AUTHOR:
Maricel Botha[1]

AFFILIATION:
[1]North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, School of Languages
Email: Maricel.Botha@nwu.ac.za

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FOUR FEMALE KHOESAN LANGUAGE TRANSLATORS ACROSS THREE CENTURIES OF CAPE HISTORY: A MORPHOGENETIC ANALYSIS[1]

ABSTRACT

Female translators are highly atypical in South African colonial history. Yet four important female translators appear on the scene who, interestingly, all translated or interpreted into or from Khoesan languages. Therefore, apart from their marginalised position as women, these translators are also linked to marginalised languages. These translators are Krotoa, a Khoe interpreter employed by colonial administrator Jan van Riebeeck, Zara Schmelen, a Nama mission assistant and Bible translator, and Lucy Lloyd and Dorothea Bleek, so-called Bushman researchers and relatives of the famous philologist Wilhelm Bleek. This article is interested in the ways in which the work of these early female translators expressed social conditioning and in the characteristics of their agency within a restrictive social space. The hindering and enabling factors involved in these women's practice of translation and interpreting is analysed and particular attention is paid to the ideological characteristics of their work. In the analysis of the social characteristics of translation, Margaret Archer's morphogenetic approach is employed. Archer's approach involves an investigation of structure, culture and agency and the ways in which these contribute to cycles of social change (morphogenesis) or maintenance (morphostasis). With regard to agency, the analysis is guided by Archer's terms primary agency (which results from social rank), corporate agency (which results from social organisation) and social actorship (which results from the unification of personal identity with social roles). The research finds that chance and male sanctioning were present in these women's involvement in translation, but that a strong exercise of agency was present which was personally motivated. Agency involved no organisation, however, and neither sought nor achieved social change. Yet, three of the four translators were able to achieve social actorship, whereby their role as translators was successfully united with their personal identity.

1. INTRODUCTION

Translation[2] trends during South African colonial history display an unsurprising dominance of male translators. Nevertheless, four important female figures appear on the Cape colonial scene in different eras, who vividly embody the social forces influencing translation. Their atypicality renders their position in the social and cultural environment

and their agency particularly interesting. Questions arise concerning the circumstances that allowed women to work as translators within a restrictive social context, and the characteristics of women's behaviour as translators, especially in terms of their social positions and the cultural or ideological work carried out through translation (see Goodrich 2013, p. 8). This type of historical analysis helps to highlight the social role of translation by pointing out that the gender linked to the translator role is socially and culturally influenced, which leads to specific types of translational behaviour within a particular complex of social conditioning.

Interestingly, these four female translators all translated into or from so-called Khoesan languages.[3] In addition to their peripheral position as female translators, they therefore also represented highly marginalised languages. While this may be accidental, it provides a double motivation for investigating these translators in response to historical inequalities.

Krotoa (renamed Eva), the first translator to be discussed, is the most famous of the four. She worked as an interpreter between the first Dutch settlers and the Khoekhoen in the service of colonial administrator Jan van Riebeeck in the mid-seventeenth century, when interpreters were crucial to the survival of colonists. Frequent reference to her in Van Riebeeck's diary has led to relative fame (or notoriety) among South African historians and the 2017 Afrikaans film *Krotoa* is evidence of the recent interest in Krotoa's tragic story. The next translator, Zara Schmelen, featured roughly one and a half centuries later in the context of burgeoning missionary translation; she was also of indigenous descent. Unlike Krotoa, however, she remains in virtual obscurity, despite being largely responsible for the first translations of the gospels into Nama in the early nineteenth century. The last two translators, Lucy Lloyd and Dorothea Bleek, were active towards the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries respectively and found motivation for translation in the developing field of science (which, of course, only accommodated women at the periphery). These women are well known as so-called Bushman researchers and relatives of the German philologist Wilhelm Bleek. They played an important role in translating folklore, history and indigenous knowledge from the Bushman languages /Xam and !Kung into English, yet their role as translators has not been emphasised.

In this article, these figures are approached sociologically rather than historiographically, since the purpose is to investigate their agency as women rather than chiefly their biographies. This approach aligns this research with the translation sociology movement. This movement aims to fully uncover translation's often hidden social role using sociological theories and methodologies. In this case, British sociologist Margaret Archer's morphogenetic approach provides the sociological framework. This approach views society as the result of complex interaction between structures, culture and agents, which brings about historical processes of so-called *morphogenesis*, during which social systems change, and *morphostasis*, during which their form is (temporarily) preserved. The use of this approach is motivated by the general departure point that society undeniably affected and conditioned these women's activities; nevertheless, as agents, they were also able to "consciously (but fallibly) organise their life journeys and react to oppression, demonstrate resistance and effect emancipation" (at least to a certain degree), as Wimalasena (2017, p. 1) notes in his application of the morphogenetic approach to the analysis of Sri Lankan women's agency. The major theoretical orientation of this research, thus, involves an interest in female translators' responses to constraining and enabling social influences through specific exercises of agency, which Archer's approach enables by granting attention to both structure and agency. In this case, the morphogenetic approach offers a fresh perspective on the small ways translation by women expressed

oppression, resistance and emancipation in the colonial context. It also helps to appreciate "the role of translation in its cultural and historical moment" (Goodrich 2013, p. 6) and its gendered source, with potential implications for investigations into present-day exercises of translational agency.

After providing an explanation of Archer's approach below, the work of the four female translators mentioned will be analysed by providing biographical background, a description of the relevant morphogenetic cycle, and an analysis of agency under the conditioning of the cycle in question.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Margaret Archer's morphogenetic approach has its origins in the late 1970s and contributed significantly to the social sciences, yet it has received little attention in translation studies. It is referred to as an approach, rather than a theory, since it offers only a descriptive programme and explains nothing on its own. It depends on the researcher to use the approach as a framework to create a practical social theory (PST) (Archer 2013, p. 10). Maccarini (2013, p. 42) distinguishes between the morphogenetic approach and the PST by explaining that the former provides a conceptual framework, while the latter refers to its application in the study of social phenomena. The PST leads to statements (theses or theories) about that particular part of social reality. Archer, therefore, leaves it to the user to interpret the findings derived from the morphogenetic approach.

