



October 2009

Outstanding Translation and Dictionaries winners  
ITD 2009 celebrations



Roots Cultural Festival

Holy Translators' Day

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The SATI constitution makes provision for members to form chapters if they wish 'to

be recognised as a distinct group on the grounds of their geographic proximity to one another or of a common interest that is acceptable to the Institute'. Chapters are formal structures of the Institute and operate in terms of a set of regulations approved by the members of the Institute. The intention of chapters is to offer members opportunities for networking and professional advancement, which can often be more readily achieved at a local rather than a national level.

**SATI Web-site:**

<http://www.translators.org.za>  
(South African Translators' Institute)

**FIT Web-site:**

<http://www.fit-ift.org>  
(International Federation of Translators)



**Journal of the South  
African Translators'  
Institute**

**Dzhenala ya Inisitituti ya  
Vhahinduleli ya Afrika  
Tshipembe**

**Jenale ya Mokgatlo wa  
Bafetoledi ba Afrika  
Borwa**

Muratho is the Venda term for 'a bridge', the symbol of the communicative activity facilitated by language workers

Muratho ndi ipfi la Tshivenda line la amba 'buroho', tshine tsha v ha tshigatsha vhudavhidzani tshine tsha shumiswa nga vhashumi v ha nyambo

Muratho ke lentswe la Seveda le bolelang "borokgo", e leng sesupo sa mosebetsi wa bohokanyi o hlophiswang ke basebeletsi ba puo

Information on the name of the journal is given in English plus two other official languages on a rotational basis (in this issue Tshivenda and Sesotho).

*Muratho* accepts articles in all the South African official languages, provided they are accompanied by an English summary.

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Cover photo: Winners and other participants in the SATI Prizes for Outstanding Translation and Dictionaries and the ITD 2009 celebrations on 2 October. Photos: Lilian Naudé

Photos in this issue: Lilian Naudé, Marion Boers



# Editor's Notes

**A**s I write this, another year is drawing to a close, offering us an opportunity to look at what we have achieved in the past year and to look forward to a new year with new opportunities and new challenges.

2009 was one of SATI's 'big' years. First we accepted major changes to the Institute's constitution and structure at the AGM in June. This offered us the opportunity to examine where we are and where we would like to be. It is not an easy task running an organisation like SATI. Members have many different ideas of what they would like to receive from their membership, there are many different audiences to be catered to and informed, and there is the constant problem of many ideas but not enough funding to implement them all.

It is, however, gratifying to see how members are involving themselves more in the Institute. A number of them generously offer their time and expertise as volunteers to translate the Bulletin and other documents into the different official languages, so that we as an Institute are able to go some way to practising multilingualism. Others have assisted with translating parts of the SATI Website into the official languages. Yet others have served on committees, where they concentrate on specific areas of interest to themselves and benefit to the other members. The Boland Chapter continues to offer opportunities for networking and education to its members. With the new constitution in place, new committees are currently being set up and we hope that more members will become more involved. We have heard repeatedly from those who have become involved that it gives them an entirely different perspective of what the Institute and the profession are all about and also affords them opportunities to learn and to give back to the profession. And the involvement of new members with fresh ideas and different skills and strengths is the only way that the Institute can grow and develop.

The other big thing that took place this year was the awarding of SATI's Prizes for Outstanding Translation and Dictionaries, about which you will read more in this issue. This was the fourth time the awards have been made; each time they are a little different, but the aim remains the same: to put translation in the spotlight and to contribute to the development of the indigenous languages.

We were helped in achieving this aim this year by generous sponsorship of R50 000 from the Via Afrika Books Group. We also achieved greater public recognition than previously, which is very positive. Now we need to use this momentum to maintain interest in the profession and raise awareness of its value in society.

Our congratulations go in particular to the winners, but also to all the nominees and to those who nominated them. As Leon de Kock said in his speech at the awards ceremony, the real reward is knowing that you have enriched people's lives through your work, and the prizes are simply the cherry on the top. We also acknowledge the generosity of all those who acted as judges and helped in other ways. With such wonderful co-operation and generosity in Working Together (the theme for ITD this year), we can only go forward in 2010.

Until next time

*Marion*



# Working together to promote translations in publication

Friday 2 October 2009 was another red-letter day for the South African Translators' Institute – as part of its International Translation Day (ITD) celebrations it awarded the 2009 SATI Prizes for Outstanding Translation and Dictionaries.

This was the fourth time the prizes had been awarded, the competition having been initiated in 2000. The objective is to recognise and encourage the publication of translations in the official languages of South Africa and in this way to contribute to the development of the indigenous languages and improvement of translation quality.

The theme for ITD 2009 was 'Working Together' and this was used as the focal point of the celebrations. The awarding of the prizes was preceded by a panel discussion in which some of the nominees and publishers considered different aspects of the co-operation that is part of publishing a translation (see pages 11 to 15 for copies of what they had to say).

