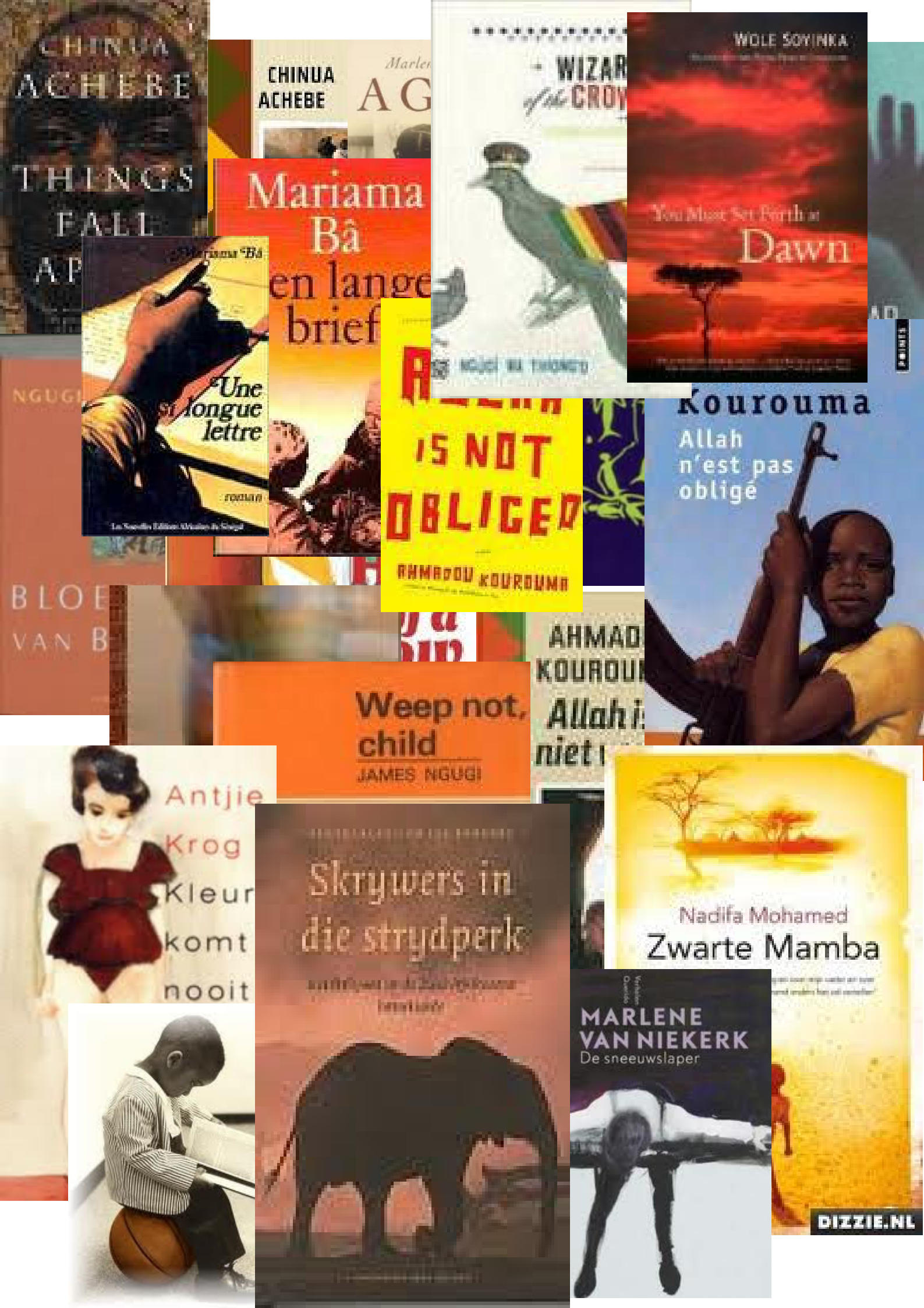
CHINUA ACHEBE
THINGS FALL
CHINUA ACHEBE
Mariama Bâ
en lange brief
Une si longue lettre
roman
NGUGI
WIZARD of the CROW
NGUGI WA THIONG'O
WOLE SOYINKA
You Must Set Forth at Dawn
Kourouma
Allah n'est pas obligé
AHMADOU KOUROUMA
IS NOT OBLIGED
BLOE
VAN B
Weep not, child
JAMES NGUGI
AHMAD
KOUROU
niet
Antjie Krog
Kleur komt nooit
Skrywers in die strydperk
Nadifa Mohamed
Zwarte Mamba
MARLENE VAN NIEKERK
De sneeuwslaper
DIZZIE.NL

THE TRANSLATION PROBLEMS OF AFRICAN LITERATURE AND THEIR CORRESPONDING STRATEGIES

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For No One

My husband says
Some of the answers
Cannot be given in Acholi
Which is a primitive language
And is not rich enough
To express deep wisdom.
He says the Acholi language
Has very few words
It is not like the white man's language
Which is rich and very beautiful
A language fitted for discussing deep thoughts.

- Okot p'Bitek

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FOREWORD

'Once you go black, you never go back' is a popular saying, but usually only applies to love or sex. For me (although the love part can still be true...) this saying also applies to my studies. For even though I have abandoned the African linguistics department at Leiden University, the study of all things African is still in my heart and it only seems logical to combine the study of translation theory with the study of the African continent. Unfortunately, this time there was no field-work-disguised holiday to the East African shores involved and I had to make do with a familiar trip to the library of the African Studies Centre.

When I finished my MA African Languages and Cultures, I did not feel I was a real Africanist who knew things. So I enrolled in the MA Translation Studies to 'learn a trade'. During those two years I realised that I knew more than I thought (especially when in a class of first year Bachelor students) and I learned to appreciate my time in Leiden. Now that I have finished my second Master I have the feeling once more that I do not know enough and that I am not yet a true translator. If the Dutch government was not in my way, I would probably enrol in a third Master, just so I can feel better about my second Master. As this is not possible, it is time for me to become a citizen of the world, instead of being the eternal student.

Last time I wrote a thesis, I thought it was going to be my last time, so I took my time to write elaborate thank-yous, as it was supposed to be my last opportunity to do so. Now, two years later, I have just finished another thesis. As this time I really think it is going to be the last time, it is only appropriate to mention some important people in my life.

So Mom and Dad, thanks again for supporting me, for listening to my frustrations and for proofreading many of my essays and translations. With the fabulous job I will get when I have finished my Master, I will be able to pay back the loan in no time. 'You think she needs you' and you are right.

Ap, you beat me by two weeks and I am very proud of you.

Roos and Sophie, now we are all done, we can start our B&B / fitness centre / physiotherapy practice.

Finally, I would like to thank my somewhat too enthusiastic thyroid gland. When I was doing the fieldwork for my first Master's thesis, I was just finishing the first round of medicines. Two years later, when I was ready to write another Master's thesis, you decided to let me know you were still there. This time I decided to finish you off once and for all by doing a treatment with radioactivity. I took the time that I was a radioactive hazard, and I was not allowed to touch anyone or come close to anyone, to be a solitary writer of my thesis.

My first thesis was dedicated to Reinout and it only seems appropriate to repeat some of the words here: When you're gone, all that's left behind are the memories you created in other people's lives. Ninakumiss.

Marthe Dijk, August 2011

INTRODUCTION

African writers write novels in European languages. That is not so much different from British writers or French writers. Still, there are some aspects of African literature that are not found in European literatures. A great deal has to do with cultural background, because even though an African writer writes in English, he is still an African. In my thesis I will expand on this by researching what problems have come up in the literature on this field of study and how the authors of these essays propose to solve the issues. The translation of African literature could use a boost and with this thesis I would like to encourage translators to start translating works by African writers. My research question will be the following:

> *What specific translation problems of an African text does the translator of African literature need to reckon with and what strategies can be used in his/her translations of this African text?*

To answer this question I will start with an introduction of African literature and the major themes that have been the subject of debate for so long. The main problem is defining African literature. As Africa is a large continent of over fifty countries, more than two thousand languages and just as many different cultures, it is not easy to establish the criteria for an African text. In chapters 1.1 and 1.2 I will expand on this. In my search for literature on the subject I have kept a broad mind, which means I have included all countries (including the islands), all languages (including the colonial languages) and all authors holding an African nationality, even when living outside of Africa. I will then continue by presenting some basic theories on translation studies and see how they can be applied to the field of African literature. Subsequently, I will devote one chapter each to the specific characteristics of the African text, which cannot be found in European novels, namely the influence of African languages on the use of the colonial languages, the culture-specific elements in an African text and the use of oral art forms. Then I will briefly touch on the subject of Afrikaans translations in Dutch, since the majority of translations published in the Netherlands comes from Southern Africa, particularly South Africa, and also because the Martinus Nijhoff Prijs 2010 has been awarded to a translator translating from Afrikaans. I will finish with a conclusion on my literature search for the African characteristics of a text and the translation strategies involved.

1.1 Defining African literature

'African literature' seems to have a clear-cut definition. However, there has been ample debate about what exactly constitutes African literature. Therefore, when talking about the translations of African literature, it is of the utmost importance to define the concepts that are involved, so that there is no confusion. However, such concepts do not have a clear-cut definition. There will always be certain grey areas. Nevertheless, my notion of African literature will be presented here.

The starting point of African written literature could be traced back to the beginning of the 1960s. This is the period in which most of the African countries gained their independence from their colonial oppressors. Ghana was the first African country to gain independence from the United Kingdom in 1957. These first postcolonial years are said to be the beginning of African literature. The Nigerian author Chinua Achebe published his *Things Fall Apart* in 1958, to which he owes his nickname 'the father of modern African literature' (for example in Pilkington). But even before that, some novels that can certainly be considered African literature were published. An example is the 1952 novel *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* by Amos Tutuola, coincidentally also a Nigerian writer. The Nigerian playwright and senior lecturer at the University of Nigeria, Emeka Nwabueze, however, states in his essay on the African canon that many scholars perceive the end of the 1950s, beginning of the 1960s as the starting point of African literature, but that literary works had been published long before that time (189). His examples are, among others, *Dark Testament* by the South African writer Peter Abrahams, published in 1942 and *Eighteenpence* by R.E. Obeng from Ghana, published in 1943. Akinwumi Isola, professor emeritus at the Nigerian Obafemi Awolowo University, mentions an even earlier date for the beginning of African literature. In his essay on Yoruba literature, he states that the first Yoruba novel was published in 1928, namely I.B. Thomas's *Itan Emi Segilola* (Isola 132).

This debate on the first African novel already shows the issues that are involved in defining African literature. One of the major themes in the debate on African literature is the language the novel is written in. Most of the African writers who published their works in the first postcolonial years had been to Europe or the United States to study at university. Their writing was an answer to the European writers and critics writing about Africa and so they wrote mostly in English or French. At the beginning, the African writers mostly wrote about their blackness or their Africanness. This was especially evident in the Négritude movement of the Francophone writers. Most of the writers involved in this movement had been to Paris. They wanted to show their colonial oppressors that there was more to the African than just being black. And so they emphasized their blackness in their literature. But then there was a group of scholars and writers who said that writing in the colonial languages and using European structures in the novel was a form of neo-colonialism and they therefore started to promote writing in African languages. This was the beginning of the language debate, on which I will expand further on in this thesis.

So why does the need exist to define the concept of African literature? If this were a thesis on the translations of Dutch literature, this would probably not have been an issue. One major difference is evidently that Dutch literature concerns a country and that African literature concerns a continent which constitutes the literatures of over fifty different countries. However, when comparing African literature to European literature, problems still arise. The difference is that many 'African' writers live in Europe, while most European writers still live in their country of birth, which usually is in Europe. A work by an African nationalist living in Europe can thus be classified into either African literature or European literature, or maybe even migrant literature. The Nigerian professor Aloysius Ohaegbu, affiliated with the University of Nigeria, asks himself the same question and answers it by saying: 'But African literature is constantly under pressure to define itself, as if it does not carry its own identity

with it' (Ohaegbu 1). So the need for defining African literature is the result of an identity crisis. The language debate, with two opposing groups of African writers, is a case in point.

Nonetheless, over the years many definitions have been put forward and Ohaegbu mentions a few of them in his essay 'Defining African Literature'. For example, the definition put forward by the foreign literary critics:

> *The latter [foreign critics] insisted that literature is literature anywhere in the world and that in the case of African literature, its language is European and those who write it went through Western education (including its manner of literary presentation). African literature to them, therefore, is both African and European-Africa[n] in content and authorship, European in form and language of the work.* (Ohaebgu 3)

The foreign critics are the third group in the debate on the definition of African literature. According to them, African texts written in a European language fall in the category of European literature. This standpoint confirms the views of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Obi Wali and their fellow pro-African language group members, who say that African literature is only the literature written in the African languages for the African people. Ngũgĩ even defines the literature described by the foreign critics as Afro-Saxon or Afro-French literature. But, as the abovementioned quote also states, it is not only language that troubles the defining of African literature. Form and structure are also part of the novel and many African texts are based on the European literary conventions, including some of Ngũgĩ's works. This strengthens the standpoint of the second dominant group in this debate, with Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka among its members. They say that the European languages can be used for African creative writing, but that these languages just have to be slightly adjusted to be able to express African thoughts and culture. This means that English, French and Portuguese are no longer European languages, but that they have become African languages, or as Ohaegbu calls it: 'part of our heritage' (11).