Structure, culture and agency contribute to cycles of social change and stagnation within the morphogenetic approach. By emphasising the influence of structure and agents, Archer's approach is a response to the frequent polarisation of structure and agency in social theories: Social theories tend to either overemphasise the freedom of human agents (upward conflation, as in rational choice theories), or overemphasise the limiting role of social structures (downward conflation, as in Niklas Luhmann's social system theory). Other theories attempt to take agency and structure into account simultaneously, though, according to Archer, without making the necessary distinction (central conflation, a characteristic of Anthony Giddens's structuration theory, which competes with Archer's approach around the centre of the continuum). Archer's approach has, in turn, been criticised for an artificial separation of agency and structure, and the inability of sociological theories to satisfactorily reconcile the influence of structure and agency has rightly been described as an unsolvable Gordian knot (Bieler & Morton 2001). Yet, Archer's effort comes close enough to relieving the tension to provide a useful perspective for studying translation and translators in collaboration.

Archer understands structure broadly as any patterned social arrangements – including social roles and norms – that stem from human (inter)action and simultaneously influence human (inter)action. Regarding culture, Archer is critical of sociologists' focus on structure and agency at the expense of culture (Archer and Morgan 2020, p. 184). Archer elevates culture to a core element of social causality and understands it as ideas and beliefs that include propositional knowledge as well as myths, beliefs, and opinions (Case 2015, p. 843). In this article, the emphasis is on ideology as an expression of dominant cultural trends, in an attempt to emphasise the social steering capacity of ideas and beliefs. The third element, agency, refers to the sphere of human action and interaction, a space conditioned and contextualised by structure and culture (Case 2015, p. 843). *Conditioning* denotes structure and culture's ability to limit or allow the action possibilities of agents. Human interaction over time, conversely,

determines how culture and structures either stagnate or change (Case 2015, p. 843). Structural and cultural expansion results in a change of cycle (morphogenesis), whereas structural and cultural maintenance leads to the preservation of the same cycle (morphostasis).

When it comes to agency, Archer provides a very detailed explanation. Although she uses *agency* broadly as a reference to the sphere of human action or human acting capacity, she also possesses a narrower understanding. Archer (2000, p. 254) explains that agency and actorship produce social identity – 'our "social selves" which emerge respectively through our involuntary embroilment in society's distribution of resources and our voluntary involvement in society's role-array'. People's involuntary participation in resource distribution relates mainly to what is known as *primary agency* – the positions assigned to people at birth within an unequal, hierarchical society, or the circumstances into which they are born, which determine what they project as possible, feasible or desirable (Archer 2000, p. 262). Besides primary agency, which all people possess, there is also corporate agency. Corporate agents are agents who, based on reflection, are aware of what they want to achieve, can articulate it, and can organise to achieve it. Corporate agents use focused action to attempt to change certain structural or cultural characteristics of society (Archer 2000, p. 265) and are active within groups with vested interests. Primary agency may also lead to social morphogenesis, as similar reactions can arise within social groupings, which can have a significant collective effect. However, primary agency does not have a strategic, systematic and organised quality (Archer 2000, p. 266). Actorship takes agency a step further by reconciling social identity with personal identity. Actors are agents who find social roles to which they can dedicate themselves so that their social identity becomes an expression of their personal identity in society (Archer 2000, p. 261). The social roles Archer refers to in relation to actors can include an individual's role as a parent, church congregant, or worker, although professional roles enjoy particular attention.

Time is significant in Archer's approach. Structural conditioning, followed by social interaction and then structural change or maintenance represent three time periods. Archer and Morgan (2020, p. 184) explain that structure and agency interact *diachronically* over time, because structures necessarily precede the actions they transform and because structural expansion necessarily follows these actions. Archer, therefore, possesses a fundamentally historical understanding of social processes, which allows structure, culture and agents to be discussed separately, and allows formation and transformation to be highlighted as guiding metaphors.

Another important characteristic of the morphogenetic approach is that it can be applied at different levels of inquiry, because of the appreciation of structure, culture and agency. It allows analysis of large-scale structures such as capitalism, as well as smaller entities, such as firms or individual agents. Little (2012) explains in this regard that,

> [t]he methodological insight that seems to come along with morphogenesis [is] the idea that it is valuable to move both *upwards* towards more comprehensive social structures and *downwards* towards more refined understanding of action and interaction.

This flexibility of the morphogenetic approach is exploited in this research by examining individual agents, but in the context of large-scale structural and cultural characteristics of society.

3. KROTOA (C. 1642–1674)

Krotoa is often seen as a tragic victim of colonial and patriarchal domination. Her history was portrayed very negatively by colonial and apartheid historians because of her death at 32 as a promiscuous alcoholic (Conradie 1998, pp. 56–57; Wells 1998, p. 417). For this reason, there have been several attempts since 1994 to rewrite her history (Conradie 1998, p. 57–58; Wells 1998, pp. 417–418). Wells (1998, p. 418) points out that large gaps in the historical record have led to a high degree of subjectivity in depictions of Krotoa. The emphasis has been her position between cultures, alongside the tragic circumstances of her later life, while the achievements of her earlier life have been overlooked. However, it is precisely here that her agency as an interpreter is of interest.

3.1 Biography

Krotoa was born in the Goringhaikwa clan in around 1642, but went to live with her uncle, the chief and interpreter Autshumato (Harry die Strandloper) of the Goringhaikona clan. She was taken into Van Riebeeck's household as a servant in 1653 and was renamed Eva. Van Riebeeck's obvious regard for Krotoa has been interpreted as a sign of hidden intimacy amid general speculation of sexual abuse (Abrahams 1996). In 1657, Krotoa, who spoke fluent Dutch, began serving as an interpreter in negotiations with Khoe clans – an unusual role for a woman. She was particularly valuable to Van Riebeeck as an interpreter for her ability to move effortlessly between the Khoe and Dutch communities. Interestingly, she wore a sari as a servant, was given European clothing as an interpreter, and preferred traditional clothes when visiting her family (Landman 1996, p. 33). Nevertheless, both the Dutch and the Khoekhoen distrusted her at times, and references to a complex liminal existence dominate the literature on Krotoa.

