

**THE INFLUENCE OF LANGUAGE VARIATION ON LITERARY
TRANSLATION: GEORGE WEIDEMAN'S '(MATRYS)'**

W. Landsberg

THE INFLUENCE OF LANGUAGE VARIATION ON LITERARY TRANSLATION: GEORGE WEIDEMAN'S '(MATRYS)'

Willem Landsberg, B.A., B.A. Honours

MINI-DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

MAGISTER ARTIUM

(Applied Linguistics)

in the School of Languages

at the

Potchefstroomse Universiteit vir Christelike Hoër Onderwys.

Supervisor: Mr. J-L Kruger

Co-supervisor: Prof. M.M. Verhoef.

Vanderbijlpark

November 1999

AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincerest thanks and gratitude to the following persons who all contributed in one way or another to the successful completion of this study:

- My supervisors Jan-Louis Kruger and Marlene Verhoef for their guidance, patience and the active interest they took in this study.
- Prof. A.L. Combrink and Marisa Behrens for their translations of '(Matrys)'.
(Note: The original text contains a typo 'Matrys' which has been corrected to 'Matry's' in this transcription.)
- The staff at the Feridand Postma library for their assistance during the research period.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Contextualisation and problem statement	1
1.2 Aims	5
1.3 Research method	5
2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND	7
2.1 Introduction	7
2.2 Language variation: standard and non-standard language	8
2.3 Language variation and translation theory	15 X
2.3.1 Even-Zohar's polysystem theory	19 X
2.3.2 Toury's target-oriented approach	21
2.3.3 Deconstruction	24
2.3.4 Summary	25
2.4 Conclusion	27 X
3. TEXT MARKERS FOR LANGUAGE VARIATION AND TRANSLATION PRACTICE	30
3.1 Introduction	30
3.2 Translation categories	30
3.3 Source text analysis	35 X
3.3.1 Analysis of source text according to House (1981)	37 X
3.3.2 Analysis of source text according to Klingberg (1986)	38
3.3.2.1 References to mythology and popular belief	38
3.3.2.2 Geographical names	40
3.3.2.3 Words containing "goed"	41
3.3.2.4 Words containing "loop"	41
3.3.2.5 Words containing "ge"	42
3.3.2.6 Typical Griqua expressions	42
3.4 Conclusion	43 X

4.	ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF TRANSLATIONS	45
4.1	Introduction	45
4.2	Testing of perceived translation challenges:	45
4.2.1	References to mythology and popular belief	46
4.2.2	Geographical names (Klingberg)	47
4.2.3	Words containing “goed”	47
4.2.4	Words containing “loop”	48
4.2.5	Words containing “ge-”	48
4.2.6	Typical Griqua expressions	49
4.3	Evaluation of translated items	52
4.3.1	References to mythology and popular belief	52
4.3.2	Geographical names	54
4.3.3	Words containing “goed”	54
4.3.4	Words containing “loop”	55
4.3.5	Words containing “ge-”	56
4.3.6	Typical Griqua expressions	57
4.4	Evaluation of translation strategies	62
4.4.1	Transference	62
4.4.2	Cultural equivalent	62
4.4.3	Functional equivalent	63
4.4.4	Descriptive equivalent	64
4.4.5	Standard English equivalent	64
4.5	Conclusion	64
5.	CONCLUSION	67
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	74
	ADDENDA	77
	Addendum A: ‘(Matrys)’ – Source text by George Weideman	77
	Addendum B: ‘(Matrix)’ – Translation by A.L. Combrink	86
	Addendum C: ‘(Matrix)’ – Translation by M. Behrens	95

ABSTRACT

Keywords: language variation, language varieties, literary translation, Griqua Afrikaans, descriptive translation approach, translation strategies, translation theory, equivalence, Landeskunde, translation categories.

The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of language variation on literary translation. This will be done by firstly determining the origin of language variation and a comparison between standard and non-standard language varieties. The specific characteristics belonging to a geographical language variety (geolect) will also be discussed, by referring to the unique grammatical characteristics of Griqua Afrikaans.

The unique grammatical characteristics of a language variety, has certain implications for the translation process as well as translation theory. The relevance of prescriptive translation approaches such as *equivalence* will have to be assessed, and alternative approaches will need to be identified. This will be done by discussing the theories of Even-Zohar, Toury and Derrida. The most relevant features of these theories will be selected and applied.

The practical implications of language variation will also be investigated by analysing the source text, namely the short story '(Matrys)' by George Weideman. '(Matrys)' is written in Griqua Afrikaans, and displays all the unique characteristics of the geolect. These unique characteristics will influence the translator's approach, as will become clear after a comparative analysis of two unpublished commissioned translations of '(Matrys)'. The translation categories of House (1981) and Klingberg (1986) will also be analysed in terms of their appropriateness for this study. The translation strategies employed by the two translators will also be analysed in order to determine their effectiveness in transferring the cultural element of the source text to the target texts. The translation strategies of Newmark (1988) will also be discussed in order to determine their appropriateness for this study. Finally, a conclusion will be made concerning the influence of language variation on literary translation, based on the information and data gathered during the course of the study.

OPSOMMING

Trefwoorde: taalvariasie, taalvariëteite, literêre vertaling, Griekwa-Afrikaans, deskriptiewe vertaalbenadering, vertaalstrategieë, vertaalteorie, *ekwivalensie*, *Landeskunde*, vertaalkategorieë.

Die doel van hierdie studie is om te bepaal watter impak taalverskeidenheid op die vertaling van 'n literêre teks het. Dit sal eerstens gedoen word deur die oorsprong van taalverskeidenheid te bepaal en 'n vergelyking te tref tussen standaard en nie-standaard tale. Verder sal daar gekyk word na die eienskappe van 'n taalvariëteit van geografiese oorsprong – spesifiek Griekwa-Afrikaans se unieke grammatikale eienskappe.

Die feit dat 'n taalvariëteit unieke grammatikale eienskappe besit, beteken dat daar opnuut moet gekyk word na die relevansie van preskriptiewe vertaalbeginsels soos *ekwivalensie*. Daar sal gepoog word om alternatiewe vertaalteorieë te identifiseer, deur die teorieë van Derrida, Even-Zohar en Toury te bespreek. Die mees relevante konsepte van hierdie drie teoretici se teorieë sal geselekteer en toegepas word.

Die praktiese implikasies van die verrekening van taalverskeidenheid sal ook ondersoek word deur die bronteks - die kortverhaal '(Matrys)' deur George Weideman - vergelykend te analiseer met twee ongepubliseerde opdrag vertalings van die teks. '(Matrys)' is geselekteer vir hierdie studie aangesien dit geskryf is in Griekwa-Afrikaans en al die unieke grammatikale eienskappe van die geolek openbaar. Die feit dat '(Matrys)' hierdie eienskappe openbaar, hou bepaalde implikasies in vir die vertaalproses wat deur die loop van die studie duidelik sal word. Die vertaalkategorieë van House (1981) en Klingberg (1986) sal bespreek word in terme van hulle relevansie ten opsigte van bronteksanalise en evaluering van die twee vertalings. Die vertaalstrategieë van elke vertaler sal ook bespreek word, om te bepaal of die kulturele element van die bronteks suksesvol oorgedra is na die twee doelt tekste. Die vertaalstrategieë van Newmark (1988) sal ook bespreek word, om hulle relevansie ten opsigte van die vertaling van 'n teks soos '(Matrys)' te bepaal. Laastens sal 'n gevolgtrekking gemaak word oor die invloed van taalverskeidenheid op die vertaling van 'n literêre teks, aan die hand van die resultate van die studie.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Contextualisation and problem statement

The translation of a text written in a non-standard language variety presents certain problems to the translator, because it is not only two languages he is dealing with, but also two cultures. Language, after all, does not exist in a vacuum, but is an integral part of culture. According to Snell-Hornby (1988:39) translators have in the past failed to keep this in mind. Lefevre (1992a:39) makes a similar statement when he says that translation is not created in a vacuum, since translators work in a given culture at a given time. Their understanding of life and their own cultures influence their translation.

The term *Landeskunde* is in particular applicable to translation studies because the specific nature of a regional group means that the usage rules of the regional language will vary from the rules maintained in other languages, (Postma,1995:43). This will influence the translator's approach, since a text written in a unique language variety will pose translational challenges not present in a text written in a standardised language. For example, it will be difficult – if not impossible – to establish one-to-one *equivalence* between the source and target texts when language variation is a factor. A text written in a non-standard or regional language will most probably contain unique grammatical elements that do not coincide with a standardised language.

When translating a text that is comprised of elements of a regional language, it becomes essential to consider the challenges posed by *Landeskunde*. Furthermore, Erdmenger and Istel (1978:25) point out that modern linguistics indicates a relationship between the language and culture of communities. Thus, the translator's task consists of more than transferring a text from one language to another; he becomes a transmitter of culture.

Literature is aimed at a specific target audience and comments on situations and problems in the culture in which communication takes place. Translating a source text written in a non-standard language variety may present problems to the translator. This language variety may have a different set of cultural values expressed in a unique way. In such a case, a thorough knowledge of the *Landeskunde* aspects of both languages is essential: it does not only help establish comprehension of the background in which the literature of the source text was created, but it also enables the translator to recreate these aspects in an appropriate way in the target language text. This is in accordance with Neubert's (1993) comment that, because of its cultural mission a literary text should be *recreated* and not merely *translated*.

This statement will be evaluated by means of a descriptive analysis of the short story '(Matrys)' (Addendum A) from Die donker melk van daeraad by George Weideman. The text was chosen for this study because it is written in Griqua Afrikaans, a geolect of standard Afrikaans, and exhibits all the characteristics of a regional language. Translating this text into English makes all the challenges of translating a text, which originates from a particular language variety become clear. Die donker melk van daeraad is a collection of stories which have been passed along from generation to generation: legends, myths and fables and it incorporates a wide variety of themes, which all comment in one way or another on storytelling (Aucamp, 1994:4). In fact, the theme of storytelling runs like a golden thread through the book and affirms an historical link with both European and African traditions, as pointed out by Aucamp (1994:4). Apart from the unique cultural aura the story '(Matrys)' has, it has a distinctive dialectical nature because of the Griqua Afrikaans grammatical elements. When dealing with words such as "vetlampies-se-tyd," "oumagoed" and "doodsoek-se-dinge"(Weideman, 1994), the translator needs to create words which will evoke the same emotional response with the target audience as the original, and also preserve the cultural element of the text. When translating the story, the translator needs to

take note of word order, sentence-rhythm and sound patterns, because these may all have an evocative power relevant to the message and must be conveyed by the translator.

According to Gentzler (1993:95), "traditional translation theory was based upon premises of original meaning, training translators to interpret that meaning correctly in order to reproduce it properly, and resulted in rules and laws about the procedure whereby products could 'objectively' be compared and evaluated." Thus, early translation theory took the supremacy of the original text for granted. A translator was no more than a vehicle for transferring the source text into a new language. The most important attribute of a target text was being equivalent to the source text. Newmark (1988:48) describes the purpose of equivalent effect as producing the same effect (or one as close as possible) on the readership of the translation, as was obtained on the readership of the original. Newmark maintains that equivalent effect is the desirable *result*, rather than the *aim* of any translation, because it is an unlikely result if (i) the purpose of the source language text (SLT) is to affect and the target language text (TLT) is to inform (or vice versa) or (ii) there is a pronounced cultural gap between the SLT and the TLT. Existing prescriptive translation theories and strategies may not be equipped to bridge this gap, created by a text written in a non-standard language variety.

The translation challenge intensifies when bearing in mind that the more cultural (more local, remote in time and space) a text, the less equivalent effect is even possible, unless the reader is imaginative, sensitive and steeped in the SL culture (Newmark, 1988:49). Cultural concessions (e.g. shift to a generic term) is only allowable where the cultural word is marginal, not important for local colour, and has no relative connotative or symbolic meaning. This problem is of particular importance to this study, because it will investigate the challenges of translating a text written in a non-standard language, containing unique grammatical elements.

In order to determine the impact that language variation has on translation, it will be necessary to determine the origin of language variation and how it manifests in the form of geolects and sociolects. The unique characteristics of Griqua Afrikaans separates it from standard Afrikaans, and also raise the question of whether *equivalence* between source and target text is possible when dealing with language variation. This question is especially applicable when a culturally embedded text such as '(Matrys)' is the object of translation. If the conclusion is arrived at that existing prescriptive approaches to translation are not adequate when dealing with a literary text, it will be necessary to find alternatives to linguistics-based approaches to translation. The practical implications of language variation will become clear once an attempt is made to translate a text written in a non-standard language variety, such as '(Matrys)'. This raises another question: are there existing translation strategies which deal with the challenges presented by a culturally embedded text? Since each text is unique, the translator may have to vary his approach depending on the needs of the text and the audience.

This contextualisation provides a broad overview of the research problems that evoked this study and from it the following questions can be formulated:

- What influence does language variation have on the translation of literary texts?
- Do existing translation approaches such as *equivalence* address the issue of linguistic and cultural transfer adequately, and are there alternatives to prescriptive theories?
- What translation strategies can be developed in order to fulfil the needs of a text written in a non-standard language – specifically a text such as '(Matrys)'?

1.2 Aims

Determining the impact of language variation on literary translation, specifically the translation of a dialect, by referring to the short story '(Matrys)' from Die donker melk van daeraad.

The particular aims are:

- Describing the unique characteristics of Griqua Afrikaans and how these characteristics influence the task of the translator, especially when a text such as '(Matrys)' is the object of translation.
- Seeking alternative theories in the work of Even-Zohar, Derrida and Toury to existing prescriptive concepts such as *dynamic equivalence*.
- Analysing the source text '(Matrys)' according to the categories selected from House (1981).
- Comparatively analysing two unpublished commissioned translations (Addendum A & B), employing translation strategies developed by Klingberg (1986) and Newmark (1988) in order to identify the strategies which are most effective in dealing with the particular needs of a text written in a non-standard language. This analysis and evaluation will be done only on the micro-level, due to the scope of this study.

1.3 Research method

This study is concerned with the impact of language variation when translating a literary text written in a dialect. This investigation will be done in the following way:

- By discussing the origin of language variation and identifying the unique characteristics of Griqua Afrikaans which separate it from standard Afrikaans.
- By scrutinising *equivalence* as a main thrust in translation theory, especially when a culturally embedded text such as '(Matrys)' is the object of translation by investigating the theories of Even-Zohar, Derrida and

Toury as a possible way of breaking free from the restraints of traditional translation theory.

- By analysing the short story '(Matrys)' according to the proposed categories of House (1981) and identifying translation strategies from Newmark (1988) and Klingberg (1986) which could be employed in the translation of a text with specific socio-cultural dimensions such as '(Matrys)'.
- Finally, a comparative analysis will be made between the source text '(Matrys)', and two unpublished commissioned translations thereof to determine what translation strategies were employed by the translators in order to deal with the problems produced by the elements of language variation. Due to the limited scope of this study, the analysis and evaluation will only take place on the micro-level.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to determine the role of language variation in literary translation. Language variation will demand a different approach by the translator of a literary text, because a text written in a particular language variety will most probably contain certain cultural elements that do not coincide with the target language. In such a case, it is time to consider whether concepts such as *equivalence* are still relevant. It will also be necessary to determine whether traditional, prescriptive approaches to translation have not outlived their usefulness – especially when a literary text is the object of translation. The question needs to be asked: are there alternatives to prescriptive approaches such as *dynamic equivalence*? This chapter will facilitate a discussion concerning these issues by firstly determining the origins of language variation, discussing the main differences between standard and non-standard variants (geolects) and how they manifest in Griqua Afrikaans. Secondly, the relevance of *equivalence* for literary translation will be discussed, especially when a culturally embedded text such as '(Matrys)' (Addendum A) is the object of translation. The theories of Even-Zohar, Derrida and Toury will be discussed as a possible way of breaking free from the restraints of traditional translation theory.

Variation in language use means that there is more than one way of saying something. The varying linguistic features of language are most clearly visible in dialects and geolects. Du Plessis (1988:4) has the following to say about variation of language use: "Geen twee mense is dieselfde nie en hieruit behoort te vloei dat geen twee mense dieselfde sal praat nie." Du Plessis says further that language needs to be studied in the actual form that it is used, as it occurs in everyday language (1988:3). Van Rensburg (1983:7)

concur with this statement: "Die algemene uitgangspunt is dat...dit taalgebruik in al sy skakerings is wat beskryf word en nie 'n onderliggende sisteem van die een of ander abstrakte aard nie." So it is not the abstract structure (the ideal form) which becomes the object of study, but language in its concrete form. The following section will discuss the origin of language varieties, and how they differ from standardised language.

2.2 Language varieties: standard and non-standard language

The existence of language variation is the result of a number of factors, as explained by Webb (1989:417). Webb names language itself as one of the factors. Afrikaans, like any other language is not a perfect and stable entity like mathematics, where the rules are absolute, and there is no digression. Different cultures and different situations make different demands on language. There is more than one way of saying something, because language is naturally variable.

Webb (1989:417) mentions Afrikaans' origin as another reason for its varying nature. The fact that it originated from Dutch is also a contributing factor. The speakers of this new language came from a variety of dialect regions, and varying levels of society. Variation can also be the result of language contamination. In early times, the population of the Cape contained a large number of speakers from a wide variety of languages (German, French, the languages of the slaves). Gradually, these speakers relinquished their mother tongues and accepted the dominant language of the region. When this occurs, it also happens that the new speakers of the language will speak it based on the grammar of their mother tongue.

The different kinds of language variation that can be distinguished are *geographical*, *temporal*, *idiolectical*, *social* and *non-standard* (Hatim & Mason, 1990:39). Picard (1988:39) locates the differences between languages in the differences between people, including factors such as climate, nature

and environment as well as experience. The reactions of different groups of people to these experiences lead to the development of diverse philosophies of life; these diverse philosophies are expressed through a variety of different languages.

In most societies, the language controlled by the norms of the dominant class as reflected in the language use of its radio, television, newspapers and literature is considered to be the standard language and as such is taught in schools right from its basic phonological qualities to the rules of its significance in social contexts. The standard is that speech variety which is legitimised as the obligatory form of social intercourse, on the strength of the interests of the dominant forces in that society (Dittmar,1976:8). The following section will investigate how a certain language becomes a standard language. It is important to take note of this process, and the implications it holds for a non-standard language, since it influences the manner in which a language variety or a dialect is perceived.

According to Hudson (1980:32) standard languages are the result of a direct and deliberate intervention by society. This intervention is called 'standardisation' and produces a standard language where before there were only dialects. To become a standard language a particular variety will pass through the following processes, identified by Hudson (1980:33): first, a particular variety is *selected* to be developed into a standard language. The choice carries social and political significance, because the chosen variety will gain prestige which will extend to its speakers; next, *codification* takes place where dictionaries and grammar books are written so that speakers will know what is correct and what is not; then *elaboration of function* follows – the selected variety will have to develop conventions for using existing forms in central government, science and so forth, or alternatively develop new linguistic items. This is one of the areas where a standard language differs greatly from a dialect. Finally, the variety has to be *accepted* by the relevant population as *the* variety of the community. The standard language then

serves as a strong unifying force for the state and as a symbol of independence. This is one of the most significant differences between standard and non-standard languages: a non-standard language is sometimes perceived as being marginal and inferior, and subsequently does not have the prestige of a standardised language. This is, however, a subjective perception, since a dialect or non-standard language variety is the result of a number of factors which are not related to the quality of the language, as the following section will point out.

A dialect is not necessarily less complete, less logical or less of a language than the standard language, write Carroll and Gregory (1978:12), although speakers of the standard language will perhaps see it as such. A geolect or dialect is not the result of a lack of education or ignorance. Rather, it is a reflection of the speaker's identity, his social origin and his speech community – a view supported by Carroll and Gregory (1978:12).

A dialect is a variant of a particular language, which exists on the basis of its use. The user's geographical as well as his social origin will be determining factors in making his particular language a dialect. In the case of Griqua Afrikaans, a number of factors led to the development of a geolect that exists in addition to standard Afrikaans. The development of Griqua Afrikaans can be attributed to language conversion, as the following section will explain.

The different stages of language conversion are identified by Henning (1983:9) as follows: when the Griqua first came into contact with Afrikaans, the adult Grikwas' language was influenced by Afrikaans but did not undergo language conversion. The second generation could manage their mother tongue as well as Afrikaans – again without undergoing language conversion. It was only much later with the third generation that language conversion was completed; this generation became alienated from their mother tongue and subsequently adapted Afrikaans as their new language.