Chinua Achebe even goes as far as to say that it is not possible to define African literature: 'You cannot cram African literature into a small neat definition. I do not see African literature as one unit but a group of associated units – the sum total of all the national and ethnic literatures of Africa' (qtd. in Ohaegbu 4). However, in his essay, Ohaegbu does keep searching for a perfect definition. The following definition is a definition that Africanists have come up with at a conference on African literature: 'Creative writing in which an African setting is authentically handled or to which experiences originating in Africa are integral' (Ohaegbu 4). There are a number of problems that occur when using this definition. The first problem is the authenticity. Who will determine what is truly authentic? This will only spark a whole new debate. The second problem is the African setting. This means that novels with non-African themes do not fall under the category African literature, even when written by an African author. And this is the last problem, the nationality of the author. Is a writer born in an African country with parents from an African country but living in Europe or America still an African? This question will also spark new debates, especially with the emergence of migrant literature in the past few decades.

As this debate cannot be settled here, in this thesis the definition of African literature is literature written in both the colonial languages and the African languages. Even though the majority of the African literary works are still written in the colonial languages, more and more writers choose to write in their African mother tongue. According to Ohaegbu, even publishers are more and more inclined to publish works in African languages (10). This has not always been the case. According to Penina Mlama, professor at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, '[l]imited and inadequate publishing and distribution systems have kept the audience of African writers very small' (13). Furthermore, she states that 'literature in Kiswahili is not given prominence internationally. The same is true for literature in Shona, Zulu, Yoruba, and other African languages' (Mlama 11). According to Mlama, this 'is not due to the poor quality of their writing because some of them are outstanding' (11). So whether writing in a colonial language or in an African language, the struggles for the African writer seem to be the same. In their introduction to *Tongue and Mother Tongue* Daniel Kunene and Pamela Olubunmi Smith state that these 'problems' could be solved by starting a translation program. This would make world literature more available to people around the world and the writers of African literature would be encouraged to write in their own mother tongue (2). It is well-known that translators are a key element for cross-cultural communication. When two people with different mother tongues want to speak to one another, they would have to speak in a language that is understood by both participants of the conversation or they would have to use the services of an interpreter. This also holds true for African literature. The African writer can either write in a language that his public understands and is able to read, or he could ask a translator to translate his work.

Ohaegbu finally concludes his essay with the following statement on the definition of African literature:

> *African literature therefore, can be seen as creative writings skilfully done in indigenous African languages or in foreign languages by African nationals or, if one prefers, bona fide citizens of the African continent (regardless of colour), which works spring from African socio-cultural background, deal with the problems of the African and offer to the rest of the world African perception of the human condition. [...] Even though its primary audience is the African, non-Africans do and should have access to it. Only those who have profound knowledge of its cultural background and the language of the work should be qualified to undertake its criticism.* (12)

The question is whether this last statement also holds true for translation and its translators. The analysis of the creative use of European languages in African literature shows that there are two forms of translation present. The first one is the common translation practice, whereby one language is translated into another language. The second one is the translation without the original, whereby African authors have to translate their thoughts in a different language. The first sense is important for understanding African literature, as the number of translated African works grows exponentially every year. The work of the translator 'enable[s] many people of different cultural backgrounds to know, understand and appreciate African culture' (Gyasi, "Translation" 106). But Gyasi also states that translating African literature can be a struggle. That is why the translator needs more than 'a certain linguistic competence' (Gyasi, "Translation" 106). 'The translator, in addition to his/her linguistic

competence, must be able to show proof of certain extra-linguistic abilities that consist in analyzing and interpreting the context in which the African literary text is embedded' (Gyasi, "Translation" 106).

1.2 The language issue

As abovementioned, one of the major themes in African literature is the language issue. The debate started in as early as 1963, when Obi Wali published a short essay in *Transition*, titled 'The Dead End of African Literature'. The main question in the language issue is what language to use for the creative writing of African literature. There are two dominant groups in this debate. One group supports the use of African languages, the other group supports the use of Africanised European languages. There are plenty of arguments for both sides. The African literary tradition has been to write in the colonial languages. Writing in the indigenous languages has been peripheral. The writing in the colonial languages and the writing in the African languages could change places, but that takes time.

An argument in favour of the use of African languages is that an author is only able to express himself in his creative writing when he writes in his own native tongue. However, it has not always been easy for the African writer to write in his own mother tongue. Imagine a writer who speaks a language with twenty thousand speakers. His audience would be very limited, not only because the number of speakers is small, but also because not all the speakers of his language will be literate. The writer could then choose to write in his second language, which would usually be a language that functions as a lingua franca in the author's area. However, there may be some political issues when using the dominant language in the area. So even though it may seem simpler to write in your mother tongue, the writer does face some serious complications with that decision. Furthermore, if the writer chooses to write in his mother tongue, he has to find a publisher that wants to publish the book and that is not so straightforward as it seems, because, even though we have seen the abovementioned statements by Ohaegbu that publishers are more and more inclined to publish works written in indigenous languages, 'through the intensification of capitalism in Africa the control over the book production industry has fallen increasingly into the grips of multinational companies whose economic interest is served by the promotion of the international languages' (Mlama 11). Furthermore, Nwabueze states that new writers cannot get into the canon of African literature, because the publishers only want to publish established writers of which they know they can make a profit (203). And if they do publish an upcoming writer, they do not make enough copies for it to make impact (Nwabueze 203). This last issue holds true for authors both writing in African languages as well as authors writing in the colonial languages.

Another problem that proponents of the use of African languages have with the use of European languages is that '[m]ost often, his [the African writer] characters, symbols and allusions are African but they express themselves – as in the case of the characters – in a foreign tongue' (Nwachukwu 19). This problem also occurs in, for example, Dutch literature, where characters with a different nationality enter the novel or when the novel is set in a different country from the

Netherlands. It is an unwritten rule that those characters naturally do not speak Dutch, unless otherwise indicated, for example by the use of metalinguistic comments in the novel.

Another issue in this debate is the audience. Proponents of the use of African languages claim that African literature should be written for the African people and therefore written in an African language. Simon Gikandi, professor at the University of Michigan, is such a proponent and states: 'What is important about language use in Africa is not what languages African writers prefer, but the ideological and cultural issues of such languages' (Gikandi 36). Hence, if an African writer wants to address a European audience to show them what African culture is about, he will write in a European language. But if he wants to address an African audience and mobilize the African, he will write in an African language. Like in translation, the choice is based on the strategy you choose for the audience you have in mind. When an author chooses to write in a European language, 'the writer can only address outsiders and the restricted population of the local elite' (Nwachukwu 18). This means that the majority of the African public will not be able to read these books. The question is whether this changes when the author decides to write in an African language. The number of people who will be able to read the book written in an African language will drop significantly. The simple fact is that English is an international language. When every African author decides to write in his native tongue, this will give rise to the creation of many different literatures. To use Nigeria as an example, there will be a Yoruba literature, an Igbo literature, a Hausa literature and so on and so forth. The use of the colonial language unites those different literatures to become a Nigerian literature, which all Nigerians will be able to read. Another simple fact is that the people who are literate in their native tongue, will usually also be literate in the colonial language, as most schools still use the colonial languages as the medium of instruction, unless the region has a native lingua franca, such as Swahili in the East African region. Besides, even if the masses were literate and able to read, there still would not be a reading culture. The elite is literate and able to read, but are not reading either, because there is no reading culture. For them it is a choice, however, and for the illiterate masses it is not (Owomoyela 95). The lack of access to books contributes greatly to this predicament.

As stated earlier, the debate on the defining of African literature is the result of an identity crisis, of which this language issue is a case in point. Mlama uses this notion to support the use of African languages, as she finds it hard to imagine that African writers could contribute to Africa's cultural identity when writing in the colonial languages (17). 'In fact, language is the only feature that presently gives African societies their cultural identity' (Mlama 17). Nwachukwu-Agbada, senior lecturer at the Nigerian Imo State University, states it even stronger by saying that '[l]anguage is the expression of the culture that owns it. Therefore, a colonized person who expresses himself in the language of the colonizer invariably propagates that culture. In other words, the basic aim of language in the colonial context is no more than the facilitation of cultural and political oppression' (16). The answer of his opponents would be that they adjust the colonial languages to their needs, and thus these languages are no longer European languages, but African languages.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o is one of the main figures in the fight for the indigenous languages. But this has not always been the case. Before he switched to writing in his native Gĩkũyũ, Ngũgĩ wrote in

English. This has naturally added fresh fuel to his opponents. For instance, Ken Saro-Wiwa states the following: 'Because he had already made his mark as a writer in English, his works have become instant subjects of translation into English, enabling him to live by his writing. If this were not the case, he might not be so sure of his decision' (156). Furthermore, even though he promotes everything African, he has left his native Kenya in 1982, travelled to Sweden, the United Kingdom and finally the United States and currently works at the University of California in Irvine (UCI), 'at the heart of "the imperial and bourgeois West" to cite one of his homely slogans' (Granqvist, "African" 95). In addition, Ngũgĩ's viewpoint is that a work remains the same in translation. This makes Joseph Mbele, professor at St. Olaf College, Minnesota, wonder the following: 'why is it essential for him to write in Gĩkũyũ first? If translation offers such an efficient bridge between languages, he could just as easily write in English and then have his work translated into Gĩkũyũ' (148). Either way, there are many translation possibilities. For example, a literary work can be translated from:

Colonial language	→	European language
Colonial language	→	African language
African language	→	European language
African language	→	African language

Each way brings its own problems. The colonial languages are influenced by African languages and need to be translated into European languages that do not have an African influence. This is even more the case when an African language is translated into a European language. The use of culture-specific elements in the African language text is the obvious problem here. An interesting question is whether this would also be the case when an African language is being translated into another African language, as, even though they have the African culture in common, not all the culture-specific elements of the African source language will be present in the African target language. In this thesis the focus will mostly be on texts written in the colonial languages that have been translated into European languages.

The question of whether African literature written in a European language is still African literature is widely debated. Some scholars say that a European language is not able to reflect African culture the way an African language can. Others say that the African languages cannot be used for creative writing because they do not have a literary discourse or the vocabulary for it. But stating that African literature is only the literature written in the African languages will strongly diminish the field of African literature and this 'would relegate African literature to a state of perpetual underdevelopment' (Mazrui 40). Therefore, to give the field of African literature the boost it needs, the productivity of the writers should stand above the language issue. It is the task of any writer to find the words to describe a story, to describe the characters and to describe the feelings of the characters. That is not easy even when you write in your mother tongue. But a great writer is able to bring across those feelings to the reader. And it should not matter if the language the writer uses to

bring those feelings across is not his mother tongue, nor his second language, because even when the writer writes in his mother tongue, he will not always be able to get his intended message across, as the reader will have a different interpretation.

Of course, this debate cannot be settled here. It is far too complicated and there are good arguments either way. In his essay collection *Morning Yet on Creation Day*, Chinua Achebe also talks about the language issue. To determine what language he should write in, people have asked him in what language he dreams. He answered that he dreams in both English and Igbo, which does not give a conclusive answer. Then some people have asked him in what language he has an orgasm. His answer to that was: 'That should settle the matter if I knew!' (qtd. in Nwabueze 190).

1.3 Translation theory

Even though the debate on the language issue cannot be settled here, and even though defining African literature is much more complicated than it would seem at first sight, it can be said that translating African literature is different from translating European literature, precisely because of these issues that do not exist in other literatures. That is why it is important to develop a theory on the translation of African literature specifically.

> *[...] analyses also prove that most of the western-oriented, linguistic-bound translation theories have certain shortcomings and as such are not useful to African texts. Their major weakness is the absence of socio-cultural factors which impinge on works produced by African artists.* (Nama 76)

Translation is important in African literature in two ways. First, there is the common translation practice where one source text in a source language is translated into a target text in a target language. But since the majority of the African authors write in a colonial language, be it in English, French or Portuguese, and not their mother tongue, there is another form of translation present in African literature. This form of translation has also been called 'transference' or 'translation without originals'. This means that the writer has to transfer the ideas that he has formed in his mother tongue into another language, so it is not so much a translation of a text as it is a translation of ideas and thoughts. So there are two ways in which an African writer can be a translator of his own works. The first one is a translation without originals, the second one is a translation with originals. In other words:

> *This explains why Paul Bandia has observed that translating African creative works is a double "transposition" process: a primary level of translation, i.e., the expression of African thought in a European language by an African writer and a secondary level of translation, i.e., the "transfer" of African thought from one European language to another by the translator.* (Gyasi, "Writing" 83)

Gillian Gane speaks in her essay of 'a gap between the language spoken within the world the text represents and the language in which it is communicated to us' (131). The process of translation, in

its broadest sense, has to bridge this gap. J.M. Coetzee, who is being mentioned in the article by Gane, calls this process 'transfer' (132). The difference between translation and transfer is, according to Coetzee, that a translation wants to put the text in the words of the target language, with minimal influence from the source language. A transference uses language to represent otherness, or differences (Gane 132). So a transference is more bilingual in nature, whereas a translation tries to avoid words and structures of the source language. This dichotomy relates to the foreignisation/domestication debate of Schleiermacher and Venuti. But since there is no original in the practice of transfer, it is certainly different. '[I]t seems that those creative writers, in Africa and elsewhere, who have imaginatively found ways to infuse other languages into English may be pioneers on a path where contemporary translators and theorists of translation are just beginning to venture' (Gane 133).