During the height of her interpreting career, she was also involved in negotiation and intelligence gathering. In this period, around 1659, Krotoa courted a charismatic young employee of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), Pieter van Meerhoff. The couple had two children before their marriage in 1664, after which a third child followed. Krotoa's marriage to Van Meerhoff and baptism shortly before Van Riebeeck's departure from the Cape have been interpreted as attempts at status retention; this is because Van Riebeeck's successor, Zacharias Wagenaar, had an extremely negative impression of Krotoa and the Khoekhoen and because Krotoa's usefulness as an interpreter declined as trade became established and relations with the Khoekhoen deteriorated (Wells 1998, p. 433). When Van Meerhoff was made superintendent of Robben Island in 1655, Krotoa accompanied him there. Two years later, he was killed in Madagascar. Krotoa's story took a turn for the worse, ending with her imprisonment on Robben Island in 1669 due to drunkenness and indecency and her death in 1674.

3.2 Morphogenetic cycle

Krotoa's story takes place in a period when Dutch colonisation of the Cape (1652–1795) resulted in large-scale social morphogenesis. Intercultural contact was primarily motivated by trade, which stimulated interpreting as an important mode of translation. Certain structural conditions supported the necessity of interpreters. Wells (1998, p. 420) refers in this regard to 'the flimsiness of the initial Dutch encampment and their high dependency on good relations with their Khoena [Khoe] neighbours', especially because of Khoe cattle provision. Alexander (1989, p. 9) and Beukes (1993, pp. 154–155) emphasise the colonists' absolute reliance on interpreters for their survival in this early colonial context – a situation that resulted in very

cautious political interaction. However, a rapid change in structural characteristics (greater VOC independence, coupled with hostility towards the Khoekhoen) meant a brief period of structural support of interpreting.

Ideological factors also contributed to the brevity of interpreting. A European ideology of superiority, supported by Calvinist Protestantism's focus on predestination and propriety, manifested in the enforcement of Dutch as a lingua franca in trade relations. It also discouraged translation as a form of intercultural exchange. The astonishing speed at which the Khoekhoen learned Dutch[4] and at which the Cape Khoe language began to die out (already by 1750), therefore, represents an exercise of ideologically motivated language oppression, which manifested at the structural level in a monolingual language policy. Alexander (1989, pp. 10–11), thus, refers to ideological language conditioning when he explains that 'there was never any serious or systematic attempt on the part of colonists to acquire a knowledge of the local languages, which, to them, sounded like the clucking of turkeys'. This attitude resulted from the aforementioned ideology of supremacy, but was also a 'luxury' that stemmed from military superiority (i.e. structural favouring). Therefore, interpreting only possessed significant value in intercultural encounters during the short initial period.

3.3 Agency

Krotoa was one of five Khoe interpreters in the early colonial period, of whom only she, Autshumato and Doman enjoyed prominence. To appreciate the scarcity of women interpreters in the larger context, one should also bear in mind that, except for Zara Schmelen (who sometimes interpreted) and one unnamed and presumably temporary female Indian[5] interpreter, there are no references to female interpreters in the entire colonial period. Ideological conditioning in both settler and Khoe societies was responsible for this scarcity. In both cultures, women's social function was limited to the household or *kraal* and did not include negotiation, mediation or trade. Krotoa's sex, a characteristic of her primary agency, was not conducive to her role as a translator in this regard, raising the question of how Krotoa was able to serve as interpreter, informant and trade agent at all.

Chance certainly played a role in Krotoa's involvement in interpreting, as she was coincidentally multilingual, available, and in favour with Van Riebeeck. Regarding Van Riebeeck's role, it is striking that in each of the cases discussed here, there is a male figure by whom agency is approved, allowed or transferred. Regardless of happenstance, agency was very vigorous in Krotoa's case and she actively exploited coincidence to improve her social position. Scully (2005, p. 5) argues that 'Krotoa [...] was masterful at manipulating the context in which she found herself'. Wells (1998, p. 423) expresses the same sentiment in her statement that 'Eva [...] actively and steadily placed herself in a central position within the Dutch establishment'. She cites several ways in which Krotoa exercised her agency (without using the term *agency*). Wells (1998, p. 421) implies, for example, that Krotoa's learning of Dutch expressed agency, since 'she took advantage of her position to learn Dutch fluently, "almost as well as a Dutch girl"' to gain acceptance within her immediate living and working situation. A further example is her very active role in gathering intelligence. Partial isolation from the Khoekhoen meant that she had to actively gather information that was not part of her passive cultural knowledge. Wells (1998) offers detailed explanations of the operative and political nature of her political negotiation in war and trade contexts. In one case, she helped establish trust between the Cochoqua and the Dutch to open the way for trade. She also suggested new trade items to

the Dutch and persuaded them to send a clown and musicians to the chief Oedasoa to win his favour (Wells 1998, pp. 426–427).

Another aspect of her agency was her exploitation of stereotypes (or ideologies) about women to position herself as safe and trustworthy (Wells 1998, p. 418). Scully (2005, pp. 3–4) believes that the stereotype of women as reconcilers and caregivers fitted in well with the mediation role. Thus, while cultural conditioning typically favoured men as interpreters, the role was not entirely inconsistent with ideas about femininity. In exploiting her 'trustworthiness' as a woman, Krotoa distinguished herself from the male interpreters, creating space for her agency. While Doman led a rebellion against the Dutch and Autshumato stole livestock from them, Krotoa's biggest offense towards the Dutch, was, according to Van Riebeeck, that she flattered them too much (Wells 1998, p. 421). However, Van Riebeeck also expressed the suspicion that she embellished his informants' words (Wells 1998, p. 424), and there is concrete evidence of dishonesty at times. Wells (1998, p. 424) describes her interpreting work in this regard as 'scarcely passive or simply functional'. She exercised a form of 'creative' agency to strengthen her standing among the Dutch and maintain her elevated status as an interpreter.

