

Framed communities: Translating the State of the Nation

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Abstract

The South African President delivers a State of the Nation Address every year. In this speech he conveys his opinion on the current state of affairs in the country. Since it is impossible for the President to accommodate all 11 official languages of the country, most of his speech is given in English. A few weeks after the Address, the speech is translated into all 11 languages and can be viewed on the Government's official website. Unfortunately, by that time the Address is considered old news. The country's different media channels report extensively on this speech. These reports can, however, be regarded as much more than simple commentaries on the speech – they are in fact *reframed* and *rewritten* versions of the speech that affect, shape and sustain the opinions and ideologies of their readers. These media channels also provide the vehicles through which common links can be established between supporters of the same media to reinforce their belief that they form part of an established community (Bielsa and Bassnett 2009:33). In situations where communication is present or necessary, it is impossible to escape the process or effect of framing, as framing implies “how speakers mean what they say” (Tannen and Wallat 1993:60, in Baker 2006:105). Therefore, the presence and effects of framing should never be ignored. In the case at hand, it is through *rewriting* the President's speech to fit the framework of the particular media channel that framing takes place. Baker (2006:3) supports the integral role framing plays in (intra- or interlingual) translation by introducing the idea that the translated and reformulated narratives that we are exposed to on a daily basis constitute the everyday stories that shape the way we perceive reality. Therefore, it is vital to investigate this process and how it affects both the target text and the target readership. In this exploration of rewritings of the State of the Nation Address, the researchers focus on three different South African publications, and how each uses the same source text to create vastly differing target texts. By catering for their target markets, these publications maintain or shape a specific point of view; by focusing on specific parts of the source text that would interest their readership, they, at the same time, only expose the readers to these sections of the speech, and subsequently frame the readers' perception of the Address, the President, and ultimately, their country.

Keywords: translate, reframe, narrative, intertextuality, media

1. Introduction: Moving towards a narrative approach

[i]t was perhaps a decade ago that psychologists became alive to the possibility of narrative as a form not only of representing but of constituting reality.

(Bruner 1991:5)

Translation can be considered as a *mode* of transporting knowledge across cultures and language barriers. The texts that are made available through translation contribute to their target readers' knowledge. Here, one can add that translated texts should also be considered as being part of a narrative framework and are, in themselves, narratives, as “[n]arration is the context for interpreting and assessing all communication – not a mode of discourse laid on by a creator’s deliberate choice but the shape of knowledge as we first apprehend it” (Fisher 1987:193, in Baker 2006:9). Narratives have the ability not only to shape reality as we experience it, but also to direct us in establishing our own identities (Baker 2006:101-102).

The principal idea behind the present study is that the process of translation not only produces a translated text, but also transfers and creates narratives. These narratives are commentaries on the source text (original narrative); they exist for a specific readership and fulfil a particular purpose. Narratives cannot, however, be created within a vacuum, and therefore it is inevitable that they relay something of the communities to which they belong, as “[n]o story exists in a vacuum, and because all narratives are embedded in other narratives they must be assessed within this broader context” (Baker 2006:146). Therefore, it is narratives that describe or allude to, and therefore frame communities in a specific way and sustain the idea of their existence. This means that the ways in which narratives are translated, presented, and displayed in the public, play a significant role in the framing and shaping of “imagined communities”.

It is also possible to argue that media channels frame the nation and communities in a certain way, as stories are told differently depending on the expectations and ideologies of its readers or listeners. As Bielsa and Bassnett (2009:13) put it, “[t]he norms operating in different cultures will determine how a story is presented, and in consequence there are bound to be ideological implications when we compare the different ways in which the same story is told”. Thus, different media attempt to establish the idea of framed communities – that each community will only be satisfied with a particular way of presenting a narrative. It is therefore necessary to explore the different ways in which different media reproduce and frame stories and events to satisfy and further frame the different (already framed) communities.

The narratives considered for this study are framed by means of translation. In this regard, it is necessary to clearly define the relevant types of translation that are identified in the literature. The term “translation” is broadly used to refer to intra- and interlingual translation, as well as some instances of transmutation: (i) intralingual in the sense that the source texts and target texts are in most cases in the same language, but the verbal signs are *reworded* in other signs of the same language; (ii) interlingual in the sense of *translation proper*, that is, from one language into another, and (iii) transmutation in the sense that verbal signs are interpreted by nonverbal sign systems (Jakobson 1959, in Venuti and Baker 2000:114). All three types of translation equip the translator with the necessary framework to reframe the source text.

2. Framing the SONA

The South African President's State of the Nation Address (SONA) is presumed to be a report or commentary on the state of the South African nation and the different communities that form this nation. It is also a vision of the future of these communities and the nation as a whole. The aim of this study is to investigate the perspectives (i.e. frames) from and for which selected articles in three mainstream South African newspapers were created, and whether these perspectives can convey any characteristics of the readership in question. As all narratives are considered already to be part of a framed space, it is plausible to assume that SONAs also form part of a specific, prescribed framed space. To fully comprehend the significance of a framed space it is necessary to consider Baker's argument that

frames are defined as structures of *anticipation*, strategic moves that are consciously initiated in order to present a movement or a particular position within a certain perspective. **Framing processes are further understood to provide 'a mechanism through which individuals can ideologically connect with movement goals and become potential participants in movement actions'** (Cunningham and Browning 2004:348). I follow this particular scholarly tradition here in defining framing as an active strategy that implies agency and by means of which we consciously participate in the construction of reality.

(Baker 2006:106; authors' emphasis)

Therefore, one can argue that within the framed space of the SONA, framing is used in order to connect individuals to the goals and actions referred to in the SONA. In the same way, republications of these addresses (re)frame aspects of the addresses that will connect individuals to the goals of the publications in which these republications appear. It is then necessary to analyse the frames used to link the individuals to the specific goals and causes in order to compare and understand the perspectives of the creators of the source narrative as well as the perspectives of the translators, journalists and finally the readers (target groups). There are many ways in which translators can (re)frame the source text in order to suit the narratives of the intended readership. Baker (2006:111) points out that the process of (re)framing

draws on features of narrativity such as temporality, selective appropriation and genericness to reconfigure patterns of emplotment and influence the narrative perspective of the reader or hearer. Processes of [re]framing can draw on practically any linguistic or non-linguistic resource, from paralinguistic devices such as intonation and typography to visual resources such as colour and image, to numerous linguistic devices such as tense shifts, deixis, code switching, use of euphemisms, and many more.