There are a number of characteristics that separate Griqua Afrikaans from standard Afrikaans. Van Rensburg (1989:458-460) identifies the following: palatalisation, morphological forms, unusual compilations, diminutive words, words combined with “-goed” and also syntax.

2.2.1 Under the heading *palatalisation*, Van Rensburg identifies forms such “gjelt” and “kjind” (1989:458).

2.2.2 *Morphological constructions* in Griqua Afrikaans are also unique, as can be seen in sentences like the following: “Die hout se ry”, “Die kontrak *die* het ons nie” and unusual compilations such as “voormense” (Van Rensburg, 1989:459).

2.2.3 *Plural words* in Griqua Afrikaans also have a distinctive form, as Van Rensburg (1988:459) points out in the following words: “ouerse” and “blankese”.

2.2.4 *Diminutive words* characteristic of Griqua Afrikaans include the following: “plekkietjie” and “miesietjie” (Van Rensburg, 1989:459).

2.2.5 Words combined with “-goed” are one of the language’s most striking characteristics, according to Van Rensburg (1989:459). It can be used independently, or as part of a compound, as can be seen in the following examples: “Houtwerk in die klas *goed*; tekeninge en *goed*; beddegoed; Pagoed” (Van Rensburg, 1989:459).

2.2.6 The syntax of Griqua Afrikaans is characterised by the use of “vir” in the following way: “Jy moet *vir* hulle kan los”. Also, one finds that two verbs are sometimes linked: “(Hy) sit kyk; (Hy) lê slaap”.

2.2.7 The *infinitive* is used in the following way: “*Om* in te klim; *om te* die taal te praat” (Van Rensburg, 1989:459).

2.2.8 The *repetition* of the predicate is another characteristic form: “In die verdrinking *in*; in die tyd *in*” (Van Rensburg, 1989:459).

2.2.9 *Possessive constructions*: “Ons se eie kinnere; hulle se goed; julle se eie mense” (Van Rensburg, 1989:460).

2.2.10 Possession is indicated by using the word “van”: “Die grootvader *van* my” (Van Rensburg, 1989:460).

2.2.11 *Adverbs* are used in the following way: “Thomas *had* geheel nie ien nie” (Hy het geen kinders nie) (Van Rensburg, 1989:460).

2.2.12 *Adjectives*: “Dis ‘n *ongemaklike* werk; hy is nou *hééj*l bewoon; hy’s seker *ontuis*” (Van Rensburg, 1989:460).

2.2.13 *Derivation morphemes*: “Gewoonlike”: “Daar’s (‘n) *annerlike* goed wa jy moet koop; dis ‘n *seerlike* punt” (Van Rensburg, 1989:460).

2.2.14 The following form of the *verb* is also typical of the Griqua Afrikaans language: “Siet, gaat, gebeginne, gegeniet” (Van Rensburg, 1989:460).

Many sentences in Griqua Afrikaans use words such as “maar”, “sal”, “weet” and “loop” in such a way that they lose their original function. Especially the word “loop” is found frequently in Griqua Afrikaans, and its function is not always to indicate moving from one place to another (Verhoef, 1988:101,102).

The translator of a text written in Griqua Afrikaans (such as ‘(Matrys)’) will need to familiarise himself with the typical characteristics of this language variety, such as the unique sentence-rhythms and sound patterns which have an evocative power relevant to the message. The unique words and

expressions found in a non-standard language such as Griqua Afrikaans will in most cases have no clear target language equivalents, which will obviously make the translator's task more difficult. It will indeed be difficult for the translator to find corresponding words and expressions in the target language. Translatability depends on the degree to which the source text is embedded in its own specific culture, and the extent to which the source and target cultures differ with regard to time and place, writes Snell-Hornby (1988:41).

Language variation can also lead to differences in the way people express themselves, because language is a communication tool. A specific region can also influence people's language use, which is why the translator should familiarise himself with the concept of *Landeskunde*. *Landeskunde* is a German term that means 'regional studies'. It is concerned with studying the influence that a specific region has on a group of people, specifically the cultural influence on a language. Erdmenger and Istel (1978:22) see *Landeskunde* as study that describes people and their different cultures. Man's language milieu, the nature of human relations in all its facets within a community, as well as the particular situation in which people find themselves, are all studied in *Landeskunde*. *Landeskunde* acknowledges the fact that different ways of thinking and different views are represented by different cultures, which makes it crucial for the translator of literature to study it.

Newmark (1988:94) defines culture as "...the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression." These 'particular manifestations' are words that are culturally embedded, and will demand special attention from the translator. Newmark feels that texts that are embedded in a specific culture should be translated with the aim of introducing this culture to the target audience. The translator will thus become a transmitter of culture, and not merely a vehicle for transferring language.

Translators are transmitters of culture, as Beuchat and Valdivieso (1992:13) observe: translators need to "...possess a wide cultural background to be sensitive to the peculiarities of the different peoples, and to respect those different cultures as well as that of the people receiving the translated text." These 'peculiarities' are studied in *Landeskunde* as part of the unique characteristics of a culture.

A text also reflects the ideology of a certain group of people, as stated by Lefevere (1992b:vii): "All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way." The needs and beliefs of any group of people are reflected in their literature, and the translator should determine which texts are selected by a society and how they are employed to promote a specific ideology.

Pretorius (1997:20) writes the following about the bond between language and culture and the translator as the transmitter of culture: "Omdat taal en kultuur so onlosmaaklik met mekaar verweef is en enige gemeenskap sy eie werklikheid deur sy eie taal orden, moet die vertaler die manier waarop die brontaalgemeenskap sy werklikheid beleef en in sy taalsisteem vergestalt, deeglik ken om as vertaler (tweede sender) die teks na die doeltaalsisteem oor te plaas sodat dieselfde werklikheid vir die doeltaalleser betekenis kry." *Landeskunde* is important for any study of language variation, because it is concerned with the link between culture and society, and the fact that the specific characteristics of a region are displayed in the language use of its inhabitants.

When the translator encounters a language variety, he will need to be sensitive to the cultural peculiarities of the source text. The translation of a literary text cannot merely be a search for sameness, since the source text may contain words or expressions unique to a particular culture. These words or expressions may have particular associations in the source text that

may not be clear to readers of the target text. The reason for this is that languages are distinct: “No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality” (Bassnett-McGuire, 1991:13). Each society uses particular words and expressions in a particular manner, according to its needs. The translator should take note of the way in which word order, sentence rhythm and a particular society or culture employs unusual grammatical forms. A word or expression should not be viewed in isolation, but as part of the identity of a society.

Lefevere (1992c:51) also comments on this, when he writes the following about the translation process: “Whereas the conservative translator works on the level of the word or the sentence, the ‘spirited’ translator works on the level of the culture as a whole, and of the functioning of the text in that culture.” A word or sentence can never be translated in isolation, for it is in one way or another an expression of the culture in which it was created. Finding a one-to-one equivalent for a culturally embedded word or expression will at best be problematic – if at all possible. The following section will investigate why *equivalence* has become a problematic concept in translation, and will also investigate the theories of Derrida, Even-Zohar and Toury, in order to find alternatives to existing prescriptive theories.

2.3 Language variation and translation theory

According to Postma (1995:65) traditional approaches to translation were prescriptive, because the goal was the establishment of a ‘faithful’ translation – even if it meant compromising on meaning. Gentzler (1993:72) also points out that so-called ‘scientific’ approaches to translation were source text oriented, because the original was seen as the embodiment of a kind of ‘deep structure’ which contained important information. The translator needed to stay faithful to this deep structure, in order to translate correctly. These approaches led to the ‘utopian’ conception of translation as reproducing the original; this led to ‘large’ statements concerning translatability, as well as how

the process should occur (Gentzler,1993:72,73). Hermans (1985:9) points out that when the supremacy of the original is taken for granted, the study of translation merely serves to "...demonstrate that original's outstanding qualities by highlighting the errors and inadequacies of any number of translations of it." In the past, the original text was held up as an absolute standard. Because of this, linguistically oriented models like those of Catford (1965) and Nida (1969) aimed at making translation models more accurate, by introducing the concept of *equivalence*. Nida introduced the concept of *dynamic equivalence*, which attempted to define translation as the closest natural equivalent of the original, i.e. a normative and prescriptive approach.

At one time, *equivalence* was very popular, until translators and theorists realised that the whole text needs to be considered when *equivalence* is the goal. Word-for-word *equivalence* is not of much value when the whole context of a translation is considered (Postma,1995:71,72). *Dynamic equivalence* was developed for Bible translating and is mostly message-oriented. But, according to Lefevere (1992a:8) literary translation concerns not just the message, but also the way in which the message is expressed. *Equivalence* can perhaps be a translation tool for the description of a particular translation, i.e. evaluation, but should not be the aim of a translation – especially not literary translation. The possibility of employing *equivalence* for the description of particular translated words and expressions, will be investigated in the following chapter.

Lefevere (1992a:10) describes *equivalence* as a problematic concept, because translators and translation theorists cannot agree on either the kind or the degree of *equivalence* necessary to constitute real *equivalence*. *Equivalence* can at best serve as a guideline to the translator, since one-to-one *equivalence* is difficult – if not impossible in literary translation. As a prescriptive approach, *equivalence* does not seem to have much value for literary translation.

Theorists are now critical towards prescriptive translation theories in light of their inadequacies. This can be seen in the following statement by Gentzler (1993:59) concerning the inadequacies of Nida's theory: "Nida's prescriptive translation theory, while intended to elucidate the original message and response, invariably results in a distortion of the very sense he claims to wish to preserve, as his translation as exegesis obscures the original text to such a degree that it becomes unavailable to the contemporary reader." This distortion of the source text is the result of traditional translation theories' emphasis on *equivalence* of form between source text and target text (a 'faithful' translation) and their failure to recognise the importance of a text's content.

Lefevere (1992c:51) has the following to say about the concept of 'faithfulness' in translation: "Faithfulness' is just one translational strategy that can be inspired by the collocation of a certain ideology with a certain poetics. To exalt it as the only strategy possible, or even allowable, is as utopian as it is futile." Lefevere writes further that "translated texts as such can teach us much about the interaction of cultures and the manipulation of texts."

The fact is: it is impossible to produce a translated text that is a mirror image of the source text, because translation is a subjective practice, not an exact science. One-to-one *equivalence* is even more improbable when language variation is a factor in the translation. "Languages are different" states Lefevere (1992c:100). Lefevere writes further that translators should not be taught to 'overcome' the differences between languages which he calls "an undeniable given". Rather, they should be instructed how to project 'their' image of the original – which could be influenced by various considerations (ideology, poetics) but also of the intended audience of the translation (1992c:100).

Gentzler (1993:196) points out that translation is in reality a major factor in the development of culture worldwide; something that becomes clear, while

translating the original text. “The language restraints imposed by the receiving culture are enormous, yet the possibility of creating new relations in the target language are also vivid”, (Gentzler, 1993:194). These language restraints are even more apparent, when the aim of the translation is a non-standard language or language variety.

According to Gentzler (1993:194), translation is a clear example of the instability of language, and has been at the receiving end of the human desire for closure, which only leads to further mistranslation and misregognition. Translations often fail to live up to the claims made about them. The reason for this failure can be traced back to a lack of comprehension of the constraints under which translations operate.

According to Lefevere (1985:235) “translation operates first of all under the constraint of the original, itself the product of constraints belonging to a certain time.” This is one of the reasons why a “faithful” translation would be an unrealistic aim when the translator is faced with a literary text. Another reason would be the “universe of discourse features” which Lefevere (1985:235) describes as “...those features particular to a given culture, and they are, almost by definition, untranslatable or at least very hard to translate.” The features characteristic to Griqua Afrikaans that were described earlier, fall under this category. These features will most probably cause shifts in the target language text, because very few – if any of them – will have target language equivalents, unless they are translated into a similar dialect in the target language repertoire.

For this reason, the translator should view translation less as an interlinguistic process and more as an intracultural activity, as suggested by Gentzler (1993:186). This will enable the translator to concentrate less on the form of the translation. Over the past two decades, scholars have devised alternatives to both linguistics-based and hermeneutic approaches to translation. Derrida, Even-Zohar and Toury are three such scholars. These

theorists have something in common, according to Hermans (1985:10,11): "...a view of literature as a complex and dynamic system..." advocating an approach to literary translation which is "descriptive, target-oriented, functional and systemic; and an interest in the norms and constraints that govern the production and reception of translations...and in the place and role of translations both within a given literature and in the interaction between literatures." Because of their target-oriented and descriptive approach to translation, the theories of Even-Zohar, Toury and Derrida will now be discussed to determine the importance of their assumptions for this study.

2.3.1 Even-Zohar's polysystem theory

Gentzler (1993:125) attributes the importance of the Polysystem theory to the fact that it allows Translation Studies to advance beyond prescriptive aesthetics. It does this by expanding the theoretical boundaries of traditional translation theory – thereby acknowledging language variation as an important factor in literary translation – and placing it in a larger cultural context. Hermans (1985:11) states that the Polysystem theory "...sees literary translation as one element among many in the constant struggle for domination in the system's various layers and subdivisions." Polysystem is a global term referring to literary systems – major and minor – existing in a culture. According to Even-Zohar (1978:15,30) it is necessary to include translated literature in the polysystem, because no one who studies the history of any literature can avoid recognising the importance of translations and their role in the synchrony and diachrony of a certain literature. Even-Zohar concentrates primarily on the signifier and how it formally interacts with literary or cultural systems of signification.

According to Gentzler (1993:117) the relationship between translated works and the literary polysystem cannot be categorised as primary or secondary, but as variable – depending on the specific circumstances operating within the literary system. After observing the position of translation within varying

cultural systems, Even-Zohar (1978:22) explores the relationship between translated texts and the literary polysystem: how texts to be translated are selected by the target culture, and how translated texts adopt certain norms and functions as result of their relation to the other target language systems.

Even-Zohar (1978:22) states that selection is governed by the needs of the receiving polysystem: texts are chosen on the basis of their compatibility with the needs of the polysystem, in order to achieve a complete, homogeneous identity. He also points out that the socio-literary conditions within the receiving culture determine which texts are to be translated.

The variety of different languages in the world leads to a variety of different cultures, which means that every culture has different views and different needs. If a source text can fulfil the particular needs of a receiving culture, it will be selected by that culture. According to Even-Zohar (1978:28) the level that the text reaches within that culture, will depend on the nature of the polysystem of the receiving culture, and its social or historical circumstances, as well as the differing elements between the text and cultural norms.

Gentzler (1993:124) emphasises that a text never exists in isolation; the culture from which it originates, imposes certain restrictions. The language of a particular culture may impose restrictions on it, which do not exist in other cultures. The Polysystem theory concentrates on describing translations and interliterary connections between cultures, in order to bridge the gap left by early translation theory, which separated form from content – failing to realise the importance of the historical situation in which the specific text is embedded.

The importance of Even-Zohar's theory lies in the fact that he varies his definition of *equivalence* and adequacy according to the historical situation, and by doing so, frees the discipline from the constraints of previous theories such as Nida's dynamic *equivalence*. Toury also used the polysystem concept

as the basis for his theory, and developed a functional-relational approach to translation. Like Even-Zohar, Toury views translation as a process in which the subjects of a specific culture communicate in translated messages determined primarily by local cultural constraints, which are the result of language variation. Because of his target-oriented approach to translation, Toury's theory is important to this study and will be discussed in the following section.

2.3.2 Toury's target-oriented approach

Toury's functional-relational approach is more adequate to suit the requirements of descriptive, historically oriented translation studies, than existing prescriptive and a-historical approaches. His model is based on differences: it assumes structural differences between languages, because each culture is exposed to different experiences and has different views and needs, and expresses them in a different way. "Every linguistic item and/or textual tradition differs from any other in terms of structure, repertory, norms of usage etc." (Toury, 1980:94). This is important, because language variation results in differences between languages and the way people express themselves.

Toury suggests that translation should be considered from the point of view of the target culture, so that translation *equivalence* will no longer be a hypothetical matter, but an empirical matter. Existing definitions of translational *equivalence* are maximal, normative ones, which – at best – can serve as guidelines for the translator (Toury, 1980:90).

In practice, it becomes clear that the relationship between the source text and the target text (the actual realisation of the *equivalence* postulate) is not one and the same in each case, and does not necessarily correspond to the maximal definition – nor can it, when one takes into account the influence of language variation. Toury (1980:91) states that by using existing, prescriptive

translation theories, the student of translation is compelled to characterise many existing translations as either 'equivalent' or 'non-equivalent' – thus, in negative terms, allowing him only to say in which respects the translation fails. According to Gentzler (1993:128) Toury's model is unified by the acceptance of translated texts without judging them as correct or incorrect.

Toury's goal is the expansion of theoretical boundaries, by studying translations in their cultural linguistic context, accepting that language variation is a reality, and replacing the rigid and narrow prescriptive definition of translational *equivalence* by a more flexible and broader description oriented approach (1980:92). This means that translated texts will be described in positive terms, which draw on one overall theory. Toury's ultimate goal is the establishment of a hierarchy of interrelated factors or constraints that determine the translation product. He sets out to include cultural-historical 'facts': a set of laws he calls 'translational norms'.

These translational norms play a central role, since their diversification along cultural and historical lines leads to the development of translational solutions within the *equivalence* postulate, which do not coincide with the maximal definition. The diverse nature of these norms makes them especially relevant when language variation is a factor in translation. A given society has varying and conflicting norms, interconnected with other functioning systems. In certain situations recur regularly, certain behavioural patterns can be established. Toury identifies three kinds of translational norms: preliminary, initial and operational (1980:92).

The *preliminary norms* are factors that govern the choice of the work and the overall translation strategy within a polysystem. It will be necessary to establish the cultural contexts in which the translation process fits.

The *initial norms*, if consistent, will influence all translation decisions. It categorise the translator's choice to subject himself to either the source text

and its governing norms and textual relations, or the target culture's linguistic and literary norms (or a combination of both).

Operational norms: the actual decisions made during the translation process: 'matrical' norms determining location, additions and deletions, 'textual norms' revealing linguistic and stylistic preferences.

The influence of the Polysystem theory is clearly visible in Toury's theory, a view supported by Genzler (1993:131). In terms of initial norms, the translator's attitude towards the source text is affected by the text's status in the literary polysystem. In terms of operational norms, all decisions are influenced by the position (central or peripheral) held up by translated literature in the target culture's polysystem.

Toury arrives at translation norms by comparatively examining several translations of one original text, which vary in terms of periods and translators. The comparison reveals different definitions of translation, priorities of translators and subconscious rules influencing the translation process: all the result of language variation. *Difference* is a key term in Toury's model. This is the reason why Toury's theory is important for translation theory: the fact that it acknowledges the fact that languages are different. Definitions of translation need to be variable, because language is variable.

Languages vary because humans who are subjected to a series of differing experiences use them. 'Meaning' is in reality something that cannot be fixed, a text's meaning varies from one person to the next, and from one culture to the next. Thus, meaning is not something stable and fixed, but unstable and always changing. As Derrida states: there is no pure meaning (Genzler, 1993:167). Deconstructionists applied this instability to their theory of translation, a process that continually opens up new avenues of meaning, while simultaneously closing others. The following section will discuss Deconstruction and its importance for Translation Studies.

2.3.3 Deconstruction

Deconstruction is a reference to what is there, named, and at the same time not yet named, and never will be named: this forms the basis of Derrida's theory of *differance*: a reference to what is not there...differing and deferring...delaying. This is how Derrida sees translation: deferring and displacing that which is named by the original...not reproducing the 'meaning' of the original, but modifying the text, placing it beyond one's grasp.

Derrida suggests that one concentrate not on the original message, but rather the process through which it must pass in order to reach the target culture. The concept 'play of traces' is introduced by Derrida as "...a play of forms without a determined and invariable substance, and also supposing in the practice of this play a retention and protection of differences, a spacing and temporisation, a play of traces," (Derrida,1982:15).

This trace is always differing and deferring, erasing itself in the act of disclosure...revealing and concealing. This trace points to a disruption in language itself, emphasising the instability of language. Translation is also like the 'play of traces': something that is not fixed, something that is forever changing and shifting, opening up new possibilities, transgressing the limits of the source language, making it grow. Derrida also points out that the original is always contained in another structure or form – even if it is never translated. Furthermore, he undermines the traditional notion of authorship, by introducing the notion that it is the translator who creates the original.