It seems that an African author always has to be some kind of translator. An African writer has two choices: to write in his mother tongue or to write in the colonial language. If a writer chooses to write in his mother tongue, and that mother tongue only has a small number of speakers, it is quite possible that the writer could also be the most suitable person to translate his work into another language, most likely the colonial language of his country. The other choice is to write in the colonial language. This means that the writer will act as a translator of his own thoughts, which will probably have been formed in the author's native language. Examples of writers who have chosen to write in their mother tongue and then translate their work themselves are Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Antjie Krog. They have translated their novels to English from Gĩkũyũ and Afrikaans respectively.

Even though, according to Nama, Western-oriented translation theories cannot be used when dealing with African literature, there are some theories that still hold true. The first is the theory of James S. Holmes. In his essay 'Rebuilding the Bridge at Bommel: Notes on the Limits of Translatability', he discusses the translation of a Dutch poem and his struggle with the translation of one particular sentence. He then discusses several strategies to handle such translation problems. In his essay, Holmes presents a diagram with two axes. The horizontal axis is the exoticising versus naturalising axis. The choice of the translator is to either bring the specific element to the target culture, or let it stay in the source culture. The vertical axis is the historicising versus modernising axis. This dichotomy deals with the choice between using outmoded language and using modern language when the text is written in a different time. The idea of the axes is that it is not a choice between either exoticising or naturalising, there is also room to be in-between. Many decades before Holmes, in 1813, the German theologian and translator Friedrich Schleiermacher proposed a similar theory as that of Holmes's horizontal axis. His opposites were called 'alienating' and 'naturalising' (Munday 29). But in his theory, the reader was the central point. Schleiermacher himself preferred the alienating strategy, where the reader is brought towards the writer and his text. This would be Holmes's exoticising strategy. The naturalising strategy thus means to bring the writer towards the reader. Lawrence Venuti takes up these viewpoints of especially Schleiermacher with his theory on domestication versus foreignisation. Venuti has a strong preference for foreignisation, but he also states that the domesticating strategy was the more dominant one at that time (his book was

published in 1995): 'Just as the postcolonialists are alert to the cultural effects of the differential in power relations between colony and ex-colony, so Venuti (1995:20) bemoans the phenomenon of domestication since it involves "an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values"' (Munday 144). The foreignising strategy, where the foreign identity of the source text is made visible, is much more preferable. This is also what most African writers writing in a colonial language have been doing.

In 1990, Mary Snell-Hornby coins the term 'the cultural turn', 'the move from translation as text to translation as culture and politics' (Munday 125). It is the beginning of the influence of cultural studies on the translation theories. It is also the beginning of the merger of the two disciplines 'postcolonial studies' and 'translation studies' to the discipline of 'postcolonial translation studies'. Tejaswini Niranjana agrees with Nama on the subject of western-oriented translation theories. She sees three main failings:

> *(1) that translation studies has until recently not considered the question of power imbalance between different languages*
> *(2) that the concepts underlying much of Western translation theory are flawed ('its notions of text, author, and meaning are based on an unproblematic, naively representational theory of language')*
> *(3) that the 'humanistic enterprise' of translation needs to be questioned, since translation in the colonial context builds a conceptual image of colonial domination into the discourse of western philosophy.* (Munday 133)

These failings are all true for the translation of African literature, but also for the writing of African literature, of which a big part is obviously the language issue. Niranjana proposes two strategies for the postcolonial translator to right these abovementioned wrongs. The translator should avoid 'western metaphysical representations' (Munday 133). This can be done by emphasising the text's otherness. The second strategy is that the translator should use an 'interventionist' approach by not attempting to assimilate the African text to the western literary discourse (Munday 133). This, again, leads back to the alienating, exoticising and foreignising strategies of Schleiermacher, Holmes and Venuti respectively.

Maria Tymoczko agrees with Nama in that translation theory has been focused on western practices of translation: 'In het geval van de vertaaltheorie zijn de huidige vooronderstellingen uitgesproken eurocentrisch' (Tymoczko, "Niet-westerse" 405). In her essay in *Denken over Vertalen*, Tymoczko rejects a number of presuppositions on the prevailing translation theories. Her key point is that western and non-western translation theories cannot be generalised. One of the main reasons for this is the different world view of non-Western peoples. In another essay, Tymoczko shows the different world views on translation by exploring the words used for 'translation' in different languages around the world. She also has an example from Igbo, where the importance of story telling is reflected in the word for 'translation'.

> *In the Nigerian language Igbo, the words for translation are* tapia *and* kowa*.* Tapia *comes from the roots* ta*, "tell, narrate", and* pia*, "destruction, break [it] up", with the overall sense of "deconstruct it and tell it (in a different form)".* Kowa *has a similar meaning, deriving from* ko*,*

> *"narrate, talk about" and* wa*, "break in pieces". In Igbo therefore translation is an activity that stresses the viability of the communication as narration, allowing for decomposition and a change in form rather than one-to-one reconstruction. The freedom of translation in this paradigm is illustrated by the domestication in Nigerian tradition of the narrative about Adam and Eve as a story in which Adam becomes a great farmer in African style.* (Tymoczko, "Translation" 450)

Postcolonial theory has long been resisting Eurocentric theories on literary discourse, instead of creating its own discourse. That was the time when postcolonialism was not seen as an ideology, but as a historic period in time (Lazarus 6). 'Thus, Chinua Achebe was described variously as an Igbo writer, a Nigerian writer, an African writer, a Commonwealth writer, a Third World writer, but seldom, if ever, as a "postcolonial" one. To have labelled Achebe a "postcolonial" writer would have been, in a sense, merely to set the scene, historically speaking, for the analysis to come' (Lazarus 6). But even in the new postcolonial discourse, postcolonialism is not seen as an ideology, but is rather used as a '"euphemism" for what used to be referred to as the "Third World"' (Larsen qtd. in Lazarus 6).

Most African literatures are marginalised. They do not belong to the dominant culture and most works do not appear in the canon of world literature. The European literatures do belong to the dominant culture. A translator wishing to bring an African text, which is marginalised, into the dominant culture faces numerous obstacles, according to Maria Tymoczko. These problems do not only relate to social culture and history, but also to literary features such as genre, form and other literary conventions (Tymoczko, "Metonymics" 12). This means that 'the information load of translations of such marginalized texts is often very high' (Tymoczko, "Metonymics" 12). The information load is the knowledge the reader has to have in order to understand the translation and relates to the metonymic aspects of the text. For Tymoczko argues that all tellings are metonymic. 'For a traditional audience each telling evokes metonymically all previous tellings of the tale that the audience has participated in and, further, the telling instantiates and reifies metonymically the entire tradition that the audience and teller share' (Tymoczko, "Metonymics" 14). For example, the tradition of European (Western) literature can be traced all the way back to the Greek narratives. In African literary tradition, oral literature plays a major part when it comes to metonymy. 'Authors commonly use a "baseline" version of the myth as an implicit standard of comparison, against which the audience measures the author's own vision (Tymoczko, "Metonymics" 16). In some instances, the target audience may be able to understand the metonymics of the text, but this will not be the case in most instances. Many readers will not be familiar with the literary traditions of the marginalised source culture, such as the plot and other literary allusions, and thus the translator has to enlighten the reader. '[T]he translator must either make some decisive choices about which aspects to translate - that is, do a partial translation of the literary information in the text - or seek a format that allows dense information transfer through a variety of commentaries on the translation (Tymoczko, "Metonymics" 17). The translator thus has to choose where he wants to use a more naturalising strategy and on what levels he might want to use a more foreignising strategy. 'Not all the information serving metonymic functions in a text from an unfamiliar literature or culture can be realized in translation [...]. [T]ranslation inevitably involves linguistic loss and gain, and it is not

possible to capture every linguistic feature of the source text' (Tymoczko, "Metonymics" 18). It all depends on the strategy of the translator. However, Tymoczko states that the translator, consciously or unconsciously, always assimilates most of the metonymies of the marginalised source text to the metonymies of the dominant target culture (Tymoczko, "Metonymics" 20). Because of this process, most translations are torn between two strategies. 'It is the selection of metonymies to preserve and to relinquish, to assimilate and to resist, that principally characterizes the initial translation norms of marginalized texts, more than the standard polarities that are usually discussed in translation theory' (Tymoczko, "Metonymics" 22).

In another essay Tymoczko even states that the foreignising strategy as promoted by Lawrence Venuti is not suited to 'cultures that are already flooded with foreign materials and foreign language impositions' (Tymoczko, "Translation" 454). She even calls this strategy 'elitist' (Tymoczko, "Translation" 454), because only an educated audience would appreciate it. Of course, when a translator adopts a foreignising strategy to a marginalised text when translating this text into a dominant culture, a foreignising strategy cannot wrong or influence the source culture, but rather influences the dominant culture. In this sense, translation is a powerful weapon. However, in postcolonial writings, translation can be used to either exert control, for example by using censorship, or resist the oppression, for example by using the translation to show dissatisfaction with the ruling parties and thereby creating cultural nationalism. When translating postcolonial writings, the translator is not only transferring one text into another text, but also one ideology into another ideology. The translator, thus, has all the power and his purpose of the text will determine the broader context in which the translation will function and he will present the book in the literary system of the target culture. According to Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi, 'European norms have dominated literary production, and those norms have ensured that only certain kinds of text, those that will not prove alien to the receiving culture, come to be translated' (5). So, apart from the translator, the publishing house also has a great influence, as the publisher is to a great extent responsible for the choice of works to be translated. Furthermore, the time in which the novel is ultimately published in the target culture can also be of great influence on the reception of the novel by the target audience. This is for example illustrated in an article by the literary critic Jacq Vogelaar. In his review of Marlene van Niekerk's novel *Triomf*, which takes places around the time of the 1994 elections in South Africa, he states the following: 'In zekere zin ben ik blij dat ik de vertaling, die eerder al in 2000 verscheen, nu [2007] pas heb gelezen. Ik zou er toen vooral een grove satire in hebben gezien, terwijl het ogenschijnlijk realistische verhaal mij nu een bijna mythische geschiedenis lijkt' (Vogelaar). However, the controversial character of the novel can get lost when it is read in a different time, at least according to Willem Kuipers, editor for *de Volkskrant*: 'Het zal niet verbazen dat Van Niekerk met dit inkijkje in het leven van een paar (arme) blanke landgenoten de nodige opschudding veroorzaakte, toen haar boek in 1994 in Zuid-Afrika verscheen. De vraag is of het, zes jaar later, in Nederland net zo'n reactie teweeg kan brengen en het antwoord daarop is heel onomwonden: nee, want voor ons is *Triomf* gewoonweg een soort Flodder..' (Kuipers, "Flodder").

In his 2002 review of *Dans aan het eind van de dag* by Eben Venter, literary critic Fred de Vries also asks himself why the publishing house, Querido, decided to publish a translation of a book which was originally published ten years earlier. 'In die tien jaar is er enorm veel veranderd in Zuid-Afrika, met als meest ingrijpende gebeurtenis natuurlijk de verkiezingen van 1994, waarna Nelson Mandela president werd en de apartheid definitief ten grave werd gedragen. Die cesuur plaatst de meeste Zuid-Afrikaanse literatuur van voor 1994 in een ander daglicht. Niet in het minst doordat zich een flinke mate van apartheidsproblematiekvermoeidheid heeft ontwikkeld. Wie wil er in deze postidealistische tijd nu nog lezen over de zwarte strijd en de blanke angsten en frustraties?' (De Vries, "Geur").

So far I have discussed some major themes in the study of African literature, namely the debate on the definition of African literature and the language issue. Both debates cannot be settled here. However, the major pros and cons have been indicated. A person's viewpoint on the definition of African literature is strongly influenced by his standpoint in the language issue. The debate on the language issue has caused a division into two camps. Proponents of the use of African languages state that the use of the colonial languages is a form of neo-colonialism. However, supporters of the use of the colonial languages state that they use an Africanised form of the colonial languages, which means they 'use' these languages in more ways than one. They are the ones who are colonising the language. But whatever language the African writer uses, the struggles will be the same. A writer writes a novel in order to find an audience that will read his novel. A translator will help broaden this audience, whether it be translating the work from an African language into a European language or from a European language into an African language. Translation problems will arise either way. But not only the translators of the works are involved in the process of translating. The African author himself is also involved in some sort of translation process, which has also been called transference. Transference is the translation of ideas and thoughts in the African author's mind that he has to translate into the colonial language, also known as translation without originals.