The complexity and volatility of Krotoa's standing within Dutch and Khoe societies made her role more complicated than that of the male interpreters. Her position as an indigenous woman did not offer her many possibilities for a better existence within her immediate circumstances, and her social status and acceptance depended largely on her success as an interpreter. Her active and 'creative' agency could, in this sense, be seen as a social survival strategy rather than evidence of actorship. Although Krotoa could have enjoyed status in the Cochoqua clan, there was probably pressure on her to perform her mediatory role from within the Dutch community (Wells 1998, p. 427). This complex conditioning and liminality probably counteracted Krotoa's potential to live as a social actor. The possibility of expressing her personal identity in her social role was very constricted. Landman (1996, pp. 31–32) summarises the tension between Krotoa's social conditioning and her agency well in her statement that 'Krotoa's story lies somewhere between contextual predestination and individual manipulation [...] between individualistic and societal holism, interrelatedness and fragmentation'. In this liminality, the whole and the individual were probably never reconciled. Furthermore, there are no traces of corporate agency in Krotoa's case, as there are in the other cases examined. Agency was, thus, limited to primary agency, which was passive in relation to morphogenesis. While, in every case investigated, there was probably a consciousness of the unusualness of female translation, there was little expectation of or claim to any form of gender equality, as the structural and ideological environment was not yet conducive to such ideas. Historical location, thus, rather obviously dictated the lack of activism in these cases of agency. There was, thus, no conscious subservience to assigned social positions as there was little consciousness of an alternative. Nevertheless, there was conscious striving within the realm of agential freedom that translation allowed and translation's hidden social role, from Krotoa's perspective, centred entirely around the social position of the translator. Translation's hidden role was not ideological or political, as is often the case, but a very personal and subjective attempt to win social acceptance through successful fulfilment of the role of interpreter.

Since Khoe interpreting in the context of trade and labour-related intercultural interactions was so short-lived and the spreading of Cape Dutch as a lingua franca so aggressive, it is not surprising that it would take a new morphogenetic cycle more than a hundred years of colonial history to introduce the next female Khoesan language translator. British colonisation's

promotion of missionary translation represents the morphogenetic development in the next case, which stimulated translation with a pronounced collective ideological goal in which personal female agency could somewhat coincidentally find a place.

4. ZARA SCHMELEN (C. 1793–1831)

The English title of a book about Zara Schmelen by Ursula Trüper (2006) refers to her as 'the invisible woman'. This description is appropriate, because very little is known about this Nama[6] woman who was one of the first African language Bible translators. What is known about this 'invisible woman' is contained in the letters of her husband, a German missionary of the London Missionary Society (LMS), Johann Hinrich Schmelen, and even there, information is scarce. Not even a letter or image of Zara[7] has survived. Yet, thanks to the efforts of certain descendants of the Schmelens (among them author Ursula Trüper, anti-apartheid activist Horst Kleinschmidt and journalist Kenneth Makatees) Zara recently received recognition.[8] Trüper's 2000 German publication, which was translated into English in 2006, attempts to reconstruct her life story from letters in European mission archives, and is the main source on Zara's life as a mission assistant and interpreter.

4.1 Biography

Zara Hendrichs, or Xaigas, born in Steinkopf in 1793, was among Hinrich Schmelen's first converts at Pella in the Northern Cape. In 1814, she and a group of converts accompanied Hinrich to Great Namaland to establish a mission station. During the long journey, Hinrich and Zara were married under unusual circumstances (Trüper 2006, pp. 38–39). Zara was employed by Hinrich as a cook and had to ride in a wagon with Hinrich after his interpreter's ox became lame, forcing Hinrich to take Zara's place next to the wagon driver. Hinrich found himself in a closed wagon with a young woman, and to escape suspicion, decided to ask Zara to marry him, and immediately observed the wedding himself. This explanation four years later to the LMS implies total coincidence. However, Trüper (2006, pp. 39–40) suspects that there was a mutual attraction and that the couple did not wed earlier because of the aversion that a marriage to an indigenous woman would have provoked in Cape society and among certain members of the LMS. Certain missionaries of the society championed the rights of indigenous people and had black wives themselves, but others were under the influence of colonial racism. The LMS initially suspended Hinrich for immoral conduct. It was believed that he and Zara were living together out of wedlock, since he did not initially mention the marriage. However, Trüper believes that racial discrimination was also a factor in the suspension, which was lifted after Hinrich provided an explanation.

At the Bethany mission station in Great Namaland, Zara worked as a missionary assistant and interpreter, and four children were born to the Schmelens. Initially, the mission was successful; however, many converts moved away because of drought. Furthermore, conflicts with local tribal chiefs regarding livestock and gunpowder led to violence. At one point, Zara was assaulted (Trüper 2006, p. 52), and was taken hostage (Trüper 2006, p. 57). The Schmelens withdrew to Kamiesberg and then moved to Komaggas in what is now the Northern Cape in 1829, where Bible translation could begin in a more peaceful environment.

Because of Hinrich's struggle to learn Nama, Zara played a prominent role in the translation. Hinrich explains her role to the LMS (in his characteristic broken English) as follows (Trüper 2006, p. 54):

> As my wife has been from the first my assistance she has now more knowledge of the language than any other to find out the proper signification, as also grammatical knowledge of what she has heard of me. Every sentence I translate, she is obliged to set it over to remain close to the words, especially to take the proper meaning of what is said in the text and at the same time to make it sound Namaquas and not Dutch Namaquas.

Hinrich's role in the translation process appears to have involved scriptural interpretation, while Zara was responsible for the actual translation and naturalisation. By 1829, the couple had translated the four gospels, but when they arrived in the Cape to have it printed, they realised that termites had destroyed the manuscript, which they had kept in a wooden box, and they had to start over (Kleinschmidt 2012, p. 8). By 1830, the four gospels, a catechism, a hymnal and a dictionary had been translated and were taken to Cape Town to be printed (Trüper 2006, p. 11). Zara carried out the proofreading herself, as Hinrich did not dare to do it (Kleinschmidt 2013, p. 3). Upon conclusion of the proofreading, she put down her quill and proclaimed that her work on earth had been accomplished (Kleinschmidt 2013, p. 2). An entry on the front page of the first copy of the gospels, housed in the National Library in Cape Town, acknowledges Hinrich and Zara as the translators. Yet recognition for this work was generally given primarily to Hinrich (Trüper 2006, p. 10). On route back to Komaggas, Zara died of tuberculosis and the translation work ended. The book of Luke was retranslated by Norwegian missionary Hans Christian Knudsen in 1846, which suggests shortcomings in the Schmelens' translation. Johann Georg Krönlein, who possessed an excellent language aptitude, later retranslated the gospels as part of his translation of the entire Bible into Nama (completed in 1881) and he apparently greatly improved the Schmelens' and Knudsen's indication of the clicks. Nevertheless, Horst Kleinschmidt regards the Schmelens as important custodians of the Nama language for their translation efforts in an atmosphere in which Nama was already marginalised, as proven by renowned missionary and Tswana Bible translator Robert Moffat's comment that '[i]t would not be a great loss if the Hottentot language be destroyed' (Kleinschmidt 2012, p. 9).

