Writing in the 'Contact Zone': The Problem of Post-Colonial Translation. A Study of the 'Afrikanissimo-Project' and Tsitsi Dangarembga's Novel Nervous Conditions in German

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This work has not been submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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Abstract

Post-colonial translations are located in 'contact zones'. They mediate in the interface of disparate cultures and languages. The multiple determinations and effects of this decisive mediation process are examined in a close reading of the Afrikanissimo-project and the translation of Tsitsi Dangarembga's novel Nervous Conditions. They represent an attempt to engage 'Africa' through literature from a German perspective. Such dialogue is caught in the aporetic tension between the preservation of linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text and the domestication of the cultural other by dominant values in the target-language culture.

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Chapter One: Introduction

> Die Weltliteratur ist wie ein Meer, das von vielen kleinen Fluessen gespeist wird. Ohne diese Fluesse wuerde das Meer austrocknen. Aber viele dieser kleinen Fluesse sind unbekannt. Wenn wir also wirklich einen kulturellen Dialog wollen, koennen wir nicht laenger hinnehmen, dass in vielen Gesellschaften immer noch Staudaemme gegen die Fluesse aus Afrika, Asien und Lateinamerika fortbestehen. (René Philombe in Afrikanissimo 1997: 1)

To engage in a cultural dialogue is to take the contribution of African literature in the 'ocean' of world literature seriously. This also implies that literature is one of the sites where culture is articulated. In this thesis, I will look at two German attempts to engage in a cultural dialogue with 'Africa' through literature: one is the Afrikanissimo-project, the other is the translation of the novel Nervous Conditions by Zimbabwean author Tsitsi Dangarembga. Both attempts are framed by the explicit agenda of the Afrikanissimo-project to present a 'new image of Africa' to German readers (Kumpman 1999: 1). The cultural dialogue and the access to this 'new image' of Africa is, however, decisively mediated by translation – a practice that often remains unacknowledged in discussions of cultural encounter. How decisive this mediation can be and how translation can alter the image of a culture is illustrated by the (in-) famous quote from Edward Fitzgerald's letter to a friend, E.B. Cowell (1857):

> It is an amusement for me to take what Liberties I like with these Persians who (as I think) are not Poets enough to frighten one from such excursions, and who really do want a little Art to shape them. (Fitzgerald in Lefevere 1990: 19)

This statement by Edward Fitzgerald shows that translation is not solely a linguistic transfer but that it always involves contextual cultural/ideological components, which shape the process considerably. As a Victorian Englishman, he considers his own culture as much more 'authoritative' and since he happens to translate from a culture that is by no means close to that centrality, he takes what liberties he likes with the text. One can also see how conceptions of the 'acceptable' literary standard of the time and of its current poetics determine the translated product – as Fitzgerald says, 'they want a little Art to shape them' (Fitzgerald in Lefevere 1990: 19).

This little anecdotal piece of colonial arrogance serves to highlight the fact that translation processes are never neutral, especially so when they happen in the interface of disparate cultures and languages. The study and practice of translation is thus inevitably an 'exploration of power relationships within textual practice that reflect power structures within the wider cultural context' (Álvarez & Vidal 1996: 1). The consequences of colonization in the interpretation of other cultures (exemplified by Fitzgerald's

attitude) have been rightly questioned (Álvarez & Vidal 1996: 1). Therefore translation has to be situated within post-colonial theory, for it is caught in the dialectic of appropriating other cultures and the attempt to 'situate precisely and convey intact the 'otherness'' of the source text (Álvarez & Vidal 1996: 2). But as Lawrence Venuti points out:

> Translation continues to be an invisible practice, everywhere around us, inescapably present, but rarely acknowledged, almost never figured into discussions of the translations we all inevitably read. This eclipse of the translator's labor, of the very act of translation and its decisive mediation of foreign writing is the site of multiple determinations and effects - linguistic, cultural, institutional, political. (Venuti 1992: 1)

Following Venuti's contention of the invisibility of translation, this study attempts to analyse some of the linguistic, cultural, institutional and political effects of the translation of 'Africa' into the German context. What I hope to show is that translation is not just a practical activity or 'manual labour' but that it has to be situated in the foreground of theoretical considerations of foreign writing in general and of African literature within Germany in particular.

Rather than approaching this topic in a linear way, I have chosen three points of departure that all highlight different, although sometimes overlapping, aspects of cross-

cultural translation. In the second chapter the German project called Afrikanissimo will be discussed. This will be followed in the third chapter by a structured theoretical debate of the translation of foreign writing, and in the fourth chapter I will analyse the translation of Tsitsi Dangaremgba's novel Nervous Conditions into German. The reason for these three avenues of enquiry lies in the complexity of the topic: as soon as one starts to think about translations of foreign writing 'multiple determinations and effects - linguistic, cultural and political' have to be taken into account (Venuti 1992: 1).

The Afrikanissimo-project started in Germany in 1997 to promote African literature in translation for the German, Swiss and Austrian book market. It is thus linked to translation activity in a direct way. Afrikanissimo is headed by the *Gesellschaft zur Foerderung der Literatur aus Afrika, Asien und Lateinamerika e.V.*, which has as its first objective to observe literary production in Africa, Asia and Latin America and to recommend works for translation to publishing houses (Dialog durch Literatur 1997: 4). Central to their work is the selection of a recommended list of titles and the production of reports on literary texts for the purpose of mediating between the foreign author and the publishers (Dialog durch Literatur 1997: 4). Since its

foundation in 1980 this society has promoted translations of over 250 works (Dialog durch Literatur 1997: 4). The outcome of promoting translation in regard to African literary production is represented in the publication of the Afrikanissimo-catalogue. For example, translations of works by South African authors that feature in the Afrikanissimo - project are Zoe Wicomb's You can't get lost in Cape Town, Vladislavic's The Folly, Ramphele's Across Boundaries, four novels by Bessie Head, most of Gordimer's literary output and ten titles by J.M. Coetzee (Quellen 2000: 23-33).[1] Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions is introduced in the 1997/1998 catalogue as well. In the second chapter, I will focus on the agenda of this project by discussing the introduction to the 1999 catalogue by Hermann Schulz. This introduction raises important questions about, to use Venuti's words yet again, the 'linguistic, cultural, institutional and political' aspects of translation (1992: 1).

The questions or areas of enquiry that arise from this discussion will be the focus of the third chapter, where the theory of what can be called 'post-colonial translation' will be presented in detail. In order to create theoretical

[1] The African section of the catalogue is 31 pages long, featuring works from 28 African countries. South African literature is the biggest section represented by the works of 43 authors (Quellen 2000: 7-38).

categories that account for translation's decisive mediation of foreign writing, contributions from a number of theorists from different disciplines will be taken into account. From this theoretical chapter certain central aspects emerge, which need to be considered in the analysis of an actual translation produced in the interface between two or more cultures.

In the fourth chapter, these aspects will be discussed in the light of Ilija Trojanow's German translation Der Preis der Freiheit of Tsitsi Dangaremga's novel Nervous Conditions. By looking at a specific translation, I hope to explore the clash/contact of cultures (English, Shona and German) and how the translator responds to the challenges this represents. Part of this analysis will be the contextual placing of the source text and the translation Der Preis der Freiheit. What kind of context is it? Why and how was it chosen? Who chose it? For it is precisely this context that determines:

> …the cultural space that emerges from the clash (although, ideally, intersection) between the two cultures; a cultural space that is as complex as it is conflicting. (Álvarez & Vidal 1996: 4)

In all the following chapters, this 'cultural space' surrounding translation will be critically reflected on and will thus remain the focal point of this study.

Chapter Two: 'Afrikanissimo', post-colonialism and translation

> Man muss von Afrika aus die Welt betrachten, um ein afrikanischer Schriftsteller zu sein, und nicht vom Standpunkt der Welt auf Afrika schauen. (Nadine Gordimer in Kumpmann 1999: 3)

Nadine Gordimer's statement frames the introductory editorial of the German book catalogue Afrikanissimo (1999) which promotes African literature in translation. In this editorial key issues around post-colonialism and images of culture are raised, and Hermann Schulz, author, publisher and chairperson of the *Gesellschaft zur Foerderung der Literatur aus Afrika, Asien und Lateinamerika e.V.*, tries to challenge and correct commonplace views of African literature. Using Nadine Gordimer's quote above he contrasts two kinds of literature: one is the colonial literature that looks *at* Africa as periphery, as other from a European perspective of perceived centrality; and the second is modern post-colonial literature written *from* Africa as a challenge to any universalising category of what African literature is or ought to be (Schulz in Kumpmann 1999: 3).

Starting with Conrad, Blixen and Hemingway, Schulz views their way of looking *at* Africa as creating 'surfaces of projection' ('Projektionsflaechen'). On these surfaces images

of the dark, unintelligible, history-less and mysterious continent take their place (Schulz in Kumpmann 1999: 3). In these literatures, African people and their social community structures remain hidden under stereotypes that are the results of Western anxieties based around control and domination (Schulz in Kumpmann 1999: 3).

These anxieties, according to Schulz, are carried over to more recent developments in the European book market, where African literature written *from* Africa does not seem to fulfil expectations and thrive as much as it would merit. Some of it has to do with the 'foreignness' that cannot be controlled. Schulz argues that the reader's uneasiness of this uncontainability is couched in attempts to label what this literature should or should not entail. Schulz identifies common questions as indicative of this labelling: Why do 'they' not write more about the horrors of the two centuries of oppression? Where is the hate? Why are fears, visions and emotions still hidden underneath strange metaphors and expressions?

Schulz then closes his argument with a plea to German readers to embrace African literature as the only adequate source - apart from personal encounters, i.e. travelling - of gaining knowledge about this continent. Instead of trying to control

or label anything that is foreign in African literature, he proposes that the act of reading be seen as an encounter with that foreign culture. He emphatically promises a varied reading experience of what Africa is and might be and the possibility of correcting the misconceptions held by the rest of the world ('ihre Buecher bieten vielleicht auch die notwendigen Korrekturen fuer die ganze Welt.') (Schulz in Kumpmann 1999: 3). He seems to envisage the reading experience as what Mary Louise Pratt calls the 'contact zone': a 'social space where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other' (1992: 4). Being exposed to a contact zone might result in a change of perceptions, and I think this is what Schulz means when he talks of the 'correction' that literature can offer. The agenda of Afrikanissimo is thus more complex than that of an ordinary book catalogue; it is an attempt to promote in German readers a perception and understanding of what is culturally 'other' without feeling threatened by it. Every single publication of Afrikanissimo is situated within this framework of cross-cultural contact. However, an inherent danger exists for readers: as soon as one pretends to understand what is 'foreign' one risks it being appropriated into one's own system of reference and thus reducing it down to stereotype. Hence, Lefevere asks in his article 'Composing the Other' (1999):

> In short, Western cultures 'translated' (and 'translate') non-Western cultures into Western categories to be able to come to an understanding of them and, therefore, come to terms with them. This brings us straight to the most important problem in all translating and in all attempts at cross-cultural understanding: can culture A ever really understand culture B on that culture's (i.e. B's) own terms? (77)

The responses to this question vary. Some theorists say that cross-cultural understanding is impossible, because culture A can only understand B within its own system of reference (Sommer in Nuenning 1998: 164). Others say that cross-cultural understanding is not even a concept in it's own right, because any understanding even of one's own culture is 'cross-cultural', stressing the heterogeneity of 'culture' (Sommer in Nuenning 1998: 164). The third position neither sees cross-cultural understanding as impossible nor trivialises it, and is thus the most fruitful for my purposes. This position sees cross-cultural understanding as a dialogic process that comes close to Pratt's notion of the contact zone (Bredella/Christ in Sommer 1998: 164). This however, does not solve the aporetic tension that is involved in the process. Culture A will always partly subsume culture B in its attempt at understanding, but there is the possibility of a resistant part that challenges, transforms and remains 'foreign'. Following Foucault's later work, Dennis Porter stresses that instead of the 'obliteration of otherness, which is implied by radical discourse theory',

there will always be a 'surplus' of otherness in the dialogic engagement with 'alien modes of life':

> The important prerequisite for such a dialogue is the acknowledgement that there is always a 'surplus' beyond that which, at any one time or place, we are in a position to perceive and record. (1991: 5)

This idea of the 'surplus' is based on a theory of textuality[2] that stresses the power of 'poetic' language to 'renew perception, to release the hold of stereotypes and make the world strange again' (Porter 1991: 6). This defamiliarizing activity of the text is exactly what makes inter-cultural reading possible. Therefore it is not surprising that Afrikanissimo frames the reading experience as such a dialogic engagement:

> Die Welt, in der wir leben, ist bunter, vielfaeltiger, aber auch undurchschaubarer geworden. Romane, Gedichte, Erzaehlungen koennen - das mag ein kleiner Trost sein - Begleiter sein auf dem Weg, den 'Anderen', das 'Fremde' zu erfahren und zu verstehen. (Weidhaas in Quellen 2000: 3)

Following from Gordimer's quote, Schulz thus promotes African literature as an opportunity to 'see' parts of African society with African eyes. What he fails to mention, however, is the crucial fact that all the works by the thirty authors