Investigating the process of (re)framing narratives will lead to a better understanding of the narratives of the communities that are involved in the translation process, and will also contribute to further investigation and development of the narrative approach to translation.

3. Implications of ideological position

[Decisions regarding the stories/narratives that are published in the news] will be made in-house, and will be affected by the ideological position of the newspaper and by the context in which that newspaper is produced. (Bielsa and Bassnett 2009:11)

Before considering the ideological position of each newspaper, it is necessary to introduce Lefevre's concept of 'patronage' and what it implies for this study. Lefevre identifies patronage as one of the external powers that guides the rewriting process:

The second control factor, which operates mostly outside the literary system as such, will be called "patronage" here, and it will be understood to mean something like the powers (persons, institutions) that can further hinder the reading, writing, and rewriting of literature. It is important to understand "power" here in the Foucauldian sense, not just, or even primarily, as a repressive force.

(Lefevre 1992:15)

What Lefevre means by saying "power" should be understood in its "Foucauldian sense", is that this external power can be regarded as "good"; it is not a force that inhibits us, but one that "traverses and produces things, [...] induces pleasure, forms knowledge [and] produces discourse" (Lefevre 1992:15). Patronage, as an external force that influences the writing, rewriting and reading processes, is also bound to have its own set of beliefs that determine the type of influence it has. However, patronage is not merely based on ideology. Lefevre (1992:16) points out that this concept comprises three components, namely those of ideology, economy and status. He goes on to state that the ideological component does not necessarily only imply political issues, and that the economic component provides the means by which the writer and rewriter make their living.

Lefevre further distinguishes between differential and undifferential patronages. If all three components are "dispensed by one and the same patron", the patronage is undifferential. Differential patronage, in contrast, implies that different parties are responsible for the components (Lefevre 1992:17). For the present discussion, it is important to note that the patronages of each newspaper are represented by their publishing houses, and in each case the publishing house is an external force that contributes to the ideological position of the newspaper. Even though all of the publishing houses appear to be undifferential, they have to answer to a number of shareholders, and it is these shareholders that drive them to form their specific ideology.

3.1 Die Burger

In his essay "Learning a new language: Culture, ideology and economics in Afrikaans media after apartheid", Wasserman (2009:68) points out that Die Burger is a "prime example" of the repositioning and balancing of the "different interests" of its diverse array of readers. This was, however, not an easy process as Die Burger "initially played on the anxieties and disillusionment of their traditionally conservative white audience by resisting key aspects of the democratic transition" (Wasserman 2009:73). After realising that this method could not

work for either the company or the readers in a democratic South Africa, *Die Burger*'s editors and staff had to be creative in order to win over Afrikaans readers from different backgrounds, thereby changing the newspaper's perception of an Afrikaner newspaper to a newspaper for "Afrikaanses" (Afrikaans-speaking South Africans; Wasserman 2009:73). By employing this technique, *Die Burger* attempted to make the newspaper "seamlessly Afrikaans", thereby erasing the race of their readership and focusing on the unifying effect of sharing the same language (Wasserman 2009:73-74).

Perceptions of especially older publications are not, however, easily changed. Wasserman (2009:74-75) points out that there are still conflicts between Afrikaans publications and the democratically elected African National Congress (ANC, the current ruling party) that show "that more conservative, white sections in the Afrikaans audience still wield a significant influence on content, even if audience figures (*Die Burger* audience, for instance, consists of 56 percent whites and 42 percent coloured) would suggest the reverse". The repositioning of a newspaper can, then, never really end, as it is a constant process. The readership's ideology relies on the newspaper's content, which is determined by what their readership wants to read – and as the newspaper attempts to satisfy its readers, it must constantly reposition itself in society. If, however, newspapers are able to determine their readership's ideology, what does that reveal of society? Wasserman (2009:75) argues that newspapers can only achieve balance "in the form of a commodified culture which views cultural identity as a saleable commodity within the free-market environment of post-apartheid South Africa". It is perhaps contentious to claim that ideology and cultural identity have become "saleable" commodities, but it does seem plausible to argue that the framing of events within the ideological intentions of a newspaper can have a definite effect on its readership.

3.2 Sowetan

The 1976 uprising in Soweto seemed to mark a turning point in journalism for black newspapers. Molefe (2006:68) points out that before this date "black newspapers were known for reporting sex, witchcraft and soccer", but that "things changed when *Sowetan* was born". Until recently the *Sowetan*'s slogan was "Building the Nation". Mecoamere (2006:82) explains that this is not coincidence, but that this slogan was a direct reference to the *Sowetan*'s "Nation Building campaign" (2006:82). Basically, this campaign set out to empower the people most affected by the political turmoil of the 1980s, and was, in Mecoamere's words, "a typically unusual answer by journalists to a great challenge" (2006:83). The newspaper's slogan then changed to "THE SOUL TRUTH", and is at present "My News. My Community." However, both slogans still hold on to the idea of building a united South African nation:

Sowetan was born to serve. Its first pay-off line was: "We Serve YOU". It was a deliberately crafted line: We had to take what was a "free", often frivolous knock-and-drop publication aimed at households in Soweto and turn it into a serious wider distribution newspaper. **We used the symbolism of Soweto to identify with the black struggle.** We committed to serve as the watchdog of society, exposing the dictatorial actions of the government of the time, the abuses of power so common, and

the corruption of leadership. Above all, we committed to championing the cause of press freedom.

(Latakomo 2006:28; authors' emphasis in bold)

At the time of writing, the *Sowetan* was published and distributed by Avusa, a company which was known as Johnnic Communications Limited (Johncom) until November 2007. Avusa was a Level 3 accredited B-BBEE (broad-based black economic empowerment) company, which showed its affinity toward black empowerment and black interests. On the company's official website, their mission clearly stated that they endeavoured to "provide compelling content and create solutions that enrich lives" (Avusa 2012). Avusa also set out to help "people to know more, do more and live inspired", and to "enrich society with quality information, education, entertainment and creative ideas" (Avusa 2012). The company was, therefore, determined to please their consumers, thereby providing the best value for their shareholders. Another aspect they considered to be important in achieving their mission was the reliability of the content of their media and entertainment. In short, Avusa set out to satisfy their consumers and stakeholders by providing reliable content that would ultimately please their readership.