4.2 Morphogenetic cycle

The change from Dutch to British control of the Cape (1795) resulted in significant structural and ideological morphogenesis. The Schmelens' translation activities took place at the beginning of this new morphogenetic cycle characterised by the spread of Western influence inland. The establishment of the Boer republics and the Natal colony brought large portions of the interior under Western control or influence. The discovery of gold and diamonds led to new settlement patterns and determined racial hierarchical working relationships as indigenous people were incorporated into Western structures in subordinate roles.

The oppression of indigenous people reflected the continuation of a Western ideology of supremacy, and Christian missionary work, an important feature of this cycle, was linked to this ideology in complex ways (Elphick 2012). On the one hand, missionary work was motivated by Christian revivals in Europe that were accompanied by liberal humanitarianism – an ideology that promoted racial equality and the abolition of the slave trade (see Keegan 1996, pp. 75–76). On the other hand, the work of certain missionaries expressed a belief in the superiority of Western culture. While the continuation of colonial racism represents ideological morphostasis, the boom in missionary work and Christian translation attests to religious morphogenesis. Indigenous people were considered candidates for evangelism, created in the image of God, rather than non-predestined heathen, as within Dutch Calvinism. However, indigenous people were also considered candidates for Western civilisation, in line

with colonial motivations. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this change promoted interpreting and written translation into indigenous languages. Bible translations and translations of Christian literature appeared in several indigenous languages and translation of folklore from local languages also took place (usually in service of evangelism). Bible translation was conducted predominantly by white men – though black men were involved to a limited extent – and there is no evidence of female Bible translators in this period besides Zara. Women's role in matters of faith was supportive and aimed at serving other women.

4.3 Agency

In Zara's case, as in Krotoa's, coincidence and the active practice of agency coincided to allow translation by women. Unlike Krotoa's case, however, agency and identity merged to a large extent, with the result that Zara could be considered a social actor. In relation to coincidence, Hinrich's deficient language abilities were probably the most important factor in what could be considered the transfer of agency to Zara. It is unlikely that Zara would have played the same role if Hinrich could perform the task himself. Bilingualism was an important feature of Zara's primary agency as a colonised native, and was an enabling factor alongside her practical availability. Furthermore, distance from Cape society and, therefore, colonial influence may have played a role in her involvement. Remoteness resulted in all sorts of cultural 'transgressions' in the region, such as interracial marriages with indigenous wedding ceremonies (Dedering 1997, p. 47) and a preference by Europeans for the less formal Khoe culture (Trüper 2006, p. 45). Western cultural conditioning was, therefore, less restrictive in remote areas, potentially allowing more freedom for atypical forms of agency.

Nevertheless, attempts were made to place Zara's work within the bounds of accepted gender roles. In his explanation of Zara's role in translation, Hinrich places himself in the leading role and highlights his responsibility for the translation, while positioning his wife as assistant and pupil ('my assistance', 'what she has heard of me', 'every sentence I translate', 'she is obliged'). This is interesting given his acknowledgment that he understood very little Nama. This positioning is complemented by a defence of Zara's suitability for the role ('As my wife has been from the first my assistance she has now more knowledge of the language than any other'). The motivation of her involvement and defence of her role can be read as attempts at conformation. The word 'obliged' gives the impression that Zara's involvement was a duty and may have been an attempt to bolster his own agential role, but there is nonetheless a convincing indication that Zara viewed translation as a personal life goal. It is, therefore, quite possible that the tone of Hinrich's writing to the LMS expresses a desire to satisfy their expectations that he, as a learned male missionary, would play the leading role. The same defensive position present in the description of his marriage may, thus, have been present here too, reflecting tension between submission to social expectations and personal preference and belief.

In terms of agency, a lack of information greatly limits the analysis. Yet, unity with her husband in the Christian faith seemingly motivated Zara to dedicate herself to Christian translation and, in this case, translation's social role was overtly spiritual rather than hidden. While the ideology of European supremacy may be seen as a somewhat more covert aspect of missionary work generally, Zara and her husband cannot be seen as proponents of colonial racism. Her words at the conclusion of the proofreading task are striking proof that she can be classified as a social actor. Zara was dedicated to her service, as Hinrich's testimony upon her death proves (Trüper 2006, p. 53), and she persisted in the translation work under difficult circumstances. It should also be kept in mind that Zara did not have a high level of education. Her relative

productivity under these circumstances and her perseverance amid setbacks (such as the destruction of the first manuscript) can be interpreted as an active expression of agency. In this regard, Zara's agency is not dissimilar to that of male missionary translators, who were motivated by evangelical zeal to translate productively under very trying circumstances. Nevertheless, Zara and Hinrich's translation work was particular in its promotion of translation into Nama in an atmosphere in which the language was already marginalised.

It would take roughly another century and a half and morphogenesis in the realm of science to produce a context in which the last two translators would emerge. The first of these, Lucy Lloyd, became active as a translator in a much more systemically developed version of the British Cape colony, where science had had the opportunity to evolve. The second, Dorothea Bleek, entered the field of scientific translation at the beginning of the twentieth century. Although developments after the South African war at the turn of the century and unionisation in 1910 can be seen to have introduced a new morphogenetic cycle politically, Bleek's work remained largely conditioned by the ideological and scientific influences of the previous morphogenetic cycle, as will be seen in the following sections.

