

Exodus 29:33

וְאֵתֵם וְזָרִי לֹא־יֵאָכְלוּ בְּיַד־קֹדֶשׁ הֵם: /And the stranger shall not eat them for they are holy

Sesotho 1909/1961: *Di se ke tsa jewa ke moditjhaba, hobane kentho tse kgethehileng/they must not be eaten by a foreigner, because they are holy.*

Sesotho 1989: *Bao e seng baprista ba se ke ba di ja, hobane di a halalelal* those who are not priests must not eat them, for they are holy.

In Exodus 30:25 and Numbers 5:17, and so on, ceremonial materials such as oil and so on are holy. In 1 Kings 8:4, utensils are also holy.

Exodus 30:25

:שֶׁמֶן מִשְׁחַת־קֹדֶשׁ יְהוָה / It will be oil of the anointing holiness

Sesotho 1909/1961: *E tla ba ole ya setlolo e kgethehileng* / It will be oil of holy perfume

Sesotho 1989: *E tla ba yona oli e halalelang, e tlotsang* / It will be the holy anointing oil

1 Kings 8:4

וְאֵת־כָּל־כֵּלֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר בָּאֵהֶל / And all the utensils of the holiness which were in the tent

Sesotho 1909/1961: *le mesebetsi yohle e halalelang e ka tenteng ya tliswa ke baprista le Balevil* and all the holy works in the tent.

Sesotho 1989: *le dintho tsohle tse halalelang, tse neng di le ka tenteng ya Jehova* and all the holy things which were in the tent of the Lord.

The concept of holiness also applies to time; the Sabbath is holy because it is the Sabbath of the Lord (Ex. 20:8-11). Moreover, this concept applied to individuals in ancient Israel who were set apart for special service to God. Priests and Levites are holy because they have been hallowed or sanctified by consecration acts (Ex. 29:1; Lev. 8:12, 30). In conclusion, holiness in the Old Testament describes the setting aside of certain people, places, and times for a specific purpose, namely to serve the Lord. Therefore, whatever is associated with his service must be holy or sacred; nothing is holy in itself but anything becomes holy using its consecration to him.

## 4.2 *Adonai* or JHWH

Koehler and Baumgartner (1988) define *Adonai* or JHWH as God's name, which first appeared in Genesis 2:4. JHWH is God as he reveals himself to man and cares for him. YHWH is God's name. *Adonai*, meaning "The Lord", is a title that was used by Jews after the exile to avoid pronouncing or singing YHWH. In other words, this is the proper name of the God of Israel. The Jews regard JHWH as a holy name to be called or to be said aloud. Hence, instead of calling JHWH, they use *Adonai* in their prayers. They would use *HaShem*, meaning "The Name", in their informal conversations and discussions. Although this is the situation in the context of the Hebrew Bible, the Hebrew tetragrammaton JHWH is still rendered into *Jehova* for 21<sup>st</sup>-century Sesotho speakers in the 1909/1961 version. This version is the older translation of the Bible in Sesotho and JHWH is translated as *Morena* (Lord) in the newer translation of 1989.

### 4.3 Priest

The Hebrew uses כֹּהֵן for priest or priesthood. Sesotho uses the loan word “*moprista*” or “*boprista*” (priest or priesthood) from the English word “priest” or the Afrikaans word “priester”. Sesotho has another name for a priest, namely “*moruti*” (a teacher) but this word is not frequently used in Sesotho translations when referring to the Hebrew name for a priest. In Sesotho, *moprista* (priest) means the one who teaches God’s word. In the Old Testament, priests under Jewish law played a vital role in offering sacrifices, teaching, and praying for the people. Aaron was given an everlasting priesthood, which means that the priest’s office was secured to him and to his children for many years (Num. 25:13). In Sesotho, כֹּהֵן עוֹלָם (everlasting priesthood), which are the proper Hebrew words for the priesthood, are translated in the 1909/1961 Sesotho Bible as *boprista bosafeleng* (priesthood that does not end) and in the 1989 Sesotho Bible as *boprista kamehla yohle* (priesthood of all the times). Normally, before the consecration of Aaron and his sons, fathers or elder brothers acted as priests, for instance, Noah, Abraham, Job, and Melchizedek; occasionally, every man acted as a priest for himself such as Abel and Cain.