Even though complaints have been made about the use of western theories when describing the translation of African literature, some theories still hold true and can be very useful when translating African literature. The best example is the alienating versus naturalising theory of Schleiermacher, adopted and further interpreted by both Venuti and Holmes. The failings of western theories for describing African literature in translation have been described by Niranjana and the coining of the term 'cultural turn' by Snell-Hornby has led to the emergence of postcolonial translation studies. An important player in the development of postcolonial translation studies is Maria Tymoczko. She has written several articles to stress the importance of the difference between western and non-western translation theories. According to her, many problems relate to the fact that the translator of African literature translates a marginalised text (the African text) into a dominant culture (the European culture). Due to the metonymics of the text that are unknown to the European reader, the translator has to find a solution for the information that is embedded in the African text. The context in which the book is presented and the date of publication in the target culture also influence the

reception of the book in the target culture.

I will now continue by presenting some important characteristics of African literature, namely the influence of African languages, the use of culture-specific items and the use of orality in written texts.

LINGUISTIC CULTURE: CULTURAL BACKGROUND REFLECTED IN COLONIAL LANGUAGES

The division into the two camps is clear now. Chinua Achebe is the captain of the pro-colonial languages squad and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o is the leader of the pro-African languages team. But the two teams are well matched. Regular playing time is over, we are way past the extra time and the penalty shoot out is undecided. Furthermore, Ngũgĩ accuses the other team of neo-colonisation. But just how legitimate are these claims?

Ngũgĩ argues that 'true decolonisation is only possible when the author uses African, rather than European, languages as his/her medium of expression' (Woodham 119). But Achebe and his crew insist that using the colonial languages the way they want is freeing in itself. There is no one who says they are not allowed to do so and so they have chosen 'to enact the process of linguistic decolonisation by using and subverting the colonial language itself' (Woodham 119). The result is an Africanised European language. This is done by for example using 'the grammatical and lexical properties of underlying African languages' (Woodham 120) in the colonial language, such as expanding the meaning of words and changing the structure of the sentences.

Chinua Achebe was one of the first who used this technique of Africanising the colonial language, but he was not the only one. The Nigerian poet and novelist Gabriel Okara experimented with the English language in his novel *The Voice*, albeit less successful than Achebe. Okara adopted the strategy of word for word translations from his native Ijo. By doing this, Okara not only adapted the semantics of the English language to the Ijo semantics, he also changed the English syntax. However, many critics have stated that Okara took his experiment a little bit too far (Gyasi, "Ahmadou" 156), for the novel was not readable anymore. Nevertheless, the novel is a great effort and an example for other African writers who want to expand the Standard English, French or Portuguese and make it fit for the African context.

An example of a Francophone writer who has Africanised the French language is Ahmadou Kourouma with his 1968 novel *Les Soleils des Indépendances*. Kwaku Gyasi, Assistant Professor at the University of Alabama, discusses the first lines of the novel in his essay 'Translation as a Postcolonial Practice: the African Writer as Translator'. These are the first lines:

> *Il y a avait une semaine qu'avait fini dans la capitale Koné Ibrahima, de race malinké, ou disons-le en malinké: il n'avait pas soutenu un petit rhume... Comme tout Malinké, quand la vie s'échappa de ses restes, son ombre se releva, graillona, et partit par le long chemin pour le lointain pays malinké...* (qtd. in Gyasi, "Translation" 109).

According to Gyasi, the use of 'avait fini' to express the death of a character in the first sentence is an indication of mother tongue influences on the discourse in the novel. The expression is 'a direct translation from the author's native language. The fact that the author chose this expression instead of French colloquial expressions like "il a cassé sa pipe" (he has broken his pipe) or "il a passé l'arme à gauche" (he has pegged out) shows that Kourouma wanted his Malinké world-view to dominate his novel' (Gyasi, "Translation" 109). It is apparent from this statement that Gyasi assumes that

Kourouma intended to write in standard (European) French. However, it could also be quite possible that the Malinke language has already infiltrated the French that is spoken in the region where the novel is set. In that case, the use of the expression 'avait fini' would not have been a deliberate or conscious choice, rather, it is just the standard African French. Whatever the case may be, it is clear that this expression does not occur in standard European French. This poses a dilemma for the translator. He could either choose to translate the expression with an idiomatic expression from his target language, or he could choose to adopt the same strategy as the writer of the original text and use a marked translation, whereby the expression in the target language is as foreign as the expression is in the source language. Of course, this expression in the source text is only marked for European readers of the French book. The African readers are already familiar with the expression.

According to Gyasi, African writers adopt translation strategies to write their book in the colonial languages, which is thus translated from their mother tongue. Only there is no original, as the source text is only in their mind. Gyasi mentions in his article the strategy of 'semantic shifts'. This means that the meaning of a word or concept in the European language has been extended to fit the meanings that this concept has in the African context. Again, Gyasi gives an example of *Les Soleils des Indépendances*. In his novel, Kourouma extends the meaning of the French word 'honte', meaning 'shame', to mean 'reserve, bashfulness and modesty' (Gyasi, "Translation" 111). The extended meaning, as intended by the author, is explained by using a metaphor to describe the emotion that is meant by 'honte'. 'It can be seen that even without the use of proverbs and other more detailed forms, the desire to describe the African imaginary world in a satisfactory way pushes the writer to resort to cultural presuppositions that are unfamiliar to the monolingual reader' (Gyasi, "Translation" 111). This emphasizes the importance for the translator to be familiar with the African context. First, the translator has to catch the connotations, or the multiple meanings, of the word or expression, in this case the word 'honte'. Then he has to decide whether or not to clarify these extra meanings to his reader. If the translator decides to give some kind of explanation, he could for instance choose to translate the word 'honte' not with shame but with a synonym of that word that comes closer to the meaning of 'honte' in this context. However, by doing this the translator interferes in the text. His interpretation thus plays a crucial role. He could also decide to translate the word with the standard meaning 'shame', so that there is room for the reader to interpret the meaning of this word by himself using the context of the novel. In this case, the writer has already chosen to explain his use of the word 'honte'. By translating the explanatory metaphor, the reader should have enough information to extract the meaning by himself.

Using metaphors for explaining double meanings is one of the strategies that have been adopted by African writers. Other methods are, according to Gyasi, cushioning and contextualization ("Translation" 111). Cushioning means that an African word in a novel written in a European language is explained by a word or phrase in that European language. And the strategy of contextualization gives, obviously, context to the word in the African language. So these are strategies used by the African writer to accommodate his non-African reader. This naturally also helps the translator of the African work. His choice to put in explanatory remarks is now already made by the author of the

original work. It would seem illogical to decide against a translation of those explanations by the author. Even though most of the ideas of the African writers can be expressed in the colonial languages, there are always some concepts that just do not have a way of expression in the colonial languages. 'Certainly, if the French language is incapable of fully expressing the Malinke world-view then one understands the difficulty in describing a feeling in a language in which this feeling does not even have a name. Thus, the need to filter the African imagination through the European medium of expression compels the writer to use expressions and conventional forms that derive from African languages' (Gyasi, "Translation" 112).

Dialects are an example of expressions derived from African languages. As in non-African novels, dialects are always a hard to solve translation problem. Dialects occur in all languages, in all countries and on all continents. In Africa, the colonial languages are often mixed with the local languages. This makes that every region has its own dialect of French or English. For example, Nigeria is famous for its pidgin English and Francophone Africa also has a distinct dialect of French. Writers use these differences between the various dialects to typify their characters. In her essay 'Translating Pidgin English, Rotten English and Ubuesque English into French', Christiane Fioupou, professor at the Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, France, discusses the translation of dialects and pidgins by using examples from Wole Soyinka's *The Road*. In this play, some characters speak Nigerian Pidgin English. Fioupou states the following: 'As Nigerian Pidgin English is a language that exists, develops, and changes, the issue for the translator here is to look for an equivalent variety of French that also exists linguistically' (Fioupou 78). The translation problem of the dialect is thus solved by choosing the strategy of translating the dialect with an equivalent dialect in the target language. But this dialect in the target language is not always easy to find, and in addition to this the translator should avoid 'the trap of stereotypes' (Fioupou 78). But Fioupou also states that 'Of course, when both target and source languages (French and English) have a colonial history on the same continent, some kind of rough equivalent between them is more likely to be found, as is the case in West Africa' (Fioupou 78). The question is whether the European French audience would understand the West African French dialect if you want to translate a West African novel written in English into French. Fioupou answers this question by stating: 'Twenty years ago, it was difficult to convince French publishers that this variety of French was going to be understood in France in the same way as Pidgin English was in Britain [...]. This form of experiment seems to be more readily accepted now' (Fioupou 81). However, not all translators seem to be convinced that it is possible to find an equivalent African dialect in French, as this quote by D'Almeida, translator of Achebe's *Arrow of God* into French, suggests: 'Because he is a talented writer Achebe has succeeded in twisting the English language so as to suit his own purpose. A problem of translation arises here from the fact that somehow, the French language does not as easily yield itself to being so twisted and this in itself constitutes a serious challenge' (D'Almeida qtd. in Woodham 127). Of course, there are many Francophone African writers who have done this just as perfectly as Achebe, Kourouma being only one example.

Nevertheless, that it is not easy to translate dialects shows the Dutch translation of *Anthills of the Savannah*, a novel by Chinua Achebe. The story is set in the fictitious West African country of

Kangan. Three former classmates are all involved in the new military regime. Using the different perspectives of these three central characters, the book tells the story of how to deal with power and what to do to keep a powerful position in a disrupted country. The book, first published in 1987, was translated into Dutch by Harry Lemmens in 1988. The use of dialect is a major factor in the book, as it illustrates class difference. There is a divide between the characters who are educated and those who are not. An example is Elewa, an uneducated help. She says: "But woman done suffer for dis world-o" (60). This is translated as "Jaja, maar het zijn toch altijd weer de vrouwen die zijn de dupe" (81). The translator has tried to convey the accent by misplacing the second verb 'zijn'. Yet, in the English accent there is a lot more happening. The subject is singular, the verb is ungrammatical, the demonstrative is spelled incorrect and there is a suffix attached to the noun. The reader would have no trouble recognising this as an accent. However, the Dutch accent could also be a typing error. In this book, the dialects are an important feature of the style, hence it is important to translate this as an accent in Dutch as well. Simply misplacing a verb is not sufficient.

Dutch translator Dorienke de Vries also came across the problems of African linguistic influences and dialects when translating a novel by Uwem Akpan: 'In het geval van Akpan was het heel speciaal, omdat je je verdiept in een andere cultuur, waardoor je soms denkt: waar gaat dit gedeelte over? In taalkundig opzicht was het een gecompliceerd boek. De personages spreken verschillende dialecten en stamtalen en daarvan heeft Akpan veel gebruik gemaakt, waardoor er soms een wonderlijke mengelmoes is ontstaan' (De Vries qtd. in Verheij). This caused several translation problems. 'Ik ben met dit boek echt tegen de grenzen van het vertalen aangelopen. Je gaat iets vertalen wat eigenlijk niet te vertalen is' (De Vries qtd. in Verheij). The publication of the Dutch translation obviously proves this wrong. De Vries reveals the following translation strategy in the interview: 'Ik heb geprobeerd de "leeservaring" zo min mogelijk aan te tasten – iets wat voor een Afrikaanse of Engelstalige lezer onbegrijpelijk is, is dat ook voor de Nederlandse lezer' (De Vries qtd. in Verheij). Information about the different dialects, such as Nigerian Pidgin and Patois, came from friends and acquaintances of the translator, not from the author, with whom De Vries was only in brief contact at the beginning of her translation process. 'Hij was bang dat de *flavour* van zijn boek met alle talen en dialecten in mijn vertaling in het Nederlands zou verdwijnen' (De Vries qtd. in Verheij). The fact that De Vries has translated Nigerian Pidgin with a dialect, but did not do the same when translating the Patois dialect (De Vries, "Vertaler") confirms this fear.

Another way to Africanise the colonial languages is by using African oral art forms. I will expand on this later on in my thesis, but I will mention the use of proverbs here, because '[i]t is known that proverbs are probably the most common form manifesting the use of translated mother tongue into the European language' (Gyasi, "Translation" 110). Proverbs are thus a feature of the mother tongue and the linguistic culture of the author reflected in his writings. Again, Gyasi gives an example of Kourouma's novel *Les Soleils des Indépendances*, who has translated a proverb from his mother tongue in French: 'A renifler avec discrétion le pet de l'effronté, il vous juge sans nez', translated by Gyasi as 'If you sniff with discretion at the fart of a shameless person, he will think you have no nose' (Gyasi, "Translation" 110). For these proverbs to be used in the novels by African

authors writing in European languages, the use of these European languages needs to be stretched. 'Thus, the use of proverbs by the authors points to the fact that if the stylistic features of African oral narrative are to be captured in the African novel written in European languages, then the full range of linguistic resources of African prose traditions must be rendered in the European languages' (Gyasi, "Translation" 110). The use of the colonial languages is thus nothing more than the language of communication. What the writers communicate and how they communicate are very African. For example, the Igbo language is peppered with proverbs. The Igbo use proverbs to describe situations, to show one's feelings, to make a point and so on and so forth. The use of figurative language is normal (Opata 233). This is different from, for instance, the Dutch language use. Even though the Dutch language has plenty of proverbs, the Igbo use their proverbs with a higher frequency. Especially in Achebe's novels the proverbs are a typical feature. There are more proverbs present than in a Standard English text. The question is whether the translator should translate all these proverbs as proverbs in Dutch. And if the translator decides to translate them as proverbs, he has the choice between a literal translation and a translation with a Dutch equivalent. In other words, the translator has to make a choice between exoticising and naturalising.