5. LUCY LLOYD (1834–1914) AND DOROTHEA BLEEK (1873–1948)

As relatively wealthy and educated white women, Lucy Lloyd and Dorothea Bleek's primary agency allowed them comparative freedom in colonial society. Numerous records of their own reflexivity (in the form of letters) offer a contrast to the mediation of Krotoa and Zara's stories by male figures. Nevertheless, a male 'chaperon' is again present – the famous philologist Wilhelm Bleek, by whom agency was motivated. Another difference is that Lloyd and Dorothea probably did not consider themselves to be translators primarily, although translation represented a significant research component, particularly in Lloyd's case. The role of women as translators was subject to morphostasis, however. Ouzman (1998, p. 39) explains that 'Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd's milieu was a curious combination of the repressive – especially for women [...] – and the enlightened', as is shown in this section. Thus, apart from certain differences, the role of women and their atypicality in translator roles remains relatively consistent in the following analysis.

5.1 Biographies[9]

Lucy Lloyd was the sister-in-law and Dorothea Bleek the daughter of renowned German philologist Wilhelm Bleek, who settled in Cape Town in 1856 as curator of George Grey's library. Lloyd, who had moved to South Africa from England as a teenager, moved into the Bleek household in Cape Town shortly after Wilhelm married her sister Jemima. There, Lloyd, a teacher, was trained as an assistant in Bushman research. The research consisted of transcribing and translating into English the narratives of /Xam informants. By the middle of the nineteenth century, traditional Bushman society was on the verge of extinction and Wilhelm was determined to record Bushman culture to trace human and linguistic evolution (Bleek 1983, p. 40).

Lloyd's work started in 1870 with the first Breakwater Prison informant. The project produced more than 11 000 pages of /Xam narratives,[10] of which Lloyd was responsible for two thirds. When Wilhelm died in 1875, Lloyd continued the research at his request and was appointed curator of the Grey Collection in his place, at half his salary. Following her dismissal five years later, she suffered as a result of financial difficulties and illness. Her work ended in around 1884 and she departed to Europe in 1887. In 1911, she published a collection of texts from

the transcription project as *Specimens of Bushman Folklore* – a major challenge, given her personal circumstances. When she returned to South Africa a year later, she became the first South African woman to receive an honorary doctorate. She died in 1913.

Dorothea Bleek was born in Cape Town in 1873, just two years before her father's death; after the Bleeks moved to Europe for financial reasons when she was about ten, she attended schools in Germany and Switzerland. As a young girl, she would have had contact with the Bushman informants and perhaps already possessed basic knowledge of the Bushman languages /Xam and !Kung (Scots 2007, p. 204). She was educated as a teacher, and was trained in research methodology and the translation of /Xam and !Kung by Lloyd in Europe. She moved to South Africa in 1904 and followed in her father's footsteps to become a Bushman researcher in 1908. She undertook numerous expeditions to the Northern Cape, Tanzania, Angola and Botswana, where she collected, somewhat haphazardly, stories, anthropological data and rock art recordings. Translation and transcription mainly involved the !Kung language. She published excerpts from her father and Lloyd's recordings in journals and compiled a Bushman dictionary (published posthumously in 1956) using their lexicon. In 1923 she was recognised as an 'honorary reader of Bushman languages' by the University of Cape Town and, in 1936, she was offered an honorary doctorate by the University of the Witwatersrand, which she refused, desiring that her father remain the only 'Dr Bleek'. She died in Cape Town in 1948.

5.2 Morphogenetic cycle

Lloyd and Dorothea's research can be located at the periphery of a developing science system, since, unsurprisingly, science was conceptualised and accepted as a male endeavour in the nineteenth century (Ouzman 1998, p. 39). In a practical sense, colonisation allowed the expansion of Western knowledge by providing infrastructure and physical possibilities for exploration. There was also ideological overlap between colonial and scientific interests, since knowledge was 'exploited', like physical resources, and was based on a view of indigenous people as uncivilised. Ouzman (1998, p. 42) remarks that 'Colonial society, though capable of occasional liberalism, was more apt to be patronising in its attitude toward indigenous people' (see also Bartnik 2010; Pratt 1992). Expeditions by European naturalists gave rise to the first rather simplistic translations, mainly from Khoe into European languages in the form of word lists and short text translations. Translation was part of scientists' efforts to classify and systematise indigenous people and languages, or to portray them as exotic and primitive to Europeans. Translation's main purpose was, therefore, the acquisition of linguistic knowledge.

The publication of Carl Linneaus's *Systema naturae* (1735) and Europe's first scientific expedition around the same time represented the beginning of a morphogenetic cycle, which conditioned these translation practices. Pratt (1992, p. 15) refers to this era as a new version of 'Europe's "planetary consciousness" [...] marked by an orientation towards interior exploration and the construction of global-scale meaning through the descriptive apparatuses of natural history'. Pratt (1992, p. 15) regards this change as the hegemonic reflex of modern Eurocentrism and, in this regard, the link with colonialism is obvious. Wilhelm's research took place long after the early naturalist expeditions, but nevertheless continued this scientific tradition, especially with his contribution to racial theory (Bank 2010). However, it also aligned with new academic trends. Wilhelm was part of a network of well-known European academics who made significant new contributions to science in the nineteenth century; other academics were his cousin, biologist Ernst Haekel, and Charles Darwin (Wessels 2008, p. 70).

The local scientific and colonial environment also offered important forms of conditioning, as 'the /Xam materials are a product of [...] the intellectual milieu of Victorian Cape Town' (Wessels 2008, p. 69). One feature of this environment was the presence of a 'tight colonial intellectual network' (Wessels 2008, p. 70). Wilhelm was one of the main figures among the liberal colonial intelligentsia, which included George Grey and the controversial minister William Colenso. Lloyd and Dorothea were not part of this academic elite. They engaged with academics, including George McCall Theal and George Stow, but preferred to form their own networks. Their research objectives also differed from Wilhelm's, although racial classification and general theoretical conditioning remained present. Wessels (2012, p. 30) explains:

> Theoretical expectations and scholarly and aesthetic practices preceded and determined the course of the collection of the /Xam materials. They accompanied, in turn, their translation and the form they assumed.