3.3 Mail & Guardian

Even though the Mail & Guardian had a difficult start and turbulent past, it repositioned and reshaped itself to find its place within the mould of the "new" South Africa. In 2002, the Zimbabwean media owner and entrepreneur, Trevor Ncube, became the major shareholder in M&G Media and thus secured the title of the company's new owner. Recalling the difficulties of changing the public's perceptions of the newspaper more than a decade after apartheid ended, Ncube (2010:6) states that "[t]here was a perception that the paper was anti-ANC and anti- anything that was black-owned and -managed. It may not have been accurate, but it was a very strong perception, and in life perception is reality". In *25 years of the Mail & Guardian*, Ncube and De Waal also point toward the inquisitive intellect of their readership, as the newspaper is "a paper for readers who really like to read: there is a lot to read in this newspaper" (De Waal 2010:9); and, at the Mail & Guardian they "have to ask [themselves]: Are we producing content that is compelling? [...] Are we delivering quality audiences to advertisers?" (Ncube 2010:7). The Mail & Guardian went through many changes, but in view of its past it is clear that this newspaper was also (re)created with a specific audience in mind. This is evident from the following remarks by Ncube (2010:7):

We played a pivotal role in the fight against apartheid and through the transformation in South Africa, but I believe our greatest contribution to this country's democracy is still ahead of us. As the heroes of the struggle backslide and are compromised, we will be called upon to protect democracy and the gains of the past 15 years.

The publishing house (differential patronage) responsible for the print and distribution of the Mail & Guardian is M&G Media, a company owned by the Guardian newspaper group in London (10%), and Trevor Ncube (87,5%), with the rest made up of smaller shareholders (Mail & Guardian 2008). The following characterisation of the newspaper's intended readership is provided on the website of the online version of the Mail & Guardian:

Niche market, interested in a critical approach to politics, arts and current affairs. Large numbers of readers among professionals, academics, diplomats, lobbyists, non-governmental groups. Regularly achieves the highest circulation percentage increases in the newspaper market.

(Mail & Guardian 2008)

4. Comparing reframed rewritings to an original

The SONA can be described as a narrative that draws on global and public narratives to provoke the personal narratives of its audience. These personal narratives stimulate readers' interests and focus their attention on how this speech can touch their lives. Public narratives become personal narratives when they directly affect the personal narratives that constitute each individual's life. For example, a discussion of crime and crime prevention in South Africa would form part of a public narrative, but as soon as a South African has been or is directly affected by an act of crime, (s)he will experience the discussion as a personal narrative. Hatim and Mason (1990:190) claim that, "[p]articularly in the case of culture-bound texts, the degree of intervention by the translator will often depend on consumers and their needs. This matter is not to be underestimated and may in certain cases even override ST [source text] communicative intentions". Therefore, one can argue that in order to satisfy their readerships, newspapers report on specific parts of the SONA that will best interest the public narratives of their readers. This type of rewriting is ultimately more a reflection of the newspaper's target readership than the actual SONA. This process also distorts the rewriter's role as mediator, as her/his task becomes much more complex. Scholars should then study these texts as "particular instance(s) of language in social life" (Hatim and Mason 1990:238).

As a target narrative, the newspaper article sets out to guarantee reader interest. Therefore, each newspaper will draw on narratives that attract their target readership. The writers frame their articles within these specific narratives by drawing on specific features of narrativity. These features include particularity, selective appropriation, causal emplotment, normativeness, and relationality. In addition, writers can also draw on "practically any linguistic or non-linguistic resource, from paralinguistic devices such as intonation and typography to visual resources such as colour and image" (Baker 2006:111). Hatim and Mason (1990:236-238) also note the importance of the "major principles" needed to analyse rewritings, namely communicative transaction, pragmatic action, and semiotic interaction.

It is necessary to further explore the implications suggested by Baker's approach; moreover, it is also important to incorporate other elements of analysis that Baker draws on but fails to discuss in depth. Hatim and Mason (1990) take a closer look at such elements that are incorporated in their principles of analysis. The features that this study focuses on include intertextuality, social and conceptual interaction, and intended and final purpose, with the main focus on framing through selective appropriation of the source text. The elements referred to here are implied by Baker's narrative approach, but Hatim and Mason (1990) provide a more detailed framework to apply when analysing texts and transmutations. In the present study, newspaper cartoons play an important role in the analysis of transmutation. For instance, a rewriter can use selective appropriation in relation to intertextuality to further frame her/his point of view. The different features also draw on each other and are "highly interdependent" (Baker 2006:5). For this study, it is necessary to analyse the content of the

selected newspaper articles on a macro level to determine how the rewriters utilise the different narrative features to create the target narrative.

5. Selective appropriation of the SONA

In a nutshell, selective appropriation is the act of choosing specific parts of a narrative to include in a retelling of that same narrative. As Baker (2006:75) notes:

[s]electing, and in some cases ‘inventing’, texts that help elaborate a particular narrative of an ‘enemy’ culture, then, is a well-documented practice that often relies heavily on the services of translators and interpreters. The narratives that these translators and interpreters help weave together, relying mainly on the feature of selective appropriation, are far from innocent.

These elements are specifically important to keep in mind for the analysis of newspaper articles in this section. Writers of newspaper articles have to rely on selective appropriation when creating a text, as both their time and space are limited.

Since Nelson Mandela’s election as the first black president of South Africa, shortened versions (or summaries) of the presidents’ SONAs have been printed in a few editions of the *Sowetan*. Where these speeches were at least seven pages long, the summaries never filled more than a few columns – therefore, it is to be expected that the speech was cut and tailored to fill the space allocated, and touched only on the issues that the *Sowetan*’s readers were assumed to be interested in. But how does this process work? Who gets to decide what the most important issues are? The rewriter mentions at the end of the summary that “[t]his is an edited version of the President’s address to Parliament on Friday” (Mandela 1999b:9), but the author is stated to be Nelson Mandela. Mandela was the original “author” of the complete version of the speech, but he could not have had a hand in the reconstruction of this shortened version.

Summarising the SONA also brings Hatim and Mason’s (1990) concept of ‘intertextual hybridisation’ to mind. This concept concerns the act of adapting a text to fit a new typology and fulfil a new purpose. According to Hatim and Mason (1990:147), this phenomenon occurs “when, in subtle and highly intricate ways, a text is shifted to another type and made to serve another purpose without completely losing at least some of the properties of the original type”. In the case of the summary, the text does not lose much on face level, but when macro-level implications are considered, the ST type and intentions are lost to a higher degree than initially seemed to be the case. The information provided in the summary has been selectively appropriated with a definite goal in mind – reporting on the SONA and providing sufficient information for readers – whereas the President’s goal with his speech was to comment on the state of the nation for a much wider, national and international audience.