Guest speaker Leon de Kock gave a most thought-provoking talk on 'The need, the challenge and the reward in literary translation' (see page 6). Leon was the winner of the first SATI Award for Outstanding Translation in 2000, for his English translation of Marlene van Niekerk's *Triomf*.

A record number of entries – 34 – were received for the 2009 competition. Five prizes were on offer, and thanks to generous sponsorship of R50 000 from the Via Afrika Books Group, the second time the Group has acknowledged the value of the Institute's endeavours in this way, the winner in each of the five categories – literary translation, translation of non-fiction work, translation of children's literature, service translation and dictionaries – received a handsome R10 000 award.

The 2009 winners are as follows:

- *SATI Prize for Outstanding Literary Translation*: **Michiel Heyns** for ***Agaat***, the translation into English of Marlene van Niekerk's novel *Agaat* [Publisher: Jonathan Ball Publishers & Tafelberg]

*International Translation Day this year saw SATI award its 2009 Prizes for Outstanding Translation and Dictionaries, the fourth time the awards have been made.*

- *SATI Prize for Outstanding Non-Fiction Translation*: **Elsa Silke** for ***Charlize: Life's one helluva ride***, the English translation of the Afrikaans version of this biography, *Charlize: Ek leef my droom*, written by Chris Karsten [Publisher: Human & Rousseau]
- *SATI Prize for Outstanding Translation of Children's Literature*: **Jaco Jacobs** for ***Willemien en die Geel Kat***, the translation into Afrikaans of Chris Riddell's book *Ottoline and the Yellow Cat* [Publisher: LAPA Publishers]
- *SATI Prize for Outstanding Service Translation*: The **Concept Literacy Project** for ***Understanding concepts in Mathematics and Science: A multilingual learning and teaching resource book in English, IsiXhosa, IsiZulu and Afrikaans*** [Publisher: Maskew Miller Longman]
- *SATI Prize for Outstanding Translation Dictionaries*: The **editorial team** for the ***Oxford Bilingual School Dictionary: Northern Sotho and English*** (Editor-in-Chief: Gilles-Maurice de Schryver; Chief compiler: Mamokgabo Mogodi; Chief linguist: Elsabé Taljard; Publisher: Megan Hall; OUP SA editor: Phillip Louw)



*A selection of the entries for this year's Prizes for Outstanding Translation and Dictionaries*

Some background on each of the **judges** is available at [http://translators.org.za/sati/cms/index.php?frontend\\_action=display\\_text\\_content&content\\_id=2454](http://translators.org.za/sati/cms/index.php?frontend_action=display_text_content&content_id=2454).

The full list of entries in this year's **SATI Prizes for Outstanding Translation and Dictionaries** is available at [http://translators.org.za/sati/cms/index.php?frontend\\_action=display\\_text\\_content&content\\_id=2410](http://translators.org.za/sati/cms/index.php?frontend_action=display_text_content&content_id=2410).

The **full reports of the judges** are available at [http://www.translators.org.za/sati/cms/index.php?frontend\\_action=display\\_text\\_content&content\\_id=2564](http://www.translators.org.za/sati/cms/index.php?frontend_action=display_text_content&content_id=2564).



The winners: Mary Gordon of the Concept Literacy Project, Elsa Silke, Mamokgabo Mogodi, who worked on OUP's Northern Sotho/English dictionary, and Jaco Jacobs – Michiel Heyns was unfortunately unable to attend

The number of entries this year made the judging a mammoth task and the Institute is indebted to the experts who volunteered their time and knowledge in assessing the entries. They are:

- **Literary translation:** Dr Marietjie Nelson (convenor), Dr Karin Cattell, Prof. Ilse Feinauer, Prof. Henning Pieterse
- **Non-fiction translation:** Mrs Wilna Liebenberg (convenor), Ms Marietjie Delport, Prof. Sandile Gxilishe, Prof. Bertie Neethling, Mr Sydney Zotwana
- **Translation of children's literature:** Prof. Thomas van der Walt (convenor), Ms Carina Diedericks-Hugo, Prof. Franci Greyling
- **Service translation:** Mr Manzo Khulu (convenor), Mr Zama Bekeweni, Prof. Bertie Neethling, Prof. Marlene Verhoef
- **Dictionaries:** Dr Mariëtta Alberts and Prof. Rufus Gouws (convenors), Mr Tom McLachlan, together with a range of lexicographic experts in the various African languages

The Institute also salutes South Africa's publishers, which are publishing more and more translations in an effort to make books available to readers in their language of choice. In addition to helping develop the indigenous languages and improve educational standards, this promotes cultural exchange and assists in nation-building.



Left: Marietjie Nelson (above left), Bertie Neethling (above right), Manzo Khulu (below left) and Rufus Gouws (below right) presented the commendations and awarded the prizes for the literary, non-fiction and service translation and the winning dictionary respectively

Right: Winners and publishers: Riana Barnard of Tafelberg Publishers, Doug Young of the Concept Literacy Project, Elsa Silke, Mamokgabo Mogodi, Lucia Ndabula of Oxford University Press and Jaco Jacobs





# Scenes from the ITD celebration



# Once more, with feeling: The need, the challenge and the reward in literary translation

*This is the address given by Prof. Leon de Kock at the awards ceremony for the 2009 SATI Prizes for Outstanding Translation and Dictionaries*

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Leon de Kock is Professor and Head of the School of Literature and Language Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand. He was the winner of the first SATI Prize for Outstanding Translation, awarded in 2000 for his translation of Marlene van Niekerk's novel *Triomf*.

