



## Investigating the Nexus between Animals and Basotho's Identities in Epitaphs as Death Discourse

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By the nature of epitaphs as a multifaceted genre of death discourse, both verbal and non-verbal strategies are involved in their typology for the purpose of commemoration or memorialization of dead people. Meanwhile, the issue of identity runs through the schematic structure of epitaphs and the situation is not different in Basotho's epitaphs selected for this study. Particularly, the eighth schematic element called "Closing" in the epitaphic typology was observed to be making reference verbally or picture-wise to each deceased Mosotho as belonging to an animal, a matter of totemic representation of every clan among the people of Lesotho. Even though a qualitative approach was adopted for the present research, 200 epitaphs were purposively chosen as database to understand the animals pre-indicated for all the clans, the rationale behind their choice of each, and why they are so much emphasized in the epitaphs. The data were originally sourced from four cemeteries in Maseru. The analysis showed that the Basotho carry a bequeathed social identity, which they are proud of and which interalia also streamlines the likely struggle for political power and thereby eases administrative process in the nation.