

Reflections of Mbiti's African Temporal Categories in Moshoeshoe Le Baruti (Moshesh and the Missionaries)

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ABSTRACT Time among the Africans (Basotho) appears to be a controversial view that is mostly attacked by many translation critics. The conflicting views around African time is whether it is two-dimensional (past and present) or a three-dimensional phenomenon (past, present and future). It is therefore the objective of this study to reflect on African time with a view to illuminate it in its proper perspective. The basic contention that the Basotho time retrogresses from the present to the past distinguishes itself from the argument that the Basotho also involves a future-dimension. The article also reflects the Basotho time as reflective of the life-view and the socio-cultural situation of the Basotho communities. The basic Basotho temporal categories are operationalized to establish the relevance of time to one of the written Sesotho drama texts, namely Khaketla's *Moshoeshoe le Baruti* (Moshesh and the Missionaries). This initiative is based on the understanding that drama reflects on reality and perhaps it would best reflect on the philosophy of the Basotho as Africans. Based on the fact that time is a structural element of a literary text, discussions around this research study are based within a structuralist theoretical framework. The results reflect that African time, in this particular text, is divided into three temporal categories. The researcher submits that time in this text characterises itself as significant in building up the unity of the text embedded within which is the establishment and the clarification of the theme. This study presents and also recommends a holistic approach in dealing with the temporal categories underlying the African (Basotho) time.