In Dorothea's time, science underwent rapid development and field research gained popularity. Yet, scientific research was still often 'haphazard, anecdotal and idiosyncratic in practice' (Weintroub 2016, p. 399), which Dorothea's approach reflected.

The unique characteristics of Lloyd and Dorothea's work as female agents should be read in contrast to the ideological norms outlined above, although general subservience to scientific norms was nevertheless observed.

5.3 Agency

Coincidence is again involved in this case of female translation, making it possible to identify it as a constant characteristic of female translation in Cape colonial history. Lloyd happened to become involved in Bushman research by virtue of her living situation. It is unlikely that she would have become involved had she remained in Durban. Ouzman (1998, p. 42) argues that 'the genesis and growth of the Bleek and Lloyd Collection was the product of fortunate happenstance enabled by the quirky nineteenth century Cape liberal tradition', with 'fortunate happenstance' no doubt including Lloyd's involvement. Like Lloyd, Dorothea might never have pursued Bushman research if Lloyd had not coincidentally been available to train her. In Lloyd's case, Wilhelm sanctioned agency directly. His request that she continue the Bushman research after his death 'must surely have bestowed on her work the credibility that, in those days, was usually reserved for male scholars and researchers' (DBLC n.d.). In Dorothea's case, her father's training of Lloyd may have emboldened her to participate in research as a woman. Her status as the daughter of Wilhelm Bleek may also have played a role, but there was no direct male sanctioning. Primary agency was an enabling factor for both women in terms of social status, education and connections, although, in terms of gender, they remained disadvantaged. The sanctioning of Lloyd may, therefore, have been an important (direct or indirect) promotion of agency for these women.

Regarding Wilhelm's role, it is noteworthy that both women assumed subordinance and never aspired to be seen as his scientific equals. Examples of this include Lloyd's initial reluctance to take up curatorship of the Grey Collection and Dorothea's refusal of the honorary doctorate. Lloyd and Dorothea created new avenues for their (female) agency rather than attempting to follow in Wilhelm's footsteps. As evidence of this, Bank (2006, p. 158) points out that Lloyd was not bound by Wilhelm's theoretical prejudices regarding race. She formed close relationships with the informants and veered from his interest in mythology to explore/Xam culture more generally. She also expressed more liberal anticolonial views (Bank 2006, pp. 352–353) and

allowed conversations with informants to take place more spontaneously. Lloyd's 'softer' approach can be seen as a distinctly female approach. Dorothea, in turn, had a more practical, expedition-based approach than her father, in which she often collaborated with female friends. A preference for female field assistants feminised her direct research environment, rendering it more welcoming. Weintroub (2009) highlights Dorothea's peripheral academic position, explaining that her 'research proceeded (by her own choice) at an intimate, private pace within the larger public and institutional context of knowledge production within which she situated herself'. Research, for Dorothea, was more about family tradition and loyalty than about theorising, and she viewed new scientific trends as alien, and clung to established ideas supporting her family tradition (Weintroub 2016, p. 406). Her research involved positioning of herself as central to her own, self-made world, as opposed to accepting a peripheral existence in a male-dominated knowledge creation industry (Weintroub 2009, p. 404). Thus, both women created space for the exercise of social actorship, and deviations from the norm allowed better integration of personal and social identity. However, morphogenesis regarding the role of women was not pursued through corporate agency. If their work contributed in any way to ideological change, it was in the passive manner associated with primary agency.

The ideological aspects of these women's work can be investigated in more detail as a component of their agency and as part of the hidden role of scientific translation in this era. Contemporary academics emphasise the fact that these translations, and even the classification and presentation of narrative records, are by no means neutral, but represent a very specific framing of /Xam and !Kung literature that covertly expresses Western ideologies surrounding literature and degrees of racial evolution. Ouzman (1998, p. 40) explains with regard to Lloyd that 'there are biases in the Bleek and Lloyd Collection' and that 'both ethnographer and teacher are "world-makers", neither representing the world as it is, but as it fits within personal and cultural frames of reference'. Staphorst (2021, p. 106) also acknowledges the influence of an artificial storytelling environment on the recorded texts'. In this regard, translation can be seen as a creative process (emphasising the agential), and as reflective of cultural and environmental conditioning.

Regarding the latter, Wessels (2012) observes that Wilhelm and Lloyd's translations unconsciously reflected nineteenth-century European ideas regarding the form of folklore (Wessels 2012, pp. 30–31). Scientific motivations (rather than literary interests) were expressed in their attempts to provide faithful, accurate and literal translations of narratives, illustrated in the following excerpt attributed to Lloyd (Wessels 2012, p. 31):

> Then her elder sister sprang out of the reeds; she in this manner, she running came. She, when she had run to her younger sister, she perceived the goats, she turned aside to the goats. […] "Ye must, pulling, leave the hair on the tips of my ears; for, in that manner I shall come to hear; for, I do not feel as if I should hear."

Although this method was an attempt to preserve the original aesthetic and character of the narrative, Wessels (2012, p. 32) believes that the exoticizing effect added an unwanted literary element. In addition, elements were added that reflected Western ideas about the style of folklore and mythology. This is especially evident in the use of archaic language and editorial 'interference' in *Specimens of Bushman Folklore*. Editorial interference included decisions about the delineation of narratives, the categorisation of texts and the creation of headings (Wessels 2012, p. 32). Furthermore, Western moral conditioning also caused offensive elements (from the Western perspective) to be left untranslated (Ouzman 1998, p. 40). Lloyd's use of archaic language has attracted considerable criticism. For example, Van

Vuuren (1994, p. 58) describes the translations as 'archaically stilted and belaboured' and there is clearly tension between the free form of Bushman narratives and Lloyd's European framing. Lloyd's 'interference' clearly expressed Western cultural conditioning, but her literal translation approach nonetheless reveals a mediatory aspect in her translator agency, as it did create room for valuing /Xam aesthetics. In this light, Wessels (2008, p. 76) describes Lloyd's translation approach as highly collaborative, as translations arose from complex negotiation and interaction with informants to understand and accurately reflect the meaning of narratives.