Selective appropriation goes hand-in-hand with another feature of narrativity, namely causal emplotment. This narrative feature is important for any type of narrative that wants to succeed in sending out a coherent or conceptually sound message. In essence, this feature refers to interpreting or explaining and setting out the events in relation to each other. In other words, it relates to how the facts of the narrative are listed: “emplotment allows us to weight and

explain events rather than simply list them, to turn a set of propositions into an intelligible sequence about which we can form an opinion” (Baker 2006:67). Through emplotment, the writer should position events in such a way that the reader can grasp the message by considering the sequence of events. For the purposes of this article, selective appropriation and causal emplotment are viewed as complementary to each other, and both features are important for the following analysis.

In the same article as mentioned above (the Sowetan’s summary of Mandela’s 1999 speech), the rewriter makes use of some narrative features to frame Mandela’s speech, particularly selective appropriation and causal emplotment. The rewriter titled the summary “Building a secure nation for all”, and selected all the appropriate sections of the SONA that illustrated this assertion. For instance, in the SONA, Mandela conveys the idea of an ongoing discussion on the state of the nation. He does this by including public responses, irrespective of their positive or negative effect on his assertions and comments. He specifically uses public responses to further his determination to prove that there is always hope for improvement, and that success can only be reached if all South Africans stay positive, “[a]nd major steps have been taken to deploy police where they are needed most. But the response is, where are the results! [sic]” (Mandela 1999a:4). The solutions are mentioned in the summary, but the responses are left out. Past issues and suggested solutions follow each other in the summary. Therefore, the idea of a dialogue between the state and the people is missing, and the summary has the layout of a typical report on events.

The article is also affected by the ideologies that underpin the rewriter’s use of language (Hatim and Mason 1990:161). Furthermore, in this case, by omitting the idea of a dialogue, the Sowetan excludes their readers from the discussion, and suggests that they are not considered to be the ones who are questioning the President’s solutions. The rewriter further focuses the attention of the reader on specific points discussed in the SONA by dividing the article into three sections through the use of subheadings. The first part can be considered the introduction; the second part, titled “Major projects”, focuses on Mandela’s plans of action; and the third part, “Crime syndicates”, is about ways to rid the country of crime (Mandela 1999b:9). Even though other issues mentioned in the SONA are included in the summary, by highlighting these subjects, the rewriter reveals what (s)he considers the most relevant for the newspaper readers’ ideology. In view of the above discussion, it seems plausible to take the intended readership of the Sowetan as being ANC supporters (who would want to focus on the positive aspects of the SONA), and who are mostly black, lower- to middle-income citizens.

Mandela also makes an indirect call to South Africans not to forsake their country, to stay loyal to the shared cause of acceptance and rebuilding a nation that includes everyone:

We slaughter one another in our words and attitudes. We slaughter one another in the stereotypes and mistrust that linger in our heads, and the words of hate we spew from our lips. We slaughter one another in the responses that some of us give to efforts aimed at bettering the lives of the poor. We slaughter one another and our country by the manner in which we exaggerate its weaknesses to the wider world, heroes of the gab who astound their foreign associates by their self-flagellation.

This must come to an end. For, indeed, those who thrive on hatred destroy their own capacity to make a positive contribution.

(Mandela 1999a:9)

He also refers to his own departure from Parliament, as he would retire later in the same year: “[t]he time is yet to come for farewells, as many of us – by choice or circumstance – will not return” (Mandela 1999a:1). Yet it is crucial to note that these sections are not included in the Sowetan’s summary. Where these passages can serve as warnings to the public that if they do not work together they will not achieve a united South Africa, said passages are not considered important enough to include in the overly positive newspaper summary. Another example that shows that the rewriter of the summary wanted to portray the SONA in an overly positive light, is the way in which (s)he refers to Mandela’s report on job creation. In the SONA, Mandela reports on the Government’s attempts to create more jobs, and that they are succeeding, but that it is not an easy feat (1999a:4-6). In the summary, it is stated that “public works programmes have created hundreds of thousands of jobs”, but the rewriter omits Mandela’s next words, “though some of them are temporary” (1999b:6). The summary leaves the impression that the SONA is close to perfect, and that it can only improve – and that this is the actual opinion of the nation’s leader.

In the Mail & Guardian, the only article that really discusses Mandela’s last SONA is titled “Only success will silence the whiners” (Barrell 1999:27). The illustration that accompanies this article is discussed later in this section. The author of the column, Howard Barrell, focuses his article on the reason for Mandela’s call for hope, as hope is an important theme throughout the SONA. The following quotes are examples of the contexts in which Mandela used the term “hope” in his SONA (*italics added by the authors*):

Example 1

“We *hope* that this year the planning and funding will be settled earlier in the year.” (Mandela 1999a:3)

Example 2

“[...] with regard to crime and job-creation – there is *hope*.” (Mandela 1999a:4)

Example 3

“We can and shall break out of this bog. There is *hope*.” (Mandela 1999a:4)

Example 4

“[...] communities and business-people have joined with police and cut the crime rate, and you will know there is *hope*. Ask the kingpins of cash-in-transit heists who are in C-max and you will know there is *hope*. Ask the corrupt police who are facing various charges, and you will know there is *hope*. Even though the level of attacks is rather too high, assess the trends in farming communities after the Summit on this issue and you will know there is *hope*.” (Mandela 1999a:4)

Example 5

“Yet the public is within its rights to ask, if all is well, why is the economy shedding jobs: is there *hope*? Yes there is *hope*.” (Mandela 1999a:6)

Example 6

“Our *hope* for the future depends also on our resolution as a nation in dealing with the scourge of corruption.” (Mandela 1999a:8)

When one considers the important theme of hope that Mandela maintains throughout his speech, it is no wonder that a rewriter reporting on the speech would focus his/her article on this specific feature. However, Barrell adopts a different angle when reporting on Mandela’s speech – he focuses Mandela’s purpose for the theme of hope on a specific South African audience, the cynical whites. By selective appropriation, he creates the illusion that Mandela was, in fact, directly addressing the issue of professional whites abandoning South Africa as a result of persisting issues, and their pessimistic views on the Government’s plans for improvement. Barrell introduces this thought by stating that he would not want Mandela’s job of “placat[ing], encourag[ing] and cajol[ing] South Africa’s five million whites”, and that this is exactly what Mandela was trying to do at his last opening of Parliament: “[t]here he was again last Friday, [...] at the opening of Parliament in Cape Town trying [...] to jolly whites up” (Barrell 1999:27). Barrell is insinuating that the SONA is more an act of maintaining a state of peace, than reporting on the actual state of the nation.