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[2] Porter follows Roland Barthes's conception of semiology as a 'critical, oppositional practice that corrects discourse theory by insisting on 'the Text' as 'the very index of powerlessness (*dépouvoir)*: it thrusts aside to an unclassable, atopic space, far from the topoi of political culture'. Literature is precisely a sphere of language use that resists the exercise of power encoded within it' (Porter 1991: 6).

that are introduced in this catalogue are translated into German. In a way this 'rewriting' becomes the negotiation within a contact zone and what the German reader can access is already removed from that 'firsthand encounter'. Therefore the text has already 'travelled' towards the reader. That this complicates Schulz's simple assertion of 'seeing' and 'meeting' Africa and its people is fairly obvious. But the fact that the knowledge of other cultures and their literatures is for most people only accessible through translation calls for a much closer attention to the processes involved in this type of cross-cultural communication. Translation plays a central role in shaping images of one culture for their reception in a different one. The Mexican writer, Octavio Paz, goes as far as to say that translation is the principal means we have of understanding the world. The world is presented to us in a heap of texts:

> Each slightly different from the one that came before it: translations of translations of translations. Each text is unique, yet at the same time it is the translation of another text. No text can be completely original because language itself, in its very essence, is already a translation - first from the nonverbal world, and then, because each sign and each phrase is a translation of another sign, another phrase. (Paz in Bassnett & Trivedi 1999: 3)

Paz's radical view of translation offers interesting suggestions that are relevant to this study. Translation is a primary cultural activity already present in the creation of a so-called 'original' or source text and the originality of

a work of literature can never transcend the status of being a 'translation of a translation' (Paz in Bassnett & Trivedi 1999: 3). What this means in regard to *Fremdverstehen* is that even if the readers read the source texts, the reading would still involve 'translation'. Both writing and reading are 'translational' activities and quite close to the actual work of the translator. If one agrees with Paz that the writer translates culture then so does the translator. The difference is that the boundaries to the translator's translation are set by the source text. The analogy between writing and translation is particularly evident in post-colonial literature:

> A literary translator is *de facto* concerned with differences not just in language (transposing word for word, mechanically), but with the same range of cultural factors that a writer must address when writing to a receiving audience composed partially or primarily of people from a different culture. The culture or tradition of a post-colonial writer acts as a metatext, which is rewritten - explicitly and implicitly, as both background and foreground - in the act of literary creation. (Tymoczko 1999: 21)

In recent post-colonial theory 'translation' has come to serve as a central metaphor for the cultural activities within the interface of multiple systems of reference. Writers like Salman Rushdie, Homi Bhabha and Gyatri Spivak talk of the post-colonial experience as translation in the sense that it always involves more than one culture, one

language and one world view that have to be negotiated.[3] Rushdie in particular refers to himself as a 'translated man' because of this experience. As a consequence of that 'translated world' the post-colonial plurilingual and pluricultural texts:

> …resist and exclude the monolingual and demand of their readers to be like themselves: 'in between,' at once capable of reading and translating, where translation becomes an integral part of the reading experience. (Mehrez in Venuti 1992: 122)

In her article 'Post-colonial writing and literary translation' (1999) Maria Tymoczko further explores the similarities of translation and post-colonial literature. This provides an important distinction and avenue of comparison and I will look at two aspects, namely post-colonial writing *and* translation, as well as post-colonial writing *in* translation. It is the failure to acknowledge either of these central aspects in view of the Afrikanissimo-project that makes Schulz's introduction one-dimensional. Or, to say it differently, he falls into the trap of perpetuating 'translation as invisible practice' (Venuti 1992: 1), disregarding the fact that the labour of the translator is a decisive mediating activity that changes the texts on multiple levels. Schulz neither draws the attention of the reader to the mediated nature of the texts nor does he

[3] See Bhabha 1994; Spivak 1993 and Rushdie 1991.

mention the even more practical link to translation activities, which the Afrikanissimo-project represents. As pointed out in the introduction, the Afrikanissimo-project is linked to translation activity in quite a direct way: it is headed by the *Gesellschaft zur Foerderung der Literatur aus Afrika, Asien und Lateinamerika e.V.*, which has as its first objective to observe literary production in Africa, Asia and Latin America and to recommend suitable works for translation to German, Austrian and Swiss publishing houses (Dialog durch Literatur 1997: 4). If Schulz wants to discuss cross-cultural encounters in literature he should be taking into account the fact of translation.

What this also shows is how intricately issues of translation, cultural encounter, and the creation of contact zones are bound together with issues of marketability and of literature-as-commodity. Despite his aim to do justice to 'African literature', to further intercultural understanding, Schulz cannot help but generalise as if it were one homogeneous entity. Schulz glosses over the fact that every single written work is situated in a distinct cultural and socio-historical context. To talk about the literature of a whole continent in a few paragraphs seems incongruous with the attempt of promoting more than mere stereotypes. And again this has to do with translation: how can one possibly

convey to a German readership what the authors of 15 very different African countries have to offer? But then, Schulz has to make the reader want to buy these books and one could speculate that the ordinary reader would not wish to peruse a detailed scholarly introduction, which explores these books with due attention to their diversity. Stereotypes then become strategic tools to kindle interest in the reader, who then might encounter the 'foreign' when reading the book.

It is clear that the Afrikanissimo-project has to operate within two contradicting paradigms: on the one hand a genuine interest in African literature and culture, and on the other hand the publisher's desire to make enough sales to keep the books econimically viable. The translations then also have to be looked at as commodities. These two conflicting tendencies are visually displayed in the layout of the catalogue. Of the nineteen title pages of books that are shown, 14 are of black people within a de-contextualised natural environment, often in conjunction with the moon, plants or wild animals. These title pages suggest to the reader that 'Africa' is indeed a wild, dark and mysterious continent, where people live outside the constraints of modern society. There are certainly erotic undertones[4] as well. It seems highly

[4] Eleven title pages are of African women, accentuating the naked or partly dressed body. Only five title pages make reference to a socio-historical context; three of which are of non-fictions. In eight title pages, one finds representations of 'African' flora and fauna.

plausible that this choice of images increases the possibility of selling the books. Thus at the same time the Afrikanissimo-catalogue projects and negates stereotypes.

These title pages are juxtaposed with photographs of the African writers themselves and a short but comprehensive introduction to their work as well as an extract from one of their novels. This has an immediate demystifying effect, for (as one might expect) these people look like ordinary twentieth century people, who wear glasses and pose in front of bookshelves instead of wild plants and rhinoceros. These paratextual representations do influence a translation, particularly when on the title page, because the reader is confronted with specific cultural images before reading the actual text. Hence, an analysis of a translation will have to consider paratextual representations as well.

Languages and cultures are interconnected to such an extent that it is impossible to separate the two. But as James Clifford emphasises, it is a fallacy to equate 'culture (singular) with language (singular)' because this implies a nationalist idea of culture and language that has been thoroughly unravelled by Bhaktin, for whom:

> A language is a diverging, contesting, dialoguing set of discourses that no 'native' - let alone visitor - can ever control. And this does not even broach the question of multilingual/intercultural situations. (Clifford 1997: 22)

In order to avoid a concept of culture and language that asserts 'holism' and privileges 'value, hierarchy, and historical continuity', Clifford attempts to define culture in terms of travel rather than stasis. Instead of seeing 'travel' as a supplement to the 'localism' of culture, he argues that:

> *Travel* emerged as an increasingly complex range of experiences: practices of crossing and interaction. [Thus] practices of displacement might emerge as *constitutive* of cultural meanings rather as their simple transfer or extension. (Clifford 1997: 3)

The cultural action of making and remaking images of identity thus happens in the contact zone. Travel, as Schulz pointed out earlier, and translation, which he forgot, are thus central in constituting this cultural action. Lefevere makes the point that translation is therefore not primarily about language, but rather that 'language as the expression (and repository) of a culture is one element in the cultural transfer known as translation' (1992: 57). This is part of the reason why colonial powers have enforced their language (or a language serving as a lingua franca) over and above the languages of a colony. The conception existed that this will yield control over culture (singular). In Language and Colonial Powers of the appropriation of Swahili in the former

Belgian Congo, Johannes Fabian makes a similar point, namely that the control of language was central to 'serving the needs of the colonial system' (1986: 82; see also Viswanathan 1989: 2-3). However, in the same study, he points out that this effort to control and implement 'constructs of power' often relies on, and thus is subverted by, 'the creative [linguistic] labours of the people' (Fabian 1986: 8). Similarly, in modern post-colonial literatures, language often becomes the marker by which conflicting identities are negotiated and cultures appropriated. If languages indeed carry views of the world then this has significance for translation. Sherry Simon and Vanamala Viswanatha talk about translations as suspicious forms of cultural traffic, connected to colonial contact, because:

> …as vehicles of colonial influence, as purveyors of foreign novelty to the metropolis, they travel the routes opened by conquest. But they also enter into relations of transfer whose results are not entirely predictable. It is because they are products of the interaction between cultures of unequal power that translations provide an especially revealing entry point into the dynamics of cultural identity-formation in the colonial and post-colonial contexts. (1999: 162)

Here one can see yet again the aporetic nature of translation as intercultural transfer: on the one hand it involves appropriation, stereotyping and the negation of difference and otherness, on the other hand there is this 'surplus', this 'unpredictability' of such a transfer that might allow contact and dialogue. In order not to subsume what is foreign

but instead to preserve its strangeness, Spivak calls for an 'intimate act of reading' of the source text, prior to any attempt at translating (1993: 183).

What interests me, apart from the theoretical debate on post-colonial translation which I will discuss in the following chapter, are the current images of African culture that become apparent in the translation of a literary work into German - and this translation includes linguistic as well as paratextual considerations. Lefevere mentions that 'rewriters' of the past and present create images of a writer and her work, sometimes even whole literatures. And that:

> …these images existed side by side with the realities they competed with, but the images always tended to reach more people than the corresponding realities did, and they certainly do so now. (1992: 5)

Looking at the Afrikanissimo-catalogue shows how images of Africa as the dark and exotic continent still influence and, more importantly, 'sell' the product that might be situated in a completely different reality when one considers the content of the work. Anselm Haverkamp correctly points out that it is inadequate to talk in general terms about 'language', 'culture' and for that matter 'translation' and

thus one has to concretise these issues *vis-à-vis* a text[5] (Haverkamp 1997: 8). Hence, I have decided to look at Tsitsi Dangarambga's novel Nervous Conditions which was published in 1988, and for which Dangarembga won the prestigious African Section of the Commonwealth Writers prize in 1989. This book was translated by Ilija Trojanow into German in 1991 and it featured in the Afrikanissimo catalogue of 1997 (19).[6] Reading Tsitsi Dangarembga's novel Nervous Conditions in both cultural (con) texts proved that this novel is firmly situated within the debate around post-colonial writing and literary translation, and that, in addition to the more general questions, this particular translation adds more concrete questions to the debate. Why, for example, is the epigraph by Sartre absent from the German version? Why is the title translated in the way it is? And how are specific cultural practices to be conveyed? This question is particularly important, since Dangarambga explores the complex and conflicting relationship between rural Shona culture and urban English colonial culture. The main characters constantly negotiate this relationship, and the way Dangarembga makes this most obvious is by drawing

[5] He says that all the questions surrounding translation are specific and that they are bound to stories: 'Es laesst sich wenig ueber Kultur und Sprache an Allgemeinem sagen, das nicht an sehr betimmten Geschichten haengt: daran, dass Geschichte im Uebersetzen nicht die allgemeine Geschichte bleibt, als die sie auftritt; dass auch Kultur und Sprache im Uebersetzen nicht das bleiben, was sie, ihrerer selbst gewiss, sein wollen' (Haverkamp 1997: 8).

[6] Curiously, the little introduction in the catalogue mentions the original title and hints at its pluri-referential qualities. This information is completely lost in the translation and the German reader has no access to it. I will discuss this in more detail later.

attention to the link between culture and language. Shona and English become sites of subversion, oppression and struggle. This poses a problem for the translator: how to keep the cultural- linguistic conflict alive while substituting English with German. The translation thus has to carry more than just one foreign culture. Most important is the question of whether the translator achieves a balance between the strange and foreign elements of the text, thus preserving the 'cultural other' and the attempt to render it in German. It is also worth asking whether Der Preis der Freiheit is a book of the contact zone and whether it coheres with the framing of the Afrikanissimo-project.

What I have tried to do in this chapter is open up interesting areas of enquiry that emerge from the example of the Afrikanissmo - project. In the next chapter I will attempt to address these areas in a more systematic manner, focusing on theoretical issues surrounding post-colonial literature and translation as well as contextualising these in regard to Nervous Conditions.