The following section shows how a translation of these foreign concepts of “saints”, “*Adonai*”, and “priest” can be adapted for a performative translation of *Everyman* into Sesotho. However, before discussing the translation strategy of adaptation in detail (see section 5 below), it is important to show how the three theoretical frameworks (see section 3 above) are applied to produce the translation of these key theological terms.

When examining the application of the three frameworks, namely adaptation, biblical performance criticism, and skopos theory, within the broader framework of complexity to create proposed translations for the concepts of “saint”, “*Adonai*”, and “priest”, within the translation of the morality play *Everyman* in Sesotho, the following elucidation is crucial.

In terms of adaptation as a primary translation strategy, the following adaptations were made when translating the key concepts of “saint”, “*Adonai*”, and “priest”.

- The epithet “Ann the Saint”/“*Anna Mohalaledi*” (Line 350) was adapted to “Name of God” or “Lord” (“*Lebitso la Modimo*” or “*Morena*”).
- The concept “priest”/“*moprista*” in lines 715, 717, 735, 740, and 745 was adapted to “Christ”/“*Kreste*”.
- The concept “*Adonai*” was adapted to “JHWH”/“*Jehova*” or “Lord”/“*Morena*”.

It is essential to remember that, at the outset of this study, the team of performers considered that these theological concepts, given their historical and contextual background in medieval plays with a Catholic foundation, would

be inappropriate and incomprehensible to their audience. Consequently, the application of the adaptation translation strategy aimed to produce meaningful translations of these key theological terms for a Protestant audience. These meaningful translations are intended to serve a specific purpose, aim, or skopos. Thus, the functionalist skopos theory revolves around the intention, purpose, aim, and function of these translations to enable a comprehensible translation of these key theological terms within a broader translation of the morality play *Everyman* for Sesotho-speaking audiences. While this is the primary objective of the translation, there is an additional layer to consider: drawing from biblical performance criticism, an understandable translation of these key theological terms within the translation of *Everyman* in Sesotho can be further enhanced when the play is performed. In other words, the intended and functional translation of *Everyman* as a morality play will be better understood when designed to follow a performative pattern.

## 5. ADAPTATION FOR TRANSLATION

### 5.1 Saint

An example of the term “saint” in *Everyman* occurs as an epithet of “Ann the Saint” in *Everyman* line 350: *Empa ntho e le nngwe eo nka o etsetsang yona, ke ikana ka Anna Mohaleledi, ha e le nna nkeke ka tsamaya le wena*/But one thing that I can do for you, I swear Ann the Saint, myself I will not go with you.

In the medieval era, a saint is a deceased person who was regarded as having lived an exemplary life of holiness on earth and, as a result, was officially recognised by the Catholic Church as being in heaven and worthy of worship. In this extract, Ann is such a highly regarded saint that the character can even swear by her name.

In Sesotho and in other African languages, the idea of a saint is acceptable, especially to those who believe in their ancestors. Ancestors are regarded as those who live next to or have the same rank as God. They play a role as intermediaries between believers and God because God is viewed as very far and unapproachable. Those who do not practise ancestor worship still commonly use their totems or their parents’ names who have passed on to swear by. The practice of worshipping persons and of making the dead intermediaries between the living and God is problematic within a Christian church setting in Africa. Therefore, Ann the Saint can be adapted to the name of God, *Lebitso la Modimo* (1909/1961) and *Morena* (1989), for it is only God (*Modimo* or *Morena*) who is worthy to be adored and worshipped because he is the only one who is holy. Hence, the translation: *Empa ntho e le nngwe eo nka o etsetsang yona, ke ikana ka lebitso la Modimo –, ha e le nna nkeke ka tsamaya le wena*/But one thing that I can do for you, I swear by the name of God, I myself will not go with you.