Because people do not stay the same, but change with time, accordingly reinterpreting the world around them, so does each reading or translation reconstruct the source text. This notion is far removed from traditional theories, which reaffirm the sacredness of the original. The author has in fact no control over the institutional systems of time and place. The 'act of creation' is in reality a series of complex processes. According to Gentzer

(1993:147), traditional translation theory revolved around the concept of determinable meaning, meaning which is single and clear, and can be transferred from one text to the next. Deconstructionists reject this definition, concentrating rather on the instability of translation, which is reflected in the translation process.

Gentzler (1993:153) points out that Deconstruction reduces the role of the author, and questions the originality of the text. It asks new questions, such as: where does the discourse of a text originate? It reconsiders the meaning of the text, and brings the unheard and ungraspable into the light. Traditional translation theory is challenged, in order to extend its boundaries. Translation is seen as an action: an operation of thought. The limits of the literary text are transgressed through translation.

This is one of the important points which Derrida wishes to communicate: that there is no pure meaning hidden behind language, waiting to be discovered...a text means different things to different people, at different times. One of Deconstruction's most important features, is the fact that it freed translation theory from the constraints of determinable meaning, bringing the unheard and ungraspable to the fore. It recognised that variation is an important factor in translation, especially in literary translation.

2.3.4 Summary

The most relevant features of these theories can be selected and combined as follows: In literary translation, the historical situation (Even-Zohar,1978:28) and the cultural linguistic context (Toury,1980:92) in which a text is embedded are important, and any definition of *equivalence* should be varied according to these two factors.

The cultural linguistic context of a particular language should also be studied because there are structural differences between languages. Studying

languages in their particular contexts means that *prescriptive approaches* to translation will be replaced by a *descriptive approach* (Toury,1980:92). Structural differences between languages also lead to variation in meaning, which means that there can be no determinable meaning (Derrida,1982:15).

The disruption that exists in language itself (the 'play of traces') reverberates in translation, leading to changes and shifts in meaning, opening up new possibilities. Meaning is extended and enlarged by transgressing the limits of the source language. The author's role is reduced when one asks the following questions: where does the original come from? Is there such a thing as an 'original text'? (Derrida,1982:15).

Thus, the disruption in language causes meaning to change and vary. This disruption is caused by structural differences between languages. Because of these structural differences, languages should be studied in their cultural linguistic situation as well as the historical situation in which they are embedded. This is why the translator of a literary text should have knowledge of the cultural circumstances that shaped the source text, and how they manifest in the text itself.

Because language variation is a reality which many translators have to deal with, it is perhaps time to consider whether *equivalence* is a realistic goal in literary translation. Translators work under the constraints of their own cultural background as well as the culture of the source text. The translator needs to determine the source text's place in history and culture, and how it functions in the society from which it originates. Because language and culture are inextricably bound to each other, we should see translation not as an interlinguistic process, but as an intracultural activity, which opens the process of translation up to variation. Variation will also lead to shifts in the target language text, since a text written in a particular language variety will contain many words and expressions that may not correspond to a standard target language. This is also the reason why a descriptive method is

preferable when the translator is dealing with a literary text. According to Hermans (1985:13) this approach implies that one works without “...preconceived notions of what actually constitutes ‘translation’...for such notions would inevitably reveal themselves to be normative and restrictive.”

With the aid of translation theorists such as Derrida, Even-Zohar and Toury, Translation Studies can finally advance beyond the prescriptive aesthetics of traditional theory where translation is only a search for *equivalence*, and be recognised as a process of acculturation. After all, a text does not function in isolation from the culture in which it was created; it in fact assimilates the cultural peculiarities of its source culture. The short story ‘(Matrys)’ (Addendum A) is an example of text that is deeply embedded in its source culture – in this case, the Griqua culture. Language variation can give the translator an opportunity to introduce a foreign culture to a new audience.

When dealing with a text written in a language variety, the translator will need to analyse the text thoroughly and identify translation strategies that aid in the translation of such a text. The following chapter will investigate ways in which the translator can deal with a text with specific socio-cultural dimensions. For this purpose, the categories of House (1981) and Klingberg (1986) will be discussed in the following chapter as ways of analysing the source text and identifying culturally embedded words that could pose a translation problem. In addition to this, the translation strategies identified by Newmark (1988) and Klingberg (1986) will be discussed in order to determine their appropriateness for the translation of a text written in a non-standard language variety such as ‘(Matrys)’.

2.4 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to show how the translation of a language variety influences the translator’s task. The origin of language varieties was investigated and it was found that there is variation in language

because language is not a stable entity, with fixed rules; because language is used by people, who have differing views and differing needs; because of variation in culture and environment, which leads to language variation.

Language variation will in turn influence translation, because the translator cannot approach a culturally embedded text as he would any other type of text. Because one-to-one *equivalence* is practically impossible when dealing with language variation, it was determined that *equivalence* should not be the aim of a translation. It was also determined that translation scholars such as Even-Zohar, Toury and Derrida have recognised the fact that translation is not merely an interlinguistic process, but an intracultural activity. These scholars have also devised alternatives to linguistics-based and prescriptive approaches to translation. Even-Zohar's polysystem theory has extended the boundaries of traditional translation theory, by placing translation in a larger cultural context, thereby recognising that language and cultural variation is an important factor in translation. Toury expanded theoretical boundaries by studying translations in their cultural linguistic context, including cultural-historical 'facts' – translational norms – in his theory. By doing this, he illustrated the instability of 'meaning'; with so many varying languages and cultures, meaning cannot be fixed, because it is always changing. Derrida adopted this instability in his theory of *differance*: a definition of translation as something which is constantly deferring and displacing that which is named by the original...placing 'meaning' beyond one's reach. Derrida's theory wishes to communicate that there can be no pure meaning in translation...a text's meaning varies from person to person and from time to time.

This instability of meaning is the result of the instability of language itself: with so many different people living under different circumstances, it is no surprise. Language variation exists because language itself is variable. The translator should accommodate this by analysing a source text in its cultural context, and devise translation strategies that are not only aimed at transferring meaning, but meaning embedded in a specific and unique context.

Certain translation strategies will be identified and analysed in the following chapter, such as House's (1981) model which determines a text's function, and Klingberg's (1986) cultural context adaptation categories. These categories are not normative and prescriptive, but rather descriptive, acknowledging the existence of language variation as it is present in '(Matrys)'. It is the translator's duty to preserve the cultural authenticity of a text, but not at the cost of meaning. *Equivalence* should not be the most important aim when translating a literary text embedded in a specific culture – although it could be used as a tool for the evaluation of a translation. Thus, the translator should use the translation of a text written in a language variety as an opportunity to introduce a marginal text to a wider audience, exceeding the limitations of one language, and prolonging the life of the source text.

CHAPTER 3

TEXT MARKERS FOR LANGUAGE VARIATION AND THE TRANSLATION PRACTICE

3.1 Introduction

The concern of this study is the influence of language variation on literary translation. The previous chapter demonstrated that language variation does have an impact on the translation of a literary text, especially a text containing cultural elements. These cultural elements influence the task of the translator, since it means that most of the words and expressions in the source text have no easily identifiable equivalents, which could cause shifts in the target language text. Because such a text needs to be approached differently than a text which is not culturally embedded, certain categories identified by House (1981) and Klingberg (1986) will be selected in order to identify and analyse the text '(Matrys)' (Addendum A) which contains unique grammatical elements particular to Griqua Afrikaans. These categories will then be applied to the source text, following an analysis of the text. It is important to note that this analysis and evaluation will take place only on the micro-level, because of the limited scope of this study.

3.2 Translation categories: House (1981) and Klingberg (1986)

The categories developed by House (1981) and Klingberg (1986) were identified as being appropriate for the purposes of this study, although their aims and functions are different. House (1981) developed her categories by adapting a model developed by Crystal and Davy (1969) which aimed at characterising the function of a text by referring the text to the situation in which it is embedded. House (1981:37) stresses the fact that any text is embedded in a unique situation, and should thus be analysed thoroughly. Klingberg, on the other hand, developed his categories for the purpose of

evaluation of specific groups of words and expressions (1986:17,18). The categories of House (1981) and Klingberg (1986) function in the following way: House's categories (1981:42) study the *whole text* for the purpose of characterising the text by referring to the situation in which it is embedded. Klingberg's categories (1986:17,18) study *individual words or specific groups of words and expressions* for the purpose of evaluating their translations. Discussing the categories of both theorists in order to determine their appropriateness for this study will prove this statement.

As stated in the previous section, the model which was adopted by House (1981) is derived from one suggested by Crystal and Davy (1969). Their system of "situational constraints" breaks the notion of situation down into manageable parts for the purpose of a multi-dimensional analysis of the source text (House,1981:38). Crystal and Davy (1969:66) developed categories such as *individuality, dialect, time* and *discourse*, which House adopted and divided into two sections: *dimensions of language user* and *dimensions of language use* (1981:41). The complete categories look as follows:

A Dimensions of Language User:

1. GEOGRAPHICAL ORIGIN
2. SOCIAL CLASS
3. TIME

B Dimensions of Language Use:

1. MEDIUM [SIMPLE/COMPLEX]
2. PARTICIPATION [SIMPLE/COMPLEX]
3. SOCIAL ROLE RELATIONSHIP
4. SOCIAL ATTITUDE
5. PROVINCE

In the section *dimensions of language user*, (A) the dimension *geographical origin* was selected, because it reflects the factor of *dialect* identified by Crystal and Davy (1969:66) which is especially relevant for this study which deals with language variation. In the *section dimension of language use*, the category of *medium* was selected, along with the category *participation*. *Medium* defines the text as either simple or complex, depending on whether the text was written to be spoken or simply to be read (House,1981:43). This category is necessary when dealing with a text which is a written account of a narration, which is the case with '(Matrys)'. In such a case, the text may contain elements such as ellipsis, exclamations, and demonstrate unique word or sentence order or even incomplete words and sentences which characterise spoken language and are also evident of the type of relationship between addresser and addressee, which is examined in the category *participation* (House,1981:44). When there is an intimate relationship between the participants in the text, this means that there will be a certain number of shared information, which is reflected in the presence of ellipsis and extraction (House,1981:47). The following section will discuss the categories developed by Klingberg (1986) which identify specific groups of words that could pose a translation problem.

Klingberg (1986:17,18) devised a number of categories according to which cultural contexts could be adapted. These categories were devised for the translation of children's literature, but are still appropriate for most literary texts. This is because the categories cover culturally embedded words that are identified as *references to mythology and popular belief* and *geographical names*, as well as *fauna and flora*. *References to mythology and popular belief* was selected, because the mythology of the Griquas feature strongly in '(Matrys)', as will become clear in the source text analysis. The category *Geographical names* was also selected, because the geographical names in '(Matrys)' have particular associations and add to the overall cultural element.

It is important to note that words and expressions identified in Klingberg's categories (1986:17,18) are not only important because of their literary value and because they portray elements of Griqua mythology, but also because of their unique grammatical form. Words such as "vetlampies-se-tyd" and "paljas-se-steen" also exemplify specific characteristics of Griqua Afrikaans (markers of possession) which were identified in the previous chapter.

To deal specifically with words and expressions according to their unique grammatical form, the categories *typical Griqua words* and *typical Griqua expressions* were created. Typical Griqua words include words with "-goed", "loop", and words created with "ge". Typical Griqua expressions include words which are examples of *unusual compilations*, *typical morphological creations*, *characteristic markers of possession*, *reduction*, *derivation morphemes* and *repetition of prepositions* (Van Rensburg, 1997:23,24).

These categories are not mutually exclusive, and it may happen that a word or expression could easily come from more than one category, e.g. *references to mythology and popular belief* as well as *typical Griqua expressions*, as in the case of "paljas-se-steen".

The combined categories are as follows: under *source text analysis* are the categories selected from House (1981), namely *geographical origin*, *medium* and *participation*.

Under *words with literary significance*, are the categories selected from Klingberg (1986) namely *references to mythology and popular belief* and *geographical names*.

Under *grammatical markers*, are the categories *typical Griqua words* and *typical Griqua expressions*. As stated before, these categories are not exclusive or prescriptive, but rather tools which can be used in the analysis of

the source text, the identification of culturally embedded words which could pose a translation problem, and the evaluation of the translations.

In addition to these categories, there are also translation strategies available to the translator. Newmark (1988) developed several strategies to aid the translation process, and Klingberg (1986:18) also identified strategies by which the more difficult words and expressions can be adapted to the target text. These strategies are also not prescriptive, because a different text will demand a different approach, and not all the strategies are equally suitable for the translation of a culturally embedded text such as '(Matrys)'. The strategies identified by both Newmark (1988:82,83) and Klingberg (1986:18) are the following: transference, cultural equivalents, functional equivalents and descriptive equivalents.

Transference involves transferring the source text word in its original form to the target text (Newmark,1988:82). *Cultural equivalent* (Newmark,1988:82). Klingberg (1986:18) describes this method as substituting a concept in the source language for an equivalent in the target language. *Functional equivalent* (Newmark,1988:83). Here the foreign word or element is omitted and only its function is provided in the translation. *Descriptive equivalent* (Newmark,1988:83). Klingberg (1986:18) calls this method rewording the original word. It involves transferring the meaning of the original word, without the cultural element.

Klingberg (1986:18) also identified methods such as simplification, localisation and deletion, but admits himself that these methods are not suitable for a text that contains many cultural concepts, because the substitution of so many words would violate the text. Klingberg (1986:18) feels that "the ways which ought to be tried in the first instance, are those which aim at the elucidation of the difficult cultural element." He further writes that it is not possible to generalise, since "it is not possible to draw up rules applicable to all

instances. Every passage to be translated has its own problems” (1986:18). The translation strategies that were identified previously will be discussed in the following chapter. They will also be evaluated in terms of their usefulness in the translation of a text such as '(Matrys)'. The following section will employ the categories selected from House (1981) and Klingberg (1986) as well as the other categories identified previously, in order to analyse the source text and identify specific culturally embedded words from '(Matrys)'.

The source text '(Matrys)' will be analysed in the following section, employing the categories selected from House (1981). In addition to this, the collection from where the text originates – Die donker melk van daeraad – will also be analysed in order to illustrate how storytelling as a theme reverberates throughout the book.

3.3 Source text analysis

The source text '(Matrys)' is part of a collection of stories called Die donker melk van daeraad by George Weideman. This is, however, more than just a collection of well-written stories; it is a book about the art of storytelling. Almost every story in the book comments in one way or another on storytelling; a view supported by Jansen (1994:121): “Dit is nie verbasend dat Weideman in bykans elke verhaal die probleem van vertelling self aan die bod bring – iets wat veroorsaak dat Die donker melk van daeraad nogal 'n selfbewuste 'meta-boek' is.”

From the very first page to the very last, it is clear that the concept of storytelling runs through the whole book like a golden thread. There are a number of images which interlock the different stories – some old, some new – in such a way that they all say something about storytelling, as Aucamp (1994:4) also points out: “Daar is die tor, die steen, die slang; daar is paddas en vloedwaters; daar is die sigeunermotief; daar is die Blinde Siener, naamlik Blinde Harry; en natuurlik, en bowenal, die magiese begrip: vertelling.”

Aucamp (1994:4) also comments on the amount of intra and intertextuality present in the book, and the fact that the stories reach far back into time to the origins of oral storytelling – a theme which features strongly in '(Matrys)': "Intra en intertekstualiteit word in dié bundel meer as tegniek; dit grens al aan tema. Want Weideman se bundel bevat nie net vertellings en vertelsels nie; dit is ook 'n bundel óór die vertelkuns, wat vir voorbeelde terugreik na die orale tradisies van Afrika; van volksmense van die Noordweste en Namibië."

The source text '(Matrys)' features some of the most important images that were identified previously: the snake with the stone in its head, water and a mythical story of which the origins reach back a long way, and has been passed along from generation to generation. The story's long history is observable in the words of the storyteller Elsie: "...dit kom ver anderkant vetlampies-se-tyd vandaan. Ek het dit eerste by my oumagoed gehoor, en sy het gesê dit kom van háár oumagoed af, en so aan tot by die voormense en die voor-voormense" (Weideman,1994:lines 18-21).

The story is in essence about a powerful and important stone – "paljas-se-steen" (105) – which belongs to the Snake and is an important symbol in the Griqua culture. Du Plessis (1999:39) describes the Snake as follows: "Swart, met moessiese en lang brouerse en snorhare soos 'n kat. En swart oë en 'n blink diamant in sy voorkop." It is believed that the Snake can change form: "...want hy vertoon hom aan jou soos hy wil: dan is hy 'n mens, dan bok, dan boom, dan slang." (Du Plessis,1999:39). When a young girl – a 'hokmeisie' – is on the verge of adulthood (the "nabasas") she has to undergo a ritual in order to appease the Snake. Her face is therefore decorated with a mixture of fat and red clay (oeroe) and she is dressed as a bride and taken to the river, where the Snake lives. After having received extensive training from her grandmother (how to dress, how to act) the girl is allowed into the community.

In '(Matrys)', the stone was stolen from the Great Snake. When the stone disappears, no one is brave enough to go looking for it, except the grandfather of a girl named Dairos. Dairos' grandfather has a physical deformity, which gave his legs a strange appearance. Because of this, everyone laughs at him when he declares his intention of setting off in search of the stone and bringing it back. On the way, Dairos' grandfather has to overcome a number of obstacles, and is warned repeatedly that his search for the stone will be the end of him. The story has multiple endings – one saying that Dairos' grandfather met with death, another saying he was successful – emphasising the fact that the story has a number of origins and that it has traveled a long way, from generation to generation. These multiple endings can also create translation challenges.

3.3.1 Analysis of source text according to House (1981)

The source text can now be analysed according to the categories selected from House (1981) as stated in the previous chapter.

Geographical origin: The text is written in Griqua Afrikaans, a geolect of standard Afrikaans and contains many words and expressions with a unique grammatical structure, which reflects its socio-cultural origin such as "oumagoed", "hullese" and "doodsoek-se-dinge".

Medium: The text is a written narrative account of a mythical stone with great powers. It contains many of the features one finds in spoke language, such as extraction and ellipsis as well as exclamations. The reason for this is that the interlocutors are close to each other, and share a good deal of background information (House, 1981:47) as stated previously. The *participants* or characters include the narrator, an old woman called Elsie, whose language and manner of storytelling is characteristic of the Griqua culture, as well as another character, Ruiter. The author himself is also present in the story, in the form of the young boy referred to as "Jorsiegoed." The text is not a one-sided monologue, because there are interjections and interruptions by Jorsiegoed and also by Ruiter in the course of the narration.

The text contains metaphors, expressions and exclamations that typify Griqua culture. These include words and expressions that refer to the mythology of Griqua Afrikaans, as well as words containing unique grammatical elements in terms of morphology, palatalisation and syntax. These characteristics were identified in the previous chapter. These words and expressions have been categorised, firstly according to certain categories identified by Klingberg (1986:18,19) and secondly according to categories created to fulfill the specific needs of a text written in Griqua Afrikaans. The categories from Klingberg that will be used, are *references to mythology and popular belief* and *geographical names*. The remaining categories are *typical Griqua words* and *typical Griqua expressions*, which will identify words and expressions which are unique to Griqua Afrikaans and '(Matrys)' in terms of grammar. These categories will be employed in order to identify words and expressions that could present a translation challenge. It is important to note that the categories do not include *all* the culturally embedded words and expressions, but *representative items* which present a challenge to the translator.

3.3.2 Analysis of source text according to Klingberg (1986)

3.3.2.1 References to mythology and popular belief

In this instance, the translator/s may encounter problems in the case of names, terms used for supernatural beings, concepts, events and customs (Klingberg,1986:30). The words that fall under this category may have a special meaning in the source language, but could be unintelligible to the reader of the target text, as pointed out by Klingberg. According to Klingberg, such words ought to be translated. This is understandable, because these words found in '(Matrys)' are all significant, and contribute to the specific cultural aura the story has. Some of the words that fall under this category, are "vetlampies-se-tyd", "voormense en voor-voormense", "paljas-se-steen" and "tkortemannetjie". It is important to know that these words do not only carry literary significance, but also grammatical significance.

Vetlampies-se-tyd. (line 19)

“The time of the lard lamps.” This expression is an example of the unique morphological structure present in Griqua Afrikaans (Van Rensburg, 1989:459). It also carries literary significance and is used to describe something that is old and dated, emphasising the fact that the story’s origin goes back a long way.