Chapter Three: Translation Studies

In the field of translation studies there are a number of theories and discourses. This chapter is an attempt to give a detailed account of the ones that are most relevant to this thesis. It should be clear from the previous chapter that my approach to translation is culturally rather than linguistically orientated, and most of the work by scholars of translation studies, which is discussed in this chapter is about the cultural implications of translation. However, for heuristic purposes I want to start off though with a short look at the linguistically orientated branch of translation studies called *Uebersetzungswissenschaften*, which has flourished particularly in Germany since 1950 (Snell-Hornby 1990: 80).[7]

Ueberstzungswissenschaft aimed at 'making the study of translation rigorously scientific, and like linguistics, it adopted views and methods of the exact sciences, in particular mathematics and formal logic' (Snell-Hornby 1990: 80). Translation was therefor viewed as linguistic transcoding or substitution and this in turn rested on the notion of the two language systems being 'equivalent' (Snell-

[7] Uebersetzungswissenschaften can be literally translated as the 'science of translation' but the term indicates a purely linguistically oriented branch of translation studies in Germany.

Probably the most pervasive idea that characterises any discussion of translation is that of symmetry. Text A can be made into Text B by substituting all the separate elements of A with the equivalent elements in B. Both A and B are equals in this mathematical transfer and should therefore enjoy the same status. Sherry Simon talks of this as the humanist vision of translation:

> The humanist vision of translation as peaceful dialogue among equals, as the egalitarian pursuit of mutual comprehension, is only one of a number of paradigms, which account for the dynamics of translation. (Simon in Venuti 1992: 160)

Translation, in this sense, assumes the possibility of carrying a text across linguistic and cultural barriers while leaving it 'intact' and 'whole'. As this terminology suggests, the original (which has the status of the complete whole) can be substituted by its equivalent in another language and culture. Within this paradigm language is perceived as 'natural'. This completely negates the belief that any language to be translated, or to be translated into, is already marked by translation, and consequently is not natural but culturally constructed (Haverkamp 1997: 9). In view of the 'translatedness' of the original, Johnston speaks of translation not as an expression of equivalence but rather of difference:

> In other words, because the 'original' is not self-identical but holds within itself these marks of another language, whether as seeds of change present in the language at a certain state or as some more radical otherness only visible in the *derivé* of other literary works, it calls for translation to 'translate' - to accomplish and bring to fruition - this difference. (Johnston in Venuti 1992: 46)

It is clear from the theory and practice that translations and their sources are far from being perfect homologies or 'equals' in the history of literary transfer. In the article 'Translation: Its Genealogy in the West' (1990) André Lefevere uses several historical examples to point out that linguistic considerations play a minor role in what he calls the 'basic categories of the history of translation' (15). Among these categories he lists the authority of the commissioning 'patron', the authority of the text to be translated, the authority of the writer of that text, the authority of the receiving culture, the expertise of the translator, trust (which survives bad translations) and the image a translation creates of an original, its author, its literature and its culture (Lefevere 1990: 15).[8] Seeing that expertise, trust and 'authority' in its various forms influence translation practice, it is obvious that the exchange of 'linguistic equivalents' in an assumed vacuum negates those cultural, ideological and poetological particularities of the context of a literary work and its

[8] Lefevere illustrates the role of comissioning authority as follows: 'Translators do not get burnt at the stake because they do not know Greek when translating the Bible. They got burnt at the stake because the way they translated the Bible could be said to be a threat to those in authority' (Lefevere 1990: 15).

translation. Even if one could circumvent the cultural component of a work, it is still impossible for a translator to shape the target text in such a way that there is equivalence of words, tone, meaning, structure and intention.[9] Any given text (and particularly a literary one) constructs meaning on different levels and it is only partly possible to 'translate' that complexity. Choices must be made by the translator; there are additions and omissions in the process, regardless of the skill of the translator. Equivalence suggests symmetry of a rather static kind and thus does not allow for the multiple perspectives of a text or the interpretative influence of the translator. Owing to these considerations Lefevere and others reject the discourse that claims that translation is a 'dialogue of equals' and an act of 'mutual comprehension'. Rather, any act of rewriting becomes manipulation of a literary text and this can have positive or negative consequences:

> Translation is responsible to a large extent for the image of a work, a writer, a culture. Together with historiography, anthologising and criticism it prepares works for inclusion in the canon of world literature. It is the main medium through which one literature influences another. It can be potentially subversive and it can be potentially conservative. (Lefevere 1990: 27)

[9] Maria Tymoczko points out in this regard that many differences between the source and the translation are inescapable shifts from one system to another. These include linguistic constraints as well as cultural features (e.g. objects, customs, historical and literary allusions) that are unfamiliar to the receiving audience. She further mentions that 'in trying to adapt the multiple layers of information in a text to a new reception environment, a translator will inevitably produce a longer text' (1999: 23).

In the introduction to the collection Uebersetzungswissenschaft – Eine Neuorientierung (1994) Mary Snell-Hornby discusses the term 'equivalence' together with the German term 'Aequivalenz' in order to show that these two terms are semantically not identical owing to the very different etymological development of each (1994: 14).[10] She further points out that even within each particular language both terms assume a number of nuanced meanings that have contributed to the rather imprecise and conflicting usage within translation studies. For example, equivalence is on the one hand firmly situated in every-day speech and is already recorded in the *OED* as early as 1460, but it also has assumed a much narrower meaning in the exact sciences, such as mathematics and formal logic. The imprecise usage of 'equivalence' and the very static scientific meaning of its other usage call its usefulness for translation studies into question. The German 'Aequivalenz' is not used in every-day language at all but is used only in the fixed scientific sense. However, realising that translational equivalence cannot be such a fixed absolute; theorists sub-categorise the term, and Hornby records 58 different types of 'Aequivalenzen' in contributions to the field (1994: 15). Owing to this extreme over-usage of the term for a number of

[10] See also Snell-Hornby 1990: 80-81.

different phenomena, she asks herself if the term is of any use at all:

> Insgesammt muss man sich fragen, ob *Aequivalenz* bzw. *Equivalence* als uebersetzungswissenschaftliche Termini tauglich sind: einerseits ist *Aequivalenz* - als eine fuer einen bestimmten Zweck wissenschaftlich fixierte Konstante - zu statisch und eindimensional geraten, und andererseits ist *equivalence* bis zur Bedeutungslosigkeit verwaessert worden. Die Entlehnung aus den exakten Wissenschaften hat sich als Illusion erwiesen. (1994: 15)

Therefore, one has to say that neither the term nor what it supposedly describes or prescribes seems adequate when talking about the translation of literary texts. Lefevere's earlier suggestion to talk of translation as 'rewriting' allows for the multiple factors that influence any translation. 'Rewriting' situates translation firmly within the realm of cultural activity.

Colonial translation - translation as manipulation:

If translation is not a 'dialogue of equals' then it does mirror the unequal relations between cultures. The asymmetrical power relations that link cultures of the West and formerly colonised cultures do influence translations, and it is clear that there are ideological implications of such a transfer. Translation rarely involves an equal relationship between texts, authors, systems, and it is recognised that 'colonialism and translation went hand in hand' (Bassnett & Trivedi 1999: 3). Bassnett and Trivedi

further point out that this rests on the notion of the colony as the 'copy' of the 'European Original' and the attempts of the coloniser to re-create the colony in as close an approximation as possible, destroying everything that might stand in the way of such a 'mission' (1999: 4). Translation, in this political sense, becomes a key aspect in cultural negotiations around hierarchy and hegemony. In order to assert its hegemony a colonial power assumes control over language:

> Language becomes the medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated, and the medium through which conceptions of 'truth', 'order' and 'reality' become established. (Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin 1989: 7)[11]

Translation as a metaphor of the process of colonisation is one aspect of 'colonial translation', but there is also a more literal aspect in that translation was for centuries a one-way process, with texts being translated into European languages for European consumption, rather than a reciprocal process of exchange (Bassnett 1999: 5). What this means is that only those texts that cohere(d) with European literary norms came to be translated, enforcing again the hierarchy of cultural production in the colony. Similarly, the few European texts that were deemed beneficial and educational

[11] See also Johannes Fabian's study Language and Colonial Power (1986), particularly chapter three, and Gauri Viswanathan's Introduction of his book Masks of Conquest (1989).

were translated into the 'native' language of the colony. Therefore, as Sherry Simon mentions:

> Translation is not only the appropriation of previously existing texts in a mode of vertical succession; it is the materialisation of our relationship to otherness, to the experience - through language- of what is different.' (Simon in Venuti 1992: 161)

Colonial translation, with its particular objectives, negates the difference and thus also expresses the oppressive and violent relationship to otherness.[12] It is interesting that the critique of translation theory emerges from these former colonies:

> The emergence and the continuing growth on the world literary scene of postcolonial literatures from the ex-colonies as well as the increasing ethnic minority in the First World metropoles are bound to challenge and redefine many accepted notions in translation theory which continue to be debated and elaborated within the longstanding traditions of western 'humanism' and 'universalism'. (Mehrez in Venuti 1992: 121)

This challenge can be linked to the relationship between translation and the so-called original. If Europe set itself up as the 'great Original' and the colony became the lesser 'translation' then it is not surprising that post-colonial theorists reappropriate and reassess that relationship and

[12] Bassnett and Trivedi provide an illustration of this in their introduction to Post-colonial translation: 'La Malinche, the native American woman taken as mistress of the conquistador Hernán Cortéz who was also the interpreter between the Spaniards and Aztec peoples, serves as icon that the dominant metaphor of colonialism was that of rape, of husbanding 'virgin lands', tilling them and fertilizing them and hence 'civilizing' them (1999: 4). Translation and colonialism are thus closely linked.

the very meaning of translation itself (Bassnett & Trivedi 1999: 5). As the discussion on equivalence has shown if translation is less about mediation but rather shows the impossibility of such an attempt, the whole grand colonising metaphor collapses. This has opened up new and creative ways to theorise about translation and to use it as quite a different metaphor. Sherry Simon mentions that translation is thus:

> …a figure of dramatic indeterminacy, invested less with a confident mission of mediation than with the power to reveal the aporia of communication and the irremediable distance between language and the world of reference. At the same time, however, the inevitable displacements and non-equivalencies of translation have come to represent modes of creation, mechanisms for engendering new meanings and forms.' (Simon in Venuti 1992: 160)

In the following, the relationship between post-colonial literature and translation shall be explored as well as the particular challenges that are faced when translating post-colonial writing.

Post-colonial translation - translation as 're-creation':

In the article 'Des Tours de Babel' (1985) Derrida points out that the very fact of translation questions any claim of univocity a colonial power might wish to assert. In the story of Babel, God destines the Semites to translation and:

> ...he ruptures the rational transparency but interrupts also the colonial violence or the linguistic imperialism. He destines them to translation, he subjects them to the law of translation both necessary and impossible: in a stroke he delivers a universal reason (it will no longer be subject to the rule of a particular nation), but he simultaneously limits its very universality: forbidden transparency, impossible univocity. (Derrida 1985: 174)

Translation as a figure of contestatory expression: this 'impossible univocity' shows how sites of colonial power always have been 'multivoiced'. Pratt speaks in this regard of the long ignored voices and texts that express the polyphonous critique of empire: 'ceremony, dance, parody, philosophy, counterknowledge and counterhistory, in texts unwitnessed, suppressed, lost, or simply overlain with repetition or unreality' (1992: 2). Translation in the post-colonial context thus emphasises and plays with the fact of polyphony[13] and it is the inter-cultural and inter-linguistic space that becomes significant. Homi Bhabha writes that:

> We should remember that it is the 'inter' - the cutting edge of translation and renegotiation, the *in-between* space - that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. (1994: 38)

As pointed out in the previous chapter, it is a fruitful endeavour to compare the processes that characterise post-colonial writing and literary translation. Here I will start with the assumption that both, the post-colonial writer and the translator have to 'rewrite'. The former 'rewrites' the

[13] Mikhail Bakhtin uses the musical metaphor of polyphony to analyse Dostoevsky's novels, where the dialogic character of the word makes it possible for the author to build up a chorus of voices. Those voices make up a pluralistic world in which a continual dialogue goes on. (Tabakowska 1990: 71)

metatext of culture whereas the latter is concerned with a particular text for an audience that will be at least partially from a different culture.[14] Both the metatext and the source culture present parameters of constraint. For the translator the cultural specificity of the source could present a number of cultural and linguistic elements that could be problematic for the receiving audience. The writer of a post-colonial text has obviously more choice in either foregrounding unfamiliar cultural elements or assimilating these differences and thus stressing the universality of the text (Tymoczko 1999: 21-22). But this freedom is by no means as great as might be imagined, for even the creative writer is bound by history, myth, ideology, patronage and affiliation in the presentation of cultures in the literary work (Tymoczko 1999: 22-23).[15]

The hybrid space of post-colonial language/translation:

Post-colonial texts frequently present an unfamiliar culture to their international audience and this, in the case of an English text, is often expressed through a 'new language' that seeks to represent the source culture through the medium

[14]It seems that literature is considered 'post-colonial' when it can be accessed in one of the dominant languages, like English or French and be read by an international audience.
[15] See Lefevere (1990) pp. 14-28 for a discussion of these influencing factors.

of this heteroglossic english.[16] Thus the translation process of a post-colonial text is rendered much more complicated. These texts, referred to as 'hybrid' because of their cultural-linguistic layering have to forge a new language that as Mehrez insists:

> ...defies the very notion of a 'foreign' text that can be readily translatable into another language. With this literature we can no longer merely concern ourselves with conventional notions of linguistic equivalence, or ideas of loss and gain which have long been a consideration in translation theory. For these texts written by postcolonial bilingual subjects create a language 'in between' and therefore come to occupy a space 'in between'. (Mehrez in Venuti 1992: 121)

Writing in this 'in-between' language does not merely 'translate' (in the sense of linguistic equivalence) other cultural experiences into English but, as Mehrez explains, becomes also a quest for an 'in between' space of translation, assimilation and hence transformation of the source text, the context and the English language. A literary example of this 'in between' language would be Zora Neale Hurston's novel Their Eyes Were Watching God (1990), where the narration is in standard English and the dialogue in the black vernacular of the time:

> 'Maybe he ain't nothin',' she cautioned herself, 'but he is something in my mouth. He's got tuh be else Ah ain't got nothin' tuh live for.' (Hurston 1990: 72)

[16] Ashcroft et al. distinguish between English, 'the language of the erstwhile imperial centre' and english in the lower case 'which has been transformed and subverted by different linguistic communities in the post-colonial world' (1989: 8).