A translator's job is to truthfully bring across the message of the original text. However, in the colonial times, European translators were not always faithful to the original text and manipulated these texts for their own good. 'In the colonial world with the perception and mentality that were less curious, and less broad-minded than ours today, a conservative world of prejudices, cultural dominance and white superiority pretentions, early European translators of African literature imprinted into it, myths and values that only suited aristocratic interests or bourgeois realism of their time, thus creating an image, an identity and a socio-ethnological atmosphere quite different from the "true" reality' (Okolie 209). Translations by missionaries were almost always more true to the original text than the translations of government bodies. During the first postcolonial years, translations were still written with a western world view in mind. For the translation of African literature, it is therefore important to put oneself in the position of the African author. 'If translated by a translator who is not conversant with or close to the culture and the specifics that make it alive, then the translation resulting from such a text fails to communicate the spirit of the culture, producing a sterile, literal translation which does not "re-create" or reproduce the people' (Okolie 208). Maxwell Okolie, Senior Lecturer at the University of Nigeria, therefore suggests that African texts should be translated by African translators. 'Unlike the earlier European translators of African "texts", new African translators do not indulge in contracting or omitting difficult expressions unfamiliar to them' (Okolie 210). This would be quite possible when the text is being translated from English to French or vice versa. However, a translation of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* into Dutch by an African translator violates the notion that a translator should always only translate the text into his native language. The dilemma arises whether to choose a translator who truly understands the source culture or one whose mother tongue is the target language.

Whatever the choice may be, the fact is that the translator needs to use certain techniques to be able to render the African text into the European language. In her article, Katryn Woodham,

affiliated with the University of Nottingham, discusses several Francophone novels by African authors. In the translations of these novels, the translators have used techniques such as "clarification" and "rationalization" (Woodham 121) to explain 'the author's creation of a French that reflects underlying African languages' (Woodham 121). She discusses for example Ahmadou Kourouma's *Les Soleils des Indépendances*, in which Kourouma uses past participles as nouns. The translator of the novel has translated these neologisms with standard verb phrases, thereby neutralizing the use of the past participle as noun. Woodham further states that this 'normalisation' (124) is done less in dialogues, where 'the colloquial nature of the speech' (124) is retained a little better, but still she has discovered that the translators are leaning towards normalisation and standardisation. According to Woodham, the consequence of this strategy is that the authors' resistance towards using the colonial language has been omitted, because it looks as if the authors have simply used the standard language and so Woodham speaks of 'recolonisation' (125). Woodham states that the choice for normalisation is caused by the widespread tendency with American and British translators to translate as fluent as possible and this has been common in translated literature throughout the US and the UK. '[T]he overwhelming tendency in all of the translations is towards fluency, the non-standard French being rendered for the most part in standard English' (Woodham 119).

In her essay 'Translating Hybridity in the Peruvian Andes', Rosaleen Howard mentions the work of Samia Mehrez, a contribution to Venuti's *Rethinking Translation*, about postcolonial Algerian writing. The Algerian writers use both French and Arabic in their novels, using each language in its appropriate domains. Howard quotes Mehrez to explain what this means for the translation of those texts:

> *These postcolonial texts, frequently referred to as "hybrid" or "métissés" because of the culturo-linguistic layering which exists within them, have succeeded in forging a new language that 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 that 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 qtd. in Howard 49).

The notion of the existence of a standard language thus needs to be abandoned and a new theory has to be developed in order to solve the translation problem of the hybrid language. The theory needs to be readjusted or redefined, because in postcolonial texts there is not just one language that is translated into another language. The source language is influenced by the author's mother tongue and, in addition, the language contact between all the languages present in the author's region causes the process of code-switching, whereby words in one language are used in the sentence spoken in another language. Developing a new theory is important, because '[s]uch a theory will help us, first, to think about the social and ideological conditions within which language contact takes shape, and, second, to think about the nature of the relationship between the original version of a text and its translations' (Howard 50). The original text is already influenced by different languages. It is as it were a translation of a hidden source text, a translation without original.

Howard discusses in her essay the translations of an Andean text into Spanish and English. In the translations, some Quechua words have not been translated and have been incorporated in the Spanish and English texts. Howard discusses this strategy in light of the foreignisation/domestication dichotomy. The Spanish translation uses italics and a glossary, the English translation uses 'ethnographic footnotes to explain what the "foreign" word means' (Howard 48). Howard wonders: 'Can this strategy be seen as a rather extreme case of what Venuti, reviewing Schleiermacher, means by foreignisation? In not translating the Quechua word at all, the translators do indeed, to cite Venuti: "register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad" (Venuti 1995: 20)' (Howard 48). Her answer is the coining of a new term: ethnographisation. 'However, the tactics of italicisation supported by a glossary, and footnotes, respectively, seem to have the effect of handing the reader a traveller's survival kit. There is no attempt to bend the Spanish or English syntax to that of the Quechua, as we would expect in a foreignised version, and the English makes use of plentiful colloquialisms that smack in places of domestication rather than foreignisation. [...] I suggest therefore that we coin the phrase "ethnographisation" in place of "foreignisation" as a more apt way to describe these particular translation strategies' (Howard 48).

In her essay 'Translation on Trial: Nadine Gordimer in Swedish' Christina Gullin discusses the translation of *The House Gun* in Swedish and the consequences of the strategies chosen by the translator. In the essay she discusses examples of rationalization, clarification and popularization, among other strategies. Her conclusion is that the 'gap between the experience of place and the language available to describe it has been enlarged' (Gullin 141). But the author is not surprised by this outcome, because it is a trend in translations to simplify the source text and this causes a loss in the significance of the source text. This suggests that the common strategies used by translators for the translating of African literature are not celebrated by critics. The critics would rather see a more foreignising strategy so as to prevent the loss of the significance of the African texts.

Tina Steiner writes in her essay 'Writing in the Contact Zone: Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* in German' about contact zones: 'social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other' (Pratt qtd. in Steiner 143). She states that '[t]he source text, itself plurilingual and pluricultural, demands a translation that is aware of this translated world and thus resists and excludes the monolingual in the target text' (143). According to Steiner, '[t]he challenge in translation is to preserve the cultural and linguistic difference of the source text by "producing translations which are strange and estranging" (Venuti 1992:13)' (143). But the fault may not always lie with the translator. In her essay she discusses the paratextual aspects of the German translation of *Nervous Conditions*, for example the blurp, the title and the cover image. The translation has been stripped of certain intertextual connections and has presented the novel in a different light so as to attract the German reader. 'It is surprising that the publisher or the translator should have chosen to leave out the Sartre epigraph and thus cut out the multiple references that situate *Nervous Conditions* in the tradition of post-colonial theory with specific regard to Fanon's work' (Steiner 149). The context in which the book is placed is important for the reception of the book in the target culture, especially in post-colonial writing.

> *It is tempting to identify the greater range of paratextual commentary permitted to the translator as another difference between literary translation and post-colonial writing. In the form of introductions, footnotes, critical essays, glossaries, maps, and the like, the translator can embed the translated text in a shell that explains necessary cultural and literary background for the receiving audience and that acts as a running commentary on the translated work. Thus, the translator can manipulate more than one textual level simultaneously, in order to encode and explain the source text.* (Tymoczko, "Post-colonial" 22)

And so it is not only important to translate the plurilingual and pluricultural aspects of the text itself, the presentation of the book also needs to do justice to the viewpoint of the original author and the political context of the book. The translator of the book, however, has tried to preserve the plurilingualism by adopting the 'strategy of 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' (Steiner 151). Many scholars of translation studies have criticised the 'word for word' translation method. Instead the translator should focus on the text as a whole, or at least the whole sentence. Steiner seems to encourage the 'word for word' translation method as she says that the translator 'loses contact with the source text and naturalizes for the German reader what should have remained foreign' (Steiner 151) when the translator did not use the 'word for word' translation method. In all given examples she celebrates the use of the word in the foreign language, in this case Shona. Whenever the translator has deviated from this translation strategy of retaining the culture-specific elements, Steiner critiques his choices. Therefore, her conclusion that the translator has naturalised the novel too much is not surprising. Like Gullin, she would rather see a more foreignising strategy.

To recapitulate, influences of African languages can be identified in the use of the colonial languages in the creative writing of African authors. The result is an Africanised European language. Influences can be seen on both semantic and grammatical levels. Meanings of words are expanded, structures of sentences are changed and expressions from the African language are translated literally. These are all marked changes to the Standard English or French that the European reader will be familiar with. When the translator translates the book to another European language, he has a choice to make between an idiomatic translation of the text, adopted to the conventions of the target language, and a marked translation of the text, whereby the expressions in the target language are as foreign as the expressions are in the source language.

As the book written in a colonial language is already a translation without original, the African author has already adopted several strategies when incorporating African culture-specific items. These strategies include contextualisation and cushioning. However, authors will not only adopt these strategies when using culture-specific items, they will also adopt these strategies when expanding the meanings of words. In cases where this is not done by the African author, the translator has to decide whether to adopt similar strategies or leave it to the reader to interpret the text and discover the meaning of the word through its context.

Other translation problems mentioned in this chapter are the influence of African languages on the use of dialects and the abundant use of proverbs by the African writers. The translation

problem of the dialects is best solved by translating the dialect with an equivalent dialect in the target language. For translating proverbs, the translator has some decisions to make. First he has to decide whether or not to translate all the proverbs in the target text. If he chooses to translate the proverbs, he can either choose a literal translation or a translation with an equivalent in the target language. In short it is a choice between exoticising and naturalising.

The translator has to keep in mind that the African writer has made a conscious decision to Africanise the colonial language. To undo this, would mean to recolonise the language, according to Woodham. She stands together with other critics who prefer a more foreignising strategy to stress the significance of the African text.

TO GLOSSARY OR NOT TO GLOSSARY: CULTURE-SPECIFIC ELEMENTS

Sometimes a word or phrase cannot as easily be translated from one language to another because there is more than just a linguistic or structural difference between the two languages. It is possible that no equivalent can be found on a cultural level, which means that there is no equivalent on word level and this means that the target language has no direct equivalent for the word or phrase in the source language. It is also possible that the equivalent in the target language has a different connotation and thus is not a direct equivalent. In translation studies theory, these words or phrases are called culture-specific elements or culture-specific items (CSIs), which are a common translation problem. Javier Franco Aixelá uses the following definition to explain culture-specific items in his essay in *Denken over Vertalen*:

> *[all elements] die behoren tot de meest arbitraire gebieden van elk linguïstisch systeem en daarom bij het vertalen in een andere taal problemen zullen opleveren, zoals namen van lokale instituties, straten, historische figuren, plaatsen, personen, tijdschriften, kunstwerken enz.* (197).

However, it needs to be considered that intercultural relations are dynamic and so changes will occur in the relation between the item in the source language and its translation in the target language. Furthermore, '[t]he use of rare or untranslated words in translations and the inclusion of unfamiliar cultural material are not necessarily defects of translated texts: translation is one of the activities of a culture in which cultural expansion occurs and in which linguistic options are expanded through the importation of loan transfers, calques, and the like' (Tymoczko, "Post-colonial" 25).

When translating culture-specific elements, the function of the translation needs to be kept in mind. The function of the target text in the target culture does not need to be the same as the function of the source text in its source culture. However, with literary translations this is often the case. Peter Newmark distinguishes two types of translation, namely communicative translation and semantic translation:

> *Communicative translation attempts to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original. Semantic translation attempts to render, as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original.* (Newmark 39)

Thus, communicative translation values the message of the source text, whereas semantic translation focuses more on the way the message is being brought across. As a result, the translator needs to decide what he values the most, as this has consequences for the translation of culture-specific elements. But, as we have seen with Holmes's exoticising versus naturalising theory, it does not have to be either/or. There are a number of strategies from which the translator can choose. When the choice is not imposed by the linguistic or structural characteristics of the target language, the ideology of the translator can be deduced. For example, Holmes states in his essay that contemporary

translators are inclined to adopt an exoticising strategy on the socio-cultural level, where culture-specific items are to be found (277). Several methods of translation can be adopted to achieve either an exoticising translation or a naturalising translation. Javier Franco Aixelá, Diederik Grit and Peter Newmark have all written essays on this subject. They have classified the different methods into two main categories. The first category is preservation, whereby the source culture element is maintained wherever possible. The second category is replacement, whereby the culture-specific item is substituted by a word or phrase that lies closer to the target language. Within these two main categories, the three scholars have presented different translation methods, but a certain degree of overlap can be found. All three theories are presented in the table below.