Voormense en voor-voormense. (line 21)

“Old people and old-old people.” This expression is an example of an unusual compilation and repetition (voor-voor) which is identified by Van Rensburg (1989:459) as characteristic of Griqua Afrikaans. When the narrator uses this expression she is referring to the ancestors, who obviously lived a long time ago. The meaning of “voor” and “voor-voor” comes down to old; very old. The word/s do not refer to a particular year or time, but simply emphasise the fact that the story is very old, lending a mythical quality to it. The repetition of “voor” is characteristic of Griqua Afrikaans. “Voor-voormense” is important for another reason: it points to the story’s origin – oral storytelling. This custom is very important in the Griqua culture, where a story is preserved by passing it along from generation to generation. This is also why the story has so many different endings, because each storyteller or narrator adds or detracts from it.

Paljas-se-steen. (line 105)

“Magic stone.” This word refers to a mythological stone, supposedly guarded by a snake, which Dairos’ grandfather sets out to look for and is also an example of the typical Griqua Afrikaans morphology (Van Rensburg, 1997:23,24). In terms of its literary significance, one should point out that the stone – “Kleur van die nag net voor die dag breek” – is very important in Griqua culture, as was explained previously. There are also other references to it in Die donker melk van daeraad. It is important that the translator is aware of the stone’s central position in ‘(Matrys)’, and that its target language equivalent captures its cultural significance.

Tkortemannetje. (line 210)

This word is an example of reduction (“tkort” instead of “het kort”) which is found frequently in Griqua Afrikaans (Van Rensburg, 1997:23,24) and refers to a mythological animal: a small lizard – actually the Snake, after it was shrunk by the water in Dairos’ grandfather’s gourd. The word is also important, because of the use of the diminutive (“mannetje”) which according to Van Rensburg (1988:459) characterises the Griqua Afrikaans language. The literary significance of the word lies in the fact that it enforces the image of Dairos’ grandfather as a runt who is not taken seriously by anyone.

3.3.2.2 Geographical names

When a geographical name is given a particular association in the source language, the translator will most probably need to translate the word, in order to ensure the word has the same association in the target language. If the word is transferred, it may retain its cultural element, but the readers of the target language may not understand the particular association. The picturesque names of “Grootkuil”, “Omdraai” and “Bitterkalbas” have a special significance in the source text. “Omdraai” for example, refers to the warning that Dairos’ grandfather receives when he searches for the magical stone, and is ordered to turn around and go back, because of the dangers involved. “Bitterkalbas” refers to the place where Dairos’ grandfather could not drink the water. The translator should attempt to translate these geographical names in such a way that they retain their significance. He can do this by analysing the words and determining their function, e.g. “Omdraai” (an order or warning to turn around), “Grootkuil” (a place with lots of water) and “Bitterkalbas” (bitter water that is undrinkable).

3.3.2.3 Words containing “-goed”

The word “-goed” which occurs frequently in ‘(Matrys)’, is one of the most distinguishing characteristics of Griqua Afrikaans (Van Rensburg, 1997:23,24). The form has the same function that “hulle” has in standard Afrikaans, as in the word “ouma-hulle”. In fact, “-goed” replaces “hulle” to a large extent in Griqua Afrikaans, as pointed out by Nieuwoudt (1990:64). The word can also be attached to a personal name such as “Jorsiegoed” (24). Because there is no target language equivalent for this form, the translator may be forced to choose a culturally neutral term for the target text, e.g. substituting “Jorsiegoed” with “Jorsie”. This would, however, mean that the name loses its cultural significance, so it is necessary for the translator to find a way to mark the word in the target language, so that the reader can take notice of its significance. In the case of words like “boekegoed”, the translator could perhaps add “stuff” or “things” to “book”, in order to separate the word from the standard English equivalent.

3.3.2.4 Words containing “loop”

The word “loop” is a syntactic marker in Griqua Afrikaans, because the manner in which it is used is different from standard Afrikaans (Verhoef, 1988:100). The word “loop” presents a similar problem as “-goed”, because it has no obvious one-to-one equivalent in the target language text. It is important to know that “loop” in Griqua Afrikaans is not only used in the sense of going from one place to another, but can also be used figuratively. Examples of words containing “loop” in ‘(Matrys)’ include “Daar lê en loop hy glo so wyd...” (28-29) (Daar is hy glo so wyd) and “Party van hulle, so loop die storie nou...” (56) (Party van hulle, so *gaan* die storie nou).

3.3.2.5 Words containing “ge-”

The use of “ge” with words that do not usually take the form, is another distinguishing characteristic of Griqua Afrikaans (Van Rensburg, 1989:460). “Ge” is usually a past tense marker in standard Afrikaans, but in ‘(Matrys)’ it is used irrespective of past and present tense, and is combined with words which do not take the form at all in standard Afrikaans, such as “Gehēle land (27) and “gestorie” (102). Another sentence that uses “ge” in an unusual way, is “Die een *wil hê* dat hy net daar *gedood* het” (195). In this case, the purpose is to intensify the verb, i.e. effect. The same sentence in standard Afrikaans would read: “Die een *sê* dat hy net daar *dood* is.” In standard Afrikaans, the word “dood” does not take the form “ge”, but the Griquas became confused about when and where to use “ge”, which is why it is used with words such as “hele”, “storie” and “dood” (Verhoef, 1988:110).

3.3.2.6 Typical Griqua expressions

This category contains a wide variety of Griqua expressions that are steeped into the source language, and demand special consideration from the translator. These include expressions which are examples of *unusual compilations, typical morphological creations, characteristic markers of possession, reduction, derivation morphemes and repetition of the predicate* (Van Rensburg, 1997:23,24).

Unusual compilations Expressions which can be classified under this category are: “losklosklong” (3), “kruipkjind” (108) (this word is also an example of palatalisation), “knakbeentjies” (109) which also uses the diminutive form (“beentjies”) characteristic of Griqua Afrikaans (Van Rensburg, 1997:23,24), “blouwater” (23), “rolwater” (25) and “handhoog” (149) which detracts from the standard Afrikaans “hoë”.

Characteristic markers of possession: “Op hullese mae lê hulle” (55) (Van Rensburg,1997:23,24).

Characteristic morphological creations: (Van Rensburg,1997:23,24:).
“Doodsoek-se-dinge” (138)

Derivation morphemes: (Van Rensburg,1997:23,24) “Droë brood en *anderlike* goed” (68)

Repetition of the preposition: (uit) (Van Rensburg,1997:23,24). “Uit sal hulle nooit weer uitkom nie” (224-225).

Reduction: “Ek moet ‘n *vernaam* ding gaan doen; ...was daar *vernaam* een meer as waarde werd” (157,92). Here the word “vername” as it would be used in standard Afrikaans, is reduced to “vernaam”. Van Rensburg (1988:459) identifies reduction as characteristic of Griqua Afrikaans.

3.4 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to apply the categories from House (1981) and Klingberg (1986) to the source text ‘(Matrys)’. This was done by firstly analysing the text according to the categories selected from House (1981). Secondly, the categories selected from Klingberg (1986) as well as the new categories – typical Griqua words and typical Griqua expressions – were applied to the text in order to identify specific culturally embedded words, representative of the cultural element of the text. The categories from Klingberg (References to mythology and popular belief and Geographical names) (1986) were employed, because ‘(Matrys)’ contains several references to the mythology of the Griquas, and because the geographical names (which form part of the mythology) carry specific associations. The remaining categories (typical Griqua words and typical Griqua expressions) were employed in order to identify and analyse words which contain unique

grammatical elements, such as words containing “-goed”, the syntactical marker “ge” as well as unusual compilations, derivation morphemes and examples of reduction. These words are important, because they could present a translational problem, because they will have no easily identifiable one-to-one equivalents in the target text which will manifest in the form of shifts (a cultural word that is removed from its setting or neutralised). To test this presumption, the two unpublished commissioned translations by Combrink and Behrens (Addenda B & C) will be analysed and evaluated in order to identify translation strategies and their effectiveness in the translation of ‘(Matrys)’.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF TRANSLATIONS

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to determine whether the perceived translation challenges which were identified in the previous chapter, did in fact present problems to the translators of '(Matrys)'. The results are not only important for this chapter, but for the whole study, because language variation and its influence on literary translation forms the basis of the study. This chapter is an opportunity to illustrate the practical implications of the translation of a text written in a language variety. The two unpublished commissioned translations from Combrink and Behrens (Addendum B & C) will subsequently be analysed and compared on a micro-level in order to determine whether the translators were successful in dealing with the particular translation challenges presented by '(Matrys)'. In addition to this, the translation strategies used by each translator will be analysed and evaluated in order to determine their effectiveness.

4.2 Testing of perceived translation challenges

To test whether these perceived translation challenges did in fact offer problems to the translators, it is necessary to identify and analyse the *representative* items from each translation. The source text words as well as those from the two target texts will be tabled, to facilitate a comprehensive comparative analysis. The criteria which will be used to test the translations, will be the degree to which the target language words detract from the source language words (amount of shifts), i.e. the amount of *cultural equivalent* translations, as opposed to the amount of *functional equivalent* or *standard English equivalent* translations. If the functional equivalent and standard English equivalent translations exceed the cultural equivalent translations, one can conclude that most of the source text words had no easily identifiable equivalents in the target language. By employing these different degrees of

equivalence identified by Newmark (1988) and Klingberg (1986), it will be demonstrated that *equivalence* does still have a function in translation, but in terms of an *evaluation tool* and not as the *aim* of a translation. The reason why *equivalence* should not be the aim of translation was established in the previous chapter. The *functional equivalent* and *standard English equivalent* translations, as well as words which were transferred, will be identified by highlighting them in bold. It is important to note that these categorisations of the translation strategies are not exact, and are only used as a tool in order to evaluate the translations. It may happen that a particular strategy can be categorised as either a functional or descriptive equivalent. In such a case, the strategy was only placed in a single category for the sake of simplicity.

4.2.1 REFERENCES TO MYTHOLOGY AND POPULAR BELIEF

'(Matrys)' (Weideman) (Addendum A)	"(Matrix)" (Combrink) (Addendum B)	'(Matrys)' (Behrens) (Addendum C)
1. Vetlampies-se-tyd (19)	The time of the little lard lamps (20) (Cultural equivalent)	The time of the <i>vetlampies</i> (20) (Transference)
2. Voormense en voorvoormense (21)	Old people and old-old people (22) (Cultural equivalent)	Old folk and old-old folk (23) (Cultural equivalent)
3. Groot Slang (95)	Great Snake (97) (Cultural equivalent)	Big Snake (96-97) (Cultural equivalent)
4. Paljas-se-steen (105)	Bewitched (107) (Descriptive equivalent)	Magic-stone (107-108) (Descriptive equivalent)
5. Tkortemannetje (210)	Little fellow (219) (Standardised equivalent)	The little one (215) (Standardised equivalent)

4.2.2 GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES (KLINGBERG)

'(Matrys)' (Weideman) (Addendum A)	"(Matrix)" (Combrink) (Addendum B)	'(Matrys)' (Behrens) (Addendum C)
1. Grootkuil (125)	Big Waterhole (128) (Cultural equivalent)	Grootkuil (127) (Transference)
2. Omdraai (140)	Turnaround (145) (Cultural equivalent)	Omdraai (144) (Transference)
3. Bitterkalbas (191)	Bittergourd (201) (Cultural equivalent)	Bitterkalbas (197) (Transference)
4. Beenbreek (158)	Bonebreaker (Cultural equivalent) (163)	Beenbreek (163) (Transference)

4.2.3 WORDS CONTAINING "-GOED"

'(Matrys)' (Weideman) (Addendum A)	"(Matrix)" (Combrink) (Addendum B)	'(Matrys)' (Behrens) (Addendum C)
1. Oumagoed (20)	Old granny (21) (Standard English equivalent)	Ouma (20) (Transference)
2. Droë brood en anderlike goed (68)	Dry bread and other strange stuff (68) (Standard English equivalent)	Dry bread and other things (67) (Standard English equivalent)
3. Bliktrommels en boekegoed en anderlike goed (59)	Tin trunks and books and other kinds of stuff (59-60) (Standard English equivalent)	Tin trunks and book <i>things</i> and other <i>things</i> (57-58) (Functional equivalent)
4. 4. Sterkgoed (73)	Firewater (73) (Functional equivalent)	Strongwine (68) (Functional equivalent)
5. Hullese dragoed, velle en so, eierdoppe met bêregood (81)	Their little chattels, skins and so on, eggshells filled with bits and pieces (81-82) (Standard English equivalent)	Their wearing <i>things</i> , skins and such like, and eggshells for packing <i>things</i> in (80- 81) (Functional equivalent)
6. Jorsiegoed (28)	Georgy-boy (29) (Functional equivalent)	Jorsie (24) (Standard Afrikaans equivalent)

4.2.4 WORDS CONTAINING “LOOP”

‘(Matrys)’ (Weideman) (Addendum A)	“(Matrix)” (Combrink) (Addendum B)	‘(Matrys)’ (Behrens) (Addendum C)
1. Daar lê en <i>loop</i> hy glo so wyd dat jy van duskant af nie anderkant toe kan sien nie (28-29) (Meaning: moving from one place to another)	Over there...<i>it gets to be so wide that you cannot see the one end from the other</i> (30-31) (Standard English equivalent)	They say <i>it runs so wide that you cannot see the other side from this side</i> (28-29) (Functional equivalent)
2. Party van hulle, so <i>loop</i> die storie nou (56) (Meaning: figurative)	Some of them, so the story goes (57) (Standard English equivalent)	...or so <i>goes the story</i> (55) (Functional equivalent)
3. Toe kom <i>loop</i> twee van die mense daar aan (65) (Meaning: moving from one place to another)	And then two of the people came up (65-66) (Standard English equivalent)	Then two of the people walked in amongst them (64) (Standard English equivalent)
4. Moet jy nou maar nie alleen by die rivier <i>loop</i> speel nie (202) (Meaning: moving from one place to another)	Don’t you go and play at the river alone (211) (Standard English equivalent)	And don’t go play by the river on your own (207) (Standard English equivalent)

4.2.5 WORDS CONTAINING “GE-”

‘(Matrys)’ (Weideman) (Addendum A)	“(Matrix)” (Combrink) (Addendum B)	‘(Matrys)’ (Behrens) (Addendum C)
1. Gehele land (27)	All of the land (27-28) (Standard English equivalent)	All the land (27) (Standard English equivalent)
2. Of daar van die mense <i>gedood</i> het (39)	I don’t know whether people died there (41) (Standard English equivalent)	I don’t know if anyone died (39) (Standard English equivalent)
3. <i>Gestorie</i> (102)	Storied (104) (Cultural equivalent)	Others made stories (104) (Standard English equivalent)
4. Die een wil hê dat hy net daar <i>gedood</i> het (195)	The one story says that he died right there (204) (Standard English equivalent)	One of them wants him to have died right there (200) (Functional equivalent)

5. ...en hulle het die steen met mag gekom vat (221)	They came to take the stone with force (231) (Standard English equivalent)	...and they took the stone with force (225) (Standard English equivalent)
--	---	--

4.2.6 TYPICAL GRIQUA EXPRESSIONS

'(Matrys)' (Weideman) (Addendum A)	"(Matrix)" (Combrink) (Addendum B)	'(Matrys)' (Behrens) (Addendum C)
1. Losklosklong (3)	Wild and irresponsible youth (4) (Standard English equivalent)	In my youth (3) (Standard English equivalent)
2. Blouwater (23)	Blue water (24) (Cultural equivalent)	Blue water (24) (Cultural equivalent)
3. Rolwater (25)	The river roared and rolled (26) (Functional equivalent)	The river started to roll (26) (Functional equivalent)
4. Kos was nie bietjie volop nie (30)	Food was plentiful (32) (Standard English equivalent)	Food there was enough (30) (Functional equivalent)
5. Perdjiehare (36)	A horse's mane (37-38) (Standard English equivalent)	Horse hair (36) (Functional equivalent)
6. Bakleisee (41)	The fight of the sea (43-44) (Functional equivalent)	Storm sea (41) (Standard English equivalent)
7. Verwetter en verflenter (47)	Torn and fluttery (48) (Functional equivalent)	Weathered and tattered (46) (Functional equivalent)
8. Breeskip (58)	Broken ship (59) (Functional equivalent)	Broken ship (48) (Functional equivalent)
9. Op hullese mae lê hulle (55)	...they were all lying flat on their stomachs (55-56) (Standard English equivalent)	...on their bellies they were lying (54) (Functional equivalent)
10. Hulle't seker gedink die kind is nie reg wys nie (64-65)	They must have thought the child's head was not quite right (64-65) (Standard English equivalent)	They probably thought the child was not quite well in the head (63) (Standard English equivalent)
11. Vleiskos (67)	Meat (68) (Standard English equivalent)	Meat (66) (Standard English equivalent)
12. Was daar vernaam een meer as waarde werd (92)	There was one which was worth more than worth (94-95) (Cultural equivalent)	Worth more than worth itself (93) (Cultural equivalent)

13. Kruipkjind (108)	Crawler (110) (Cultural equivalent)	Crawling (110) (Functional equivalent)
14. Knakbeentjies (109)	Spindly legs (111)	Bent legs (111)
15. Hy was eenmanier so verspot (120)	He was so runty (123) (Standard English equivalent)	He was so stunted (122) (Standard English equivalent)
16. Doodsoek-se-dinge (138)	Looking for death (142) (Functional equivalent)	Death-wishing (142) (Standard English equivalent)
17. Ek moet 'n vernaam ding gaan doen (157)	I have an important thing to do (162) (Standard English equivalent)	...a big thing I have to do (162) (Functional equivalent)
18. Klapper (156)	Chattering (161) (Standard English equivalent)	Chattering (161) (Standard English equivalent)
19. Moeër as moeg (161)	Weary to death (168) (Standard English equivalent)	More tired than tired (167) (Cultural equivalent)
20. Die nag wil-wil net begin padgee (162)	The night was just about to depart (168) (Functional equivalent)	The night was almost leaving (167) (Functional equivalent)
21. Ander weet te vertel (198)	Other stories say (207) (Standard English equivalent)	One of them wants him to have died right there (200) (Functional equivalent)
22. ...het sy ou knakbeentjies sulke stewige latte geword (212-213)	...his own knobbly, runty little legs had become tree trunks (221,222) (Functional equivalent)	...his little bent legs had become as strong as branches (217,218) (Functional equivalent)
23. Die meisiekind smaak baie vir hom (213)	The girl was looking at him with lusty eyes (222-223) (Standard English equivalent)	And the girl liked him (218) (Standard English equivalent)
24. Toe sal hy sien (148)	Then he could see (153) (Standard English equivalent)	And he saw that someone was sitting inside the fire (152-153) (Standard English equivalent)
25. 'n Handhoog mensie (149)	Only as big as his hand (154) (Standard English equivalent)	A small hand-high person (153) (Functional equivalent)
26. Diekant en douriekant (146)	This side and that (151) (Standard English equivalent)	Dairos' oupa looked this way and that way (150) (Standard English equivalent)

27. Uit sal hulle nooit weer uitkom nie (224- 225)	They knew then that they would never get out again (234-235) (Standard English equivalent)	Never would they come out from here (228-229) (Standard English equivalent)
--	---	--

The fact that most of the items from the identified categories were translated with culturally neutral or standard English equivalents is proof that it was no easy task finding equivalents for these items, which is why the translators made use of translations strategies such as *transference*, *functional equivalents*, *descriptive equivalents* and *standard English equivalents*.

The words where most shifts occurred, and that were obviously the most difficult to translate, were words which had a unique grammatical structure, such as “paljas-se-steen”, “Jorsiegoed”, “gehele”, “gedood” and “losklosklong.” Because these words and expressions are examples of unique Griqua grammar, they do not have easily identifiable one-to-one equivalents in the target language. Because of the degree of language variation involved, there are also varying degrees of *equivalence* between source text words and target language words. This is an important point, because this study is based on the assumption that because language variation occurs, it is unrealistic to expect one-to-one *equivalence* when translating a literary text. This is especially true when the object of translation is written in a non-standard language variety such as ‘(Matrys)’, as can clearly be seen when the source text and the two translations are compared. The level of *equivalence* that will be used in the evaluation of the translations encompasses not only meaning, but also the degree of cultural *equivalence* of the target language words. Because of the difficulty involved in finding cultural equivalents for these words, many of the source text words which contain unique grammatical elements, were translated with culturally neutral or standard English equivalents, as well as functional and descriptive equivalents.

4.3 Evaluation of translated items

4.3.1 References to mythology and popular belief

Vetlampies-se-tyd.

Combrink: “The time of the little lard lamps.”

Behrens: “The time of the *vetlampies*.”