In his afterword to this novel, Henry Gates, Jr. writes about this divided 'double voice' as an expression of her 'in-between-ness' as a black woman writer in America (Gates Jr. in Hurston 1990: 193). Another African novel that also invents this 'new' language is Chinua Achebe's Anthills of the Savannah (1987) where the social strata is encoded in different ways of speaking English.

Literary translation has to occupy this 'in between' space of intercultural writing in a similar way to post-colonial literature. Translation thus gets stuck in the fragmentary space between languages and cultures, where the aim of 'carrying across' remains an ideal impossible to achieve due to the complexity that such a transfer entails.

In the interface of two cultural systems (re-)writing often shows most clearly that neither culture nor language offer themselves as unifying systems of universal references. Therefore, contemporary understanding of translation (and of post-colonial literature) has, as Sherry Simon suggests, more to do with 'discontinuity, friction and multiplicity' (Simon in Bassnett 1999: 15). It is an act both of bearing across and of fertile coming together. In his article 'Writing Translation. The strange case of the Indian English novel'

(1999), G.J.V. Prasad points out that the gain of translation is most obvious in the 'pollinated and enriched language (and culture)' (1999: 41). The English that a post-colonial writer uses becomes part of the message as well as being the medium of the creative text. The relationship of the languages that are involved in such a multilayered text is one of translation in the sense of mutual fertilisation and transformation. The analogous processes of post-colonial writing and literary translation have to do with creating this space between languages and cultures. Hence, as Sherry Simon observes:

> Translation, it turns out, not only negotiates between languages, but comes to inhabit the space of language itself. The many languages of the literary text speak of the fragmentation of language communities and the increasing complexity and heterogeneity of cultural space.' (Simon in Venuti 1992: 174)

The heterogeneity of cultural space forces the translator as well as the post-colonial or minority-culture writer to make choices, to emphasise certain features and to select from the material presented in the metatext of culture or the source text. The problems a translator has to deal with often become marked features of the post-colonial text. These will be discussed in detail below.

Lexis:

First of all there are lexical items that are culturally specific and thus have no equivalents in the receptor culture. These often include aspects of material culture (foods, clothes and tools), measurements (currency and weight), social structures (customs, institutions and law) and features of the natural world like plants, animals and weather conditions (Holliger 1997: 6-7; Tymoczko 1999: 24). In the children's section of Afrikanissimo *Guck Mal Uebern Tellerrand!*, Helmi Martini-Honus and Juergen Martini discuss the difficulty of translating the novel Joys of Motherhood by Nigerian author Buchi Emecheta into German. For example the word 'soup' was translated as 'Suppe' but:

> Unser Erstaunen (und unser Gefuehl von Peinlichkeit) war schon sehr gross, als wir feststellen mussten, dass 'soup' viel dicker ist, der Sauce naeher als der Suppe, aber auch keine richtige Sauce, sondern viel kraeftiger, laenger gekocht, viel wuerziger. (1997: 8)

Another example they give are the words 'bottlies' and 'teapots' in Patricia Grace's novel Cousins, where they are used to describe games played in New Zealand in the Twenties. After a long search they found out that 'bottlies' are antique 'Flaschenverschluesse' and eventually Patricia Grace explained to them what 'teapots' were:

> 'Teapots' waren kleine Kugeln, die sich in den Tuellen der Teekannen befanden und die man durch Abschlagen der Tuellen herausbekommen

> konnte. Aber was war das im Deutschen? Ein Murmelbuch half uns weiter - da gab es 'Limokugeln', die im Hals von Limoflaschen steckten, und die man nur herausbekam, wenn man die Flaschen zerbrach. (1997: 8)

Facing lexical difficulties, the translator has a number of choices: she could omit the reference, or find an 'equivalent' in the target language, or import the word untranslated (possibly with a footnote or other explanation) or add an explanatory classifier (Tymoczko 1999: 25). The use of untranslated words in the translation and the inclusion of unfamiliar cultural references might result in quite a different texture than that of the unmarked prose in the target language, and that is also often the case in post-colonial texts where the writer faces similar difficulties in portraying the cultural metatext (Tymoczko 1999: 25).[17] One can also see these inclusions of unfamiliar references as deliberate ways in which the post-colonial writer subverts and appropriates the colonial language to account for a distinctly different experience (Ashcroft et al. 1989: 1-13). There are other lexical anomalies that are present in

[17] In A Grain of Wheat, Ngugi wa Thiong'o imports without explanation words for plants, tools, garments and dances. In A Man of the People, Chinua Achebe also imports African words into English, but more typically uses established English equivalents for African cultural concepts that are parts of his English dialect (i.e. head tie, pit latrine, highlife). Other writers introduce African words with explicit explanations (Tymoczko 1999: 25).

translations as well as intercultural writing, for example English words can be used in a non-standard way and thus assume a completely different meaning (Tymoczko 1999: 26).

Myth and custom:

Sometimes, unfamiliar cultural information does not reside in the lexis but rather pervades the text more diffusely. But, as Maria Tymoczko points out, it is more common that translators and post-colonial writers deploy strategies of informing the reader about these myths, historical circumstances and customs. For example, Chinua Achebe in his novel Things Fall Apart (1981) explains the 'Feast of the New Yam' to his audience:

> The Feast of the New Yam was approaching and Umuofia was in a festival mood. It was an occasion for giving thanks to Ani, the earth goddess and the source of all fertility. Ani played a greater part in the life of the people than any other deity. She was the ultimate judge of morality and conduct. And what was more, she was in close communion with the departed fathers of the clan whose bodies had been committed to earth. (1981: 26)

This need to inform an unfamiliar audience has to do with cultural hegemony, for translators that move from a dominant-culture source text to a minority-culture audience frequently leave cultural information implicit, thus presupposing knowledge of the dominant mythical and historical references (Tymoczko 1999: 28). One could suggest that if a post-

colonial writer has achieved international success, the need to explain also diminishes, for s/he can expect more from his/her audience. In both literary translations and literary works:

> The necessity to make cultural materials explicit and to foreground potentially unfamiliar materials affects primarily the movement of a cultural substratum from a marginalised culture to a dominant one and it is associated with a negative cline of power and cultural prestige. In post-colonial writing the amount of cultural material that is explained explicitly serves as a kind of index of the intended audience and of cultural gradient between the writer and the audience. (Tymoczko 1999: 28-29)

This might be a general trend but is not always applicable, because a writer might want to achieve a *Verfremdungseffekt* by presenting unfamiliar material to an international audience, thus making more demands on the reading process. An example is Tsitsi Dangerambga's Nervous Conditions, where Shona words and sentences intersect the English narration, often without explanation (1988). This strategy de-familiarises the non-Shona-speaking reader and constantly draws attention to the difference between Shona culture and English culture. In this case, the choice to leave certain aspects unexplained might be a political stance to resist precisely the cultural hegemony Tymoczko describes above, perhaps at the risk of alienating the readership. Complete comprehension and transparency of the source culture might thus not be the first aim of the writer.

Literary genre:

Another problematic area for both types of intercultural writing are literary genres and forms (proverbs, songs and metaphors) of the source culture. And again, the solutions will be either to 'naturalise' for the receiving audience or to preserve the 'strangeness' of the material. In Gideon Toury's terms both translation and post-colonial writing are governed by two kinds of norms:

> preliminary norms involving general principles of allegiance to the standards of the source culture or the receptor culture, as well as operational norms guiding the myriad small choices that are made in textual and cultural transposition. (Toury in Tymoczko 1999: 30)

Any analysis of such norms that govern literary translations will thus have to consider both of the languages and cultures. Similarly, to judge a post-colonial text only from the receptor culture might lead to inadequate interpretations. For a translator of a post-colonial text this becomes doubly complicated, for she has to interpret multiple layers and cultures in the source text and then reproduce this in yet another culture. For example, the translator of Nervous Conditions has to understand the intricate relationship between rural, traditional Shona culture and urban, colonial English culture and then 'translate' this into German.

Patronage and audience:

The preliminary norms of allegiance to source or receptor culture that Toury mentions have to be analysed also in view of the parameters of constraint exercised by patronage, or what I have called earlier the 'comissioning authority'.[18] Examples of such 'commisioning authority' are presses, publishing houses, granting agencies, universities and in the case of Afrikanissimo the *Gesellschaft zur Foerderung der Literatur aus Afrika, Asien und Lateinamerika e.V.*. These patrons determine what is to be translated as much as what is to be published and they in turn depend on their respective audiences.[19] A valid question would be whether a writer is called post-colonial without being part of international patronage, thus being available to a wide audience and as a consequence being read in English. As Trivedi and others point out, there is a correlation between international reputation and post-colonial writers residing in foreign metropolitan centres (1999: 12, Tymoczko 1999: 31). Trivedi further mentions that:

> ...in [Salman Rushdie's] formation as a post-colonial writer, the fact of having abandoned both his native language and his native location

[18] For a discussion of patronage and translation see Lefevere 1990 and 1992.

[19] An example would be the German book market: of approximate 9000 to 10.000 publications every year in the rubric of fiction, the number of African publications is marginal; in 2000 only 42 books by African writers were translated and published some of which were reprints. At the moment there are circa 375 titles available by African writers out of 125.000 works of fiction (e-mail from Peter Ripken, 30/11/2000).

> has played a crucial constitutive role. With him as with numerous other Third World writers, such translingual, translocational translation has been the necessary first step to becoming a post-colonial writer. (1999: 12)

This possibly indicates that the demands of international patronage might compromise the form, content and perspective of the post-colonial works themselves. But maybe that is just too negative a view. Rushdie sees the reasons for writing in English as internal, rather than as the influencing power of patronage. He states that Indians writing in English do so:

> ...in spite of our ambiguity towards it, or because of that, perhaps we find in that linguistic struggle a reflection of other struggles taking place in the real world, struggles between the cultures within ourselves and the influences at work upon our societies. (Rushdie 1991: 17)

What Rushdie claims then is that the 'native language and location' is not a singular, homogenous entity as Trivedi implies, but that his location as a creative writer is one 'between the cultures within'. This 'struggle' compels him and many other post-colonial writers to opt for a language that best expresses this struggle. It is hardly surprising that as a consequence of this choice, the work is more widely read. Trivedi (1999: 10) insists though that this fosters a dangerous perception, namely that all works that come to be called 'post-colonial' must be written in English and thus 'have attained a hegemonic ascendancy':

> The widely shared post-colonial wisdom on the subject is that the Empire can translate back only into English, or into that lower or at least lower-case variety of it, english. To any counter-claims that literature with a post-colonial thrust is being written equally or even more abundantly in languages other than English, especially in countries such as India, the usual sceptical Western retort is: But show us - in English translation!(1999: 11)

In this view translation still serves the purpose to perpetuate unequal power relations between the writer and the Western cultural apparatus that appropriates the work. What this quote also illustrates is that the demands of patronage and the intended audience are powerful ideological and economic influencing factors. Is the writer mainly addressing an audience within the post-colonial culture, the former coloniser or an international audience? An important consideration for the critic will be that writing strategies will differ according to the audience. Similarly, for whom does the translator translate a text? If a text is produced for an international audience this might have to do with the trend towards the 'internationalisation of literature':

> It becomes increasingly hard to define national traditions of the modern novel, for example, for more and more the novel has become an international genre with writers influenced by and influencing other writers from different linguistic traditions. At the same time American cultural and economic hegemony means that to succeed as writers, many authors feel an imperative either to write in English or to be translated into English. (Tymoczko 1999: 32)

The international audience of the post-colonial or minority-culture writer might thus in fact be influencing the production of the text just as the audience will influence a

translation (Tymoczko 1999: 33).[20] Harish Trivedi's above-mentioned critique of Salman Rushdie's (and, by implication, of any Indian English writer's[21]) choice to write in English seems to have some validation, considering the quote above. In response to this critique, Dennis Walder points out that the history of colonialism and decolonisation has not only influenced the 'themes and preoccupations of literary producers', but more profoundly also 'their chosen medium' (1998: 42). Instead of 'abandonment' one should rather speak of the possibilities this offers, as Chinua Achebe remarks: 'let no one be fooled by the fact that we write in English for we intend to do unheard of things with it' (Achebe in Walder 1998: 43).