In his article, Barrell claims that he would not want to be Nelson Mandela because of the tremendous burden of having to “placate, encourage and cajole South Africa’s five million whites” (1999:27). In the following excerpt, Barrell refers to Mandela’s attempt at this during his speech the previous Friday night:

[Mandela was] trying, among other things, to jolly whites up. There was cause for hope, he declared, as he set about pushing all the right buttons: language and culture would be protected; economic management would continue to follow prevailing international orthodoxies; crime would be beaten and personal security improved; and progress was being made in education and health.

(Barrell 1999:27)

In his report, Barrell focuses on the parts of the speech that refers to the South Africans’ (and more specifically *white* South Africans’) unwillingness to work together to build a nation, that they are endeavouring to “conduct war by other means” (1999:27). By “other means” he is referring to Mandela’s suggestion that South Africans are slaughtering one another with words (Mandela 1999a:9). Barrell concludes that many of the problems that are causing white South Africans’ unhappiness are solvable, but that “[t]here is no guarantee of success. Success is something we will have to make” (1999:27; authors’ emphasis). The theme of hope is evident throughout Mandela’s SONA, and can be considered as his main theme on the eve of his retirement – a hope he has for the future of the country to which he has devoted much of his life. By highlighting this specific theme, Barrell is not only framing the SONA in this light, but is also creating a collective nostalgia among his readership – a yearning for a South Africa that never was, but that could be; a South Africa for which there is *hope*.



Figure 1. Cartoon accompanying Barrell’s (1999) article (Mail & Guardian 1999:27)

The cartoon that accompanies Barrell’s article (Figure 1) supports his argument while at the same time criticising the idea behind it. The Mandela depicted in the cartoon seems old, resigned, and on the verge of giving up (in reality he was on the verge of handing over his position to Thabo Mbeki), while the person representing South African whites looks rather dubious. The offering of a “nation building” hardhat, trowel, and shovel might not be sufficient material to convince the whites. The irony that accompanies the illustration further ridicules the situation – the master plots of colonialism, apartheid, etc., of whites telling blacks what to do, are inverted: here, it is a white man who receives working gear from a black man, even though the former does not seem willing to accept it. This inversion is also further commentary on this particular period in South African history, a time of change where the master plots of the past should be questioned. The cartoon is subtle but effective, as it supports the ultimate point the article is making, namely that success for a united South African nation is possible but not guaranteed, as it requires a team effort of national proportions, and ultimately for whites to accept this reversed role.

Barrell, to an extent, also conveys his own cynicism towards the Government and the motive behind the SONA, as he questions the bond of trust between the assumed author and audience: “Mandela – or, perhaps a very good new speechwriter he seems to have got himself – got it right last Friday” (Barrell 1999:27). This shows that even though Barrell praises Mandela throughout his article, in the end he has difficulty convincing himself that all the goals and solutions discussed in the speech are as honourable as they appear. Just by inserting this short phrase of doubt, Barrell plants the seed of suspicion within his readers’ minds.

One of the articles on Mandela’s 1999 SONA that ran in *Die Burger* was titled, “Mandela se rede stel teleur, sê opposisiepartye” [‘Mandela’s address disappoints, say opposition parties’] (Bigalke 1999:2). In order to justify the claim expressed by this title, Bigalke includes the opinions of a few, mainly “white”, opposition parties. The opening lines focus on the main disappointments of the speech, but do not state who exactly is disappointed – just the broad idea that opposition parties are disappointed (Bigalke 1999:2). Bigalke continues to quote the leader of the New National Party (NNP), Marthinus van Schalkwyk. It is of interest that this publication still puts a lot of emphasis on the opinion of a party that, in the past, caused the public to question the newspaper’s credibility (Louw 2003, Wasserman 2009:64). Most of the

article is dedicated to the opinions of the NNP's leader and the former Democratic Alliance frontman, Tony Leon. At the end of the article, Bigalke briefly mentions the opinions of General Constand Viljoen, leader of the Vryheidsfront, and Roelf Meyer, deputy leader of the United Democratic Movement.

It is, of course, not necessary for Bigalke to quote all the opposition parties, or to provide an in-depth analysis of the reception of the SONA. However, since she mentions that the SONA was labelled a disappointment by *all* the opposition parties, a more inclusive report might be expected: “[o]pposisiepartye het gister eenparig pres. Nelson Mandela se laaste parlementêre openingsrede as teleurstellend bestempel” [‘yesterday opposition parties unanimously labelled President Nelson Mandela’s last SONA as disappointing’] (Bigalke 1999:2). The idea that this is the opinion of all the opposition parties manipulates the readers’ perception of the SONA. Bigalke reframes the reception of the SONA by selective appropriation, causing readers to question their own receptions of the SONA.

5.1 Instances of unintended selective appropriation

Most of the articles considered for this study do not contain long or many direct quotes (except the Sowetan’s summaries of the entire speech), and yet mistakes persist in the rewritings of directly quoted sections. The examples in this section focus on the implications of these “errors” that happen during the rewriting process. By depicting a false direct quote as an actual direct quote, the rewriter is affecting the original to an extent – whether correcting grammar or spelling mistakes, or making new mistakes, the original message is reframed and ultimately received in a different way. Consider the following examples in this regard:

Example 1

“[...] where people live [...]” (Zuma 2010:5)

“[...] where the people live [...]” (Majova 2010:2)

In this example, the definite article in Majova’s version makes the sentence, and in particular the noun, more specific. It is not merely “people” in general, but “*the* people”. The effect of this change is that it shifts the focus of Zuma’s statement to South African people in particular. According to Majova, Zuma is referring to the housing of the South African people. Zuma makes this reference to explain that his government “knows *where people live*, understands their needs and responds faster” (2010:5). In addition, even though he is specific about why his administration should be aware of people’s living conditions, his statement does not clearly indicate whose living conditions he is referring to. South Africans’ living conditions are not all equal, hence the question now arises as to which people Zuma is referring. Zuma keeps his sentence open-ended, which allows the audience to come to their own conclusions, asking themselves whether they are part of this generic “people”. Majova, however, attempts to make the sentence somewhat stronger by adding the definite article, but the phrase still lacks lucidity.