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As a prelude to writing this talk, I translated the last poem in a cycle of lyrical verse which I have adapted into English for the Pretoria poet Cas Vos. The poem cycle is based on the Abelard and Heloise saga, a story of doomed but undimmed love, love in an eternal present tense, love always hauntingly alive in the memory of its loss. Vos's short poem, called 'Verlore tyd', and my translation/adaptation, read as follows:

## Verlore tyd

Skoelappervlerke vou oop  
en toe as die wind sug,  
die sterre bly gloeiend  
tydloos en onverskillig.

Oor die aarde se rimpelvel  
sprei 'n engel sy vlerk,  
klop aan die koue uur  
om die stilwees te merk.

In 'n nes van spikkel sterre  
waak kraaie oor afwesigheid.  
Wie praat nog oor verborge  
verlange na die verlore tyd?

My rendering, in its turn, goes like this:

## Lost time

Whirling butterflies through air,  
the wind utters a groan  
as morning stars glimmer,  
imperious and unknown.

An angel spreads his wings  
over earth's rimpled hide,  
heralding the arctic hour  
the quiet by which we abide.

Crows keep watch over absence  
from a nest of speckled light.  
Who still dares to bemoan  
lost time, longing's last rite?

Whether or not this is an adequate adaptation/translation, I as translator-rewriter must leave to others to decide. Critical reckoning –

should there even be any, given the thin yield of invested literary reading in South Africa today – is out of my hands. However, what does remain in my power as a translator, a renderer of felt meaning in words, is a certain command over process. And, speaking from practice about process, the process of literary translation, which is preeminently a process of writing first and foremost, I would say, over and over again, 'once more, with feeling'.

There are many ways of talking about the need for, and the challenge and reward of, literary translation, but I would emphasise above all that it is done for love, for the love of writing – writing as both a noun and a verb. I would, in addition, say that it is done to stem the tide of loss. The kind of love I mean is fairly elementary: a love of the supplementation of being that only the literary can deliver; a love of the way the literary stalls the vanishing trace of being, captures it in flight, in a sensuous, sinewy form, giving us a provisional respite from the onrush of impermanence. In the provisionality of this respite – the paradox of arresting time in order to chart the shape of its vanishing – lies the literary's curious, shimmering promise of permanence, of deep value beyond the banal and the trite and the passing spectacle.

One might argue that spectacle is precisely what we are up against as those who hold the Literary Fort, so to speak. It is worth quoting Nancy Fraser here, who in her key essay, 'Transnationalising the Public Sphere' (2007 [2002]), has the following to say:

*Consider the increased salience of cultural hybridity and hybridization, including the rise of 'world literature'. Consider also the rise of global mass entertainment, whether straightforwardly American or merely American-like or American-izing. Consider finally the spectacular rise of visual culture, or better, of the enhanced salience of the visual within culture, and the relative decline of print, the literary, etc. In all these ways, it is difficult to accord conceptual primacy to the sort of (national) literary cultural formation seen by Habermas (and by Benedict Anderson) as underpinning the subjective stance of public-sphere inter-*



locutors. (11-12)

Fraser is here arguing that the category of the national, upon which literary formations have traditionally been built, has become etiolated, transgressed and ruptured almost irretrievably by transnationalising, global cultural forces, in which process visual forms of culture – some may prefer the term spectacle – have assumed a certain ascendancy over the literary. Certainly, the literary basis of culture is under threat, and certainly that is the case in this country. To give an example with which many in this room might relate, our children, in the here and now, today, would be far more likely to be found watching the noisy *Big Brother Africa* on TV, or the clamorous *Survivor China*, than quietly sitting and reading Eugene Marais’s *Dwaalstories*, either in Afrikaans or in the translation by Jacques Coetzee (*The Rain Bull and Other Tales from the San*), a work which is among the contenders for today’s prize. No matter how much we might want to implore our children to read something worthwhile rather than to consume visual spectacle, they will pooh-pooh us and ask us in return why we watch so much cricket, or rugby or *Oprah* or *Movie Magic 1*. We are all implicated in these transformations, these changes in the where and the how of a cultural world altogether different from the one into which our own parents were born.