[20]Writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o serves as an interesting example of the attempt to change audience: after writing several successful novels in English, Ngugi changed to writing in Kikuyu; since then his works have been accessible to an international audience only through literary translation. In his book Decolonizing the Mind (1986), Ngugi explains that writing in the coloniser's language is to accept at least some of the coloniser's values as well (Tymoczko 1999: 33; Walder 1998: 44&52).

[21] The discussion around English is relevant also in view of the works by most post-colonial African writers, i.e. Chinua Achebe, Ama Ata Aidoo, Ben Okri, Tsitsi Dangarembga, Njabulo Ndebele, Ayi Kwei Armah just to name a few.

The focus on the creative potential of English as an in-between language that 'translates' cultural experiences is perhaps a more pragmatic and fruitful approach to the complex issue of literary language.[22] As Walder points out:

> Whatever the generalisations, suspicions and admonitions of critics, politicians, theorists and legislators, the writers go on writing, whether in their new, 'borrowed' tongue, or in the old 'original'. Their specific histories decide their positions for them, as much as they themselves feel they have done. (Walder 1998: 55)

Creative innovation and experimentation:

Another similarity between literary translation and post-colonial writing is the possibility of experimenting with literary style, genre and language. In order to reproduce the source culture(s) in the target language translators/ post-colonial writers often have to expand the target language to accommodate 'foreign' forms and styles. Zora Neale

[22] The following lines by Indian writer Kamala Das illustrate beautifully the creative potential of English and are a refusal to relinquish a medium that has become 'her own':

> I am Indian, very brown, born in
> Malabar, I speak three languages, write in
> Two, dream in one. Don't write in English, they said
> English is not your mother-tongue. Why not leave
> Me alone, critics, friends, visiting cousins,
> Every one of you? Why not let me speak in
> Any language I like? The language I speak
> Becomes mine, its distortions, its queernesses
> All mine, mine alone. It is half English, half
> Indian, funny perhaps, but it is honest,
> It is as human as I am human, don't
> You see? ...
> (Das in Walder 1998:53)

Hurston's divided voices seem to provide such an innovative strategy to encode the experiences of a minority culture that differ from the dominant culture (1990). This shows that translation can have innovative and transformative influences over literary systems in the receptor culture. Maria Tymoczko quotes Amos Tutuola's novel The Palm Wine Drinker as an example of Yoruba poetic sensibility that transforms the English language in which the novel is written (1999: 34). Ganesh Devy points out that translation is one of the crucial conditions for creativity and that 'origins of literary movements and literary traditions inhabit various acts of translation' (1999: 183).[23] Translation can even become an '"alibi" for challenges to the dominant poetics' (Tymoczko 1999: 33). The approach at translation as a creative possibility is taken by many theorists (Bassnett 1999: 6), they do not to see translation as inevitable loss, or a strategy of domination.

As with translation, in post-colonial writing formal experimentation and innovation is a notable characteristic. Both intercultural writings expand dominant standards of language, poetics and culture. This is due to the fact that both the post-colonial writer and the translator is situated

[23]Devy identifies some of the literary traditions that emerged through translation, i.e. Anglo-Irish literature, Indian English literature and most other post-colonial literatures (1999: 183).

between cultures, and that they have to 'translate' experiences or beliefs from one to another and thus often resort to:

> ...new mythic paradigms and archetypal representations, new formal resources, and revitalised language, including new mythopoetic imagery. (Tymoczko 1999: 34)

This pollinated and enriched language is a benefit of translation; it is not just a bearing across but a fertile coming together. Prasad mentions the Indian writer Raja Rao, whose writing in English 'posits a struggle for space' between colonial English and the native Indian languages. In the process of literary creation all three - English, the Indian text and the context - are transformed (1999: 42). Rao thus creates a language and in doing so underscores the 'otherness of the culture depicted' (1999: 42). Chinua Achebe explains the function of this 'new language' as follows:

> The African writer should aim to use English in a way that brings out his message best. He should aim at fashioning out an English which is at once universal and able to carry his peculiar experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings. (Achebe in Walder 1998: 52)

Conclusion:

Translation as cultural activity is caught in the dialectic of usurping and appropriating the 'cultural other', and of

making encounters in the contact zone possible. It is therefore neither an act of 'colonising' nor is it pure 'writing back to the empire', but rather something in-between these two. Individual translations have to be situated within this dialectical relationship, and this is what I attempt to do with the translation of Nervous Conditions by Ilija Trojanow: Der Preis der Freiheit. Keeping in mind that the critique rests on interpretation and 'rewriting' of the source text just as much as on his translation, my analysis will always draw on my own reading of Nervous Conditions as a post-colonial text *vis-à-vis* his translation. The focal point, as mentioned earlier, is the specificity of cultural-historical material and how this specificity is preserved in the translation. Can, in other words, Der Preis der Freiheit enable intercultural encounter (however complex and unpredictable) or is it a German book for German readers with a little 'African colouring'?

Chapter Four: Tsitsi Dangaremga's Nervous Conditions and Ilija Trojanow's Der Preis der Freiheit

Comparing the two books, it is interesting to note that their first few pages are already very different from each other. The translation actively 'rewrites' the source. This is conveyed in the title, the layout of the front and back cover, and the absence of the epigraph in the German edition. Before the readers even embark on their reading journey, certain expectations and images of what the novel entails are raised. A major shift in focus occurs in the translation of these first few pages. After having analysed these pages, I will look at other aspects of this 'rewriting' in the cultural interface, always bearing in mind the question of how specific cultural material is translated for an unfamiliar audience.

If one imagines a reader in a bookshop taking the German edition into her hand for the first time it will be clear that she will 'read' the textual and paratextual information presented on the front and back and a certain image of the book will emerge. In particular this image will be influenced by the series name *Neue Frau*, the title Der Preis der Freiheit and the back cover quote on the content. These

aspects are therefore closely interconnected. However, for the sake of the argument, I have discussed each one in turn.

The cover and its framing - *Neue Frau*:

As I pointed out in chapter one, all the books promoted in the Afrikanissimo project are framed by their objective to enable *Fremdverstehen*. This sometimes coheres with or is in opposition to the selling strategies of the publishers. Der Preis der Freiheit was published by Rowohlt in their series *Neue Frau* ('new woman'). This second framing - *Neue Frau* - might suggest to the reader a number of things. Firstly, that this novel will be concerned with issued relating mainly to women. Secondly, that the main characters will be women. Thirdly, the word 'neue' possibly suggests that the novel will be dealing with emancipated, modern women, and when read in conjunction with the title, that 'freedom' will entail some form of emancipation of women/woman. Some of these ideas are bolstered by the visual and textual layout of the cover (see appendix one).

The illustration on the front cover highlights this second framing, because the white letters *Neue Frau* stand out on the dark red background. Above it, there is quite a stylised image of two snakes, one trying to bite the other's tail.

They make the shape of a square with their wavy bodies, possibly suggesting the 'evil powers' that try to prohibit the emancipation of women and the development of the *neue Frau*. Snakes are however quite ambiguous symbols, reminiscent of the story of Adam and Eve. In the history of its reception the woman has often been associated with the evil of the snake, as in Milton's 'Paradise Lost'. But, considering the other visual clues, this is definitely not the most obvious reading. In the square there is a stylised face in profile, looking at an open book, which contrasts the natural world (suggested by the snakes) with that of (Western) written culture. This introduces the *Bildungsroman*[24] function of the novel where the emancipation and freedom of 'woman' goes hand in hand with education, as exemplified in the icon of the open book. This idea of educational progress and emancipation is also expressed on the back cover where one reads:

> Tsitsi Dangarembga, 1945[25] im heutigen Zimbabwe geboren, schildert anruehrend und meschenkundig den zaehen Kampf eines Dorfmaedchens um Bildung. Doris Lessing schrieb ueber dieses Buch: Viele gute, von Maennern geschriebene Buecher sind in Afrika entstanden, aber wenige von schwarzen Frauen. Dies ist der Roman, auf den wir schon lange gewartet haben. Er beschreibt, wie ein armes benachteiligtes Maedchen allmaehlich dem Dorfleben, dem Stammesleben entschluepft, um seinen Platz als gebildete Frau einzunehmen - erzaehlt, was sie gewonnen, aber auch, was sie verloren hat; wie schwer es Frauen unter der Fuchtel der Maenner in der traditionellen afrikanischen Gesellschaft hatten. (1991)

[24] For a discussion on Nervous Conditions as Bildungsroman see Gorle 1997 and Driver 2000.
[25] This date is wrong, Tsitsi Dangarembga was born in 1959! (Dangarembga in Wilkinson 1992: 190).

There are a number of aspects that have to be pointed out regarding this advertising summary. On one level, the structure of the novel is linear and chronological: it tells how Tambu is growing up and thus can be called a *Bildungsroman*. On another level, the narrative strategy of employing two first person narrators (the young, naïve experimenting Self versus the older experienced Self) allows Tsitsi Dangarambga to critically reflect on education and Bildung with subtle irony (Veit-Wild 1989: 171). Western education is contrasted with rural wisdom and oral history, and both are looked at critically by Tambu. The ambiguity of Western education can best be seen in the characters of Babamukuru, Maiguru and Nyasha. Babamukuru is empowered by his Mission education; he is wealthy, educated and director of the Mission school and has done well in everybody's eyes. But it is obvious that education and colonial administration go together and he is certainly one of Fanon's pacified native elite who keep the colonial values in place:

> The European elite undertook to manufacture a native elite. They picked out promising adolescents; they branded them, as with red-hot iron, with the principles of western culture; they stuffed their mouths with high-sounding phrases, grand glutinous words that stuck to the teeth. After a stay in the mother country they were sent home, whitewashed. (Sartre in Fanon 1967: 7)

That he suffers from it can be seen in his extremely violent reactions to Nyasha, and in his 'bad nerves' (102), a common symptom of male hysteria as Sue Thomas points out (1992: 29).

Maiguru is another character who serves as an example of how Dangarembga complicates any unproblematic understanding of *Bildung*. Allowed to continue studying with her husband in South Africa and England, she gets a Masters degree only to give her salary to her husband, who uses it to feed the extensive family without any recognition of her contribution. This effacement is heightened by the expectations placed on her to conform to two models: the dutiful wife within a traditional Shona marriage and, as the wife of the headmaster, the feminine embodiment of Christian decorum. This denial of her autonomous Self leads to her baby-talk and fussing. Tambu notes that Maiguru effaces herself 'so well that you couldn't be sure she didn't enjoy it' (102). It thus emerges that Western education is not the straight path to progress and emancipation for the characters in the book. This is finally confirmed in the last chapter of the novel where the older Tambu's critical stance towards her Western education and her acknowledgement of her mother's wisdom enables her to write down her story. She says:

> Although I was not aware of it then, no longer could I accept Sacred Heart and what it represented as sunrise on my horizon. Quietly, unobtrusively and extremely fitfully, something in my mind began to assert itself, to question things and refuse to be brainwashed, bringing me to this time when I can set down this story.(203-204)
>
> [Obwohl ich es damals nicht bewusst wahrnahm, konnte ich das *Young Ladies College* der Nonnen und alles, was es repraesentierte nicht mehr als die an meinem Horizont aufgehende Sonne betrachten. Leise, unauffaellig und sehr sprunghaft festigte sich mein Denken; ich begann Dinge in Frage zu stellen und widersetzte mich der Gehirnwaesche, bis ich so weit war, diese Geschichte niederzuschreiben. (283-284)]

The reader gets the sense that what Tambu calls the 'process of expansion', and what is referred to in chapter one as her 'escape', is by no means as straightforward as the title and the back cover text of the German edition suggest. It is also interesting that Tambu refers to another novel that would have to be written to adequately describe this process of expansion. What we have as readers then is the story of 'how it all began' (204). It is thus quite obvious that the last chapter of the novel remains open-ended subverting the structure of a *Bildungsroman*. Gilian Gorle points out therefore that the novel departs in two ways from the *Bildungsroman* function, firstly it tells the story of five women and their men, with Tambu and Nyasha jointly occupying centrestage; and secondly the end of the novel provides no sense of closure (1997: 180):

> Taking the novel's opening and closing paragraphs together, we are left to speculate over the success and the precise nature of Tambu's escape. The final chapter makes it clear that she continues her education at Sacred Heart. What is left unclear is the question of Tambu's inner response to 'Englishness'. (1997: 180)

Moreover, neither the first nor the last chapter tells the reader that Nyasha is safe. The uncertainty that her rebellion 'may not have been successful' is created in page one and still echoed by the doctor on page 202, who would not commit himself to saying whether Nyasha would survive. Tambu says that 'Nyasha's progress was still in balance, and so, as a result, was mine' (202). The impression given by the title, back cover text and the cover illustration is suggesting that this novel it is a feminist story of emancipation through education, but the novel itself shows this impression somewhat misleading.