	Javier Franco Aixelá	**Diederik Grit**	**Peter Newmark**
	PRESERVATION		
1	Herhaling	Handhaving	Transcription
2	Orthografische aanpassing	Idem	Naturalisation
3	Linguïstische (niet-culturele) vertaling	Leenvertaling	Through-translation
4	Extratekstuele toelichting	Handhaving of leenvertaling + omschrijving of definiëring	Translation couplet
5	Intratekstuele toelichting	Idem	Idem
	REPLACEMENT		
6	Synonymie		
7	Beperkte universalisering		
8		Adaptatie	
9	Absolute universalisering	Kernvertaling	
10	Weglating	Weglating	Deletion
11	Autonome schepping		
12		Benadering	Cultural equivalent
13			Recognized translation

The first strategy is present in all three theories. The CSI is reproduced in the target language. An example Aixelá mentions in his article are toponyms. 'Seattle' in the source language is translated as 'Seattle' in the target language. Grit gives the example of 'Sinterklaas', which remains 'Sinterklaas' in the target language. The second strategy is similar, but leaves room for any orthographical adjustments. Aixelá mentions the use of Russian names in English texts, as Russian has a different

script from English, the Russian script is translated into a Latin script. Grit encompasses this in the first strategy. His examples include 'the Volkskrant' as a translation of 'de Volkskrant'. Newmark gives the example of anglicising foreign names by supplying them with an English suffix, such as Aristotle. The third strategy is a literal translation of the CSI. Aixelá mentions currency units, where Grit gives the example of 'States-General' as a translation of the Dutch 'Staten-Generaal'. The fourth and fifth strategies of Aixelá have been combined by Grit and Newmark. It involves one of the first three strategies with an explanation either within the text itself or in any footnotes or glossaries. Examples are 'the conservative daily paper "de Telegraaf"' (Grit) and 'Knesset (the Israeli Parliament)' (Newmark). These are all strategies in the first category, preservation. When the text consists of too much new information, the reader is lost, but when there is not enough new information, the reader looses interest. The translator, thus, has to balance the amount of explanation he uses for the culture-specific items. Using as little explanation as possible makes for a more fluent text, because there are no interruptions, but there is a chance that the reader will not understand the culture-specific element.

The following strategies fall under the replacement category. The first strategy in this category, the sixth on the list, is only mentioned in Aixelá's article, namely synonymy. This is a mostly stylistic strategy to avoid repetition of the CSI. Usually, the translator has already made a choice of one of the other strategies and chooses this strategy when the CSI is repeated in the source text. Strategy number seven explains the CSI by using a more familiar CSI from the source language. This strategy is also only mentioned in the theory of Aixelá. His example is 'cinco mil dolares' (five million dollars) as a translation of 'five grand'. Similar to this strategy is the strategy of 'adaptatie' presented in Grit's theory. This is a translation of the function of the CSI. For example 'Labour Party' for 'Partij van de Arbeid'. However, the difference is that in Grit's strategy, a CSI from the target language is used. The next strategy in this table involves hypernyms. The English 'Chesterfield' becomes 'un sofa' (a couch) in French (Aixelá) and the Dutch 'havo' is translated with 'secondary school' in English (Grit). The tenth strategy is present in all theories and would seem one of the easiest strategies. For different reasons, such as irrelevance for the target text reader, the CSI is simply deleted. The next strategy of adding a CSI, only present in Aixelá's theory, is a seldom used strategy, but could be used for compensating a CSI that has been deleted elsewhere in the text. Strategy number twelve is used when the exact meaning of the CSI is not relevant and a similar concept can be found in the target language. The last strategy is not a strategy that can be chosen by the translator as such, but is based on availability. Some government agencies or other authorities, for example the EU, have published lists of CSIs with their equivalents in other languages and they expect the translator to use these lists, especially in official translations.

Ovidi Carbonell i Cortés does not speak of culture-specific elements in his essay 'Can the Other Speak? Metonymic (Re)creations of the Other in Translation', but of xenisms. He writes: 'I take the concept xenism from terminology studies and extend its meaning to stand for any culture-specific word or phrase that remains phonetically unchanged in the target text, either maintaining its original phonemic transcription [...], or orthographically adapted [...]' (Carbonell 59). A xenism thus relates to

the first and second strategies of Aixelá, Grit and Newmark. In all other instances, the term xenism cannot be used, according to Carbonell: 'A xenism is always sociolinguistically marked as foreign, and when such marking disappears because the source word or phrase has been integrated in the target language lexicon, then it is not a xenism proper, but a loanword [...]' (59). Carbonell places this notion in the context of the self and the other. According to Carbonell, there are four strategies, or processes, to deal with the identity of the culture-specific element. The first is identification. This means that the reader does not detect the CSI as being foreign, but identifies it as his own culture. The translator has thus adopted some sort of replacement strategy. The CSI has been adapted to the target culture and therefore has been made invisible. On the domestication versus exoticising axis this strategy lies closest to the domestication end. The second strategy in Carbonell's theory is othering. This means that the CSI is consciously made foreign by the translator and this is also what, according to Carbonell, Lawrence Venuti means by foreignisation. The result of this strategy can be called a xenism proper, as the CSI is exoticised and marked as foreign. This strategy relates to the preservation category as presented in the theories of Aixelá, Grit and Newmark. The third is familiarisation. This means that the CSI, or the other, has now been made familiar in the target culture and the traits of the CSI are known to the reader. Like identification, this strategy lies closest to the domestication end of the axis. The last strategy is foreignisation. This means that unfamiliar traits have been added to a previously known word or phrase and so the word has been distanced from the reader. This is different from what Venuti means by foreignisation, as mentioned above.

As aforementioned, certain influences of the African mother tongue of the author can be found in the text. This can also be seen in the use of culture-specific elements, which are often written in their original language. It is a specific feature of postcolonial literature.

> *One major feature of postcolonial writing is its willingness, some would say compulsion, to instruct or educate its readers. To teach is of course also to translate (and vice versa). To affix a glossary explaining lexical items or phrases at the end of the novel, however short and redundant it may be, or to include lengthy preambles, addenda or footnotes demonstrate basically two things: a frantic yearning to be understood and an equally strong desire to be taken notice of. The first aspiration speaks to the didactic tendencies of the (early) postcolonial novel; the second to its ideological. Theoretically, in this extended function, the glossary operates as a median shaping the novel's dialogue with its readers.* (Granqvist, "African" 97-8)

The words in the glossary are usually italicised in the text, which means that both the glossary and the corresponding italicized words halt the reader in his reading process. According to Granqvist, this is the reason that the translator of *Things Fall Apart* into Swedish decided to omit the glossary in his translation ("Postcolonial" 64). Instead, the translator incorporated the meanings of the words in the glossary in the text, if he thought it was necessary to do so. By doing this, he chose a different strategy from the strategy chosen by the writer of the original work, Chinua Achebe, whose choice to use a glossary can also be seen as a translation strategy for his use of Igbo words in his novel. African writers writing in the colonial tongues are essentially translators; therefore they too adopt different strategies for incorporating African words into the text. Tymoczko gives a number of examples in her

essay 'Post-colonial writing and literary translation'. For instance, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o adopts a resistant strategy of writing in his novel *A Grain of Wheat*. Ngũgĩ 'imports without explanation words for plants (e.g. *Mwariki*, p. 125), tools (e.g., *panga* and *jembe*, pp. 6, 8), garments (e.g. *Mithuru*, *Miengu*, p. 180), and dances (p. 205), among others, where the category of the words is made clear by context or collocation' (Tymoczko, "Post-colonial" 25). Even though the author, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o in this case, decided not to explain the meaning of these words, the translator can choose to add an explanation in the form of an embedded explanation, a glossary or a footnote. However, the translator should consider the fact that the author has deliberately chosen not to include an explanation. Another example, with a different strategy, is Chinua Achebe. 'In *A Man of the People* Chinua Achebe also imports African words into English (e.g. *lappa*, a garment), but more typically uses established English equivalents for African cultural concepts that are part of his English dialect (e.g. *head tie*, *pit latrine*, *highlife*)' (Tymoczko, "Post-colonial" 25). Achebe is more oriented towards his European reader and has already added some words of explanation for the reading comfort of his audience. This concept is taken even further by Buchi Emecheta, 'who introduces African words, for which she then provides explicit explanations: "he ... paid ten shillings towards his *esusu*, a kind of savings among friends whereby each member of the group collected contributions in turn" (*Joys of Motherhood*, p. 147)' (Tymoczko, "Post-colonial" 25). In many instances, the translator can simply copy these strategies in his own translation. However, this is not always the case. The Swedish translation of *Things Fall Apart* has not only omitted the glossary, it has also de-italicised the Igbo words and phrases (Granqvist, "Postcolonial" 65). But not only the glossary distracts the reader from the text, the italicised word is also a distraction for the reader, as it stands out from the rest of the text. Granqvist states that the italicisation of words in the text 'provokes the reader to recognize a difference' ("Postcolonial" 64). But as the words that are italicised in *Things Fall Apart* already stand apart from the rest of the text, as those italicised words are in Igbo and the rest of the text is in English, the italicisation does not do any more harm than the foreign language already does. Without the italicisation, the reader would still be distracted and halted in his reading process.

In the original text of *Things Fall Apart*, some italicised Igbo words are already explained in the text itself by using the conjunction 'or'. Even though the Swedish translator has added some information from the glossary in the text, he has not adopted the same strategy that Chinua Achebe was already using in his novel when explaining culture-specific elements. Furthermore, the Swedish translator changed the strategy of Achebe in some instances where an explanation is given of the Igbo word. The examples Granqvist gives in his article are the combinations with 'chi'. The original text says '*chi*, or personal god' and the Swedish translation says 'chi, his personal god', hereby omitting the conjunction 'or' and de-italicising the culture-specific item. As a reason for the translator to change Achebe's strategies Granqvist gives the avoidance of monotony ("Postcolonial" 67). His reason for assuming this is that the translator has also changed 'woman' to 'bitch' in one of the examples, thereby interpreting the context and not rendering the most obvious translation. The conclusion that Granqvist draws from all these examples from the Swedish translation of *Things Fall Apart* is that the translator has overall adopted a foreignising strategy ("Postcolonial" 69). This is in

line with the earlier statement by Holmes that contemporary translators are more inclined to use exoticising translation strategies when translating culture-specific elements.

FROM ORALITY TO LITERACY: VERBAL ART FORMS IN WRITTEN TEXTS

In Africa, literacy is often seen as a threat to orality. Literacy is modernist and therefore different from orality, which is traditionalist. But the coming of literature does not exclude the production of oral literature or the expression in oral art forms. To the contrary, orality and literacy can complement each other. One could even say that literature needs orality, for the oral tradition is still stronger than the reading culture. By reading literature to children, for example, children can be encouraged to start reading themselves. But there is another, even more important, way in which literature is influenced by orality, and that is the story plots. Many African novels are based on oral traditions such as folktales. Examples are the Sundjata Keita epic and the stories of Anansi the spider in West African literature. So even though literacy and orality are two different modes of communication, the message they communicate can be the same. This is why we speak of oral literature and of written literature, with literature as the common denominator.

Orality in African literature is also the main reason that sets the African novel apart from the European novel. 'It must be emphasized that a major difference between the modern Europhone African novel and its European counterpart is that of narrative form. Many scholars and critics have pointed out the influence of African oral literature on modern African writing. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o has suggested that what provides the innovative difference in modern African literature is "its relationship to African languages and the great heritage of orature in those languages'" (Gyasi, "Translation" 106). The story tellers and the griots have become the narrators in the novels.

According to Nolue Emenanjo, professor at the Nigerian Institute of Languages, African oral literature can be divided into four categories, which exist in every African culture (40). These are (1) the narrative forms (folktales, anecdotes, jokes), (2) the poetic forms (songs, poems, epics), (3) the gnomic phrase forms (proverbs and riddles) and (4) the dramatic forms (all forms of dramatic performances). These four categories are performed in three different modes, namely the spoken, the song and the dramatised (Emenanjo 41). According to Emenanjo, '[t]he passages in the speaking mode exhibit far many rhythmic patterns of recurrence (e.g. repetition and parallelism) than is usual in ordinary prose speech' (41). So when translating passages in different modes, the translator has to be aware of these stylistic conventions, if he wants to distinguish these passages in his translation.