There is not much point in being modern-day Luddites and bemoaning the drift from depth reading to shallow visual spectacle on flat screens. It is, in fact, also true that people across the world are reading in greater numbers than ever before. South African literary publishing is arguably healthier and more prolific than it has been at any time in the past. New literary works across different SA languages, and new translated literary works, are appearing in healthy numbers, as the longlist for the SA Translators Institute prize for literary translation will attest. (So too will the increasingly long entry lists for the M-Net, the UJ, and the Sunday Times literary prizes.) It is rather perhaps the case that cultural forms in general, including the literary, have become more segmented and diverse, no longer splitting simply into highbrow and popular, serious SA writing as against ‘less literary’ writing, but seeping across borders and categories of all kinds. Just as the content-category ‘South African literature’ has become problematic – including now diverse forms such as detective fiction, diaspora writing, crime stories, chick-lit, science fiction, flash fiction, creative nonfiction, among others – so the manner of rendering literary material has multiplied, and



Leon de Kock

the styles diversified, to the extent that we may now be forgiven for feeling just a little lost in the land of the literary, let alone the world of visual and aural culture.

In the midst of such diversity of style and prolificness of content, I find it useful to take a writerly approach, and that is to concentrate on the writing task at hand, and forget about all else. Once more, with feeling. Keep working on that one line until it feels right. Do not stop until you have created what writer Kevin Bloom calls the ‘indestructible sentence’, the sentence that no other can replace. Precisely because there is so much out there, in so many different manners of expression, and in so many forms and sub-categories, it feels all the more critical to work the ground of the literary with loving, dedicated, practised labour, with style and aplomb, digging deep and hard. If literary academics, among whom I count myself, tend increasingly to disavow the literary in favour of the discursive and the paradigmatic, writers know what it is they do simply because they continue to do it, regardless. They do it compulsively and illogically, against all economic sense, but they do it all the same. And it is here that the literary translator occupies a critical intersectional space. The literary translator is both reader and writer, critic and creator. In the act of rendering literary art from one language into another, the literary translator engages in the highest possible form of reading. If, as a teacher of literature, you want to bring back the virtues of close reading – and I do not use the term ‘virtues’ here with any sarcasm whatsoever – then you can hardly do better than to make your students translate what they are reading. This is because translating a sentence means writing that sentence again, recreating it from scratch. To bring a sentence into being again, in a different language, you are compelled to read it for style, for weight, balance, texture, meaning, connotation, and

*“It is, in fact, also true that people across the world are reading in greater numbers than ever before. South African literary publishing is arguably healthier and more prolific than it has been at any time in the past.”*

overall finish, among other factors. Writing, in the form of translating – which I often prefer to think of as rewriting – forces one to the knife-edge of the literary.

The knife-edge of the literary, the place where what is important is not Foucault or Agamben, the paradigmatic or counter-paradigmatic, but the way in which language is made to work, is crafted and shaped for an effect that one may wish to call beauty, and an affect that one may wish to call imaginative or emotional transformation. In order to make such an event of effect-affect, one must, one cannot but, go deep and far into the engine room of writing; one is compelled to learn how the machinery of writing really works, in the busy, hot confines of writing’s secret engines of manufacture.

So, were I to talk about the need for literary translation, I would frame it in terms of the need to maintain the ground of the literary – among the plethora of other cultural grounds that are also legitimate – to maintain the very substrate of the literary as a place where both intensive, appreciative reading and committed writing are engaged in as a *practice*. My sense is that this is where we face the greatest threat – not from outside the literary, but from within, especially within the literary academy itself, where I believe we might have allowed the broad sweep of cultural studies and theoretical supremacy to dilute the primary bedrock of the literary, indeed the literary-imaginative itself as a place of great importance. The literary translator must, in terms of sheer operational pragmatics, repeatedly enter into this precise zone, must go in there and work, work and refine, write and rewrite, read and weigh up, and make calls about what to say, and how to say it, and in what style, what form, what manner of voice and address. Where else do we still teach such recondite categories as voice and mode of address, register, style and point of view, irony and bathos, manner and tone? Not much, anymore, in literature classes, I fear, where we tend to bestride the world of cultural politics – not without good reason – but where we have all but forgotten what Wayne C. Booth once called the ‘rhetoric of fiction’, and I would be tempted to call the salt of stylistics. I would add, too, while I’m on a roll, the perlocutions of poetry, the drumbeat of dialogue, Thanatos and Eros as the stuff of the lyrical voice. The stuff of literature, and the means of writing. That, ultimately, is why I am standing here, today. But I am also standing here because the very ground of the literary feels to me to be unsteadier than I can recall it being for a long time. So many other, sexier things are occupying the minds of

people who work as scholars in literature departments – the cultural ethnographies of cities, for example, or oceanic studies, ugly/beautiful aesthetics, self-styling, public culture, the practice of everyday life, you name it. These topics are indeed important, and necessary, but they have tended to shift the literary-imaginative into the domain of the recondite and the fuddy-duddy. I am not saying that these other topics are not deeply fascinating and important – they are – I am simply wondering whether they should be practised at the cost of the literary-imaginative bedrock of the humanities itself. This is a matter about which I believe we should all start making a racket unless we feel happy about the risk of losing something that is at the centre of our lives as literary practitioners.