Another problem with Lessing's quote on the back cover is that her white middle-class brand of feminism is applied to fit Dangaremga's text. Stressing the patriarchal structures of Shona culture, Lessing fails to acknowledge the complexity of the positions of the female characters in the novel. Dangarembga explores this complexity and carefully differentiates between the colonial patriarchy and the Shona patriarchy. In a sense, Lessing blames the male characters in the novel for inhibiting the emancipatory processes of 'their' women, but the situation is much more complex. In an interview with Kirsten Holst Petersen, Tsitsi Dangarembga talks of the inequality between Tambu and her brother Nhamo,

stressing that its causes are not only patriarchal but also colonial:

> I have become increasingly more reluctant to use this model of analysis as it is put forward by Western feminism, because the situation in my part of the world has one variable, which makes it absolutely different: the men are also in a position of powerlessness. So I would offer perhaps also economic reasons, for the family knew that she would not be in a position to help them afterwards; that it is not purely a patriarchal problem, it is also a result of the state of colonisation at the time. (1994: 345)

Lessing's quote thus bolsters the very general and moreover global reading of 'Woman', of *neue Frau*. But as Sally McWilliams points out:

> The female subject is a site of difference; differences that are not only sexual or only racial, economic, or (sub)cultural, but all of these together, and often enough at odds with one another … these differences then, cannot be again collapsed into a fixed identity, a sameness of all women as Woman, or a representation of Feminism as a coherent and available image. (1991: 103)

Considering the framing of *Neue Frau* and the visual and textual layout of the book, this generalising and globalising image of a 'feminist' novel is put forth. This is closely connected to the title Der Preis der Freiheit, which raises completely different expectations from the English title Nervous Conditions.

The title:

The English title Nervous Conditions refers to the psychological disorders all the characters display in one way or another in the face of patriarchal and colonial domination. Dangarembga's choice of title links her novel to Franz Fanon's work on the psychological effects of colonisation. It particularly draws on the chapter entitled 'Colonial war and mental disorders', in his book The Wretched of the Earth (Fanon 1967: 200-250).[26] Sue Thomas points out that hysteria affects both men and women in the novel, raking a number of different forms:

> ...most spectacularly, anorexia nervosa; more banally, angelic housewifely submission, the horizontal violence of naming women witches, the repression of loss which manifests itself in obsessively repeated justifying myths which entrench colonial rule, and 'bad nerves' which accompany playing the part of the 'good kaffir' of the coloniser's imagination. (Thomas 1992: 26)

Moreover, the title is a direct quote from Jean-Paul Sartre's preface to Fanon's work, and this is reflected in the epigraph on the first page of the novel. The specificity of the title is thus very important and it is clear that Tsitsi Dangarembga wants the reader to pick up the multireferential quality of it. She understands her novel to be part of the tradition of post-colonial thought, and she successfully brings the dilemmas and contradictions that are the legacy of

[26] In this chapter, Fanon examines a number of cases in which the process of colonisation is held responsible for various pathological mental complaints, which he then divides into various subsections according to type (Fanon 1967).

colonialism into focus. It is thus also a political gesture to refer back to Franz Fanon's work on the same topic.

The German translation works with a completely different title, possibly because of the difficulty of finding an adequate substitute that captures the idiomatic quality of the expression 'nervous condition'. The title selected, Der Preis der Freiheit (the price of freedom), originates from a quote in the novel. When the young Tambu hears that her uncle will allow her to go to Sacred Heart, the Catholic convent, she muses somewhat naively:

> I was to take another step upwards in the direction of my freedom. Another step away from the flies, the smells, the fields and the rags; from stomachs which were seldom full, from dirt and disease, from my father's abject obeisance to Babamukuru and my mother's chronic lethargy. Also from Nyamarira that I loved. *The prospect of that freedom and its possible price made me dizzy.* (183, my emphasis)
>
> [Ich sollte eine weiteren Schritt nach oben tun, auf die Freiheit zu. Einen weiteren Schritt fort von den Fliegen, den Geruechen, den Feldern und Lumpen; von Schmutz, Krankheit, vom kriecherischen Gehorsam meines Vaters Babamukuru gegenueber und von der chronischen Lethargie meiner Mutter. Und auch vom Fluss Nyamarira, den ich liebte. Von der Aussicht auf diese Freiheit und von ihrem moeglichen Preis wurde mir schwindlig. (254-255)]

The German title refers to Tambu's social climbing, from being a poor village girl to a middle-class educated young woman (one of the black elite). But is does not show that this journey to freedom is not without costs and sacrifices. Therefore the title fails to capture the ambiguity of this 'freedom' and its price as discussed in the novel. Bearing in

mind the expectations of the reader who has not yet started the novel, this title emphasises again the emancipatory/ feminist paradigm suggested by the second framing and the cover. But, apart from the experience of loss mentioned in the passage above, Nyasha tries, in one of her lucid and very critical speeches, to explain to Tambu that this 'freedom' is only another way of colonial control:

> It would be a marvellous opportunity, she said sarcastically, to forget. To forget who you were, what you were and why you were that. The process, she said, was called assimilation, and that was what was intended for the precocious few who might prove a nuisance if left to themselves, whereas the others - well really, who cared about the others? So they made a little space into which you were assimilated, an honorary space in which you could join them and they could make sure that you behaved yourself. (179)
>
> [Es sei eine wundervolle Chance zu vergessen, bemerkte sie sarkastisch. Zu vergessen, wer man sei, was man sei und warum man so sei. Dieser Prozess nenne sich Assimilierung und sei fuer die wenigen Fruehreifen vorgesehen, die sich als Laestig erweisen koennten, wenn man sie sich selbst ueberliess, aber was die anderen anginge - nun, wen kuemmerten schon die anderen? Also raeumten sie dir ein Plaetzchen ein, um dich zu assimilieren, einen Ehrenplatz, wo du dich ihnen anschliessen durftest und sie sichergehen koennten, dass du dich gut benahmst. (249)]

What Nyasha so aptly points out is that assimilation is another form of colonial control, achieved through offering Tambu an education. The 'freedom' this seems to offer is an illusion. The freedom from poverty and the restraint of Shona patriarchy that Tambu wants to achieve, might thus result in another bondage, another loss. Here again it has to be stressed that colonialism and patriarchy are intricately connected, but in the German title the link to colonialism is very oblique. There is another reason why this 'freedom'

might not be what it seems for Tambu does not control her own access to it. Anthony Chennels remarks that whenever Tambu moves to a new space that seems to provide more liberty it is never by her own labour and inclination. Instead, access to these new spaces has been the result of a 'gift':

> The white woman's gift allows her to return to school. Babamukuru's gift sends her to the mission. A scholarship from American nuns will let her go to Sacred Heart. *Her growth into freedom is an illusion for she is moving from dependency to dependency.* The final gift of the scholarship is dependent on yet another gift: Babamukuru's permission to accept it. (1996: 72; my emphasis)

Dependency and freedom are thus interconnected themes that run through the whole novel. Owing to the forces of colonialism and patriarchy, which affect all the characters, any offer of freedom always carries with it in its baggage some kind of dependency. Freedom is disclosed as yet another colonial strategy to remain in power and exert control. Therefore, when the older Tambu is summing up her story, freedom resembles more an attempt to 'escape' and 'a beginning' (1; 204). Gillian Gorle mentions that the meaning of the word 'escape' is no simple given either, for in chapter four:

> Tambu's determination to 'escape' from the homestead has ominous connotations of wanting to wipe out her entire past. That is precisely the type of denial that Ma'Shingayi earlier saw in Nhamo's behaviour: a symptom of the deadly disease which she bitterly identifies as 'Englishness'. (1997: 182)

Central to this is the idea of forgetting one's roots and traditions. So in the end it is Tambu's rootedness in traditional Shona culture that gives her the freedom to question the education she receives at Sacred Heart. In an interview with Jane Wilkinson, Dangarembga talks about this as follows:

> I think this problem of forgetting - remembering and forgetting - is really important. What is interesting is that Nyasha as an individual does not have anything to forget: she simply doesn't know. [Tambu] has this very solid background. She knows exactly where she is coming from. (1992: 193)

This remembering then also enables Tambu to choose what is going to be 'useful in future as (she) progress(es)' (Dangarembga 1992: 193).

For the reader, who has not yet read the main body of the novel, the German title, together with Lessing's quote, suggests a rather linear development, not accounting for the immense struggle and ambiguity that this development entails (this is captured much better by the English title). The title also does not account for Nyasha's failure and the struggles that the other characters go through in their efforts to survive. Tambu says in the last lines of the novel:

> It was a long and painful process for me, that process of expansion. It was a process whose events stretched over many years and would fill another volume, but the story I have told here, is my own

> story, the story of four women whom I loved, and our men, this story is how it all began. (204)
>
> [Es war ein langer und schmerzhafter Prozess fuer mich, dieser Prozess der Erweiterung; ein Prozess, der sich in ereignisreichen Stufen ueber viele Jahre erstreckte und der einen weiteren Band fuellen wuerde, aber die Geschichte, die ich hier erzaehlt habe, ist meine eigene Geschichte, die Geschichte von vier Frauen, die ich geliebt habe, und die Geschichte unserer Maenner; es ist die Geschichte davon, wie alles begann. (284)]

The novel is a story about a beginning, possibly the beginning of freedom, but certainly not for all the four women, because Tambu says elsewhere:

> My story is not after all about death, but about my escape and Lucia's; about my mother's and Maiguru's entrapment; and about Nayasha's rebellion - Nyasha, far-minded and isolated, my uncle's daughter, whose rebellion may not in the end have been successful. (1)
>
> [In meiner Geschichte geht es schliesslich nicht um den Tod, sondern um meine und Lucias Flucht, um das Gefangensein meiner Mutter und Maigurus; und um Nyashas Rebellion --Nyasha, aufgeschlossen und einsam, die Tochter meines Onkels, deren Rebellion letztendlich vielleicht doch nicht zum Erfold fuehrte. (7)]

Der Preis der Freiheit 'rewrites' in another way as well. For the German reader, this title poses no challenge, in fact it is incorporated immediately into the existing system of reference (i.e. feminism, emancipation with a little bit of struggle, African men are to blame). One can see how the translation thus negates difference and otherness by universalising the story. This is however not the case with the English title, Nervous Conditions, which resists any easy understanding. For an unfamiliar audience, this title has to be decoded with the help of Sartre's epigraph, thus directly

leading the reader to the socio-political dimension of the text by situating it within post-colonial thought. The loss of this reference in the German title reduces the possibility of cross-cultural encounter by taking away the specific context in which Dangarembga places her novel. For the English title is closely linked to the epigraph by Sartre from his introduction to Fanon's The Wretched of the Earth: 'the condition of the native is a nervous condition' (1988: 1). This epigraph is not even translated, it is simply absent from the German edition, and the link to Fanon is completely lost.

The missing epigraph:

In the preface to Franz Fanon's The Wretched of the Earth, Sartre discusses the repressed sources of horizontal violence, which the colonial situation enforces on the colonised. This horizontal is the violence directed at the fellow colonised, and which precedes the vertical violence of the wars of independence that are fought against colonising powers. Sartre writes:

> At first it is not *their* (the colonised) violence, it is ours, which turns back on itself and rends them; and the first action of these oppressed creatures is to bury deep down that hidden anger. If this suppressed fury fails to find an outlet, it turns in a vacuum and devastates the oppressed themselves. (Sartre in Fanon 1967: 16)

The force of Western culture causes a split in the psyche of the oppressed, who cannot but live in two worlds. By 'laying claim to and denying the human condition at the same time: the contradiction is explosive' (Sartre in Fanon 1967: 17). The violence that ensues takes a certain form:

> Our enemy betrays his brothers and becomes our accomplice; his brothers do the same thing. The status of the 'native' is a nervous condition introduced and maintained by the settler among colonised people *with their consent*. (1967: 17)

Sue Thomas relates this to the characters in Nervous Conditions and explains their hysteria as a result of 'precariously repressed rage at patriarchal and colonial domination' which then is turned against the self (1992: 27). Dangarembga qualifies and extends Fanon's post-colonial psychiatric thought with regard to gender difference.[27] Dennis Walder points out that Fanon 'seems to have elided women from his theorisation of the colonial process' and that there is complete silence on the possible involvement of 'women as well as men as agents of resistance' (1998: 79). Dangarembga concentrates on how men and women are contained by colonialism and by Shona and Western patriarchy respectively. Thomas mentions that Dangarembga uses many of Franz Fanon's key concepts, namely:

[27] See also Michelle Vizzard's 'Hysteria and Anticolonial Feminism in Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions' (1993) where she talks about the cases that Fanon discusses: 'The experience of the woman is mediated through the lives of men' (2).

> The creation of a black colonial elite as a means of pacification; the distinctions between physical, structural and psychological violence; the early elaboration but not naming of horizontal violence; the psychological damage wrought by a colonial system of domination and the need to liberate repressed anger at domination. (1992: 34)

What distinguishes Dangarembga's arguments from Fanon's is the inclusion of a critique of the Shona patriarchal system within these concepts (Thomas 1992: 34; Driver 2000). Also her detailed awareness of the operation of hysterical resistance, particularly in women, provides an interesting and far-reaching revision of Fanon's work on domination (Thomas 1992: 35).