Example 2

“[...] a lone voice [...]” (Zuma 2010:2)

“[...] the lone voice [...]” (Sowetan reporter and Sapa 2010:2)

The change from a definite to an indefinite article in this example reduces the noun in question to a regular “object”. However, in this case, the original text makes use of the indefinite article, whereas the rewritten text describes the “voice” as “the” only one. The “lone voice” is a reference to Helen Suzman’s efforts to support the struggle against apartheid. The original version suggests that although hers was “a lone voice”, there was always the possibility of other voices that supported her, even though they might have been silent. The rewritten version, “the lone voice”, implies that hers was the only voice that effected change. The change might seem insignificant, as both versions portray the importance of Suzman’s role, but the distinction transferred by the rewritten version slightly changes the meaning behind the original phrase.

Example 3

“[...] our nation is in a good state”; “the nation is in a good state” (Motlanthe 2009:2)

“the nation is in a good state” (Unknown 2009:14)

It is unclear why Die Burger’s journalist only included Motlanthe’s reference to “the nation” without mentioning the fact that Motlanthe later on used the same line, but with the slight change to “our nation”. Only referring to “the nation” in the article is a small change, but this change makes a significant difference to the meaning of the excerpt. The word “our” is inclusive, and by referring to the nation as “our nation” Motlanthe is including everyone, whereas the rewritten version refers to the nation as an entity on its own, hence distancing it from the reader.

6. Framing through intertextuality

A common strategy for pointing readers in the direction of a “master plot” is through the incorporation of intertextuality, that is, “the process whereby a text goes back to what precedes it, adding to its ideologically neutral form the whole underlying volume of signification which accrues from experience, awareness, etc. This is in sum the function of intertextuality” (Hatim and Mason 1990:121). Through the use of intertextuality, a rewriter compares an original narrative to an existing plot, and immediately draws the reader’s attention to the narrative features of this plot, ultimately shaping her/his interpretation of the target text; in Baker’s (2006:81) words, “[m]otifs and skeletal storylines within which the particularity of a narrative is realized shape our interpretation of the events and discourses”. Besides serving to shape readers’ attitudes, intertextuality also plays an important role in conveying writers’ attitudes: “[i]ntertextuality, or the way texts rely on each other, is a semiotic dimension which is powerful in reinforcing social attitudes” (Hatim and Mason 1990:238).

Selective appropriation, as discussed earlier, further allows the rewriter to decontextualise a set of events by representing parts of the narrative within a new context; the rewriter is, in effect, selecting certain parts of an event and excluding others in order to “elaborate a coherent narrative” (Baker 2006:71). Ultimately, “all stories are selective representations of reality” (Baker 2006:75). Selective appropriation is unavoidable in the retelling of a story, but Baker warns against the effect of “deliberate selective appropriation” (2006:75-76). Hatim and Mason (1990:161) point out, however, that “behind the systematic linguistic choices [the rewriter] make[s], there is inevitably a prior classification of reality in ideological terms” (1990:161). As Hatim and Mason refer to the importance of predominant ideologies, it should

be clear that it is impossible for rewriters not to selectively appropriate texts, especially if the target texts are newspaper articles.

Figure 2, the front page of the Mail & Guardian of 12 February 2010, uses different images and captions to comment on Zuma's SONA:



Figure 2. The front page of the Mail & Guardian on 12 February 2010

In the centre of the page is a large image of Jacob Zuma, wearing an ANC cap and a playful smile, with the headline “The state of Jacob Zuma” appearing to the left of his head. Other images on the page include one of Mandela, fist lifted, with the sub-headline “When Madiba walked free” appearing to the left of the image, as well as an image of a graffiti artist next to his drawing with “State of spray” written as another sub-heading. Even though the story about the graffiti artist has nothing to do with the SONA, the simple use of the heading “State of spray” is an indirect signifier thereof. This is deduced from the articles on the SONA included in this edition of the publication, as they only focus on Zuma’s personal life, with more than one reference to his alleged promiscuity.

The words “state of” immediately references the “state of the nation”, as this event would be foremost in the Mail & Guardian readers’ minds after reading the main heading. “Spray” could allude to concepts such as ‘shower’, ‘scatter’, ‘liquid particles’, and in this case could remind readers of Zuma’s sexual exploits, especially since he is commonly portrayed by well-known South African cartoonist Zapiro with a showerhead affixed to the back of his head (as a result of previously reported sexual behaviour; www.zapiro.com). The graffiti figure that appears below the “State of spray” heading can be perceived as a representation of Julius

Malema¹. However, even if this assumption holds significant implications for this analysis, the authors must reiterate that it is merely an assumption, and sufficient evidence cannot be provided to prove this claim. If the art is a representation of Malema, it could direct the reader's attention towards the state of Zuma and Malema's relationship at the time. In 2010, Malema was still an avid Zuma supporter, and "spray" could hint at the way he used his words to show his support. The fact that the newspaper focuses more on the state of the President than the state of the nation shows that the editors and other decision-makers at the Mail & Guardian believe the President's personal issues to be of more interest than the issues of the nation, that the President is in fact more involved with issues regarding his personal life than with solving the country's problems. It is also an indication that the newspaper's commentary is more concerned with Zuma's personal performance than his actual report.

The Sowetan also used Zuma's personal life to comment on his first SONA. On 11 February 2010, President Jacob Zuma delivered his first SONA; the next day the cartoon by Sifiso Yalo on page 16 of the Sowetan (see Figure 3) commented on Zuma's speech with a specific reference to Zuma's personal life:



Figure 3. Yalo's cartoon in the Sowetan (12 February 2010)

The cartoon depicts a father and son sitting on a couch in front of the television. The following is written in the speech bubble emanating from the father's head: "That's President Jacob Zuma son, undressing the nation. I mean addressing the nation..." (Yalo 2010:12). In order to understand the irony of this message, some background is required regarding Zuma's personal life during that time. At the beginning of 2010, rumours were spreading that Zuma had fathered a love child, and that the mother was the daughter of his "old friend", Irvin Khoza (Mail & Guardian online 2010). Even more newsworthy was that, apparently, this was Zuma's twentieth child. It is no wonder then that his personal affairs would affect the commentary on his speech. The cartoonist uses an ambiguous slip-of-the-tongue to refer to Zuma's indiscretions, and by doing this he also comments on Zuma's role as part of the South African nation. In this commentary, it appears that Zuma is well-known for his polygamy instead of his speech-making skills. It also reflects the fact that people are watching the SONA in their homes, many with their families, including young children, showing that Zuma's actions are common knowledge to an unrestricted audience of South Africans.