Dorothea's approach was similar to Lloyd's in relation to translation methods and framing. This is unsurprising, since she was trained in translation by Lloyd. Framing is particularly evident in Dorothea's adaptation of Lloyd and Wilhelm's material for publication. Wessels (2012, p. 34) criticises Dorothea's high degree of processing in *Mantis and Friends* (1923). Here, Dorothea merged separate portions of the material, although she claimed to have left out only tedious repetition (Wessels 2012, p. 34). Hollmann (2020) also criticises Dorothea's nine articles in *Bantu Studies*, stating:

> In preparing the narratives, Dorothea sacrificed the /Xam idiom for more familiar English modes of speech, as was also the case in *Specimens of Bushman folklore.* And while Dorothea's invaluable translations are always closely aligned to the /Xam text, she did intervene in a number of ways, omitting /Xam comments and other details that she did not consider directly relevant to the narrative. References to urination and genitalia were excised.

Hollmann (2020) criticises her retention of archaic language and English idiom at the expense of the idiomatic nuances of /Xam and describes her language as oppressive. Comparing Lloyd and Wilhelm's manuscripts with Dorothea's adaptations shows that the latter often processed several short sentences from the source text in a single, complex English sentence, thus allegedly misrepresenting the source style (Hollmann 2020).

In terms of translation and editorial methods, Lloyd and Dorothea's work, thus, generally expressed reigning ideological norms (which explains their subjection to harsh criticism). Although individual manifestations of agency are evident in the slight differences in approach, these are not as striking as the distinctly feminine forms of agency observable in their practical data collection methods. This makes for a very striking example of the tension between the avenues available for individual agency and the conditioning power of social norms and expectations.

Regarding translation's hidden social role, for these women, the personal, rather than only the subconscious ideological role, must be emphasised, however. Family tradition and legacy were embodied in the practice of folklore translation, which rendered it a personally fulfilling pursuit that expressed personal identity within an occupational role. Translation also represented a door to the male-dominated realm of science, which had personal emancipatory effects rather than a significant effect on social status. This context bestowed upon translation a subjective, empowering function, which was also social in terms of its embeddedness within society's role assignment regarding work. For these women, as for Krotoa, translation was not primarily a means to spread ideologies (although it did subconsciously perpetuate certain ideologies), but was part of a family legacy and a scientific pursuit that they had "inherited" and entered into, but also navigated through the exercise of female agency.

6. CONCLUSION

The question that needs to be answered, in concluding, is what similarities are observable in the analyses and what these contribute to our understanding of translation as a socially contextualised phenomenon. The first similarity is that, in every case, coincidence was involved in women's practice of translation. A specific combination of primary agency and other incidental circumstances had to be present to create roles for women as translators, since these were not present by default. Furthermore, in almost every case, male sanctioning played an important role in allowing, approving and justifying women's translation within a restrictive ideological space. Thirdly, a very active practice of agency for personal reasons (acceptance, social elevation, spiritual zeal, loyalty and family tradition) are present in all cases. Translation was not primarily practically or economically motivated, but personally inspired. Fourthly, corporate agency and, therefore, social organisation are absent in all cases, and the place of gender in the role array of society was not really questioned or challenged. Nevertheless, attempts to reconcile personal identity and vocational role were successful in most cases. In this regard, the findings support Wimalasena's (2017, pp. 14–15) comment on work and female agency, that 'work plays [a unique role] in women's lives in enabling the conscious manoeuvring of their life journeys ... [and] holds even the potential of being an emancipatory life strategy'. Social actorship, rather than social morphogenesis, can be seen as the goal of female translation. In Krotoa's case, status elevation and social acceptance were pursued via the translator role, but the unification of personal and occupational identity was hindered by particularly stringent social conditioning. In Zara Schmelen's case, translation fulfilled a spiritual life goal, and thus reconciled practice and purpose. In Lucy Lloyd and Dorothea Bleek's cases, avenues were created for the unification of female identity and social roles. These women, of course, engaged differently with structural and cultural influences in attempts to achieve social actorship. In this regard, Wimalasena (2017, p. 15) notes that 'a morphogenetic view of women's agency can provide realistic explanations regarding the subtleties associated with their responses to social powers'. Herein lies the connection with translation's social role more generally. This research emphatically underscores the motto of the translation sociology movement, that translation is by no means merely a neutral, functional activity, but highly reflective of social constellations. Yet, the focus on female translators and Archer's ideas about agency add to this observation an appreciation of the role of translation in individuals' navigation of complex social environments and their pursuit of personal goals. It highlights the role of translation in creating new, creative and spontaneous reflexive activities to mediate the diverse causal forces of social structures (Archer 2007, p. 109).

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ENDNOTES

1 This is an English translation by the author of an article that was originally published in Afrikaans in *LitNet Akademies*.

2 Translation is used in this article to refer collectively to written translation and interpreting.

3 The term *Khoesan* is sometimes considered problematic because it describes an artificial grouping of languages and/or cultures. Yet, the grouping of Khoe and Bushman languages (previously known as San languages) makes sense in this case due to the status of these languages as highly marginalised non-Bantu indigenous languages.

4 Olsen (2008, p. 12) states that many Khoekhoen were able to communicate in Dutch within just five years of the arrival of the Dutch.

5 Badassy (2002, p. 15) mentions that an Indian woman formerly employed by Reverend Crompton in Pinetown served as a court interpreter in Natal in 1860. It appears that this was only a temporary role.

6 *Nama* is a name of the Khoe people and the Cape Khoe language that was the chosen descriptor in the time and area in which the Schmelens lived.

7 First names are used to distinguish between family members with the same surname.

8 Documentation of a celebration of Zara Schmelen's life by her descendants and communities in the Northern Cape is available on Horst Kleinschmidt's personal website (http://www.horstkleinschmidt.co.za/zara-and-hinrich-schmelen-200th-anniversary.html). The website includes links to the South African Broadcasting Corporation's coverage of this event.

9 The following biographies are summarised from mainly the digital Bleek-Lloyd collection (DBLC n.d.), though detailed biographical information about Lloyd is available in Schoeman (1997) and Scotnes (2007), and about Dorothea in Weintroub (2016).

10 This archive has been digitised and is available as the digital Bleek-Lloyd collection (DBLC n.d.).