It is surprising that the translator choses to leave out the epigraph and thus cut out the multiple references which situate Nervous Conditions in the tradition of post-colonial theory with specific regard to Fanon's work. This choice de-contextualises the novel by cutting all the intertextual connections, and the German reader is not even given the chance to follow the lead that Dangarembga so deliberately put in place for her readers. As a consequence, the novel loses also part of its historical specificity, for the German reader will not pick up the synchronicity between the plot (taking place just before Zimbabwe's struggle for independence) and Fanon's idea that the stage of horizontal violence is followed by a war of independence. It is

interesting to see how the translation of three pages can alter the image of a text so drastically, and one has to say that the aim of the translation is not to enable *Fremdverstehen*. One reason for this might lie in the publisher's choice to focus solely on the feminist agenda of the novel. But quite a significant alteration of the text has occurred as a consequence of this failure to situate Nervous Conditions at the crossroads of feminism *and* post-colonialism. By stressing the one over the other by leaving out the epigraph, by changing the title completely and by framing the novel as simply feminist the meaning is reduced. Without the colonial aspect, the experience of both men and women characters is generalised, and the German reader cannot access the particularity of Tsitsi Dangarembga's story. Sadly, it is this particularity of socio-political and historical context that makes the novel an important contribution to post-colonial literature. One might want to say though, that a contact zone has still been created if the 'rest' is translated to emphasise particularity and specificity over any universal reading of the text. With this in mind, I want to turn to other aspects in the translation of the novel that are important in order to assess the way that the translation has 'rewritten' the source text.

Language and Nervous Conditions:

Nervous Conditions is a text that seeks a double decolonisation: from both the Western coloniser and the 'national' or rather 'traditional' grip of patriarchal Shona structures. In order to do this the text itself is plurilingual, i.e. English and Shona intersect to resist any universalising grip of one culture over the other. As a result the reader has to be 'in between' as well; s/he has to be able to read and translate at the same time. Nervous Conditions is a text that anchors itself in a highly deliberate and problematised confrontation with the languages and cultures that are its raison d'être. This is shown in Tambu's acquisition of English at the Mission and Nyasha's acquisition of English in England itself (the gift of the 'father', which leads to exclusion and 'freedom'), and in Nyasha's case the nostalgia for Shona (the mother tongue, which insures inclusion and silence). Written in English, but nourished with Shona traditions, it is this Shona subtext that engages in a continuous struggle with the English language over a position of centrality. The character that articulates this conflict most clearly is Tambu's mother, Ma'Shingayi:

> 'It's the Englishness', she said. 'It'll kill them all if they aren't careful,' and she snorted. 'Look at them. That boy Chido can hardly speak a word of his own mother tongue, and you'll see his children will be worse.' She went on like this for a while, going on

> about how you couldn't expect the ancestors to stomach so much Englishness. (203)
>
> ['Es ist das Englischsein', sagte sie. 'Es wird sie noch alle toeten, wenn sie nicht aufpassen.' Sie schnaubte veraechtlich. 'Schau sie dir an. Dieser kleine Chido spricht kaum ein Wort seiner eigenen Muttersprache, und du wirst sehen, bei seinen Kindern wird es noch schlimmer.' So wetterte sie eine Weile fort und erklaerte, man koenne es von den Ahnen nicht erwarten, dass sie so viel Englischsein verkrafteten. (282)]

Acculturation and amalgamation result in the closeness of these two cultures, and thus indicate the modern, post-colonial condition of this novel (Driver 2000: lecture notes). As a result, any reader who approaches this text is expected to perform the same act of perpetual translation. By its cultural specificity Nervous Conditions challenges our competence as readers/translators capable of a global reading in this post-colonial world. In the following, I will concentrate on certain aspects of the translation Der Preis der Freiheit that strike me as indicative of the problems that this plurilingual text must have posed for the translator.

Language and Der Preis der Freiheit:

Given the very deliberate juxtaposition of English and Shona, as described above, it is practically impossible to achieve the same effect in the German translation. English is the language of the coloniser, of the Christian mission and of higher education. As such, it carries so much historical and

political significance in the novel that, when it is substituted with German, the socio-political fabric of the novel changes completely. Only the obvious meta-narrative of the language conflict is re-created, as in the following evening conversation where the bilingual context of the novel is made explicit in German:

> Babamukuru kam durch die Hintertuer herein, als wir gerade das Gebet beendet hatten. 'Guten Abend, Baba', gruesste ihn Maiguru auf shona. 'Guten Abend, Papa', sagte Nyasha auf englisch. 'Guten Abend, Babamukuru', sagte ich, die beiden Sprachen mischend, denn ich war mir nicht sicher, welche davon angemessen war. (114)
>
> [Babamukuru came in through the back door as we finished saying grace. 'Good evening, Baba', Maiguru greeted him in Shona. 'Good evening, Daddy', Nyasha said in English. 'Good evening, Babamukuru', I said, mixing the two languages because I was not sure which was most appropriate. (80)]

The question of which language and culture is 'angemessen' ('most appropriate') is 'seminal throughout the story', without ever being answered in a direct way (Gorle 1997: 180). The German reader accesses this question through a third language and culture that is quite removed from the context of the novel, and this inevitably poses parameters of constraint on the translation. Language is discussed on a meta-level in the text where various Englishes and certain abilities to speak Shona assume political 'spaces'. The German translation reduces this dialectic and urgency of the debate.

Ilija Trojanow's translation relies closely on the structure and content of the source text. Mostly, the sentences are translated as 'literally' as possible, preserving the content 'word for word'. If one randomly compares two sentences this is quite obvious, i.e.:

> Babamukuru was God, therefore I had arrived in heaven. I was in danger of becoming an angel, or at least a saint, and forgetting how ordinary humans existed - from minute to minute and from hand to mouth. (70)

This is translated as follows:

> Babamukuru war Gott, also war ich im Himmel angekommen. Ich lief in Gefahr, ein Engel zu werden, oder zumindest eine Heilige, und zu vergessen, wie normale Sterbliche lebten - von einer Minute zur anderen, von der Hand in den Mund. (100)

This translated passage is indicative of Trojanow's strategy throughout the novel, namely staying as close to the linguistic level of the text as possible. However, there are some lexical items and social customs that do not lend themselves to an easy 'word for word' translation into German, owing to their cultural specificity. It is in these instances that the translation loses contact with the source text and 'naturalises' for the German reader what should have remained 'other'.

Lexis:

There are a number of lexical items in both Shona and English that are culturally specific and have no equivalents in German. Dangarembga left the Shona items untranslated, thus defamiliarising the reading experience for the non-Shona reader. These words often describe material culture, i.e. foods ('derere' p.8, 'sadza' p.10, 'covo' p.11), tools and furniture ('dara' p.11) and places ('magrosa' p.2, 'Nyamarira' p.183). There are also a number of natural features and social practices that are left untranslated, i.e. plants ('msasa', 'lantana', 'mopani' p.2), games ('nhodo' p.8, 'pada' p.22) and forms of address ('Mukoma' p.9, 'Sisi' p.10, 'Baba' p.16). In the German translation, these Shona words are imported, thus marking the cultural specificity of the story for the German reader.

The English also poses some interesting challenges for the translator. The first that recurs quite often is the word 'homestead' that Ilija Trojanow translates as 'Heimstaette' (8). In this case the 'homestead' (in the Oxford dictionary described as 'a house with the land and buildings round it, esp a farm' 1995: 570) is a two-bedroomed brick house with a tin roof, an outside latrine, a separate little kitchen and a one-room guest hut (89). The fields and garden are a bit further away. 'Heimstaette', a word that I have never before heard used in German, does not evoke any sense of what this

homestead is and looks like. I think that the German 'Gehoeft' would have been more appropriate and understandable for the reader. After having used 'Heimstaette' from the beginning, Trojanow uses 'Hof' in chapter four, which is similar to 'Gehoeft' (89). But even though 'Hof' and the similar term 'Gehoeft' are better 'equivalents' than 'Heimstaette', they hardly evoke an image of this African homestead for the German reader. Facing the same problem in their translation of Buchi Emecheta's Joys of Motherhood, Helmi and Juergen Martini translate it as 'Hauswesen', because 'Gehoeft'

> kam uns nicht richtig vor, denn wir dachten dabei sofort an niedersaechsische Bauernhoefe mit Pferdekopfgiebeln, und sowas gibt es in Nigeria nicht. (1997: 8)

Another way to deal with this difficulty would have been to import the word untranslated, possibly adding an explanatory classifier, or a footnote with the description of the homestead as given on page 89. This, however, would alter the texture of the novel. Nonetheless, I would have preferred this option, as it would have given readers a clearer sense of the physical surroundings of the main characters.

Another area of lexical difference arises regarding the school system, and the word that causes a 'mistranslation' is the English 'standard'. In the opening chapter, the reader is

told that Tambuzai is thirteen and that she is in standard Three but, according to her age, should have been in standard Five (12). In the translation this reads as follows:

> Deshalb war ich in dem Jahr, als Nhamo starb, noch in der dritten Klasse statt in der fuenften, wie es meinem Alter entsprochen haette. (22)

Any alert reader will notice immediately that there must be something wrong, for a thirteen-year-old would have to be in Klasse sieben, because children in Klasse drei are on average nine years old. What happened is that the school system of Dangarembga's novel is working with Standards, whereas the German system operates with Grades, ranging from Grade one to Grade thirteen. Either the translator has to choose the right 'Klasse' according to the Standard, or he should just leave that information untranslated with an explanatory note on the different division in the English system. At the end of chapter three, there is this curious mixture of translating and not translating 'standard':

> 'Aber was soll sie tun?' redete mein Vater auf sie ein. 'Sie hat die *Standard Three* abgeschlossen. Sag mir, gibt es eine vierte Klasse in Rutivi? Kuedza ist zum Laufen zu weit. Wo soll sie die vierte Klasse machen?' (82, italics in the text)
>
> ['But what will she do?' persuaded my father. 'She has finished her Standard Three. Tell me, is there a Standard Four at Rutivi? Kuedza is too far to walk. Where will she do her Standard Four?' (56)]

This has the effect of confusing the German reader completely. It also shows that the translator has not thought about this problem carefully, despite the fact that school is such a central focal point in the novel. The unfortunate consequence is that a German reader may think that Tambu is four years behind in her school career (instead of two).

Maiguru's babytalk is another challenge for the translator. Particularly challenging is her way of addressing her husband Babamukuru with terms of endearment that are so obviously over the top. One immediately notices that this is her form of hysterical reaction to the pressures of horizontal violence. For example, during one dinner, Maiguru uses 'Baba', 'Daddy-dear', 'Daddy-pie', 'my Daddy-d' and 'Babawa Chido'(80-84). All these terms have to do with Babamukuru's role as father and provider. By addressing him as 'Daddy', Maiguru assumes the role of a child rather than that of a partner, which is an important aspect of her self-debasing attitude. Interestingly, the translator has kept the Shona terms 'Baba' and 'Babawa Chido', but translated the English terms with the German 'mein Lieber' (114-119). 'Mein Lieber' however, is not a very unusual and 'baby-ish' term, instead it is a very plain term of endearment that does not imply any hierarchy or family ranking. As a consequence, some of

Maiguru's most extreme attempts at verbal subordination remain inaccessible to the German reader.

Myth and custom:

Apart from some lexical items that become problematic in the German translation, there is also unfamiliar cultural information, which is not solely contained in one particular word, but which becomes important in a whole sentence or passage. One example would be the passage in chapter three where Babamukuru returns from England to the homestead. Dangarembga uses the verb 'to ululate' to denote the African custom of women triumphally acknowledging an important person or achievement with a loud, vibrating shout. This particular cultural practice is made even more accessible to an unfamiliar audience by adding an onomatopoeia:

> 'Prururu!' she ululated, shuffling with small gracious jumps to embrace my mother. 'Prururu!' They ululated. 'He has returned. Our prince has returned!' (36)

This passage in chapter three, where Babamukuru's return is celebrated, is translated as follows:

> '*Prururu*!' Sie brach in ein Heulgeschrei aus. 'Er ist zurueckgekehrt. Unser Prinz ist zurueckgekehrt!' (55)

On the lexical level 'Heulgeschrei' is an unfortunate choice for a number of reasons. Firstly, ululation is a joyful sound that has nothing to do with 'heulen' ('crying'), nor does it have the unpleasant connotations of 'Geschrei' ('yelling', 'screaming'). It is certainly a loud noise, but to call it 'Heulgeschrei' portrays it negatively, and also calls the validity of such a cultural expression into question by making it sound slightly ridiculous as well. A better translation would have been, for example, 'Jubelruf' or 'lautes Jauchzen'. It is also surprising that the translator does not translate the words 'small gracious jumps', which give the action an aesthetic and dignified quality. Moreover, he negates the communal aspect by only mentioning one woman performing, whereas in Dangarembga's text it is two. The ritualistic quality of dance and praise is thus reduced to the banal stereotype of a 'screaming woman', who becomes a spectacle of otherness. It is very interesting to note how the translation of two sentences can have such an impact on the impression that is conveyed.