There are other ways of framing the need for literary translation, such as the fact that it is arguably only through such acts of often relatively selfless rendition that different South African literatures can speak to and through each other. The call that Albert Gerard made half a century ago, for a great teamwork effort to write up all of Southern Africa’s literatures in an interreferential manner, has never been accomplished, and looks increasingly unlikely. This is because the daunting size of such a project, which has defeated most intentions in this regard, is becoming more daunting and Quixotic by the day, almost. But it can be done in microcosm, or in smaller acts of coordinated cross-engagement, precisely in projects of literary translation. This would serve to create cross-reading and cross-writing: English into Afrikaans, isiZulu into Afrikaans, English into isiZulu, English into Sotho, and so on and so on, avoiding but not excluding the uniformity of everything being translated primarily into English, with little two-way traffic. I once called for a coordinated, institutional project in this regard, at a symposium on SA writing, but somehow our literary-cultural divisions, and the market need for translation only or mostly into English, have kept us too busy in regulated channels of literary work to do this kind of thing. Nevertheless, for me, it remains both a need and a pragmatic way of working our writing into and across the cultural and multi-ethnic seams that still succeed in dividing us, despite everything that has happened since the 1990s. I would, in addition, argue that translation is perhaps one of the most neglected modes in the teaching of creative writing: it gives students a vehicle through which they can both write and observe the writing process as reflective readers, or students of the writing process, if you like. And this without the intrusive, often blinding ego of the precious me-as-writer persona.



Nonetheless, behind even such important objectives of literary translation – making the country’s literatures speak to each other; bridging the space between the teaching of writing and the teaching of reading – behind even these lies my refrain, ‘once more, with feeling’, because why do any of this if not for the love of it, if not for a passionate loyalty to literature, a belief that acts of literature matter in the world, that they are repositories of glowing value, treasure chests containing jewels that cannot be found elsewhere?

Naturally, the challenge is big. You don’t get to share in the secrets of the writing process, you don’t get entry into the engine room of literary writing of a high calibre, without paying at the door. But what is the entrance fee, you might ask? For me, it is a combination of selflessness and attentiveness, in addition, of course, to literary skill and aptitude. By selflessness I mean a readiness to put one’s own writing ego aside and work in the interests of a project of writing that exists publicly in another person’s name. Nowadays, this can take some doing. For reasons that I cannot begin to speculate upon in the confines of this brief speech, there is an enormous hunger out there for authorship.

I see this in my role as coordinator of the creative writing programme at Wits, and it often scares me, because in many cases the desire to be an author does not carry, for such would-be rock stars of the literary world, a concomitant duty to be readers. I often want to say to such candidates: put your own desire to be famous aside for five or ten years, and go read. Go read everything from Melville to Proust to Dostoevsky to Marquez, from Laurence Sterne to Balzac to Dickens to Zola to Kundera, from Roth to Attwood to Amitav Ghosh to Rose Tremain, and scores of others. At least, start picking from this enormously abundant bowl of fruit. That’s before you even to get to South African writing in any language, before you get to Pauline Smith and CJ Langenhoven, Mazisi Kunene, CM van den Heever, Es’kia Mphahlele, Njabulo Ndebele, Michiel Heyns, Eben Venter, Ivan Vladisavic, Marlene van Niekerk and JM Coetzee, to name a very limited number of writers. Read as a way of life, I want to say to these would-be instant writers, read as a compulsively pleasurable process. You cannot write without reading: the two are enmeshed, as Harold Bloom so clearly articulates in his work, *The Anxiety of Influence*.

But there is a different level of challenge, and that is application to the task. Dedicated and relentless labour, and a willingness to engage

in multiple acts of rewriting, selflessly, for a cause that does not necessarily include one’s own name as an author. The emphasis should be on the process, rather. I remember how, in the process of reworking *Triomf* into a demotic South African English, I reached the end of the translation manuscript repeatedly, and carried straight on back to the beginning, over and over again, until I thought I would go quite mad. It felt as if the end slung me back to the beginning in a kind of whiplash action over which I had little control. That was because the process of refining and reworking, relentlessly seeking a smoother flow, a better tenor of narrative voice, a sleeker illusion of total fictive envelopment, felt to me as if it were endless. Each new improvement on one page called for similar improvements on the next, and like refinements at the end of the work called for similar ones in the beginning, and the middle, and so it went on, and on, and on. Once more, with feeling. Always, once more. And then some. In a long work of complex narrative translation, especially, there is literally no end to the process of improving and refining, smoothing and roughing up the surface of narrative, making it better and better and better. Always better. Always, once more, until at some point publisher’s demands compel you to abandon the text.

At least, that’s what it feels like, to me. It is truly a kind of obsession, a grand obsession with acts of literature, flirting with the possibility of a claim to something big in the world. If nothing else, in these days of debunking the author in favour of the postmodern, self-enamoured critical persona, we need to teach literature students just this: an old-fashioned reverence for literature. For the possibility of something big in the world. We need to *model* this grand obsession with literature and acts of writing, the way my first literature teacher of any note, Stephen Gray, did it for me on this very campus in the 1970s. I have forgotten most of the content of his teaching, but I have not forgotten his utter dedication to the cause of literature, the way in which his entire life revolved around this great cause, first and foremost, as did his mannerisms, his personality, his home, his décor, his travels. What, I feel compelled to ask, have we done to literature in these whingy, stingy days of promoting ourselves as acolytes of discourse rather than literary personalities above all else? Translation remains a challenge to us, and an opportunity to return to some of the deep values of literature, of writing, as repositories of felt human value. Just that. It is more than enough.