Combrink retained the expression’s cultural element in the target text, by retaining those words which are crucial to the reader’s comprehension of the expression: “vetlampies” (lard lamps) and “tyd” (tyd van) (the time of), as well as staying close to the form of the original word.

Behrens transferred the cultural word to the target text in its original form. The sentence retains its cultural element, but this may be at the expense of the reader’s comprehension of its significance i.e. a reader who is not familiar with the culture and does not understand the word’s cultural significance. According to Klingberg (1986:30), cultural words should be translated, if they are to be understood by readers of the target text. It is the translator’s duty to translate and explain; to make clear that that is obscured by culture.

Voormense en voor-voormense.

Combrink: “Old people and old-old people”

Behrens: “Old folk and old-old folk.”

Repetition and unusual compilation (Van Rensburg,1989:459). Both the translators were successful in transferring the cultural element to the target text, by translating the source text expression, with an equivalent in the target language. “Voormense” can be equated with “voorgeslagte” in standard Afrikaans, which translates as “ancestors” in standard English. Ancestors are people who lived a long time ago, which is why the word “old” is important for the reader’s comprehension of the expression. “Old-old” is also important, because it detracts from the standard English form of the word, signifying the word’s cultural importance.

Paljas-se-steen.

Combrink: “Bewitched”

Behrens: “Magic-stone”

Example of typical morphological structure found in Griqua Afrikaans (Van Rensburg, 1997:23,24). In this case, both the translators translated “paljas-se-steen” with culturally neutral terms. “Bewitched” is the standard English equivalent of “getoor” and “magic-stone” translates back into Afrikaans as “toorsteen”. This technique can be equated with one of the translation strategies listed by Klingberg (1986:18), namely rewording the original term, which comes down to the transference of the word’s meaning, but not the cultural element. While this option does provide a clear meaning of the original word, its cultural significance is lost to the reader of the target text. The translated words can be classified as *descriptions* of the source text word, rather than *representations*.

Tkortemannetjie.

Combrink: “Little fellow”

Behrens: “The little one”

Reduction and the diminutive form (Van Rensburg, 1997:23,24). Here the source text word is reworded to a standard English term/s, which transfers the meaning, but not its cultural element. The word “tkorte” in “tkortemannetjie” is especially significant, because it is a reduction of “het kort”. A possible option is choosing an English equivalent for either “kort” or “mannetjie”, which detracts from the standard version, and would signify the word’s cultural significance. The word “little” could be substituted, for example, with “short”, and instead of “fellow” the translator can choose a non-standard form of the word such as “fella”. The target language word would then be a less standardised term such as “shortfella.”

4.3.2 Geographical names

Grootkuil.

Combrink: “Big Waterhole”

Behrens: “Grootkuil”

Beenbreek:

Combrink: “Bonebreaker”

Behrens: “Beenbreek”

Omdraai.

Combrink: “Turnaround”

Behrens: “Omdraai”

Bitterkalbas.

Combrink: “Bittergourd”

Behrens: “Bitterkalbas”

Combrink translated the geographical names according to their function, e.g. using “big” (groot) and “water” (kuil) as the key elements, and translating the word as “Big Waterhole”. The same applies to the other geographical names: “Omdraai”, “Beenbreek” and “Bitterkalbas”; all of these were translated according to their function in the source text (a warning to turn around; a place where it is easy to fall down and hurt yourself, and a place where the water is bitter). **Behrens** preferred transferring the geographical names in their original form to the target text “Grootkuil, Beenbreek, Omdraai, Bitterkalbas.”

4.3.3 Words containing “-goed”

Oumagoed.

Combrink: “Old granny”.

Behrens: “Ouma”

Both translators chose culturally neutral equivalents for this word, but while **Combrink** translated the word, **Behrens** transferred the original word to the target text. The fact that “-goed” was not accounted for in any of the

translations, means that the cultural element was lost in the target text. “-Goed” functions in Griqua Afrikaans, as a marker of unique Griqua Afrikaans morphology (Van Rensburg,1989:459). The word replaces “hulle” which occurs frequently in standard Afrikaans (Nieuwoudt,1990:64). “-Goed” is sometimes attached to personal names such as “Jorsiegoed.” In this case, Combrink accounted for the Griqua form, by translating the word as “Georgy-boy”. “Boy” does not have the same meaning as “-goed”, but it detracts from the standard English equivalent, and stays true to the form of the original word. Behrens chose a culturally neutral equivalent: “Jorsie.” The presence and function of “-goed” is especially important in Griqua Afrikaans.

Bliktrommels en boekegoed en anderlike goed.

Combrink: “Tin trunks and books and other kinds of stuff”

Behrens: “Tin trunks and book things and other things”

This sentence contains words with unique morphological structures (“boekegoed”) as well as syntactical markers in the form of a derivation morpheme (“anderlike”) (Van Rensburg,1997:23,24,). **Combrink** translated this expression without its cultural element, i.e. a standard English equivalent. **Behrens’** translation does signify “-goed”, by adding “things” to the words, as in “book things”.

4.3.4 Words containing “loop”

Daar lê en loop hy glo so wyd...

Combrink: “Over there...it gets to be so wide...”

Behrens: “They say it runs so wide...”

“Loop” is characteristic of Griqua Afrikaans as a syntactic marker (Verhoef,1988:100). **Combrink** signified “lê en loop” with “gets to be” in her translation, and **Behrens** translated it with “runs”. “Gets to be” is a relatively accurate approximation of “lê en loop”, while “runs” refers to the function of “loop” in the sense of running water.

accurate approximation of “lê en loop”, while “runs” refers to the function of “loop” in the sense of running water.

Moet jy nou maar nie alleen by die rivier loop speel nie.

Combrink: “Don’t you go and play at the river alone.”

Behrens: “And don’t you go and play by the river on your own.”

Translated with the standard English equivalent: “go” points to moving from one point to another. Once again, the use of “loop” is typical to Griqua Afrikaans (Verhoef,1988:100) and is not a reference to moving from one point to another. Many words in Griqua Afrikaans function outside their original meaning, i.e. outside the meaning determined by Griqua Afrikaans, but these words do contribute to the overall cultural element present in ‘(Matrys)’, and should not always be dismissed as unimportant.

4.3.5 Words containing “ge-”

Gehele land.

Combrink: “All of the land”

Behrens: “All the land”

“Ge” is, in this case, taken out of its original context as a past tense marker, and combined with a word that is an adjective and does not take the form in standard Afrikaans (Van Rensburg,1997:23,24). Both translators translated the word with the standard English equivalent “all” or “all of”, taking the word out of its cultural context.

Gestorie.

Combrink: “Storied”

Behrens: “Others made stories”

Characteristic form of the verb “storie” (Van Rensburg,1997:23,24). **Combrink’s** translation stays true to the form of the original, and retains the cultural element of the original word. **Behrens’** translation rewords the source text word into the standard English equivalent,

thereby taking the word out of its cultural context, providing only its function in the target text.

4.3.6 Typical Griqua expressions

Losklosklong.

Combrink: "Wild and irresponsible youth"

Behrens: "In my youth"

Unusual compilation (Van Rensburg, 1989:459). **Combrink's** translation is an accurate approximation of the word's meaning, but the cultural element is not present. **Behrens'** translation is also the standard English equivalent of the source text word. The importance of the original word lies not only in the word "klong" which means young child, but also the words "losklos" which adds another meaning to the word: "wild, irresponsible, etc." Behrens' translation is therefore not completely accurate, because it only transfers one part of the word's meaning, namely that of youthfulness.

Rolwater.

Combrink: "The river roared and rolled"

Behrens: "The river started to roll"

Unusual compilation (Van Rensburg, 1989:459). Both translators translated the word into the Standard English equivalents, transferring meaning to the source text, but not the cultural element embedded in the form of the word. It is in fact a compilation between two separate words, "rol" and "water". This type of compilation is typical of the Griqua Afrikaans language, which gives the word its characteristic structure.

Bakleisee.

Combrink: "The fight of the sea"

Behrens: "Storm sea."

This expression is an unusual compilation (Van Rensburg,1997:23,24:) since it personifies the sea, by ascribing human characteristics to it. Combrink's translation is a close cultural equivalent to the original word, retaining the personification of the sea in the word "fight". Behrens chose the standardised version of the word, namely "storm", omitting the cultural element and its associations.

Op hullese mae lê hulle

Combrink: "...they were lying on their stomachs"

Behrens: "...on their stomachs they were lying"

"Hullese" is a typical indicator of possession in Griqua Afrikaans (Van Rensburg,1997:23). The unique form of the word makes it difficult to find an equivalent, as can be seen in the translations. **Combrink** neutralised the word by using "they". **Behrens** attempted to signify the word's significance by using both "their" and "they" and arranging the sentence-order in an unusual way.

Verwetter en verflenter.

Combrink: "Torn and fluttery"

Behrens: "Weathered and tattered"

The word "verwetter" is this particular expression's most distinguishing characteristic in terms of form, rhythm and sound. Combrink translated the expression with the standardised English equivalent. Behrens' translation "weathered" is a close approximation of the word, also as far as form is concerned.

Kruipkjind.

Combrink: "Crawler"

Behrens: "Crawling"

The palatalisation present in this word (the "j" in "kjind") is a distinguishing characteristic as well as the fact that it is an unusual compilation (Van Rensburg,1997:23,24). **Combrink** signified this by translating the word as

“crawler”, thus as a noun, while **Behrens** chose the more standardised form, “crawling”, omitting the word’s distinguishing form.

Knakbeentjies.

Combrink: “Spindly legs”

Behrens: “Bent legs”

Unusual compilation (Van Rensburg,1997:23,24:). This word is used to enforce the image of Dairos’ grandfather as a silly runt, which no one takes seriously. **Combrink’s** translation is “spindly”, which means “long, thin and weak looking”, like that of a grasshopper (which Dairos’ grandfather is also compared to). **Behrens** translated the word as “bent” which is also accurate as far as meaning is concerned, since it can also signify a physical impairment.

Hy was eenmanier so verspot.

Combrink: “He was so runty”

Behrens: “He was just so stunted”

Combrink translated “verspot” as “runty” which means “undersized” or “ridiculous”. **Behrens’** translation “stunted” which means “physically retarded”. This is a fitting description for Dairos’ grandfather who was physically impaired. The word “eenmanier” is in this instance an adverb, and is used for affect. As such, it does not influence the meaning of the sentence, but it is an example of the form of a typical Griqua expression (Van Rensburg,1997:23,24).

Doodsoek-se-dinge.

Combrink: “Looking for death”

Behrens: “Death-wishing”

Combrink translated this Griqua expression which contains a unique morphological structure (Van Rensburg,1989:459) with a functional equivalent, which stays true to the meaning of the expression, although it does not have the striking form of the original. The same can be said of

Behrens' translation, which standardises the expression. The cultural element of the source text expression is not only contained in the word "doodsoek", but in the "se" which combines "doodsoek" and "dinge".

Die meisiekind smaak baie vir hom.

Combrink: "The girl was looking at him with lusty eyes."

Behrens: "And the girl liked him."

The significance of this expression lies in the use of "smaak" as well as "vir" which is characteristic of the syntax of Griqua Afrikaans (Van Rensburg, 1989:459). **Combrink's** translation of "smaak", "lusty" signifies an eagerness to possess. **Behrens'** translation "like": "to be fond of; to have preference for." This is an accurate translation of the word's meaning, but "like" does not have the striking effect that "smaak" has in the source text. Neither the of the translations account for the word "vir", which carries cultural significance.

Anderlike: (Droë brood en anderlike goed)

Both translators chose to omit "anderlike" – a derivation morpheme characteristic of Griqua Afrikaans according to Van Rensburg (1997:24) – from their translations: Combrink translated the sentence as "Dry bread and other strange stuff" (68) while Behrens translated it as "Dry bread and other things" (67). This is one of the more difficult words to translate, because there is no equivalent to "anderlike" in English. It is for this reason that both translators neutralised the expression.

Diekant en douriekant.

Combrink: "This side and that."

Behrens: "And Dairos' oupa looked this way and that way."

Combrink and **Behrens** both neutralised the expression, by concentrating on transferring the meaning of the expression, rather than its form. The significance of the expression lies in its form (*diekant*; *douriekant*) its rhythm and the tone in which it is presented. The "ou" in "dourie" is in fact a

diphthong, which is also found in words such as “blou” and “oud” (Coetzee, 1985:49). The translator should also keep in mind the source of the expression, because it is part of the distinct vocabulary of the narrator, Elsie. The function of the expression should be seen in the context of the text as a whole. If no equivalent exists in the target language, the translator could signify the word’s significance, by choosing a form of “this way and that way” that detracts from standard English, but only if it does not obscure the meaning of the word. In the end, the translated word has to be comprehensible to the reader.

Uit sal hulle nooit weer uitkom nie.

(Hulle sal nooit weer daar uitkom nie) They would never get out of there.

Combrink: “They knew that they would never get out again.”

Behrens: “Never would they come out from there.”

The two prepositions in this sentence, “uit” and “uitkom” are culturally embedded in Griqua Afrikaans (Van Rensburg, 1997:23,24). **Combrink** and **Behrens** both translated the sentence with the standard English equivalent, which contains the single preposition. Although this does not have an influence on the meaning of the sentence, the double preposition is indicative of the sentence’s cultural origin, and the overall tone of the text. This unique use of the preposition could be indicated in the target text as follows: “From *out* there they would never get *out of*.”

The strategies used by the translators can now be identified as *transference*, *functional equivalence*, *cultural equivalence*, *descriptive equivalence* and *standard English equivalence*. The following section will evaluate these translation strategies in terms of their effectiveness in transferring the source text’s cultural element to the target text.

4.4 Evaluation of translation strategies

4.4.1 Transference

Transference involves “transferring a SL word to a TL text as a translation procedure” (Newmark,1988:81). According to Newmark (1988:82), cultural words are transferred in “regional novels and essays...to give local colour, to attract the reader, to give a sense of intimacy between the text and the reader – sometimes the sound or the evoked image appears attractive.” Klingberg (1986:16) also has strong feelings concerning the translator’s right to alter the text or not. However, he also concedes that adaptation is necessary sometimes. There are arguments for and against transference. The arguments in favour of transference are that it shows respect for the SL culture. The argument against it is that it is the translator’s job to translate and explain (Newmark,1988:82), making the target audience understand an unknown culture. Behrens used this technique for the geographical names in the text (Grootkuil, Beenbreek, Omdraai, Bitterkalbas). Transference is allowable in cases where the source text contains sounds or grammatical structures, which are not found in the target language. But in the case of ‘(Matrys)’, the meaning and function of these words can be determined and transposed – even in the form of a descriptive equivalent. The translator should choose a strategy that makes the meaning of such culturally embedded words clear to the target text reader.

4.4.2 Cultural equivalent

This method involves the substitution of a concept in the source language, for an equivalent in the target language. According to Newmark (1988:83) they can be used for the sake of readers who are ignorant of the source language culture, and have a greater pragmatic impact than culturally neutral terms. Combrink uses this procedure in the translation of the geographical names (Big Waterhole, Turnaround, Bonebreaker). A cultural equivalent can help the

target text reader grasp the meaning of a word more easily, by placing it in a more familiar cultural context, using the particular grammatical structures of the target language (Newmark,1988:83).

4.4.3 Functional equivalent

This method involves rewording the original word, transferring the meaning of the word, but not the cultural element. It therefore generalises or neutralises a cultural word. This method is used by both translators on a number of occasions, especially in the case of Griqua words containing the word “-goed”, e.g. when Behrens signifies “-goed” by adding “things” to particular words (boekegoed/ bookthings). “Things” is in this case not a cultural equivalent but it does fulfil the function of “-goed” in the target text. Newmark (1988:83) calls this procedure the most accurate way of translating, and occupies “the middle, sometimes the universal, area between the SL language or culture and the TL language or culture.” While this is true, the translator has to keep in mind that when dealing with a text such as ‘(Matrys)’, it is important not to remove the text completely from its cultural context, because this is where much of the text’s appeal and importance lies. The translator has the chance of introducing the target audience to a culture and a language variety of which they probably know nothing. This procedure is acceptable if the cultural element of a word obscures its meaning or function to the target audience.

4.4.4 Descriptive equivalent

This is also an option when the source text term contains unique grammatical elements, as in the case of “paljas-se-steen”. Combrink translated this word as “bewitched”, and by Behrens as “magic-stone.” Although these translations neutralised the original word, they accurately describe its function as a stone that holds great powers. If the source text word was transferred in order to

retain the cultural element, the target language readers would most likely not grasp its meaning, without a footnote, or added explanation.

4.4.5 Standard English equivalent

Here the source language concept is substituted for an equivalent in the target language. This involves omitting the cultural element and standardising the form of the source text word, moving it closer to everyday English. This technique is used frequently by both translators, when there is no clear target language equivalent for a cultural word or term (e.g. for source text words such as “gehele” and “gedood”), and it can also be employed when the cultural element obscures the meaning of the word. However, if used too frequently – especially when dealing with a text such as ‘(Matrys)’ – the text may lose its unique cultural characteristics, which is most probably the source of its appeal. The translator should find a balance between transferring the meaning of a word, and staying true to its cultural origin, because in many cases the cultural element lends a striking quality to the word in the source text.

4.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been the evaluation of the two unpublished commissioned translations by Combrink and Behrens in terms of their success in retaining the cultural element of the source text. Certain translation strategies identified by Klingberg (1986) and Newmark (1988) were also identified and evaluated in terms of their applicability to a text such as ‘(Matrys)’.

Each of these translation strategies contains advantages as well as drawbacks, when applied to a text written in a non-standard language variant such as ‘(Matrys)’. *Transference* seems to be the least effective strategy in

this case, because transferred words do not bridge the gap between source text and target text. This is because they are loan words, transposed to the target text, without being adapted to the grammatical structures of the target language. Because these words are not translated, they are not explained to the target text reader. The result of this is that the transferred words stay shrouded in the cultural aura of the source text, and are not absorbed into the target culture, like other translated words. All words should be translated in order to demystify them for the target text reader, either by employing *functional equivalents*, *descriptive equivalents*, *standard language equivalents* or *cultural equivalents*.

Functional equivalents, *descriptive equivalents* and *standard language equivalents* function differently from each other, either concentrating on transferring the meaning of the word, describing the function of the word, or standardising the word. All have something in common: culturally neutralising the source text word. This is acceptable in some cases, e.g. when the cultural element may obscure the word's meaning, or when a cultural element employed largely for effect, has no identifiable equivalent in the target language. However, culturally equivalent translation appears to have some advantages not shared by the other procedures.

Culturally equivalent words have a greater pragmatic effect than culturally neutral terms. Because such words employ the particular grammatical structures of the target language, they place the words in a cultural context familiar to the readers of the target text. This will demystify a source text word or expression, making its meaning clearer to the reader. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find cultural equivalents to the unique grammatical forms of Griqua words, especially words such as "doodsoek-se-dinge", "oumagoed" and "hullese", because such forms mostly do not exist in standard English. This is why it is sometimes necessary to translate a cultural word with a standard target language equivalent, a functional or descriptive equivalent. In the end,

the target text reader's comprehension of a word as well as its significance, is the most important objective of the translator.

The conclusion can now be made that although the translators did not succeed in preserving the cultural element of every word and expression, they did succeed in preserving the overall cultural element as well as the tone of the source text. The fact is, the loss of certain words and expressions is inevitable, which is why one should not evaluate a translation based only on individual words and expressions, but based on the translation as a whole. These two translations of '(Matrys)' could help to familiarise a reader with the Griqua culture and some of the mythological stories which characterise that culture. It is evident that the most appropriate translation strategy (in the case of a culturally embedded text) is one which succeeds in retaining the cultural element of the text, and stays true to the word-order, sentence-rhythm and unusual forms of the words and expressions in the source text. But the analysis and evaluation of the two translations of '(Matrys)' revealed that it is very difficult to do this, because the original words make use of language in such a unique way, that it is very difficult – if at all possible – to find target language equivalents for each and every word. In many cases, the translators had to choose words that retain the meaning of the source text words, but not the cultural element. But, as pointed out previously, the translator should not concentrate on the *meaning* of individual words and expressions, but rather on the transference of the *overall cultural element*. Translation theorists such as Derrida (1982:15) points out that meaning is in fact in a constant state of flux, changing with every reading and every translation. The success of a translation should not be measured according to the level of *equivalence* between source and target text, but rather the level to which the target text has been acculturated.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to determine the role of language variation in literary translation. This was done by firstly determining the origin of language variation and the difference between standard and non-standard language. It was determined that variety in language exists because language is not a stable entity with fixed rules. Furthermore, language is used as a communication tool by a variety of people from different levels of society and different cultures. Because of differences in culture and environment, people have different needs and different ways of using language to express themselves. Language variation manifests itself in society in the form of dialects.