In Yoruba society, the oral artists used their songs and performances to criticise kings and chiefs. Kings have even taken their own life, because of the shame that the song of the oral artist brought upon them. The oral artists are able to criticise the power, because they are immune. When a king arrests an oral artist, the people will demand his freedom (Isola 126). In Yoruba society, the oral artist thus has a very high status. This function of the oral artist addressing shortcomings in society can also be executed in the form of literary art. And thus the oral artist becomes a writer. This is one way in which the characteristics of oral art have been transferred to literary art. The African writer has taken over the role of the griot, of the bard. This means that the writer must show social commitment, which can be reflected in his work by referring to events that have happened in the

nation or on the continent. The Négritude movement is a great example of this social commitment in literature. In the literature published by the members of this movement colonial racism was addressed. A translator must know about these historic events, because it shapes the context of the novel. The background of an African writer writing in English is different from the background of a British author writing in English and so their works should be approached differently. The main area in which this will manifest itself is the use of culture-specific elements, which has been discussed earlier.

These are all aspects of orality that are on a higher, semantic level. Ideophones, on the other hand, are a linguistic phenomenon, but they are also a huge part of the oral cultures of Africa. Ideophones are oral in the sense that they represent a sound. But ideophones are also oral in the sense that they are often used by oral artists in their performances. They are used in folk stories and proverbs. And these folk stories and proverbs are in turn used by African authors in their creative writing. Ideophones are used across the African continent, in every language family. And although ideophones are a feature that can be found in languages across the world, the number of ideophones that occur in a language greatly differs. An ideophone can represent sounds, but also other sensual perceptions, such as smell and sight. Furthermore, ideophones can express feelings, but also colour, size and duration. This means that 'ideophones combine perception and concept in a cultural linguistic relationship between sound and semantics' (Noss 42).

The translator needs to decide what to do with ideophones that he comes across in the source text, but it is also possible that the target text would normally use an ideophone where the source text has none. By studying translated ideophones, added ideophones and omitted ideophones, the strategy of the translator can be determined. From studying translations of the comic series *Asterix* from French into English and Afrikaans, Philip Noss has found two strategies. The first is the translation of the French ideophone into an equivalent ideophone. This can naturally only be done when the target language has an equivalent ideophone. Otherwise, the second strategy was used, namely adapting the French ideophone to the English or Afrikaans language by changing the orthography. An example of the first strategy is the French 'bof!' and the English 'bonk!'. An example of the second strategy is the English 'splash!' and the Afrikaans 'splesj!' (Noss 44). By studying the translations of Swahili proverbs and riddles, Noss has found two more strategies. The first is the 'translation of the sense of the ideophone' (Noss 46). An example is the Swahili proverb 'Chururu – si ndo! ndo! ndo!', which is translated as 'a flow of water is not as effective as constant dripping' (Noss 45). The problem with translating this proverb is the repetition in the ideophones, meaning 'constant'. Noss proposes a translation with 'drip! drip! drip!', but he also states that the English reader might not understand the constancy of the Swahili ideophone with this translation (46). The second strategy is the replacement of the Swahili proverb by an English proverb with a similar meaning. The sense of the proverb will thereby be transferred, but the semantics of the Swahili proverb will not. It is the choice of the translator of what message he wants to convey to his audience.

In the telling of folktales, ideophones are often used to enforce the story and they serve the same function when used in written literature. In his essay, Noss presents the work of the translators Marie-José and Jean Derive, Jacqueline Thomas and Marcel Mavode. They have translated folktales

from the Central African Republic. They adhered to a method of three translation stages. The first was the word for word translation, the second the translation in intelligible French and the third was a literary translation (Noss 47). They had two strategies, based on the form of the ideophone. An onomatopoetic ideophone was translated by a French onomatopoeia. But a non-onomatopoetic ideophone was translated with the first strategy of the Swahili proverbs, namely translating the sense of the ideophone. The third and last stage reflects the most natural and idiomatic French. Noss concludes that the strategy of adopting the ideophone into the target language is mostly done in comics, not in novels or other texts. This can mostly be attributed to the format of the comic book. In novels, the most common strategy is to translate the sense, or the content, of the ideophone, and not the form (51).

THE CASE OF AFRIKAANS TRANSLATIONS IN DUTCH

Of all the African countries, apart maybe from Morocco, the Netherlands has the best connection with South Africa, due to the colonial past. This is reflected in the number of translations of South African literature into Dutch. As mentioned in the introduction, it is hard to define African literature. Therefore, it is not easy to distil African literature from the *Nederlandse Bibliografie Online*. However, for the year 2010 I have attempted to make a list of translated African novels and short stories. In order to compile this list, I have used the database of the *Nederlandse Bibliografie Online*. 'This website includes objective and complete descriptions of every publication issued in The Netherlands since 1974' (Nederlandse Bibliografie Online). In the advanced search all the publications were filtered containing the words 'romans en novellen ; vertaald', and the word 'vert', as this is the abbreviation used in all the novels that have been translated by someone. Furthermore, publications containing the word 'Harlequin' have been excluded, as I made the safe assumption that most, be it not all, books published by Harlequin have not been written by African writers. In addition, defining Harlequin books as literature could spark a whole other discussion. To narrow down the results, poems and other genres have been excluded, as the aim was only to give a brief overview of the situation as it is today, not to generate a complete and thorough list. This reason also accounts for the decision to only search for publications published in 2010. This means that second (and third, fourth, et cetera) editions have been included in the list, even though the translation was first published in another year. To make the search complete, my material selection was only books. These search criteria generated 1708 publications. This list, however, includes all the translations of books and short stories published in the Netherlands in 2010. To restrict this list to books from African writers only, I have researched the nationalities of all the translated writers. In most instances, Wikipedia was the source for the nationality of the author. Nevertheless, problems still arise. Many authors do not live in their country of birth anymore; they have migrated to Europe or the United States. In addition, some authors are born to European parents. Nadine Gordimer, for example, is one of the few authors who writes in her language of birth and lives in her country of birth. Nevertheless, I have tried to be as consistent as possible in the making of this list. Authors who were only born in an African country to European or American parents have not been included. Authors who lived in an African country for a brief time have not been included. Authors born in an African country to African parents who migrated to a European country have been included. I realise that these criteria are debatable. However, it is important to stress again that the aim of this list was only to give a brief overview of the situation and some careful conclusions can be drawn from this list.

The list contains 33 different works by 28 different authors. The majority of the authors have the South African nationality.

South Africa	12	Ethiopia	1
Algeria	2	Ghana	1
Morocco	2	Mauritius	1
Nigeria	2	Sudan	1
Somalia	2	Swaziland	1
Angola	1	Togo	1
Egypt	1		
Total			**28**

The number of translations bears no relation to the number of the population. For example, Nigeria has a population of over one hundred million people, which means that one out of five Africans is Nigerian. Yet, in the year 2010 only two translations were of works by Nigerian authors, contrary to the twelve translations of South African novels.

Furthermore, there are no translations from the indigenous African languages. Most works were translated from English, 22 of the 33 different titles. French is in second place with seven translated titles, and only one work has been translated from Portuguese. Of the 14 South African novels, 3 novels have been translated from Afrikaans.

English	22
French	7
Portuguese	1
Afrikaans	3
Total	**33**

In 1996 Susan van der Ree presented an overview of all the South African works that had been translated into Dutch. The first Dutch translation of a South African work was published in 1886 and was translated from English. The first translation of an Afrikaans work was published in 1937 (Van der Ree 18). From 1886 to 1995 194 translators have translated 312 literary South African works into Dutch (Van der Ree 17). However, South Africa was colonised for the greater part of that period and the freedom of expression was compromised. Writers were banned for writing or publishing their works and it is quite possible that many works were not even known outside South Africa. This changed after 1994, when a new government was elected democratically. It would explain the number of translations in 2010 (12) in comparison with the average number of translations during the period researched by Van der Ree (2.8).

Like in other African countries, the language issue is also present in South Africa, especially with there being two colonial languages, namely English and Afrikaans. According to Ethnologue.org, there are more Afrikaans speakers than English speakers in South Africa (4,470,000 versus 3,670,000, based on a 2006 census). But the number of Afrikaans speakers is decreasing. The African languages

Zulu, Xhosa and Sotho all have larger numbers of speakers than both Afrikaans and English. During the Soweto protest in 1976 the people of South Africa protested against the use of the Afrikaans language. But they were not protesting in favour of African languages, but in favour of English, as this was the language that was most used in the rest of Africa (Mazrui 43). Even the black youths thought that English was the language of progress and civilisation, whereas the indigenous languages were seen as being backward (Van Dis 32). When the apartheid government promoted the use of African languages in schools and on radio and television, the use of these languages was seen as implicit support for the government, and so many black intellectuals turned to writing in English (Van Dis 28-9). In an interview Ariejan Korteweg had with the South African author André Brink, which appeared in *de Volkskrant* of 17 September 1994, Brink also talks about his use of language. He states that when he writes in Afrikaans, he writes for the African reader, who is a bit more conservative and thus has to be persuaded of certain viewpoints (Brink 10). When Brink writes in English, he writes for the British reader, who is not familiar with the South African situation, which makes Brink more inclined to clarify his words (Brink 10). This in turn makes for quite a difference between his use of the two languages. He even had to write in English, as his Afrikaans novels were banned. From then on, Brink has written his novels in both Afrikaans and English, translating his own work. His translator in the Netherlands, Rob van der Veer, talks about translating Brink in his contribution on the website boekvertalers.nl. Brink's method of writing, starting in Afrikaans, then translating it to English, and then continuing with the Afrikaans novel, creates several translation problems on its own. Brink asked his publisher that translators only use his English novel when translating, but Van der Veer also used the Afrikaans version of the novel to consult whenever the English version was not clear enough. He discovered that Brink's Afrikaans was much more fluent and idiomatic than his English, and thus Van der Veer decided to use the Afrikaans version as well in his translations, as Afrikaans is closer to Dutch than English: 'Omdat het Zuid-Afrikaans en het Nederlands zo dicht bij elkaar liggen, zou het dus een gemiste kans zijn indien ik de Zuid-Afrikaanse tekst niet wat diepgaander voor de vertaling zou benutten, met name wat de kleur en de klank van de tekst betreft' (Van der Veer). That this method of translation can also cause problems shows the following:

> *Het heen en weer gaan tussen de Engelse en de Zuid-Afrikaanse tekst is redelijk vermoeiend en het maken van keuzes vergt op een of andere manier meer energie dan wanneer ik vanuit één taal werk. Met twee teksten voor mijn neus kijken mijn ogen soms aan het eind van de dag elk een eigen kant op. Wel is het vertaalproces spannender dan in andere gevallen, omdat ik voortdurend en op leerzame wijze word geconfronteerd met de structurele verschillen tussen het Engels en het Zuid-Afrikaans.* (Van der Veer)

But whatever the source language, Van der Veer states that '[hij] vind[t] dat je aan een vertaling niet mag kunnen aflezen wat de brontaal is geweest'. However, there is a difference between his translation using the Afrikaans version as well as the English text and translations into other European languages just using the English version. For the use of the Afrikaans version of the text has led to the use of more culture-specific elements in the Dutch version than in the English version, because these CSIs were all translated from the Afrikaans version of the novel. The CSIs Van der Veer used in

his translation were all items that were more familiar to the Dutch reader because of the Afrikaans-Dutch connection and would not be understood by other European readers. But not all culture-specific elements in an Afrikaans text can be understood by the Dutch reader, as many CSIs relate to the African culture or the African languages that have influenced the Afrikaans language. Even though there is a close relation between Dutch and Afrikaans, they are two distinct languages. Afrikaans has been greatly influenced by both English and the indigenous languages of South Africa. Particularly the influence of English leads to the formation of 'false friends'. In an interview Riet de Jong-Goossens had with the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds, she mentions the Afrikaans word 'selfbewus'. The meaning of this word lies closer to the English self-conscious then to the Dutch 'zelfbewust' (self-confident). In this same interview De Jong-Goossens mentions that there are no Afrikaans-Dutch dictionaries. Consequently, the translator has to find the right translation by using an Afrikaans-English dictionary, followed by an English-Dutch dictionary. The fact that there is no standard Afrikaans complicates this matter even further.

The website VPRO Boeken mentions Jan Kees van der Werk as the godfather of African literature in Dutch translation. Van der Werk initiated the Afrikaanse Bibliotheek series in 1978, which published fifty volumes within twenty years. However, there are more established names in the world of translation, Martinus Nijhoff Prijs winner Riet de Jong-Goossens being only one of them. She has translated two of the three Afrikaans works that were published in the Netherlands in 2010. But also Robert Dorsman has contributed a great number of translations, among them all the works by Antjie Krog and the aforementioned Rob van der Veer is also an important player in the field. However, the market for translated works from South Africa is small. According to Jan Vinck, a maximum of three or four translators can have a job at any one time, and that is not even full-time (76).