*“Finally, of course, there is the occasional reward of literary prizes, on which you should never count because it is a mere cherry on top of the cake”*

It remains for me, in terms of my tripartite title, to say something about the rewards of literary translation. The old chestnut is that virtue is its own reward. And in this case it is indeed true, at least for me. Few things make me happier than to be lost within myself, at a keyboard, engrossed in the business of writing. Taken away. It is the only time that one is oblivious to the passing of time, and spared the constant awareness of one's own skin, the skin of a particular consciousness and no other. Writing takes me away, and makes me feel like a good Calvinist afterwards. Now we can watch cricket, or take a walk in the park, because we've done some real work, some really hard work, something that might make a contribution, and may just amount to something in the world. Why else are we doing what we do as literary practitioners, if not to make a contribution, to be writers, to become part of the literature that we profess to study.

That, for me, is the real reward: literary translation makes you a writer, not in the grandiose sense, but in the quiet, discrete, selfless and operational sense, which for me is the real meaning of writing. If one thinks of literary writing as deep human process and not as shallow egotistical massage, and if one values that process, then one needs and wants to become part of it. Why on earth not? However, not everyone's talents lie in the odd and peculiar area of imaginative writing, nor does everyone necessarily want that kind of exposure, or, more likely, neglect. Literary translation is an alternative way into writing, and a relatively safe way, at that. You won't be taking quite the same risk of professional spite and jealousy, public ridicule, empty flattery or, even worse, being completely ignored, which are just some of the risks that South African writers have to take all the time. In addition, you will be spared the awful terrors of imaginative failure, about which I'm sure the writers in this room can tell you a lot. Writing is mostly a thankless, lonely and money-bereft occupation which also tends to make intimate relationships problematic. Be a writer at your peril! But translation, in a sense, is a more measured way into the writing process. The text has already been written, and texts that come into contention for translation do so because they are regarded as having literary merit. So, many of the anxieties and dangers of writing at first remove are eliminated. But the rewards are similar: you will learn what it means to test the weight of a verb at different points in a sentence, a sentence whose primary purpose is to make an impact, to create a sense of beauty or realistic capture or magical effect.

You will learn this because you will be compelled to write that sentence all over again, in a language other than that in which it was first written, and it will lie in your power as a writer to do this job poorly, indifferently, or brilliantly. Your choice, your power. You will learn what rhythm and flow feel like in your hands, in the percussion of your fingertips and the modulations of your breath. You will learn the discipline of reading your own sentences out aloud, repeatedly, so as to test their weight and balance, texture and variation, on the tongue and in the ear. Once more, with feeling. You will learn the creative rewards of rewriting, the surprising lesson that writing is actually about rewriting, no matter how reluctant you might feel to go back and start again, and again, and again. This is the closest you will ever become to being a jazz musician, a person whose entire life revolves around playing, playing today and playing tomorrow, and again the next day, the next week, the next month and the next year. Playing knows no end, and eventually, after a great amount of practice and obsessive dedication, there are moments in it of such pure joy that you might become completely hooked. This is the kind of writing process I try to model in my own teaching, whether it revolves around translation or creative writing, because both are instances of improvisational rewriting in which the participants want to play, and the rewards of the game are the ultimate joy of playing. Once more, with feeling.

Finally, of course, there is the occasional reward of literary prizes, on which you should never count because it is a mere cherry on top of the cake, but a cherry nonetheless, and I shall now end this talk so that this final reward may be given to some deserved winners here today. For those of you who do not win, however, believe me, your real prize is the joy that we as readers feel when reading what you have taken the trouble to write, or to rewrite, just for our pleasure, and just for the sake of writing itself. Congratulations on that, and thank you.

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# Working together in translation

*The theme for ITD 2009 was 'Working Together' and this was used as the focal point of the celebrations. The awarding of the SATI Prizes for Outstanding Translation and Dictionaries on that day was preceded by a panel discussion in which some of the nominees and publishers considered different aspects of the co-operation that is part of publishing a translation. Here is what some of the participants had to say.*

## Translation as co-operation, collaboration, co-creation?

Michiel Heyns

I should begin by mentioning that the most recent number of the *Journal of Literary Studies*, devoted to the work of Marlene van Niekerk (25:3 September 2009), contains much that will be of interest to anybody interested in literary translation. There is an essay by Leon de Kock on translating *Triomf*, an article by myself on translating *Agaat*, and then an interview by Leon de Kock with Marlene van Niekerk and myself. What follows are merely some jottings in the shade of these much longer studies, and of Leon de Kock's earlier JLS article on translating *Triomf*, provocatively sub-titled 'Never Translate Anyone but a Dead Author' (JLS 19 (4): 345-359).