Similar remarks can be made about the cartoon that appeared in the Sowetan on 10 February 2009 (see Figure 4) after Kgalema Motlanthe's first and only SONA. Around the same time,

¹ Julius Malema was president of the ANC Youth League from April 2008 until his expulsion in April 2012.

rumours spread of Motlanthe's illicit affair with an unknown woman, and the cartoon uses his silence on the matter against him. In the depiction, the journalist asks Motlanthe to comment on the rumours, but instead of holding the microphone to his mouth, the journalist points it at his crotch. This indicates that the journalist (and the cartoonist) believes that the nation is not interested in what Motlanthe has to say, but instead looks towards his actions to reveal his character. As this cartoon appeared right after the SONA, it also comments on how Motlanthe's SONA was received by the nation, and that many felt that his words did not carry a lot of meaning. This shows that even though the *Sowetan* is aimed at liberal ANC supporters, they also believe their readers to be inquisitive, and want to keep them alert and focused on the end goal – even though Motlanthe is interim President, he is not going to be *the* President, therefore, his words (or lack thereof) should be scrutinised.

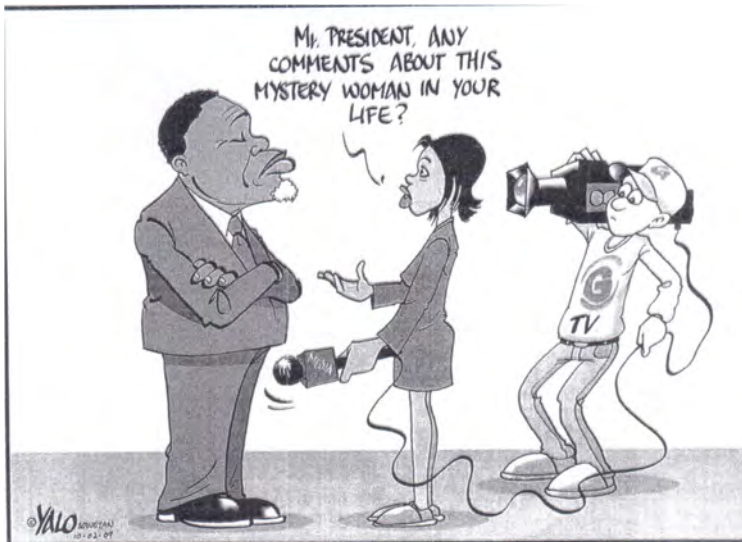


Figure 4. Yalo's cartoon in the *Sowetan* (10 February 2009)

A third cartoon that uses intertextuality to reframe the narratives of the SONA (see Figure 5) appeared with the article in the *Mail & Guardian* of 25 June–1 July 1999 entitled "Can Thabo be a good Machiavelli?" (Mangcu 1999a), on the day that Thabo Mbeki gave his first SONA. Therefore, it is possible to assume that listeners/readers of the SONA would have read the article before hearing/reading the SONA for the first time. This article and the cartoon would then affect the way in which they perceive the speech.



Figure 5. Dr Jack's cartoon in the *Mail & Guardian* (25 June–1 July 1999)

What is most notable about this cartoon and the article is the reference to Niccolò Machiavelli. Machiavelli was considered an expert on politics in 15th century Italy, and is well known today for a pamphlet he wrote called “The Prince”. Machiavelli’s thoughts on government are summarised as follows by Nederman (2009:1):

For Machiavelli, there is no moral basis on which to judge the difference between legitimate and illegitimate uses of power. Rather, authority and power are essentially coequal: whoever has power has the right to command; but goodness does not ensure power and the good person has no more authority by virtue of being good. Thus, in direct opposition to a moralistic theory of politics, Machiavelli says that the only real concern of the political ruler is the acquisition and maintenance of power (although he talks less about power per se than about “maintaining the state”).

According to Nederman, Machiavelli argues that a ruler will do anything to acquire and maintain her/his seat of power. There is, however, an ongoing debate that Machiavelli made these statements merely to gain favour with the ruling family of that period, and that in reality his political genius is often overlooked because of his association with corrupt politics (www.ctbw.com/lubman). The artist of the Mbeki cartoon, Dr Jack, uses the uncertainty that goes with the appointment of a new leader to illustrate this debate. Mangcu (1999a) furthers the association by suggesting that Mbeki has wonderful ideas for his term as President, but that the public has yet to find out whether he will continue to strive towards his goals, or merely please his party so that he can maintain his seat of power.

Mangcu includes another important intertextual reference in his article, namely the reference to the 1964 Bob Dylan song “The Times They Are A-Changin’”. In the third column of the article, Mangcu mentions Mbeki’s choice to appoint Nkosazana Zuma as Minister of Foreign Affairs, saying that this appointment “sends out a strong message to the male-dominated foreign-policy establishment that ‘the times are a-changing’” (1999a:23). The quote is not the exact phrase, but it is close enough to realise that it is a reference to Dylan’s song. Moreover, the song is generally taken to be a protest song, supporting the fight for equality (Roberts 2005:51-52), a fight that Mbeki also appears to support through his appointment of Nkosazana Zuma as a cabinet minister. Here, it is necessary to consider the implications and the often complex nature of intertextuality. Hatim and Mason (1990:124) note that, “cultural connotations and knowledge structures are incorporated into an intertextual reference. In this broader definition, intertextuality exercises an active function and entails the view that texts are never totally original or particular to a given author” (Hatim and Mason 1990:124).

In order to grasp the broader context, it is necessary to consider the cultural connotations and knowledge structures attached to the Dylan reference. “The Times They Are A-Changin’” was “inspired by the murder of Medgar Evers, a civil rights worker who was killed in 1963 [and] in the song Dylan suggested that *everyone* has a responsibility to work for equality” (Roberts 2005:52). By including this reference in his article, Mangcu is not only encouraging the readers to acknowledge Mbeki’s appointment as an act of human rights activism, but is also broadly referencing the “Master Plot” of the black man’s struggle against oppression, the fight for human rights and equality for all, the revolutionary concepts of *‘liberté, égalité,*

fraternité'. The inclusion of this reference aids Mangcu in conveying the idea that, as the leader of the nation, it is Mbeki's responsibility to ensure equal rights for all, and that he is not only already supporting this effort, but also doing so in the manner of the peace-loving countercultural freedom fighters.

The cartoon in Figure 6 appeared in the following week's edition of the Mail & Guardian (on 2 July 1999, after the SONA), and furthers Mbeki's connection to medieval Europe and Machiavelli.