In 1998 the Dutch language department of Leiden University organised a workshop on translating Afrikaans into Dutch. '"Het risico bij het vertalen vanuit het Afrikaans", legt organisator Eep Francken uit, "is dat je de problemen niet herkent"' (Van Dijk). False friends, no past tense, no standard language. These are just a few translation problems a translator has to deal with when translating Afrikaans literature. De Jong-Goossens acknowledges that these characteristics of the Afrikaans language are indeed difficult when translating. Because there is no standard Afrikaans, many different varieties exist. 'De laatste tijd wordt het [Afrikaanse literatuur] sterk beïnvloed door het Afrikaans van de kleurlingen van de Kaap. Een prachtig, kleurrijk Afrikaans spreken zij, met veel samentrekkingen, die al snel ingeburgerd raken in de standaardtaal: van die wordt vannie en dat boek wordt doerie boek. Er zijn al dichters die zo dichten, en ik moest laatst een roman vertalen die zo geschreven was. Ik heb er in het Nederlands maar spreektaal van gemaakt' (De Jong-Goossens qtd. in Van Dijk). The past tense is also a well-known translation problem. 'Als je in de vertaling een imperfectum gebruikt, kun je een heel andere toon en sfeer krijgen. Bovendien kun je er makkelijk de fout mee ingaan' (De Jong-Goossens qtd. in Van Dijk). To these linguistic translation problems, Ena Jansen adds the problem of context and reference. 'Als Elisabeth Eybers in een gedicht schrijft over de maand maart, denken jullie aan voorjaar, Afrikaners juist aan najaar' (Ena Jansen qtd. in Van Dijk).

Like in other African literatures, features of orality can also be found in the literature of South Africa. According to Riana Scheepers, the short story genre is a particular feature of the oral heritage of South Africa. '"Die [orale traditie] bestaat voornamelijk uit korte verhalen, vooral verteld door vrouwen," vertelt Scheepers, die zelf met nostalgie terugdenkt aan de theatrale vertellingen die een zwarte oma haar 's avonds vertelde toen zij nog een klein dochtertje was' (Spaninks). But also the present day everyday life is reflected in the short story. 'Die energie, die dynamiek die het Afrikaanse leven van alledag beheerst, is er volgens de schrijfster ook de oorzaak van dat korte verhalen momenteel het genre in de Afrikaanse letterkunde zijn' (Spaninks). Unfortunately, since the arrival of the television and the high rate of illiteracy, literature plays a subordinate part in the everyday life in South Africa (Spaninks).

In her contribution to Boekvertalers.nl, Dorien de Vries gives an account of a seminar that was held at Radboud University, where Riet de Jong-Goossens and Marlene van Niekerk had a conversation about their intensive work relationship. De Jong-Goossens characterises Van Niekerk's work by alienating language use, unusual structures and many changes in register. It is difficult to reflect all these aspects in the translation, but when it is finally done, De Jong-Goossens is frustrated by the fact that the editor has changed everything to idiomatic Dutch. These characteristics only apply to the works of Van Niekerk, but there are more translation problems that arise from the difference between Dutch and Afrikaans. Both De Jong-Goossens and Van Niekerk agree that Afrikaans is more poetic than Dutch. Furthermore, it is more compact. An Afrikaans text is about ten percent shorter than the same text in Dutch. Van Niekerk and De Jong-Goossens also mention the false friends and the lack of a past tense as translation problems, which have already been mentioned earlier.

De Jong-Goossens's preferred translation method is working in a close relationship with the author of the work. This relationship can even go as far as her relationship with Koos Prinsloo, whom she accompanied to the end of his days: 'De vertaalster van Koos Prinsloo's werk in het Nederlands, Riet de Jong-Goossens, verpleegde de schrijver tijdens de laatste weken van zijn leven. Zij voegde aan haar vertaling een liefdevol geschreven verslag van deze weken toe. Het is een uniek document van een hechte vriendschap tussen schrijver en vertaalster' (Ester, "Nog"). But not only De Jong-Goossens is happy with a close relationship. In an interview published in *De Gelderlander*, Riana Scheepers, author of many works translated by De Jong-Goossens, mentions her relationship with her translator: 'Hartelijk gelukkig is ze [Scheepers] ook met de vertaling die Riet de Jong-Goossens in nauw overleg met haar maakte. "Lange tijd onderhielden we een drukke briefwisseling om de gevoelslevens van mijn personages tot in detail te tekenen. Maar daardoor kan Dulle Griet hier nu wel echt op eigen benen staan"' (Spaninks).

The translations by De Jong-Goossens have both been praised and criticised in several different reviews published in Dutch national newspapers. Hans Ester, for example, praises the translation by De Jong-Goossens of Jeanne Goosen's *Ons is nie almal so nie*: 'De vertaling munt uit door zorg en literaire kwaliteit' (Ester, "Jeanne"). And a few months earlier, Hans Ester gave praise for another translation by De Jong-Goossens. This time her translation of *Een ander land* by Karel Schoeman. 'De vertaling is bijzonder goed. Het is de beste vertaling die ik van Riet de Jong-Goossens

onder ogen kreeg' (Ester, "Karel"). But not everyone praises De Jong-Goossens. Willem Kuipers writes: 'Het [de hartverscheurende tragiek] maakt Triomf wel tot een sympathiek boek [...] maar geen heel goed boek. Daarvoor is de schrijfster te beperkt. Zij hanteert een tamelijk realistische, onopgesmukte, maar (in de Nederlandse vertaling) erg saaie stijl' (Kuipers, "Flodder"). However, this style can also be part of the stylistic features of the text. If Kuipers would have taken the time to make a comparison between the Afrikaans text and the Dutch translation, he probably would have reached a different conclusion. Nevertheless, De Jong-Goossens was honoured with the Martinus Nijhoff Prijs 2010 for her complete oeuvre. The report of the jury said the following:

> *Uit haar vertalingen blijkt dat Riet de Jong-Goossens een gedreven vertaler is, die de brontekst uiterst grondig bestudeert en onvermoeibaar zoekt naar de beste manier om deze in de doeltekst om te zetten. Steeds weer lukt het haar de authentieke toon te treffen en van opvallend moeilijke Zuid-Afrikaanse boeken prachtige Nederlandse teksten te maken.* ("Cultuurfonds")

In an essay De Jong-Goossens wrote for *Filter*, several of her views on translation can be distilled, which she also relates to the prevalent views on translation. For example, De Jong-Goossens mentions that the prevailing views of the last few years have put the reader first (83). But De Jong-Goossens prefers to put the author first: 'Ik ben ervan overtuigd dat de vertaler nog altijd moet zoeken naar dat wat de auteur met zijn verhaal wilde duidelijk maken' (83). The most important factor to achieve this in the translation is to find the right tone. The fact that this is prioritised undermines other aspects of a successful translation, as De Jong-Goossens is willing to make sacrifices in order to be able to translate the right tone. Examples she mentions in her own article are misinterpretations of words and sentences (De Jong-Goossens 84). But further on in her article she states that 'het openlijk doorbreken van taboes, het boek [Griet] stond mede daardoor zo in de belangstelling, was voor het Nederlandse lezerspubliek niet belangrijk' (De Jong-Goossens 86). Her Dutch translation was a success, but the Dutch reader may not have realised the importance of the book in South Africa. The book was presented in the Netherlands in a whole different context, which affects the significance of the source text, which was published during the years of apartheid in South Africa. Even though a translator needs to make certain compromises in his or her translation, Marlene van Niekerk is still happy with the translations of her work: "Vertaling is 'n fascinerende proses. Dis die mees intense vorm van kommentaar. Ek ervaar dit tot dusver as opwindend, mens vind uit wat jy eintlik geskryf het [...] Dis ook 'n kans vir die boek om verder te ontwikkel in sy associatieve reikwydtes. Mens verloor iets, maar jy wen ook baie" (Van Niekerk qtd. in "Marlene").

As we have seen, the context in which the story or book is presented determines the reception of the book in the target culture. Postcolonial writings are more than just a story. In 1995 Nijgh & Van Ditmar published a collection of short stories titled *Kort Afrikaans*, compiled and translated by Riet de Jong-Goossens. In a review of that book, Willem Kuipers writes: 'In veel verhalen in deze bundel wordt, al of niet seksueel of erotisch getoonzet, de verhouding tussen "blank" en "zwart" tot onderwerp gemaakt - soms niet direct maar zijdelings als een verhaal zich in strikt

blanke kring afspeelt - en dat leert de Nederlandse lezer misschien meer dan alle objectieve berichtgeving in de krant of op de tv hoe juist in het persoonlijke vlak - het leven thuis of in de buurt - de boel grondig verpest is' (Kuipers, "Zweetlucht"). The themes and the context of the short stories published in *Kort Afrikaans* are thus determining the reception of the book in the target culture. Furthermore, the language issue is also mentioned in this review. Kuipers quotes the author Abraham Philips, who was in turn quoted in the book:

> *Nog 'n groot kwessie wat met haat te doen het, is die twis oor die taal Afrikaans. Die swart mensen sal baie versigtig hieroor moet wees. Apartheid het niks met Afrikaans te doen nie. Die feit dat die opstellers van apartheid Afrikaanssprekend was, is bysaak. Baie Engelssprekendes het apartheid uitgevoer en ook daartoe bygedra. Daarby is amper (bijna) die hele bruin gemeenskap se huisstaal Afrikaans, dit is dus ook hulle taal. Dit is in elk geval hulle wat hom lewendig hou. Deur Afrikaans te vervang, sal die hele bruine gemeenskap ontgogel word en dit sal baie hartseer en ellende tot gevolg he, net so erg als wat apartheid aan hulle gedoen het. In elk geval het Adolf Hitler Duits gepraat, maar geen mens kan die Duitse taal verkwalik vir dit was Hitler gedoen het of waarvoor hy gestaan het nie.* (Kuipers, "Zweetlucht")

According to Kuipers, De Jong-Goossens has not been very consistent in her choice for Afrikaans literature, as some stories have been translated from English, but he does compliment her on the insight the reader does gain in the literature of South Africa, particularly the Afrikaans literature.

In brief, because of the colonial history and because of the similarity between Afrikaans and Dutch, South African literature has always been of interest to the Dutch public. However, as we have seen, the similarity between the two languages can also create distinct translation problems and therefore the translator has to be aware of the African influences on the Afrikaans language.

CONCLUSION

As this thesis has shown, the translation of African literature is complicated. But this also holds true for the creation of African literature. There is a need to define African literature, because there are many interpretations possible. The language issue is only one matter that complicates the forming of a definition. But this language issue also complicates the translation of African literature, as no matter in what language the text is written, African language or European language, the influence of the writer's mother tongue will always be present. This is also one of the main characteristics of African literature, the influence of African languages both on a linguistic level and on a semantic level. On a semantic level this presents itself as the use of English or French words, but with a different (African) meaning. But sometimes the African concepts are not even translated in English or French by the African writer, which leads to the creation of culture-specific elements. Many of the CSIs in the text are written in an African language. Furthermore, Africa has always been known as a continent with an extensive oral heritage. It seems only natural that African writers use their heritage in their creative writing. The influence of African languages on the use of the colonial languages, the culture-specific elements in an African text and the use of oral art forms are thus some of the most prevalent characteristics of an African text.

Translating consists for the most part of making choices. A translation is considered a good translation when these choices are made consistently. In order to make consequent choices, the translator chooses a strategy for his translation of the text. The main dichotomy in this choice is the naturalisation/domestication versus alienating/foreignisation/exoticising option. At first, most translators of African literature chose to naturalise the text, as this was the predominant translation strategy in those days. This began to change when Lawrence Venuti presented his ideas on domestication versus foreignisation, even though these ideas can be traced back to the theories of Friedrich Schleiermacher. Venuti made his preferred choice abundantly clear and he gathered a group of translators and theorists who agreed with him. The choice for using the strategy of naturalisation in the translation of African texts was thus disapproved of. The translator should bring the reader to the text.

When applying this strategy in the translation of culture-specific elements, at first this led to the formation of glossaries. Italicising CSIs was one of the ways to foreignise a text. But by doing this, the reader was halted in his reading process, as he had to look up the unknown words in the glossary at the back of the book. Some translators, and even some writers, decided to omit the glossary and started to incorporate the meaning of the CSIs in the text itself. Still, the translator has to decide what the reader may know and what would need to be explained.

This is more difficult with the references to oral literature in an African text. Proverbs can be translated literally or translated with an equivalent proverb in the target language. But there are also references to myths and folk stories for example. Some references are already made clear in the context of the novel, but there are some references which are more difficult to detect. A short

explanation in the text would probably lead to a short summary, which is not desirable. The translator could also make clear what reference is used. In this age of internet, the reader could look up the reference on Wikipedia. This avoids that readers who already know the reference are not halted in their reading process and readers who do not know will know in the future.

Nevertheless, the translator is assumed to be all-knowing. All the abovementioned strategies amount to the translator having an extensive knowledge of African languages and African culture. But with over two thousand languages and as many cultures, this is surely not an easy task. But rather than deterring the translator to start translating African literature, this can also be seen as a challenge. Nevertheless, the translator is fortunate enough that African writers who write in the colonial languages – and this is the majority – also adopt similar strategies to make their novel understandable for a European audience, which is usually a foreignising strategy. If the translator also chooses to adopt a foreignising strategy, all he has to do is imitate the strategy of the writer.

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APPENDIX

Dutch translations of African literature published in 2010, listed per country.

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Angola

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Egypt

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Ghana

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