In my above-mentioned essay on the business of translating *Agaat*, I came up with the following ad hoc description of what I thought a translation was:

... a translation is a licensed trespass upon a rich but relatively unknown territory, upon which the translator has to report back to people to whom the territory is not only unknown but foreign. ... He must give as accurate an account of this territory as he can, to enable his audience to understand something of this territory in their own terms but *without losing the sense of foreignness*. If all countries looked the same, nobody would travel. (JLS 125)

The part of this description that is relevant to the present topic is my reference to translation as 'a licensed trespass' – a contradiction, of course, in that if one has a licence one is not trespassing, but let's make it more

respectable and call it a paradox. The paradox, then, is that the translator is licensed by the author and is yet conscious of trespassing on that author's territory – and is, of course, felt by the author to be trespassing and is yet tolerated.

The co-operation, then, involved in a translation is in the order of a negotiated settlement. For translator and author need each other, and yet each is staking a claim to what is now a shared territory. They are, in a term that Leon de Kock uses in a different context in his interview, 'intimate enemies'. In the greater scheme of things, of course, the translator needs the author more absolutely than the author needs the translator, but for the purposes of that particular translation the translator is as essential as the author.

But because of the nature of literary translation, in which there is seldom such a thing as a pure equivalence of sense, the translator of necessity has to take some liberties with the source text: that is the *trespass* bit of the definition.

I recently received a Call for Papers from the University of Swansea in the UK for a conference on 'The Author-Translator in the European Literary Tradition' ([www.swan.ac.uk/german/SeminarsLecturesandConferences/Conferences/Author-TranslatorConference/](http://www.swan.ac.uk/german/SeminarsLecturesandConferences/Conferences/Author-TranslatorConference/)). The call for papers kicks off with the following paragraph:

The recent 'creative turn' in translation studies has challenged notions of translation as a derivative and uncreative activity which is inferior to 'original' writing. Commentators

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**Michiel Heyns** has published four novels — *The Children's Day*, *The Reluctant Passenger*, *The Typewriter's Tale* and *Bodies Politic*. *The Children's Day* has been translated into Afrikaans and is due to be translated into French in the next year; and *The Reluctant Passenger* was translated into French in 2006. Michiel has translated *Equatoria* by Tom Dreyer, as well as *Memorandum* and *Agaat* by Marlene van Niekerk, and, most recently (not yet published), *30 Nagte in Amsterdam* by Etienne van Heerden. He reviews regularly for the *Sunday Independent*.

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*“So the co-operation of writer and translator during the actual process of translation is in the first place an exercise in diplomacy, a negotiation of disputed territory; but it differs from such negotiation in that the objective is a shared one: the creation of something that will serve the interests of both.”*

have drawn attention to the creative processes involved in the translation of texts, and suggested a rethinking of translation as a form of creative writing.

What is interesting here, of course, is the insistence on ‘the creative processes involved in the translation of texts’ and on translation as ‘a form of creative writing’. If indeed translation is a form of creative writing, how does it differ from the more traditional kind?

I’m not sure that I have a clear-cut answer to this. Yes, translating a complex literary text is more creative than translating a Home Economics textbook: the play of possible meanings is far richer, and the translator is often led by considerations not strictly lexical: the register of the original, its range of cultural allusion, even mechanical aspects like rhythm or alliteration. The translator tries to recreate not just the verbal meaning, but in some sense the experience of the original, for the edification of readers unfamiliar with the original context.

Perhaps the word ‘recreate’ encapsulates the problem: for if it means simply *rendering* the work in another language, then it’s more a question of transliteration or transposition than creation; but if it means ‘re-create’ as in creating anew, then one is stressing the creative contribution of the translator: the translation, then, carries the stamp of the translator as unmistakably as the original carries the stamp of the author.

But of course translation is also, inescapably, a second-order activity, derived very directly from the creation of the author. If the translation is a creative act, it is yet unlike the writing of a novel in that it does not require that most difficult of creative feats, which is to create from nothing. A novelist creates and peoples a world; a translator reports back on that world to people who wouldn’t otherwise have access to that world.

So a translation is not only a negotiation between two cultures (although it is very much that too): it is also a negotiation between two *people* – that is, where the author of the original is still alive and proficient in both source and target language. And here the creativity of the translator may create problems: most authors are understandably possessive of their work and jealous of any attempt to appropriate it. Translators again, equally understandably, are tempted to tamper with the original, bring out meanings that are latent in the original – or so they might maintain, in the face of accusations that they have in fact imposed unwarranted meanings upon the work.

The fact is, I think, that authors don’t particularly *want* their translators to be creative: what they want is a faithful rendering of their original. It’s a rare author who will welcome deviations from the original as in fact enriching – one such author, incidentally, being exactly, in my experience, Marlene van Niekerk. For the most part, as becomes clear from Leon de Kock’s interview with Marlene and myself, Marlene was entirely open to changes and additions that extended the range of the novel, and the result was, I think, a better translation than would have been possible with a more possessive author – *better* in the sense then of resonating within the receiving language with something of the force of the original, if not exactly in the same terms.