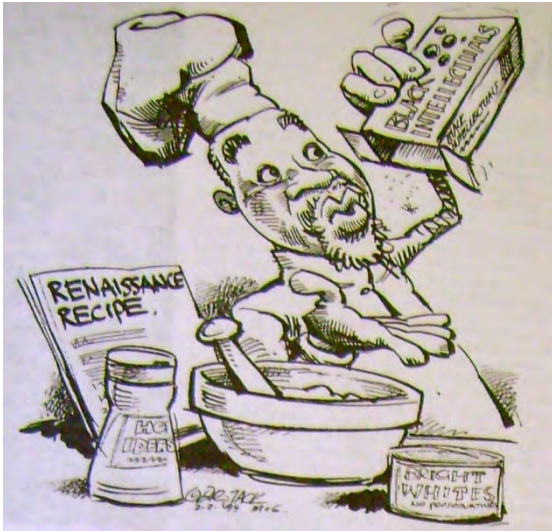


Figure 6. Dr Jack's cartoon in the Mail & Guardian (2 July 1999)

During his time in Parliament, Mbeki initiated an undertaking dubbed "the African Renaissance". In his 1999 speech, he makes the following reference to this programme:

I am happy to inform the Honourable Members that former minister, Jay Naidoo, will continue to work in this sector to assist in its further development domestically and to promote the African Connection, which is a critical element of the African Renaissance.

(Mbeki 1999:6)

The use of the term "Renaissance" also links Mbeki to 15th century Italy, as this is considered the birthplace of the original Renaissance movement. Consider the following remarks by Laurie (1968:3) in this regard:

The Renaissance, or the Revival of Letters, is the name by which we distinguish the period which saw the revolt of the intellect of Europe against Medievalism in all its forms, political, ecclesiastical, philosophical, and literary. It has correctly enough been called a 'Humanistic' revival; but the word 'Humanistic', if it is to be a true designation, must be interpreted broadly and not be confined to the revived interest in *Litterae Humaniores*.

The article discussing Mbeki's idea for an African Renaissance is titled "The potential for Thabo's 'renaissance'" (Mangcu 1999b:21). Both of the articles Mangcu wrote for the *Mail & Guardian*, which discuss Mbeki and his SONA, reference important events of 15th century Europe. One article appeared before the SONA and one a week after, and can therefore be considered as neatly encompassing the SONA. By repeatedly connecting Mbeki to the intellectual movements of 15th century Europe, Mangcu is actually framing Mbeki as an intellectual – that he has the potential to be a force to be reckoned with, and could steer not only the country, but also the continent in a better direction. The implication is that Mbeki could lead Africa into a new era, similar to the progressive era Europe experienced during the Renaissance during which

Europe passed out of a period of dogmatic and ecclesiastical bondage into the freer life of the modern world by very gradual steps, and found itself unawares in a new intellectual attitude to life and possessed by a higher faith in human capacities and possibilities.

(Laurie 1968:6)

The fact that these rewriters make use of complex intertextual references points toward their belief that their readership is made up of intellectuals and professional, well-read citizens, that is, people who will be able to understand the allusions the rewriters make.

7. A turn towards power: concluding remarks

From the research done thus far, it is evident that somewhere during the process of translation there is an opportune moment for the translator to manipulate the text that (s)he is producing (Lefevere 1992:vii). The authors do not want to claim that this opportunity is seized by all translators during the translation processes. However, when a translator does manipulate the translation on purpose to reach a specified end, or in order to satisfy the ideology of her/his target reader, it is necessary to investigate this process as well as the extent of the translator's power. Lefevere (1992:vii) makes the following comments on this characteristic of translation:

[t]ranslation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature^[2] to function in a given society in a given way. Rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service of power, and in its positive aspect **can help in the evolution of [...] a society.**

(Lefevere 1992:vii, authors' emphasis)

During translation, a source message (even though the originality of this source is questionable) is rewritten into another language/text, with a specific purpose and for a specified audience. However, it is clearly not as simple as it seems. There are numerous other factors that come into play within the many contextual layers of a translation:

² Note that the focus was on literature in Lefevere (1992), whereas the current study focuses on media texts.

Translation thus is not simply an act of faithful reproduction but, rather, a deliberate and conscious act of selection, assemblage, structuration, and fabrication – and even, in some cases, of falsification, refusal of information, counterfeiting, and the creation of secret codes. In these ways translators, as much as creative writers and politicians, participate in the powerful acts that create knowledge and shape culture.

(Tymoczko and Gentzler 2002:xxi)

In this quote, Tymoczko and Gentzler emphasise the ability of translations to attribute to or “shape” ideologies, as their creators “participate in powerful acts that create knowledge and shape culture” (Bielsa and Bassnett 2009:7). Therefore, translations can be manipulated to reach a certain goal in favour of the translator or, in the case of this investigation, the medium that forms part of the translator’s practice. Earlier in this article, it was suggested that newspaper articles are moulded specifically to fit the shape of the newspaper in which they appear, the shape that their readers have come to expect. However, the relationship between the newspaper and its readers is an interdependent one: the readers expect the newspaper articles to satisfy their ideological expectations, and the newspaper’s success is dependent on the survival of its readership’s ideology. In other words, taking both the above quotes into consideration, a translator has through her/his profession the capacity to sustain an ideology.

Lefevere points out that this characteristic has both positive and negative attributes; the positive involves introducing new ideas to otherwise oblivious societies, bringing cultures that communicate in different languages closer together (Lefevere 1992:vii; 8-9), but the negative can include the repression of information, the manipulation and distortion of accounts and details, which can further hostile feelings between cultures (Lefevere 1992:vii). That is why further investigation into the relationship between power and translation is essential, as this type of study will “help us towards a greater awareness of the world in which we live” (Lefevere 1992:vii).

The present study also serves to raise awareness about the implications of framing within translation. This process is, in many instances, “far from innocent” (Baker 2006:75). We are not, however, the first translation scholars to emphasise the “guilty nature” of the discipline; Lefevere and Bassnett (1990:11), for instance, note that

[w]hat the development of Translation Studies shows is that translation, like all (re)writings is never innocent. There is always a context in which the translation takes place, always a history from which a text emerges and into which a text is transposed. Translation involves so much more than the simple engagement of an individual with a printed page and a bilingual dictionary; indeed, the bilingual dictionary itself is an object lesson in the inadequacy of any concept of equivalence as linguistic sameness.

The process of translation can never be unaffected; it is a sensitive process influenced by so many different factors that it is impossible to study translations as though they were created within a vacuum (Naudé 2000:4). Hatim and Mason (1990:161) argue that “[i]deologies find

their clearest expression in language”, but we want to argue that language also bears qualities of collective narratives and framing, and should be studied with these aspects in mind. Therefore, translation scholars should always be aware that different frameworks and narratives play an important role in the complex process of translation.

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