## 5.2 Priest

*Everyman* lines 713, 715, 717, 732, 735, 740, and 745:

Line 713: *Ha ho kgosi, morena, kgosana, le ha e le mookamedi. Ya laetsweng ke Modimo*/There is no king, ruler, prince, nor anyone in charge who has been commanded by God

Line 715: *ho feta moprista lefatsheng la ba utlwang...*/than a priest on the earth of the living ones...

Line 717: *O tshwere dinotlolo, mme ka baka leo o na le tokelo ya ho pholosa motho*/He holds the keys and, in this way, he has the power to save a soul.

Line 732: *Hobane boprista bo feta ntho tsohle...*/For priesthood surpasses everything...

Line 735: *Modimo o ba file Matla a phahametseng lengeloi lefe kapa lefe lehodimong*/God gave them the strength to be above every angel in heaven.

Line 740: *Moprista a ka tlama le ho tlamolla tsohle lefatsheng le lehodimong*/A priest can bind and unbind everything on earth and in heaven.

Line 745: *Ha ho pheko e nngwe e tswang ho Modimo ha e se fela ka boprista*/There is no other cure coming from God if not through the priesthood.

On reading the above lines, one notices the reverence and elevation (hierarchy) of priests in the medieval era. For instance, they were more crucial than anything else (line 732); they were directly commanded by God (lines 713, 715); they were given absolute power by God (lines 735, 740); they had authority on earth and in heaven (line 717); they were used by God as instruments of healing (745), and they could save souls (717).

Priests were the servants of God and the nation, but God of Israel had all the powers above the whole creation and life, in general. Hence, the following examples illustrate how the translations below have been adapted to express the idea of God's sovereignty.

Line 715: *Ho feta Kreste lefatsheng la ba utlwang*/More than Christ on the Earth of the living ones

Line 717: *Kreste o tshwere dinotlolo, mme ka baka leo o na le tokelo ya ho pholosa motho*/Christ holds the keys, and in that way, he has the power to save a soul

Line 732: *Hobane Modimo o feta ntho tsohle...*/For God is above everything...

Line 735: *Modimo o file Kreste matla a phahametseng lengeloi lefe kapa lefe lehodimong*/God gave Christ the Strength to be above every angel in heaven

Line 740: *Kreste a ka tlama le ho tlamolla tsohle lefatsheng le lehodimong*/Christ can bind and unbind everything on earth and in heaven

Line 745: *Ha ho pheko e nngwe e tswang ho Modimo ha e se fela ka Kreste*/There is no other cure coming from God if it is not only through Christ

Priest was adapted to Christ in lines 715, 717, 735, 740, and 745.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The primary intent of translating these medieval morality plays with their specific linguistic aspects and vocabularies is to shift the liturgical activities by developing a modern way of communicating the gospel most effectively and understandably to unite societies in Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. According to Protestant theology, saints or priests should not be viewed as legendary, perfect superheroes, who are similar to God; they should be viewed as ordinary people of God. Priests should be considered only as servants of God and his people; they should not be viewed as people who are above everything.

One must be aware of the fact that this research is not about the propagation of certain ideological agendas; rather, it is about fulfilling the prophetic call of addressing the needs of the prospective target audience in understanding the morality plays when these have been translated (adapted) to be performed. In this case, the target audience was able to nourish their spiritual well-being more effectively. This was only achieved by applying the umbrella theory of complexity in conjunction with adaptation and performance criticism. In this sense, the complicated translation has been resolved once and for good.

Once the performative translation was completed, it was presented to the performance group and they rehearsed the play. The rehearsal went very smoothly because the problem of foreign and unfamiliar concepts in a play was resolved. The play was performed with great passion and enthusiasm and it received a most welcoming response from the audience. Believers expect more performances of morality plays in and outside the church when these plays have been translated and properly adapted in Sesotho. The organisers promised to exhibit more performances of such nature. Furthermore, based on the audience's reaction and on the powerful messages that these morality plays conveyed, further research on adaptative-performative translations of medieval morality plays and other religious literature would be very productive.

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