Patronage and Audience:

Tsitsi Dangarambga does not have a particular target audience in mind when she wrote this novel. What is important to her is the story she has to tell:

> That's my starting point: I want to tell it and I want to make sure that any passer-by could stop and listen to this story. Maybe later on I'll think about targeting. (Dangarembga in Wilkinson 1992: 192)

Obviously things are a bit more complicated than Dangarembga wants to admit in this quote. Later on in the same interview she acknowledges the connection between writing in English and writing for an international audience (Dangarembga in Wilkinson 1992: 197). Dangarembga's first language is English, as she accompanied her parents to England during her formative years, but she re-learnt Shona on their return to Zimbabwe (Wilkinson 1992: 190). This fact strongly indicates that her choice of English, intersected with Shona, has to do with the struggle of cultures within Dangarembga as well as the influence of this struggle on society at large.

Explaining why her story is about 'growing up', Dangarembga indicates that she herself had wished to find a book, as a young Zimbabwean woman, that would speak about her own experience. She says further:

> I'm always conscious at the back of my mind that there is very little that a woman in Zimbabwe can pick up - in Zimbabwe today - and say yes, I know, that's me. (Dangarembga in Wilkinson 1992: 197)

Possibly, then, the intended audience is not quite as 'amorphous' as Dangarembga says (1992: 192), or rather the

intended 'passer-by' turns out to be (more often than not) a young, educated Zimbabwean woman. However, because the novel's unusual theme and its subtle and crafty writing style it has come to attract an international and academic audience.

The novel was published in 1988 by the London-based publishing house The Women's Press, and subsequently has been reprinted eight times. Dangarembga tried a Zimbabwean publishing house for four years first but they were not interested in the manuscript. She attributes their lack of interest to the fact that her writing was 'about things that they were not ready to read about' (1992: 197).[28] However, the international audience was ready for it and enthusiastically welcomed it into the canon of post-colonial fiction. One indication of this is the Commonwealth Writer's Prize that Dangarembga was awarded in 1989. Another is the inclusion of the novel in university and school syllabuses in South Africa and elsewhere, and the positive critical responses the novel has generated in journals and collections.

It is therefore not surprising that Afrikanissimo suggested the novel for translation and that it was published in German

[28] It was published in Zimbabwe a year later, in 1989. In the same year, Dangarembga won the Africa section of the Commonwealth Writer's Prize for it.

in 1991. It also featured in the Afrikanissimo catalogue of 1997/1998 (presumably it was still available then). What is surprising is the fact that the book is out of print now; it does not appear in the new Afrikanissimo catalogue[29] and is generally unavailable in German bookstores and is really only attainable through libraries[30]. Joern Albrecht says that one cannot make the simple equation that the success of the source text and the success of the translation will match (1998: 340). Even though the 'original' might be successful in the source culture there are some literary works that:

> ...konnten trotz aller Anstrengungen und Kunstgriffe der Uebersetzer die Sprach-und Kulturgrenzen nicht wirklich ueberwinden. Die beiden klassischen Vertreter des franzoesischen Dramas, Pierre Corneille and Jean Racine, sind vom 17. Jahrhundert bis in die juengste Vergangenheit immer wieder ins Deutsche uebersetzt worden; der Erfolg ist ihnen sowohl beim deutschen Lesepublikum als auch auf den Buehnen versagt geblieben. (Albrecht 1998: 341)

It can also happen the other way around: a literary work that did not have much success in the source culture might gain considerable fame through a translation. For example, Peter Hoeg's novel Froken Smillas fornmelse fro sne (Miss Smilla's Sense of Snow) had to be translated into English to be noticed by a larger audience (Albrecht 1998: 341). What this shows is that it is extremely difficult to ascertain the

[29] In the Redaktionelle Vorbemerkung one reads: 'Als vergriffen gemeldete Titel sind nicht mehr beruecksichtigt, auch wenn solche Titel in Buechereien noch verfuegbar sein koennen (Quellen 2000/01: 0).
[30] The book was available in a small town-library but not in the fifth biggest university library in Germany, in Goettingen. This might seem insignificant but it does suggest that it cannot feature in the university syllabus as does the English version.

reasons for the 'failure' or 'success' of a translation, and often success has more to do with well informed market strategies than with the actual translation (Albrecht 1998: 341). However, the Der Preis der Freiheit was advertised through the Afrikanissimo - project, which is as good a marketings approach as an African book can get in Germany, so this is unlikely to be the problem. Tentatively, one might say that Der Preis der Freiheit does not fall under the rubric of what Spivak calls 'responsible translation' (1993: 193).

In her article 'The Politics of Translation' Spivak argues that the task of the translator is to facilitate 'love' between the source text and its 'shadow', a love that 'permits fraying, holds the agency of the translator and the demands of her imagined or actual audience at bay' (1993: 181). In practical terms, this requires the translator to read 'intimately',[31] and to know the source text in order to not just capture the 'logical systematicity' of the source language (which Ilija Trojanow does), but also the 'rhetorical interferences' that disrupt this systematicity (which he does not) (1993: 180). Spivak further points out that the translation from a non-European woman's text (such

[31] About intimacy Spivak writes: 'No amount of tough talk can get around the fact that translation is the most intimate act of reading. Unless the translator has earned the right to become the intimate reader, she cannot surrender to the text, cannot respond to the special call of the text' (Spivak 1993: 183).

as Nervous Conditions) often fails, because the translator 'cannot engage with, or cares insufficiently for, the rhetoricity of the original' (1993: 181). As a consequence the 'literarity and textuality and sensuality of the writing' is lost (1993: 189).

What does this mean in the case of Ilija Trojanow's translation Der Preis der Freiheit ? I think he has emphasised the logical systematicity of the text, because he translates mostly 'word for word' and thus has opted for safety rather than try to and capture the rhetoricity of the text. However, the aspects of the translation that I have discussed in detail show a certain absence of intimacy, and as a result the possibility of the text beeing a 'contact zone' for the German reader is reduced. As Lawrence Venuti points out, the biggest challenge in translation is to:

> ...help to preserve the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text by producing translations which are strange and estranging, which mark the limits of dominant values in the target-language culture and hinder those values from enacting an imperialistic domestication of a cultural other. (1992: 13)

Through an analysis of the sample passages I hope to have shown that the novel is domesticated to such an extent that the text hardly remains strange.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Ilja Trojanow's translation does not fall into the same category as Fitzgerald's free adaptation of Persian poetry, which is mentioned in the introduction of this thesis. Neither is the Afrikanissimo - project a site where 'African' culture is subsumed under German stereotypes. However, both show that having to access the 'other' through translation involves significant mediation and alteration of the source.

Drawing on the analysis of the previous chapters, I want to conclude with some of the multiple determinations and effects of translation in the interface of different cultures that have become quite obvious in this study, be they linguistic, cultural, institutional or political.

As briefly pointed out in the discussion of the notion of linguistic equivalence, no text can be substituted in another language without being actively 'rewritten' into something else. Language constructs meaning on so many different levels within and outside of the boundaries of the text that when translating it is impossible to achieve exactly the same effects and intertextual links. Despite the attempt to remain as close as possible to the linguistic construction of the source text, i.e. choice of words, syntax and content, Ilija

Trojanow's translation mediates considerably. This can be seen in the translation of the title and other culturally specific lexical items from the source text. In rewriting Nervous Conditions into Der Preis der Freiheit, Trojanow influences the cultural and political significance of the text and domesticates its difference. Clearly, the linguistic and cultural-political effects of translation cannot be separated, but are intricately bound together in the process of rewriting. For example, the translation of the verb 'to ululate' into 'Heulgeschrei' (even if permissible on the lexical level) does not sensitively render the cultural specificity of the source. Spivak's critique of the 'irresponsible' translator centres on the way the mediation process happens - with a lack of love and intimacy for the source text (1993). Taking all the differences between Nervous Conditions and Der Preis der Freiheit into account, Ilija Trojanow fails to adhere to Spivak's high standards. Not only is foreign cultural specificity 'naturalised' into a German frame of reference, but the political import of Nervous Conditions also changes considerably owing to the 'reframing' of the text as a feminist novel rather than a feminist post-colonial novel. One might speculate why Trojanow 'mediated' between the texts in this way. Perhaps he did not know anything about Zimbabwe, Dangarembga and post-colonial theory, and did not care enough to want to find out

about these things prior to doing the translation. However, in the Afrikanissimo - catalogue Quellen, one reads that he has subsequently translated Chenjerai Hove's novel Bones (in 2000) and that in 1996 he co-authored with Hove a book called Hueter der Sonne. Begegnungen mit Zimbabwe's Aeltesten - Wurzeln und Visionen afrikanischer Weisheit. This suggests that he is in fact showing continuous interest in Zimbabwean literature and culture (2000: 35).

The quality of the translation may also be a consequence of the institutional side of this mediation process, i.e. literature as an economic commodity. There is, for example, the low status of the translator's work, obvious in the legal and economic rules that govern the market and the general invisibility of the translator. Lawrence Venuti points out that translation is often represented as 'manual' as opposed to intellectual labour and that:

> …this representation is maintained in copyright law and translator's contracts with publishers, particularly in the Unites States. Both British and American [and German] law define translation as a second-order product, whose copyright is vested in the 'author'. The United States Code includes a further provision which is manifestly exploitative: a translation can be contractually defined as a 'work made for hire', in which case 'the employer or person for whom the work is prepared is considered the author' and 'owns all of the rights comprised in the copyright.' (1992: 2)

What this means is that many standard translation contracts, including many in Germany, 'assign the translator below-subsistence fees' per the number of words translated. In addition to this most of the profit made from the book goes to the publishers of the translation and the foreign text (Venuti 1992: 2). As a result of these facts, Venuti further muses that:

> …the goal for many translators is to work from contract to contract and move from one foreign text to another, focussing on the delivery of the manuscript and therefore devoting little time to sustained methodological reflection. (1992: 1)

The number of projects that a translator is forced to work on may put the translator in a position where there is no time for cultural considerations or for Spivak's 'intimacy' with the source text. Ilija Trojanow might have had little time to produce the translation of Nervous Conditions, and thus some of the problems with the translation could be the consequence of work being done under severe time constraints. Moreover, it is difficult to know how much of the 'reframing' is actually a result of the publisher's decisions (i.e. the series name, paratextual layout, title and possibly the missing epigraph) rather than those of the translator. Although Spivak stresses that the production of a 'responsible' translation does not need to be slow, she concedes that the preparation might take more time:

> I myself see no choice between the quick and easy and slapdash way, and translating well with difficulty. There is no reason why a responsible translation should take more time in the doing. The translator's preparation might take more time, and her love for the text might be a matter of a reading skill that takes patience. But the sheer material production of the text need not be slow. (1993: 181)

Part of the invisibility of the translator is also due to the obscurity of the translator's name on the product (Ilija Trojanow is mentioned as translator only on page three). If readers were immediately alerted on the title page that they were reading a translation, this would help the attempt at *Fremdverstehen*. The reader would already expect 'foreign' elements in the text and would thus be more open to otherness. The status of the translators and their legal/economic position are thus bound up together with their actual work and the possibility of the foreign text creating cultural encounter. At least in the Afrikanissimo - catalogue it has to be acknowledged that one is dealing with translations, with texts from Africa that are rewritten for the German reader. This would work against any simplified notion of 'reading in the contact zone'.

Drawing again on Nadine Gordimer's quote at the beginning of chapter two, I want to stress that the translator, like the African writer, has to try and look at the world from an 'African' standpoint while translating. Thus, in order to

negotiate the contact zone, the translator becomes the first special and intimate reader, an 'in-between-cultures' reader (or, following Clifford's rhetoric a 'travelling translator'). This is why Spivak talks about reading/translating as a kind of intimacy with the source text; she is recognising the change of perspective that could be required of the translator.

Translation will always be a mediation of cultural differences, but the way this mediation happens can either be 'responsible' or not. Some translations offer the foreign reader access to cultural differences, and thus challenge the reader to engage in a dialogue with these differences. Other translations do this to a lesser extent. Consequently one has to recognise that translation is central to intercultural politics/ethics, because its mediation is such a powerful 'rewriting' of cultural space.

Tsitsi Dangarembga,

1945 im heutigen Zimbabwe geboren, schildert anrührend und menschenkundig den zähen Kampf eines Dorfmädchens um Bildung. Doris Lessing schrieb über dieses Buch: «Viele gute, von Männern geschriebene Romane sind in Afrika entstanden, aber wenige von schwarzen Frauen. Dies ist der Roman, auf den wir gewartet haben. Er beschreibt, wie ein armes benachteiligtes Mädchen allmählich dem Dorfleben, dem Stammesleben entschlüpft, um seinen Platz als gebildete Frau einzunehmen – erzählt, was sie gewonnen, aber auch, was sie verloren hat; wie schwer es Frauen unter der Fuchtel der Männer in der traditionellen afrikanischen Gesellschaft hatten. Eine faszinierende Geschichte, schwer aus der Hand zu legen.»

9 783499 129568 DM 12.80

Tsitsi Dangarembga

Der Preis der Freiheit

Roman

neue frau

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