It was determined that a non-standard language differs from standard language in a number of ways, in terms of usage and status. Hudson (1980:33) identifies the different processes a language variety will have to pass through to become a standard language: selection, codification and elaboration of function. To gain the status of a standard language, a particular variety will have to be accepted by the dominant class as their tool for communication.

A geolect or dialect is not the result of a lack of education or ignorance, but is rather a reflection of the speaker's identity, his social origin and his speech community (Gregory & Carroll, 1978:12). A user's geographical as well as his social origin will be determining factors in making his particular language a dialect. It was found that a number of factors determined the development of Griqua Afrikaans, a geolect that exists in addition to standard Afrikaans.

Henning (1983:9) describes Griqua Afrikaans as the result of language conversion, which occurred when the original Griquas first came into contact

with Afrikaans. Over an unknown period of time, the Griquas abandoned their own language and accepted Afrikaans as their new language. This process was completed over a period of three generations: as time passed, the newer generations became alienated from their mother tongue and adapted Afrikaans as their new language (Henning, 1983:9).

It was determined that Griqua Afrikaans contains a number of characteristics that separate it from standard Afrikaans. They were identified for the purposes of this study as the following: palatalisation, morphological forms, unusual compilations, diminutive words, words combined with “-goed” and syntactical markers such as “loop” (Van Rensburg, 1989:458-460).

The unique words and expressions found in a non-standard language variety such as Griqua Afrikaans will in most cases have no clear target language equivalents. When encountering language variation, the translator will need to be sensitive to the cultural peculiarities of the source text. The source text may contain words or expressions unique to a particular culture. These unique words and expressions could be the result of the influence of a specific region, which is why the translator should be familiar with *Landeskunde*, because it studies the influence that a specific region has on a group of people – specifically the cultural influence on language. As stated before, different cultures have different ways of thinking and different views, which makes *Landeskunde* an important object of study.

Any culture has a unique way of expressing the needs and views of its people, and the translator will need to be attentive to the particular manifestations of a culture as stated by Beuchat and Valdivieso (1992:13). This means that the translator will need to become a transmitter of culture, and not only a vehicle for transferring language.

Because culturally embedded words and expressions may have specific associations in the source text, they cannot simply be deleted or

standardised, since this will create shifts in the target language text. Shifts are only allowable when a particular word or expression does not have any cultural significance, as pointed out previously by Newmark (1988:49). But it is also true that finding one-to-one equivalents for these words and expressions will be problematic, if at all possible. *Equivalence* was found not to have much value for literary translation as a prescriptive approach. It can function as a translation tool for the description of a particular translation, i.e. evaluation, but should not be the aim of translation – specifically not literary translation. The reason for this is that no text is created in a vacuum: it is created as part of a particular culture at a particular time. The source text culture may contain certain cultural peculiarities which could impose certain restrictions on the translator, as also pointed out by Gentzler (1993:194): “The language restraints imposed by the receiving culture are enormous, yet the possibility of creating new relations in the target language are also vivid.”

The conclusion was made that it is impossible to produce a translated text that exactly mirrors the source text, especially when language variation is a factor in translation. As Bassnett-McGuire (1981:25) points out, translation involves far more than the replacement of lexical and grammatical items between languages, especially when the objects of translation include idioms and metaphors.

Translation should in fact be viewed as an intracultural activity and not as an interlinguistic process (Gentzler,1993:186). Doing this will enable the translator to concentrate less on the form of the translation. This is an important statement, because the analysis of '(Matrys)' (Addendum A) and its two translations (Addendum B & C) revealed that the culture from which a text originates is reflected in the text itself. Therefore, the translator needs to study the context of the text as a whole, and not concentrate only on the form of the text. Scholars such as Derrida, Even-Zohar and Toury devised alternatives to linguistics-based and hermeneutic approaches to translation. This is why these approaches were investigated in order to identify concepts applicable to

translating a text written in a language variety. Even-Zohar's polysystem theory extended the boundaries of traditional translation theory by placing translation in a larger cultural context, thereby recognising the impact of language variation on literary translation. Toury expanded theoretical boundaries by studying translations in their cultural-linguistic context, including translational 'norms' in his theory. By doing this, he acknowledged the instability of meaning, which varies as a result of differences in language and culture. Derrida adopted the instability of meaning in his theory of difference: he defines translation as a practice which constantly defers and displaces that which is named by the original, placing 'meaning' beyond one's reach. Derrida makes the point that no pure meaning exists in translation, because a text's meaning varies from person to person and from culture to culture.

The most relevant features of these theories were selected and combined as follows: in literary translation, the historical situation (Even-Zohar,1978:28) and the cultural linguistic context (Toury,1980:92) in which a text is embedded are important and any translation theory or strategy needs to vary itself according to these factors. The analysis of the source text '(Matrys)' and its two translations proved this statement. Because the text was embedded in a specific culture - Griqua Afrikaans - it demanded a different approach than a text written in a standard language variety, with no unique cultural characteristics.

The cultural linguistic context should also be studied because there are structural differences between languages. Studying languages in their particular socio-linguistic contexts means that prescriptive approaches to translation will be replaced by a descriptive approach (Toury,1980:92). This approach recognises the instability of meaning which is illustrated in translation itself, because meaning varies from person to person and culture to culture (Derrida,1982:15).

The instability of meaning is also a result of the varying nature of language. The conclusion was made that the translator needs to accommodate this by analysing a source text in its cultural context, and devise translation strategies, which are not only aimed at transferring meaning, but meaning, embedded in a specific culture. For this purpose, the translation categories of House (1981) and Klingberg (1986) were analysed and selected and combined in order to analyse the source text and identify culturally embedded words and expressions. This analysis and evaluation took place on the micro-level, due to the limited scope of this study. Certain translation strategies by Newmark (1988) and Klingberg (1986) were analysed and selected according to their compatibility for translating a text such as '(Matrys)'.

'(Matrys)' was subsequently analysed according to the categories selected from House (1981). It was determined that the text is written in Griqua Afrikaans, a gelect of standard Afrikaans and contains many words and expressions with a unique grammatical structure, which reflect its socio-cultural origin. Two categories were created to deal with the specific characteristics of '(Matrys)', namely *typical Griqua words* and *typical Griqua expressions*. These categories were employed in addition to *references to mythology and popular belief* and *geographical names*. In addition to the identification and analysis of culturally embedded words and expressions, two unpublished commissioned translations by Combrink and Behrens were analysed and evaluated in order to identify the translation strategies used by the translators, and evaluate their effectiveness. The effectiveness of the translation strategies was evaluated in terms of their ability to bridge the gap between the source and the target text.

The evaluation of the two translations revealed that the two translators employed translation strategies such as *functional equivalence*, *descriptive equivalence*, *cultural equivalence* and *standard English equivalence*. Behrens employed the technique of transference most often, when dealing with geographical names and source text words containing the word "-goed."

Transference was found to be less effective than the other strategies, because the target text word is not adapted to the grammatical structures of the source text. The result is that these words and expressions are not translated and explained to the reader, and are subsequently not absorbed into the target text culture, as is the case when a cultural equivalent is employed. A cultural equivalent involves substituting a concept in the source language for an equivalent in the target language (Klingberg, 1986:18). The remaining strategies (functional equivalents, descriptive equivalents, standard English equivalents) function differently from each other, but all have something in common: neutralising the source text word. This will make the meaning clearer to the target text reader, by omitting the cultural element. Although this technique is acceptable in some cases, e.g. when a cultural word obscures the meaning of a text, the translator should be sensitive to the cultural character of the source text. He or she should find a balance between transferring the meaning of a word, and staying true to its cultural origin, because the cultural element may lend an evocative and striking quality to the word or expression.

It was determined that it is difficult and sometimes impossible to find cultural equivalents to the unique grammatical forms of Griqua Afrikaans words such as “doodsoek-se-dinge”, “oumagoed” and “hullese”, because of their unique grammatical form. This makes it sometimes necessary to translate a culturally embedded word or expression with a standard target language equivalent, a functional or a descriptive equivalent.

The conclusion can now be made that language variation does have an impact on the translation of a literary text. The fact that a non-standard language variety is mostly steeped in a unique culture such as the text ‘(Matrys)’, means that the text will contain unique expressions as well as words with a unique grammatical structure. The analysis and evaluation of the two translations of ‘(Matrys)’ proved the assumption that one-to-one *equivalence* is not a realistic aim in such a case, since most of the source

text's words and expressions do not coincide with standard Afrikaans, and will therefore not coincide with standard English. Thus, the loss of certain cultural elements was inevitable. However, this loss has to be measured against the fact that a translation of a text which represents a marginal language and culture, will introduce the text to an audience most of whom would probably be ignorant of it. The translator will thus prolong the life of the source text – if he is aware of the text's cultural peculiarities and succeeds in transposing these to the target text. The two unpublished commissioned translations succeeded in doing this - despite the loss of certain words and expressions - by staying true to the tone and the manner in which the source text was written. The translation strategies discussed in this study are not meant to be prescriptive, because every text is embedded in a unique situation and will demand a different approach from the translator. The translator needs to vary his approach to a particular text, along with the degree of language variation he is dealing with. He cannot hope to transpose all the cultural elements, but should strive to retain the overall character of the source text and transpose this to the target text. Thus, the success of the translation should not be measured according to its *equivalence* to the source text, but rather the degree to which the target text has been acculturated.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- Aucamp, H. 1994. "So word Afrikaans 'n Stradivarius" (*In: Insig*: October. p.b4)
- Alswang, J. & Van Rensburg, A. 1990. An English usage dictionary. Johannesburg: Educum.
- Bassnett-McGuire, S. 1991. Translation Studies. London: Routledge.
- Beuchat, C. & Valdivieso, C. 1992. Translation of children's literature: Intercultural communication. *Bookbird*, 30 (1) March.
- Claasen, G.N. & Van Rensburg, M.C.J. 1993. Taalverskeidenheid: 'n Blik op die spektrum van taalvariasie in Afrikaans. Pretoria, Kaapstad & Johannesburg: Academica.
- Carroll, S. & Gregory, M. 1978. Language and situation: language varieties and their social contexts. London: Routledge & Paul.
- Catford, J.C. 1965. A linguistic theory of translation: an Essay in applied linguistics. London: Oxford University Press.
- Coetzee, A. 1985. Fonetiek. Kaapstad: Academica.
- Crystal, D. & Davy, D. 1969. Investigating English style. London: Longman.
- Derrida, J. 1982. Margins of philosophy. Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Press.
- Dittmar, N. 1976. Sociolinguistics. London: Edward Arnold.
- Du Plessis, H. 1988. Variasietalkunde. Pretoria: Serva.
- Du Plessis, H. 1999. "Tweebektaal: Afrikaans van die Grootrivier" (*In: Rooi Rose*: Augustus 4. p. 36-39)
- Erdmenger, M. & Istel, H. 1973. Didaktiek der Landeskunde. München: Max Heuber.
- Even-Zohar, I. 1978. Papers in historical poetics. Tel Aviv: Porter Inst. for Poetics and Semiotics.
- Gentzler, E. 1993. Contemporary translation theories. London & New York: Routledge.
- Hatim, B. & Mason, I. 1990. Discourse and the translator. London & New York: Longman.

- Henning, P.J.P. 1983. Vokaalvariasie in die Afrikaans van die Griekwas van Griekwaland-Wes. PU for CHE. (Unpublished M.A. dissertation)
- Hermans, T. 1985. "Translation Studies and a new paradigm" (*In: Hermans, T. (ed) The manipulation of literature: studies in literary translation. London & Sydney: Croom Helm. p.7-15*)
- House, J. 1981. A Model for translation quality assessment. Tübingen: Narr.
- Hudson, R.A. 1980. Sociolinguistics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jansen, E. 1994. "Gekomponeerde bundel" (*In: De Kat, December. p.120,121*)
- Klingberg, G. 1986. Children's fiction in the hands of translators. Lund: Bloms Boktryckerkeri.
- Kritzinger, Schoones Cronjé & Eksteen. 1994. Groot Woordeboek/ Major Dictionary. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Lefevere, A. 1985. "Why waste our time on rewrites? The trouble with interpretation and the role of rewriting in an alternative paradigm" (*In: Hermans, T. (ed) The manipulation of literature: studies in literary translation. London & Sydney: Croom Helm. p. 215-243*)
- Lefevere, A. 1992a. Translating literature: Practice and theory in a comparative literature context. New York: The modern language association of America.
- Lefevere, A. ed. 1992.b. Translation/History/Culture. A sourcebook. London: Routledge.
- Lefevere, A. 1992c. Translation, Rewriting & the manipulation of the Literary fame. London & New York. Routledge
- Lyons, J. 1972. Preface to: Labov, W. 1972. Sociolinguistic patterns. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Newmark, P.1988. A textbook of translation. New York, London: Prentice Hall.
- Nieuwoudt, HP.1990. Variasie binne Oranjerivier-Afrikaans. (Unpublished MA dissertation) Potchefstroom: PU for CHE.
- Neubert, A. 1993. Translational models. (Paper delivered at the annual SATI conference held at UNISA on 3 May 1994). Pretoria. (Unpublished)

- Nida, EA & Taber, C. 1969. The theory and practice of translation. Leiden: Brill.
- Picard, J. 1988. Vertalers en vertalings: 'n Handleiding in Afrikaans vir taalpraktisyns. Pretoria: Serva.
- Postma, M. 1995. Bridging cultural differences in the translation of literature: the case of selected South African authors/translators. Potchefstroom: PU for CHE (Unpublished MA dissertation).
- Pretorius, H. 1997. Die vertaling en groepering van Landeskunde elemente in geselekteerde verhale van Bessie Head. Potchefstroom: PU for CHE. (Unpublished MA mini-dissertation)
- Snell-Hornby, M. 1988. Translation studies: an integrated approach. Amsterdam: Benjamin.
- Toury, G. 1980. In search of a theory of translation. Tel Aviv: Porter Inst. for Poetics and Semiotics.
- Van Rensburg, C. (ed).1997. Afrikaans in Afrika. Pretoria: JL van Schaik.
- Van Rensburg, M.C.J. 1989. "Soorte Afrikaans" (*In: Botha, T.J.R. (ed) Inleiding tot die Afrikaanse taalkunde. Pretoria & Kaapstad: Academica. p. 436-467*)
- Verhoef, M.M. 1988. Aspekte van Oranjerivier-Afrikaans in die spontane taalgebruik van blanke boorlinge in Noord-Kaapland. (Unpublished MA dissertation) PU for CHE
- Webb, V.N. 1989. "Die Afrikaanse variasietaalkunde" (*In: Botha, T.J.R. (ed) Inleiding tot die Afrikaanse taalkunde. Pretoria & Kaapstad: Academica*)
- Weideman, G. 1994. '(Matrys)' (*In: Die donker melk van daeraad. Kaapstad: Tafelberg. p. 1-8*)

ADDENDA

**A: '(Matrys)' - Source text by
George Weideman**

1 Soos met die stories van Blinde Harry en Marta en al die ander wat hier
2 versamel is – wonderverhale, grilstories, liegstories, reste van vertellings –
3 het ek as losklosklong ook nie werklik aandag gegee aan dit wat ek by Ruiters
4 en Elsie gehoor het nie. Of miskien moet ek liever sê: ek het die storie agter
5 die storie dalk nie verstaan nie.

6 Op 'n manier tog – dalk intuitief – want soos ek ouer word, kom die
7 vertellings en oorvertellings stuk-stuk na my toe terug, word hulle deel van my
8 eie vertelprosesse, word hulle opgeneem in die bloedstroom van my stories.
9 Destyds het ek oopmond sit en luister, en soos 'n kind. Agter die
10 verwondering aan. Noudat ek ouer is, soek ek formules en patrone, maar hoe
11 meer ek weet, hoe minder verstaan ek.

12 Op 'n dag het Elsie vertel van die steen wat weggeraak het. Hoewel hulle
13 meestal saam 'n storie vertel het, soms met redekawelings tussen-in, het
14 Ruiters die keer byna end-uit geswyg, dit onthou ek goed. Asof dit eintlik Elsie
15 se storie is, en nie syne nie.

16 Maar hy het voortdurend instemmend geknik of tong geklik of gekreun.

17 “Nou kyk, dis 'n baie ou storie,” het Elsie gesê, “die een van die steen wat
18 weggeraak het. So oud, ek kan nie sê waar dit vandaan kom nie. Maar dit
19 kom ver anderkant vetlampies-se-tyd vandaan. Ek het dit eerste by my
20 oumagoed gehoor, en sy het gesê dit kom van haar oumagoed af, en so aan
21 tot by die voormense en die voor-voormense.

22 “Hulle, die voor-voormense, het eers verder met die rivier af gebly – ek
23 weet nie eens of dit hierdie rivier is nie. Maar dit was naby die blouwater wat
24 Jorsiegoed ‘see’ noem. Daar was baie water en rivier het sy slijkwater daar
25 geloop afgee aan die see, en as die rivier die slag rolwater maak, dik van die
26 stompe en dik van die modder, was die rivier soos lensiesop, of rivier die
27 gehele land met hom saamgevat het.

28 “Nou nie soos hier nie, Jorsiegoed weet hoe hy hierlangs raak. Maar daar
29 lê en loop hy glo so wyd dat jy van duskant af nie anderkant toe kan sien nie.

30 “'n Goeie plek, het my oumagoed vertel, en kos was nie bietjie volop nie,
31 gemsbokke het gebokspring en hulle was blink van die vet. Die mense het

32 goed gebly, hulle was vrede. Hulle het nog altyd rondgetrek, ja, maar na
33 daardie plek – hulle't vir hom gesê Mûmâixabes – het hulle altyd t'ruggedaan.

34 “En toe kom veranderings. Daar het 'n skip gekom, die blouwater was dol
35 soos 'n dier met skuim om die bek die slag, het ousagoed gesê. Hulle sê hy
36 maak soos perdjehare, die see. En toe? Toe gooi perd vir skip af. Nou my
37 kjind, dit was seker 'n groter een as Niklaas se boot wat hier onder by die drif
38 uitgesleep lê. Tot op die sand gooi die blouwater hom, nie ver van rivier se
39 uitloop af nie. Of daar van die mense gedood het, weet ek nou nie, maar die
40 storie loop glo so: Dairos, nog skaars prammetjies, was aan die kind abba,
41 haar sustertjie, en aan die skulpies versamel die oggend na die bakleisee, toe
42 sy die mense sien. Hulle het klere gedra, soos ons nousedae dra, maar
43 outydser, en hulle velle was soos melk, hulle hare soos gras, en hulle het 'n
44 taal geloop en praat wat Dairos nie kon verstaan nie. Baie anders as haar
45 mense s'n.

46 “Maar hulle was maer en honger, soos mense wat lank sonder kos was,
47 party se klere was verwetter en verflenter, en Dairos was verskrik. Sy het
48 goed weggekrui. Ook om te sien wat hulle maak, hoe hulle goed van die
49 breekskip af land toe karwei. Maar, sê ousagoed, toe gaan die sustertjie aan
50 die huil, en Dairos hardloop op haar spore terug, maar daar was nie wind om
51 hulle toe te blaas nie, en die mense het haar nagesit. Nou nie vinnig nie, want
52 hulle was moeg en verinneweerd, soos ek gesê het. Tot by die rivier se
53 uitloop, daar waar sy moes wegswaai na haar mense toe, het hulle haar
54 nagesit. Toe sy terugkyk, sien sy nee, daar kniel en lê hulle almal by die rivier,
55 op hullese mae lê hulle om van die vars water te drink.

56 “Party van hulle, so loop die storie nou, het daarso aan die slaap geraak,
57 so gedaan was hulle, en Dairos het hulle in die oog gehou, want sy het nog
58 nooit sulke mense gesien. Later het hulle t'ruggeloop na die breekskip toe;
59 nog bliktrommels en boekegoed en anderlike goed afgedra. Gesit en kyk oor
60 die see.

61 “Ai, Dairos wou eers haar geheim hou – maar jy weet hoe moeilik dit is om
62 'n storie te hou – en sy het geloop en vertel van die mense wat die see nie
63 wou hê nie. Dairos se merise was nie gelukkig hieroor nie, maar voor hulle

64 mooi kon verstaan wat sy daai aand om die vuur vertel – hulle't seker gedink
65 die kind is nie reg wys nie – toe kom loop twee van die mense daar aan, met
66 goed van die skip af. Dairos se mense was aan die eet. Die een vreemdeling
67 het na die kos gewys en oor sy maag gevryf, seker die vleiskos gesien, en in
68 sy hand was droë brood en anderlike goed. Die ander man had 'n vaatjie met
69 sterkwyn op sy skouer. Toe maak die eerste man 'n skietding uit sy klere los
70 en skiet na 'n vinknes wat naby die oorslaapplek aan 'n takkie hang, en
71 tknaps! val die nes in die water.

72 “Toe was Dairos se mense baie bang, want so het hulle nog nie gesien nie,
73 en hulle het van die sterkgoed uit die vaatjie gedrink wat die man omgestuur
74 het, en dit seker gesmaak, beter as die vaaljapie wat 'n oumens vandag te
75 drinke kry...”

76 Maar die steen, ouma Elsie, het ek gepor, ek onthou nog goed by die
77 oorvertel, wat van die steen? Vandag is ek nie seker of die onderbreking of
78 die gedagte aan die vaaljapie haar van koers af gestuur het nie. Maar Ruiters
79 het net ge-hm en ge-a.

80 “Etste! Ek vertel mos. Dairos se mense het seker nie goed gehad nie,
81 behalwe nou hullese dragoed, velle en so, en eierdopppe met bêregoed.

82 “Maar toe sien die een man die eierdop vol rivierklippies – jy weet
83 Jorsiegoed, soos wat julle in die maalgate optel – en hy gooi dit in sy hande
84 uit en kyk daarna soos iemand wat die eerste keer in sy lewe die son sien
85 opkom.

86 “Nou, en hier kom die storie van die steen, tussen die klippies was daar
87 vernaam een wat 'n lang pad saam met Dairos en haar mense geloop het. *

88 “Nou kyk, daar was gewone spoelklippies, rond gespoel in die maalgate,
89 glad en blink van die dag en die nag, en grou tot by die geel van
90 moedersmelk, en van dag se helderblou tot sonder se rooie, en die donker-
91 donkerblou van aand.

* Ek meen dat Elsie na die maansteen verwys het, blouerig wit soos lewkie se eier, of na rookkwarts, want rookkwarts het die kleur van die lug voordat die dag breek. Maar dit kon natuurlik ook chalcedoon gewees het. Selfs diamant! Al die ander optelklippies was skynbaar, volgens die oorvertelling, daar: agaats, tieroog, jaspis...

92 "Maar vir Dairo's se mense was daar verneem een meer as waarde werd.
93 Hulle het die steen genoem 'Kleur van die nag net voor die dag breek', en vir
94 die steen se behoud het baie mense toe al hullese lewens afgelê.
95 "Hoekom sê ek so? Party mense weet te vertel dis die Groot Slang se
96 steen wat einste Dairo's se oupa in die hande gekry het.
97 "Wat die steen eers wonderlik gemaak het, is dat dit glo lig afgee in die
98 nag. As jy in die stikste, stikste donker in die eierdop kyk, lê dit daar en gloei
99 saggies soos 'n oog. Nee, dit was 'n verwonderlike steen.
100 "Hoe die steen in die hande gekry is? Die Slang het glo die steen neergesit
101 met die weislag. Toe tel iemand dit op.
102 "Ander het weer gestorie dat 'n padda die steen in sy bek gehad het en toe
103 'n mooi meisie eendag water drink, het hy glo gepraat en vir haar gesê sy
104 mag die steen kry as sy met trou. Maar dis weer 'n ander storie.
105 "Hoe dan ook al, Dairo's se mense moes geweet het dis paljas-se-steen. Of
106 dalkies was dit net vir hulle mooi. Ek weet nie. Hoe moet ek weet? Ek is oud,
107 en het min wat myne is.
108 "Toe Dairo's se oupa 'n kruipkind was, was hy so verspot dat die mense
109 hom nie wou hê nie; later het hy knakbeentjies geloop soos 'n sprinkaan, iets
110 was met hom verkeerd, ek weet nie wat nie. Hy was sommer so, nie 'n
111 gerekende nie.
112 "En eendag is die steen – die een wat hulle mos sê 'Kleur van die nag net
113 voor die dag breek' – weg. So, pfoei, weg. Hulle keer vir eierdop om, hulle
114 soek in die sand, hulle kyk in die kraai se nes bo in die doringboom. Maar
115 niks. Weg. Of die wind hom weggedra het.
116 "Toe weet hulle: Slang het sy steen kom t'rugvat.
117 "En hulle was bang. Daar word gevra: Wie sal die steen loop vra?
118 "Jy kon die hout in die vuur hoor kraak, maar niemand sien kans nie. Nie
119 eens die vinnigste hardloper nie.
120 Toe sê Dairo's se oupa – hy was eenmanier so verspot dat hy tussen die
121 kinders gesit – toe sê hy: Ek sal. Ek sal die steen loop t'rugvat.
122 "Hulle het vir hom uitgelag.

123 “Maar hy staan daar op en hy vat sy waterkalbas en hy raak tussen die
124 biesies weg soos ‘n likkewaan, en toe hulle weer sien, slaan hy anderkant die
125 vlak ‘n stoffie uit soos hy Grootkuil toe draf. Waar die slang nou bly. En die’s
126 ver, bitter ver.

127 “Toe lag hulle nie meer nie.

128 “En Dairos se oupa loop dat hy so klein word, en hy was reeds klein! Tot
129 hy skoon gedaan teen ‘n melkbos gaan sit, toe’s hy nog nie naby Grootkuil
130 nie. En net toe hy ‘n sluk uit die waterkalbas wil vat, hoor hy ‘n stemmetjie wat
131 vir hom sê: au te re, toe!

132 “En hy skrik groot, en hy kyk rond, maar hy sien niks. Net ‘n vaal voëltjie op
133 ‘n klip daar naby.

134 “En hy wil weer drink, toe vra die stemmetjie dieselfde.

135 “Toe sien hy: maar dit is die voëltjie. En toe kry hy ‘n klip met ‘n holtetjie en
136 hy gooi ‘n bietjie van die water daarin uit en sit dit voor die voëltjie neer.

137 “Toe sy klaar gedrink het, praat die voëltjie weer. Sy sê: ‘Jy moet liewër
138 omdraai, dis doodsoek-se-dinge om verder te gaan.’

139 “Maar wat, Dairos se oupa lag net lekker, en weg is hy. Tot vandag toe
140 word dourie plek Omdraai genoem.

141 “Teen die aand se kant sien hy ‘n lig teen die berg. Hy klim tot by die lig en
142 sien dat dit ‘n vuur is. Dit was koud, en hy was bly om by die vuur te kan sit
143 en sy knakbeentjies en krom ruggie warm te maak.

144 “Hy sit nog so, toe hoor hy weer ‘n stem. ‘Gee my ‘n bietjie van jou water,
145 dis baie warm hier.’

146 “En Dairos se oupa kyk diekant en douriekant, maar dis nag. Net die vuur
147 lewe.

148 “Toe praat die stemmetjie weer, en toe sal hy sien daar sit iemand binne-in
149 die vuur. So ‘n handhoog mensie, en die kyk met smekende oë na hom en
150 vra weer vir water.

151 “Hoe nou gemaak? Dairos se oupa hou toe maar sy kalbas bokant die vuur
152 en laat ‘n druppeltjie tot binne-in. Tsssa! sê die vuur, en hy’s uit. Morsdood.
153 En weg is die mannetjie.

154 “Maar hy verbeel hom hy hoor nog die stemmetjie. En die sê: ‘Jy moet
155 liewer omdraai hierso, dis doodsoek-se-dinge om verder te loop.’

156 “Die oupa se tande klapper hoeka van die koue, maar hy sê: ‘Hû-û,
157 omdraai sal ek nie, ek moet ‘n vernaam ding gaan doen. En hy sukkel verder.
158 Nou as hy in klipwêreld, Beenbreek noem hulle die plek, nou nog.

159 “Kan skaars sien, en oor die al die klippe, maar hy hou.

160 “Nou het hy geweet hy’s naby die rivier, en nie so ver van Grootkuil af nie.
161 Toe hy weer een steil plek uit is en moeër as moeg bo-op die nekkie sit en
162 rus, sien hy die nag wil-wil net begin padgee.

163 “En hy hoor aan sy kalbas daar is nog so ‘n laaste sluk of so. Grootkuil kan
164 nie so ver wees nie, maar hy is baie dors. Maar aiii, net toe hy die kalbas teen
165 sy mond sit, hoor hy weer ‘n stemmetjie wat soebat vir ‘n slukkie water.

166 “En hy kyk om, maar sien niks. Die melkbos teen die skuinste is asvaal, die
167 klipbanke hier onder hom is blou van die koue. Maar dit word nou so lig dat
168 hy sien, jinne, hy sit dan reg bokant rivier. Volop water! Die’s hier onder die
169 kranse waar hy sit, maar afklim is moeilik, en hy wil dood van die dors.

170 “Weer hoor hy die stemmetjie. Aie! Maar hy skrik. Want daar sien hy ‘n
171 meisie op die kranse aan die oorkant. Maar mooi! Só het jy nog nie gesien nie,
172 dink hy by homself. En sy’t net krale om haar lyf.

173 “Gee my tog ‘n bietjie van jou water! roep sy.

174 “Maar jy sit dan by die water! roep hy t’rug.

175 “Jy wil nie vir my gee nie,’ sê sy treurig, en sy hart word soos bokvet.

176 “Maar hy skop nog vas. ‘Hoe sal ek by jou kom?’ skreeu hy terug. ‘Kyk hoe
177 lyk dit hier af, en rivier loop sterk.’

178 “Dan moet ek wag tot ‘n sterker man kom,’ roep die meisie weer, en sy
179 draai haar rug op hom, en haar rug blink soos ‘n otter se lyf.

180 “Hoe nou gemaak? Dairos se oupa het die kalbas geskud en dit teen die
181 lug se skynsel gehou. H’n-‘n, daar was baie min.

182 “Swem wil hy swem, want die meisie is darem nou ‘n groot
183 aantrekkingskrag, maar hy is so dors dat sy lippe aan mekaar vassit. Wag,
184 dink hy toe, ek kan mos maar nou die kalbas se water drink; as ek deurswem,
185 skep ek sommer die kalbas vol.

186 “En toe maak hy so. Maar toe hy die kalbas by sy mond bring, kom hy
187 agter die water is so bitter soos karkoer. Hy knyp sy oë toe, maar dit help
188 niks. Hy kan die water nie drink nie.

189 “En daar sit hy, op van die dors, en met die rivier hier onderkant hom. Maar
190 die kranse is te steil, regaf soos by Tierwater se berg.

191 “Tot vandag toe nog word vir die plek gesê Bitterkalbas.”

192 “En Dairoos se oupa? Het hy toe daar afgegaan en deurgeswem tot by die
193 meisie?”

194 Elsie en Ruiters het na mekaar gekyk. “Daar is eintlik klomp stories,
195 Jorsiegoed. Die een wil hê dat hy net daar gedood het, hulle het sy bene op
196 die klipbank gekry.”

197 “Ja,” sê Ruiters, terwyl sy wangspier so trek dat ek meen hy knipoog vir my,
198 “maar ander weet te vertel hy het toe deurgeswem en tot by die meisie
199 gekom, en daar het hulle gebly en baie kinders gehad.”

200 “En die slang? Met die steen?”

201 “Nee, die was dan vergete. Slang sit vandag nog met steen voor sy kop.
202 Moet jy nou maar nie alleen by die rivier loop speel nie.”

203 “Maar die derde storie is die een wat ek die graagste glo,” sê Elsie, en haar
204 oë raak in haar wange weg soos sy lag.

205 “Dis die een waar hy sy kalbas se water bêre, soos die meisiekind gevra
206 het, en toe maak hy die op sy kop vas en hy swem deur, en toe hy anderkant
207 kom, sit wag sy vir hom en sy sê vir hom: ‘Jy het nou net deur Grootkuil
208 geswem.’

209 “Maar hy slaan amper agteroor van skrik. ‘Nee,’ sê sy, ‘dis die water in jou
210 kalbas –dit het vir Slang so klein gemaak soos kortemannetjie.’ En waarlik,
211 daar sit ‘n akkedissie op ‘n rondevlakte onderkant toe en hy blaas van boosheid.
212 En toe sien hy: waar die slang nou gekrimp het, het sy ou knakbeenjies sulke
213 stewige latte geword, en die meisiekind smaak baie vir hom, en so is hulle toe
214 bymekaar, en hy het die korteman doodgemaak en die steen teruggevat na
215 sy mense toe.”

216 “Maar daar is weer ander wat sê: Nee, Groot Slang het hom doodgemaak.
217 So verskil mense,” sê Ruiters en kou aan sy lippe.

218 “Ja, maar wag,” sê ek toe, “Elsie...wat het van die mense geword wat met
219 die skip gekom het? Jy het nog nie van hulle klaar vertel nie!”

220 “Daar is mos nie veel te vertel nie. Maar toe die man die mooi steen sien,
221 het hy sy makkers loop haal en hulle het die steen met mag gekom vat. Toe
222 vort, al met die rivier se loop langes, waarnatoe weet ek nie.”

223 “En Dairos se mense het hulle nagesit tot kortby Grootkuil. Toe sien hulle:
224 die mense is daar in. En hulle het geweet: uit sal hulle nooit weer daar uitkom
225 nie.”

**B: '(Matrix)' - Translation by A.L.
Combrink**

1 *As with the stories of Blind Harry and Martha and all the other stories which*
2 *have been collected here – stories to make you wonder, to make you*
3 *shudder, stories which. tell lies, little snatches of stories – I did not really, as a*
4 *wild and irresponsible youth, give proper attention to what I heard from Rider*
5 *and Elsie. Or perhaps I should say that perhaps I did not understand the story*
6 *behind the stories.*

7 Still in a way – perhaps intuitively – because as I grow older the stories told
8 and retold come back to me piecemeal, they become part of my own
9 storytellings, they are assimilated into the bloodstream of my stories. In those
10 days I would sit open-mouthed and listen, like a child. For the sheer pleasure.
11 Now that I have become older, I look for formulae and patterns, but the more I
12 find out and know, the less I understand.

13 One day Elsie told me about the stone that had gone missing. Although
14 they mostly told their stories in a kind of tandem, at times with fierce
15 arguments interspersing the narration, Rider on this occasion kept quite quiet
16 almost throughout, as I well remember. Almost as if it were really Elsie's story,
17 not his.

18 “Now see, this is a very old story,” Elsie said, “the one about the stone that
19 went missing. So old, I cannot even say where it came from. But it comes
20 from far away and long ago, from the time of the little lard lamps. I heard it
21 first from my old granny, and she said that it came from her old granny, and
22 so on and so on back to the old-people and the old-old people.”

23 “They, the old-old people, first lived further down the river – I don't even
24 know whether it was this river. But it was near the blue water which Georgy-
25 boy calls the sea. There was lots of water, and the river went and dumped its
26 silt in the sea there, and when the river roared and rolled, full of trunks and
27 mud, the sea would be like lentil-soup, so as if the river had dragged all of the
28 land with it.

29 “Of course not like it is here, Georgy-boy knows how the river gets to be
30 along here. But over there I hear it gets to be so wide that you cannot see
31 the one end from the other.

32 “A good place, my old granny would say, and food was plentiful, the oryx
33 played around and they shone with fat. The people also lived there, they lived
34 well. They still moved around, but they also went back to that one place they
35 called Mûmaixabes.

36 “And then came the changes. A ship came, the blue water was like a mad
37 dog, with foam around its fangs, granny said. They say the sea makes likes a
38 horse’s mane. And then? The horse threw the ship. Now just listen to this. It
39 must have been a bigger one than Big Nick’s boat which lies at the crossing
40 place down below. The blue water threw it right out on the sand, not far from
41 where the river meets the sea. I don’t know whether people died there, but
42 the story goes like this: Dairos, with only bubbling little bubbies, was carrying
43 her little sister on her back, and picking up shells on the morning after the
44 fight of the sea. Then she saw the people. They wore clothes, as we do now,
45 and their skins were like milk, their hair like grass, and they spoke a language
46 that Dairos could not understand. Very different from her people.

47 “But they were thin and hungry, like people who had been without food for
48 a long time, and their clothes were torn and fluttery, and Dairos was
49 frightened. She hid. Also to see what they were doing, and how they were
50 dragging their things from the broken ship. But, said little granny, the little
51 sister began to cry, and Dairos went running headlong, back along her tracks,
52 but there was no wind to blow sand back into the tracks, and the people
53 followed her. Not fast, you understand, because they were tired and tattered,
54 and they followed her until the outflow of the river, where she had to swerve
55 to return to her people. When she looked back, she saw that they were lying
56 on their stomachs, lapping up the fresh water of the river.

57 “Some of them, so the story goes, just fell asleep there, so tired they were,
58 and Dairos kept an eye on them, because she had never seen people like
59 that. Later they returned to the broken ship, and found more tin trunks and
60 books and other kinds of stuff. Sat and stared disconsolately across the sea.

61 “Oh, Dairos first wanted to keep her secret – but you know how difficult it is
62 to keep a story covered up – and she went and told about the people the sea
63 has spat out. Dairos’s people were not happy about this, but they could not

64 really understand what it was that she was telling at the fire – they must have
65 thought the child’s head was not quite right – and then two of the people
66 came up, with things from the ship. Dairos’ people were eating. The one
67 stranger pointed to the food and rubbed over his stomach, perhaps he had
68 seen the meat, and in his hand there was dry bread and other strange stuff.
69 The other man had a little vat with strong wine on his shoulder. Then the one
70 man untied a shooter from his clothes and shot at a finches’ nest overhanging
71 the river and zap! The nest fell into the water.

72 “Then Dairos’ people were very frightened because they had never seen
73 anything like it, and they drank of the firewater the which the man sent
74 around, and it must have tasted good, better than the moonshine which is all
75 an old person gets to drink today...”

76 But the stone, granny Elsie, I urged her, I remember it well from the
77 retelling, what about the stone? Today, I still can’t remember whether it was
78 this interruption or thoughts of moonshine that sent her off track. But Rider
79 just hummed and hawed.

80 “Man! I am telling, aren’t I? Dairos’ people probably did not have much, the
81 apart from their little chattels, skins and so on, and eggshells filled with bits
82 and pieces.

83 “But then the man saw the eggshell full of river pebbles – you know,
84 Georgy-boy, the stuff that you pick up from the whirlpools in the river – and he
85 tossed them into his hands, at looked at them like someone seeing a sunrise
86 for the first time in his life.

87 “Now, and here comes the story of the stone, among the pebbles there
88 was especially one which had come a long distance with Dairos’ and her
89 people.”

90 “Now look there were ordinary little shingle pebbles, washed into
91 roundness by the whirlpools, smooth and bright with all the colours of day and

* I have an idea that Elsie is referring to the moonstone, bluish-white like a lark’s egg, or to smoked quartz, which has the colour of the sky before daybreak. But it could also have been chalcedon. Even diamond! All the other little pebbles were also there, according to the story: agate, tiger’s eye, jasper.

92 night, from grey to the yellow of mother's milk, and from the bright blue of the
93 day to the red of sunset, and the dark-dark blue of evening.

94 "But for Dairos' people there was the one which was worth more than
95 worth. They called the stone "Colour of night just before the break of day",
96 and many people had laid down their lives to protect this stone.

97 "Why do I say this? Some people say that it is the stone of the Great Snake
98 which Dairos' grandpa had got hold of.

99 What made this stone even more wonderful was that they say it gave off
100 light in the night. If you looked into the eggshell in the pitchest pitchest dark,
101 the stone glowed softly like an eye. No, it was a wonderful stone.

102 "How they had got hold of the stone? The Snake, it is said, put it down
103 while eating. Then somebody picked it up.

104 "Some storied that a frog had the stone in its mouth and one day, when a
105 lovely girl came to drink water, he spoke and promised her the stone if she
106 would marry him. But that is another story...

107 "However it is, Dairos' people had to know that the stone was bewitched.
108 Or perhaps they just thought it was beautiful. I don't know. How should I
109 know? I am old, and I have little that is mine.

110 "When Dairos' grandpa was just a little crawler, he was so runty that people
111 did not want him – later he walked with little spindly legs like a grasshopper,
112 something was wrong with him, I don't know what. He was just a thing, not
113 thought of.

114 "And then one day the stone – the one they called "Colour of the night just
115 before the break of day" was gone. Just like that, phut! Gone. They
116 overturned the eggshell, they looked in the sand, they looked in the crow's
117 nest up in the thorn tree. But nothing. Gone. As if the wind had taken it.

118 "Then they knew. Snake had come to claim it back.

119 "And they were afraid. They asked: Who will go and ask for the stone
120 back?

121 "One could hear the wood crackle in the fire. But nobody had the guts. Not
122 even the fastest runner.

123 "Then Dairos' grandpa said – he was so runty that he sat among the
124 children – then he said: I will go. I will go and get the stone back.

125 "And they laughed and howled at him.

126 "But he just got up and took his water gourd, and he slipped away through
127 the reeds like a leguan, and when they saw him again he was raising a
128 spectre of dust as he trotted over to the Big Waterhole. Where the Snake is
129 staying now. And that is far, so very far.

130 "And then they stopped laughing.

131 "And Dairos' grandpa ran until he almost disappeared, and he was already
132 so small. Until he was spent, and sat down against a milkweed – and he was
133 not even close to the Big Waterhole yet. And just as he was taking a sip of
134 water from the gourd, he heard a little voice which said: au te re, now!

135 "And it startled him a lot, and he looked around, and there was nothing.
136 Just a little grey bird on a rock nearby.

137 "And when he wanted to drink him again, the little voice asked the same
138 thing again.

139 "And then he saw that it was the bird talking. And he found a rock with a
140 little hollow in it, and he poured a little water into it, and gave it to the bird.

141 "When she had finished drinking, the little bird spoke again. She said: It
142 would be better if you turned around here, it is looking for death you are if you
143 go on.

144 "But no way – Dairos' grandpa just laughed and he left. And to this day that
145 place is called Turnaround.

146 "Towards evening he saw a light against the mountain. He climbed to the
147 light, and saw that it was a fire. It was cold, and he was glad enough to get a
148 fire and to warm his knobbly little legs and his bent back.

149 "He was still sitting there, when he heard a voice. 'Give me some of your
150 water, it is very hot here.'

151 "And Dairos' grandfather looked this side and that, but it was night. Only
152 the fire lived.

153 "Then the voice spoke again, and he could see there was someone inside
154 the fire. A tiny little person, only as big as his hand, looking at him, and
155 pleading for water.

156 "How now? Dairo's grandpa held the gourd over the fire and let a drop fall
157 into the fire. Tsssa! The fire said, and went out. Dead. And gone is the little
158 man.

159 "But he could not shake off the little voice. And the voice said: It would be
160 better if you turned around here, it is looking for death you are if you go on.

161 "Grandpa's teeth were chattering from the cold, but he said: No way, I am
162 not turning back, I have an important thing to do. And he struggled on. Now
163 he was in a rocky world, a place they still call Bonebreaker.

164 "He could scarcely see, and had to clamber over all the rocks, but he went
165 on.

166 "Now he knew that he was near a river, and not so far from the Big
167 Waterhole. When he had scaled another place, and wanted to sit down,
168 weary to death, he saw that the night was just about to depart.

169 "And he could hear from the gourd that there was still a little sip left.
170 Waterhole could not be too far away, but he is so thirsty. But oh! Just as he
171 was putting the gourd to his mouth, he heard the little voice clamouring for
172 some water.

173 "And he looked around, but could see nothing. The milkweeds against the
174 slope were dusty grey, and the rock ledges around him blue with the cold. But
175 it is now getting light, and he could suddenly see, would you believe, that he
176 was sitting right over the river. Lots of water! The water is all round below the
177 steep ledge where he is sitting, but climbing down is difficult, and he is dying
178 of thirst.

179 "And then he heard the little voice again. Wow, he got a fright. Because
180 there on the other shore he could see a girl – and so beautiful. He has never
181 seen anything like it, he thinks to himself. And she has only beads around her
182 body.

183 "Do give me some of your water!" she calls.

184 "But you are right next to the water!" he calls back.

185 "You don't want to give me water," she says sadly, and his heart melts like
186 lard in the sun.

187 "But still he holds back. 'How will I get across the river?' he yells. 'See how
188 it is running, so strongly.'

189 "I suppose then I have to wait for a stronger man to come along,' the girl
190 calls again, and she turns her back to him, and her back shines like an otter.

191 "What to do now? Dairo's grandpa shakes the gourd and holds it against
192 the sheen of the sky. H'n-'n, there's really very little.

193 "Swimming is what he wants to do, because the girl is really something, but
194 he is so thirsty that his lips are glued together. Wait, he thinks, I can drink this
195 water now from the gourd, and fill it again as I swim through.

196 "And this is what he does. But when he brings the gourd to his mouth, he
197 discovers that the water is as bitter as the wild coloquint. He squeezes his
198 eyes shut, but it won't help. He just can't stomach the water.

199 "And there he's stuck, as dry as dust, and with the river down below him.
200 But the cliffs are too steep, sheer as the sides of the Tiger Mountain.

201 "And to this day this place is called the Bittergourd.

202 "And Dairo's grandpa? Did he get down and then to the girl?

203 Elsie and Rider glanced slyly at each other. Then she said: "There are
204 really lots of stories, Georgy-boy. The one story says that he died right there,
205 and that they just found a pile of bones later."

206 "Yes," said Rider, and there is just the faintest suggestion of a wink on his
207 face, "other stories say that he got through and met the girl and they lived
208 there and had many children."

209 "And the Snake? With the Stone?"

210 "No, this had been forgotten. Snake still has the Stone in his forehead
211 today. Don't you go and play at the river alone."

212 "But the third story is the one I like to believe," said Elsie, and her eyes
213 disappear in their deep sockets as she giggles.

214 "This is the one where he left the water in the gourd, as she asked him to,
215 and he tied it to his head and swam through the river, and when he reached

216 the other side, she sat waiting for him and said to him: 'You have just swum
217 through the Big Pond'.

218 "And he almost fell over backwards from the shock. 'No,' she said, 'it is the
219 water in the gourd – it turned the Snake into a little fellow.' And would you
220 believe, when he looked, there was a tiny lizard sitting on a rock hissing with
221 rage. And then he saw – where the Snake had shrunk, his own knobbly, runty
222 little legs had become tree trunks, and the girl was looking at him with lusty
223 eyes, and they came together, and he killed the little lizard, and took the
224 Stone back to his people."

225 "But there are other people who say, 'No, the Great Snake killed him. You
226 see how people are always different," Rider said, chewing reflectively on his
227 lips.

228 "Yes, but wait," I said. "Elsie...what became of the people who had come in
229 the ship? You have not finished telling about them."

230 "There is not much to tell, is there? When the man saw the beautiful stone,
231 he went to fetch his friends, and they came to take the stone with force. And
232 then they were gone, all along the river, I don't know where they ended.

233 "And Dairos' people followed them, all the way to the Big Pond. And then
234 they saw that the people had gone in there. And they knew that they would
235 never get out again."

**C: '(Matrys)' - Translation by M.
Behrens**

1 *As with the stories of Blind Harry and Marta and all the others here*
2 *collected – tales of wonder, horror stories, lies, remnants of tales – I did not*
3 *really pay much attention to what I heard from Elsie and Ruiter in my youth.*
4 *Or maybe I should rather say: I probably did not understand the story behind*
5 *the stories.*

6 *But maybe I did – maybe intuitively – because as I grow older, the tales*
7 *and their retellings come back to me, bit by bit; they become part of my own*
8 *narrations, are absorbed in the bloodstream of my stories. Then, I sat*
9 *listening with mouth agape, like a child. Because it was wondrous. Now that I*
10 *am older, I look for formulae and patterns, but the more I know, the less I*
11 *understand.*

12 One day Elsie told me about the stone that had got lost. Although they
13 mostly told a story side-by-side, sometimes arguing in between, this time
14 Ruiter kept quiet almost right to the end, I remember it well. As if it was
15 actually Elsie's story, and not his.

16 But throughout he nodded his head in agreement, or clicked his tongue, or
17 groaned.

18 "Now see, it's a very old story," Elsie said, "this one about the stone that
19 got lost. So old, I couldn't tell you where it came from. But it comes from long
20 before the time of the *vetlampies*. I first heard it from my *ouma*, and she said
21 it had come from her *ouma*, and so on and so on, back to the old folk and the
22 old-old folk.

23 "They, the old-old folk, first lived lower down the river – I don't even know if
24 it was this river. But it was close to the blue water which Jorsie calls the 'sea'.
25 There was a lot of water, and there the river gave its silt to the sea, and when
26 the river started to roll, thick with tree trunks and thick with mud, the sea was
27 like lentil soup, as if the river had taken all the land along.

28 But not like here, Jorsie knows how the river is here. But there they say it
29 runs so wide that you cannot see the other side from this side.

30 "A good place, my *ouma* said, and food there was enough, gemsbok
31 galloped and they shone with fat. The people lived well, they were satisfied.

32 They still moved around, yes, but to that place – they called Mûmâixabes –
33 they always returned.

34 “And then came changes. A ship came, the blue water was crazy that time
35 like an animal with foam around the mouth, *ouma* said. They say it makes
36 horse hair, the sea. And then? The horse threw the ship. Now, my child, it
37 was a bigger one than the boat Groot Niklaas has lying on the bank at the
38 drift. Right onto the sand the blue water threw it, not far from the river’s
39 mouth. I don’t know if anyone died but the story goes like this: Dairos, her
40 chest just budding, was piggy-backing the child, her sister, and collecting
41 shells the morning after the storm sea, when she saw the people, like those
42 we wear these days, but more old-fashioned, and their skins were like milk,
43 their hair like grass, and they spoke a language that Dairos could not
44 understand. Very different from her people’s.

45 “But they were thin and hungry, like people who had been without food for
46 a long time, and the clothes of some were weathered and tattered, and Dairos
47 was scared. She hid away. Also to see what they were doing, as they carried
48 things from the broken ship to the land. But, as *ouma* said, the little sister
49 started crying, and Dairos ran back over her footprints, but as there was no
50 wind to blow over her tracks, and the people followed her. Not quickly,
51 because they were tired and tattered, as I said. All the way to where the river
52 ran into the sea, there where she had to break away to her people, up to
53 there they followed her. When she looked back, she saw them kneeling and
54 lying by the river, on their bellies they were lying to drink the fresh water.

55 “Some of them, or so goes the story, fell asleep there, so tired were they,
56 and Dairos kept them in view, because she had never seen such people.
57 Later they walked back to the broken ship; they loaded off more tin trunks and
58 book things and other things. And sat and looked across the sea.

59 “Ay, Dairos wanted to keep her secret – but you know how difficult it is to
60 keep a story covered up! – and she went to tell about the people that the sea
61 did not want to keep. Dairos’ people were not happy about this, but before
62 they could nicely understand what she was trying to tell them around the fire
63 that night – they probably thought the child was not quite well in her head –

64 well then two of the people walked in amongst them, with things from the
65 ship. Dairos and her people were busy eating. The one strange person
66 pointed at the food and rubbed his tummy, he'd probably seen the meat, and
67 in his hand was dry bread and other things. The other man had a vat with
68 strongwine on his shoulder. Then the first man loosened a shooting thing from
69 his clothes, and he shot a finch nest hanging from a branch over the water,
70 near the overnight place, and crack! The nest fell into the water.

71 "Then Dairos' people were very scared, because they had never seen such
72 a thing, and they drank the strongwine from the vat that the man passed
73 among them, and it probably was good, better than the vaaljapie that us old
74 ones get to drink these days..."

75 "But the stone, *ouma* Elsie, I prodded, I remember it well now with telling it
76 again. What about the stone?

77 Now I am not sure if it was this interruption, or the thought of the vaaljapie
78 that knocked her off course. But Ruiter just hummed and ah-ed.

79 "Etse! I'm telling you. Dairos and her people probably did not have much,
80 except for their wearing things, skins and the like, and eggshells for packing
81 things in.

82 "But then the one man saw the eggshell full of river pebbles – you know the
83 ones, Jorsie, like those you pick up in the river potholes – and he tipped them
84 out in his hands and looked at them like someone seeing the sun come up for
85 the first time.

86 "And now, here comes the story of the stone, because among those stones
87 there was a special one that had come a long way with Dairos and her
88 people.

89 "Now see, there was ordinary pebbles, rubbed round in the potholes,
90 smooth and shiny and with all the colours of the day and the night, from grey
91 to the yellow of mother's milk, and from daylight's bright blue to sundown's
92 red, and the darkest darkest blue of night.

93 "But for Dairos' people there was one which was worth more than worth
94 itself. They called this stone 'Colour of the night just before day breaks', and
95 for the keeping of this stone many people had already laid down their lives.

96 "Why do I say this? Some people know as to say that it was the Big
97 Snake's stone that the very Dairos' *oupa* had managed to lay his hands on.

98 "What made this stone especially wonderful, was that that it apparently
99 made light in the night. If you looked into the eggshell on the pitchest of black
100 nights, it would lie there, glowing softly like an eye. No, it was a wonder-filled
101 stone.

102 "How the stone was gotten? The Snake had apparently put it down at the
103 water while grazing. Then someone picked it up.

104 "Others made stories that a frog had the stone in its mouth and when a
105 beautiful girl came to drink water, he spoke to her and said she could have
106 the stone if she married him. But is another story...

107 "However it may be, Dairos' people must have known it was a magic-
108 stone*. Or maybe they just thought it was nice. I don't know. How should I
109 know? I am old, and have little that is mine.

110 When Dairos' *oupa* was still crawling, he was so undergrown that the
111 people did not want him; later he walked on bent legs like a grasshopper,
112 something was wrong with him, I don't know what. He was just so, not a
113 complete one.

114 "And one day the stone was gone – the one that they say is 'Colour of the
115 night just before the day breaks'. Phui, gone. They turned over the eggshell,
116 they looked in the sand, they looked in the crow's nest high in the thorn tree.
117 But nothing. Gone. Like the wind had carried it away.

118 "Then they knew: Snake had come to take his stone back.

119 "And they were scared. It was asked: Who will go ask for the stone?

120 "You could hear the wood crack in the fire, but no one would go. Not even
121 the fastest runner.

122 "Then Dairos' *oupa* said – he was so stunted that he sat amongst the
123 children – then he said: I shall. I will go and take the stone back.

124 "They just laughed at him.

* I believe Elsie was referring to the moonstone, blue-white like a lark's egg, or smoke quartz, because smoke quartz has the colour of the sky before the day breaks. But it could also have been chaledony. Even diamond! All the other gathering stones were apparently included, according to the re-telling: agate, tiger eye, jasper...

125 "But he got up there and took his water calabash and he disappeared
126 amongst the needs like a likkewaan, and when they saw again, he was a dust
127 cloud on the other side of the flat, running to Grootkuil. Where the Snake now
128 stays. And that is far, bitterly far.

129 "They did not laugh anymore.

130 "And Dairos' *oupa* walked till he was sooo small, and he was already very
131 small. Till he collapsed against a melkbos, and even then he was not yet at
132 Grootkuil. And just as he wanted to take a mouthful of water from his
133 calabash, he heard a little voice saying to him: au te re, ta!

134 "And he got a big fright, and he looked around, but he saw nothing. Just a
135 dull bird on a nearby stone.

136 "And when he wanted to drink again, the same little voice repeated its
137 question.

138 "And then he saw: but it was the little bird. And he found a stone with a
139 small hollow in it, poured some of his water in and put it down in front of the
140 bird.

141 "When she had finished drinking, the bird spoke again. She said: 'You
142 should turn around here, its death-wishing to go further.'

143 "But Dairos' *oupa* just laughed, and away he went. Even today that place is
144 called Omdraai.

145 "Towards evening he saw a light on a mountain. He climbed all the way up
146 to the light and found that it was a fire. It was a cold, and he was glad to sit at
147 the fire and warm his grasshopper legs and his twisted little back.

148 He was still sitting like that, when he heard a voice again: 'Give me some
149 of your water, it's very warm here.'

150 Dairos' *oupa* looked this way and that way, but it was night. Only the fire
151 was alive.

152 "Then the voice spoke again, and he saw that someone was sitting inside
153 the fire. Just a small hand-high person, looking at him with pleading eyes and
154 asking for water. Just a small hand-high person, looking at him with pleading
155 eyes and asking for water again.

156 "What now? So Dairos' *oupa* held the calabash above the fire and let a tiny
157 drop fall into it. Tsss! Said the fire, and it went out. Dead. And gone was the
158 little man.

159 "But he imagined that he heard another little voice. And this one said: 'You
160 must turn around here, it's death wishing to walk further.'

161 "*Oupa's* teeth were chattering from cold, but he said: Hû-û, around I will
162 not turn, a big thing I have to do.' And he struggled further. Now he was in a
163 stone world, Beenbreek they still call the place, even today.

164 "Could hardly see, and over all the stones, but he kept on going.

165 "Now he knew he was close to the river, and not so far from Grootkuil. After
166 he had climbed up another steep place, and was sitting in a neck, resting,
167 even more tired than tired, he saw that the night was almost leaving.

168 "And he heard, in his calabash, there was only a last sip left. Grootkuil
169 could not be much further, but he was very thirsty. But aiii, just as he put the
170 calabash to his lips, he heard another voice pleading for a sip of water.

171 "And he looked around him, and nothing. The melkbosse against the slope
172 were as ash, and the rock ledges underneath him were blue with cold. But
173 now it was light enough to see that, *jinne*, he was sitting right above a river. A
174 lot of water. Water right under the ledge he's sitting on, but down is difficult,
175 and he's nearly dead from thirst.

176 "Again he hears the little voice. Aie! But he gets a fright. Because there, on
177 a krans on the other side, he sees a girl. And beautiful! Such he has never
178 seen, he thinks to himself. And she has only beads around her body.

179 "Please give me some of your water!' she calls.

180 "But you're sitting at the water!' he calls back.

181 "You don't want to give me any,' she says sadly, and his heart becomes
182 soft like buck fat.

183 "But still he refuses. 'How will I get to you?' he shouts back. 'See what it
184 looks like here, and the river flows strong.'

185 "Then I'll have to wait till a stronger man comes', the girl replied, and she
186 turned her back on him, and her back shone like an otter's body.

187 "What to do now? Dairo's *oupa* shook the calabash and held it against the
188 brightness of the sky. H'n-'n, there was very little.

189 "Swim he wants to, because this girl is just too much of an attraction, but
190 he is so thirsty that his lips stick together. Wait, he thinks, I can drink the
191 water from the calabash; once I swim through, I can fill it again.

192 "And that is what he did. But when he put the calabash to his lips, he found
193 the water as bitter as bitter melon. He pinched close his eyes, but it did not
194 help. He could not drink the water.

195 "And there he sat, finished from thirst, and with the river down below him.
196 But the kranes were too steep, straight down like by Tierwater's mountain.

197 "Even today that place is still called Bitterkalbas."

198 "And Dairo's *oupa*? Did he go down and swim to the girl?"

199 Elsie and Ruiter looked at each other. Then she said, "There are actually
200 lots of stories, Jorsie. One of them wants him to have died right there, that
201 they found his bones on the rock ledge."

202 "Yes," said Ruiter, while pulling his cheek muscles in such a way that I
203 think he is winking at me, "but others want to say he swam through to the girl
204 and that they stayed there and had many children."

205 "And the Snake? With the stone?"

206 "No, this was forgotten. Snake still sits with the stone between his eyes.
207 And don't you go and play at the river on your own."

208 "But the third story is the one that I want to believe", said Elsie, and her
209 eyes disappeared into her cheeks as she laughed.

210 "It's the one where he kept the water in his calabash, as the girl had
211 asked, and then he tied the calabash to his head and swam through, and
212 when he got to the other side, she was waiting for him and said: 'You have
213 just swum through Grootkuil.'

214 "And he almost fell over backwards from fright. 'No', she said, 'it's the
215 water in your calabash – it made Snake as small as the little one. And truly,
216 there was a small lizard on a round stone lower down and he was hissing in
217 anger. And then he saw: where the Snake had now shrunken, his little bent

218 legs had become as strong as branches, and the girl liked him, and so they
219 were together, and he killed the lizard and took the stone back to his people.”

220 “But there are others who say: No, Big Snake killed him. That’s how people
221 differ,” said Ruitter and chewed his lips.

222 “Yes, but wait,” I said then, “Elsie...what happened to the people who
223 came in the ship? You haven’t finished telling about them!”

224 “There is not much to tell. But when the man saw the beautiful stone, he
225 went to fetch his mates and they took the stone with force. Then they left, all
226 along the river, where to I don’t know.

227 “And Dairos’ people followed them as far as Grootkuil. Then they saw: the
228 people had gone in there. And they knew: never would they come out from
229 here.”