As for the other, more possessive kind of author, I’m afraid I’m one of those. When my novel *The Children’s Day* was translated into Afrikaans, I went through the translation like a jealous lover seeking signs of infidelity, and ruthlessly expunged every such sign. The translator, under whose name after all the translation was to be published, would have been within her rights to be resent my interference; and yet, can one really blame an author for interfering with what he continues to see as his creation, even in the translated form? (The novel is now being translated into French: fortunately for the translator, my French isn’t good enough to enable me to interfere.)

So the co-operation of writer and translator during the actual process of translation is in the first place an exercise in diplomacy, a negotiation of disputed territory; but it differs from such negotiation in that the objective is a shared one: the creation of something that will serve the interests of both. For ultimately, author and translator want the same thing, the best deal for the shared territory, what Leon de Kock describes as ‘a textual object which shows the highest equivalence of style, meaning, matter and form when read against the source text.’ (JLS 18) And it is only through cooperation, collaboration, even co-creation, that they can achieve that.





# Co-operation between author/translator and illustrator in producing children's books

Jaco Jacobs

**F**iguratively speaking, I stand before you today wearing different hats. On the one hand, I'm a writer who specialises in books for toddlers, children and teenagers. On the other hand, I'm also the translator of some 120 children's books into Afrikaans. And because my 'day job' is working as a children's book publisher, I might be considered to be wearing a third hat.

Working in the field of children's literature, regardless of which figurative hat I'm wearing, for me, one of the greatest joys and the most interesting aspects of the genre is the illustrations.

Illustrations not only serve to make children's books more enjoyable; they also make books more accessible and understandable to the target audience – from babies to young readers, and even teenagers.

Therefore, the text and illustrations in a children's book are in most instances of equal importance, and many publishers nowadays realise that illustrations aren't merely a pretty 'add-on'. Bad, ill-conceptualised illustrations can ruin a promising picture book text; while, on the other hand, the right illustrations can enhance the effect of a children's story and add layers of meaning unforeseen by the author.

So, the question arises: How closely do authors, translators and illustrators get to work together?

## Co-operation between author and illustrator

As far as the relationship and co-operation between author and illustrator is concerned, many new and aspiring writers are surprised to learn that they have very little control over the illustration process. In fact, few authors have the final say as to who gets to illustrate their books and what the illustrations should look like. Sometimes, this is (in my opinion) actually not such a bad thing, as writers often do not understand the market well enough or have inadequate knowledge of available local illustrators and their skills. (Some aspiring writers even go so far as to demand with manuscript submissions that cousins of gran-

nies be used as illustrators, should the manuscript be accepted for publication.)

I've been mostly lucky in my own writing career, in the sense that I have nearly always had a certain amount of input when illustrators are appointed for my books. Of course, it helps if you share a certain vision with your publisher. Not all writers are this lucky.

Many people may be surprised to know that there is, in fact, very little actual co-operation between author and illustrator. In fact, most publishing contracts stipulate that the publisher has final say with regard to illustrated material. Which seems fair, if you take into account the fact that the publisher has to pay for illustrations!

In most cases, my publisher lets me see rough draft submissions beforehand, sometimes from two or more possible illustrators. I discuss these with my publisher, and usually we agree on which illustrations work the best.

This illustrator is then commissioned by the publisher, and he/she starts working with the text, completely independent from me. In some cases, especially with picture books, my original manuscripts include my own ideas as to what happens visually on a page, where pages should be split, etc. However, it is up to the illustrator to use or discard these ideas. I can think of one instance where an illustrator actually requested, via my publisher, that I change the text on a certain page in a picture book, because the animals referred to on this page would not 'fit' with the look of the rest of the book. I was only too glad to oblige.

Usually, I receive rough black-and-white drafts of illustrations from my publisher, and subsequently I can go through these and point out incongruencies with the text, or any other aspect that I may find troubling. Usually, this is the last say the author has in the illustration process, apart from input in the final design of the cover, which is also limited.

Some illustrators enjoy receiving continuous input from the author, and regularly send e-mail updates. Others like to work independently, and in many instances I have never met or directly conversed with the illustrators of



**Jaco Jacobs** is a successful author of children's books. He has had more than 40 books published and has also translated over 120 children's books into Afrikaans. He works as an editor at LAPA Publishers.



The fourth participant in the panel discussion was **Miemie du Plessis** (above, with Jaco Jacobs) of LAPA Publishers, who spoke about the role of the publisher and their relationship with authors and translators.

Miemie is currently head of the children's book department at LAPA Publishers in Pretoria, where she is responsible for the publication of 70 children's books per year. She was the South African finalist in the International Young Publisher of the Year Award in 2005.

my books. Which is, I think, often a good thing – my visual literacy is rather limited, and I enjoy it when an artist can give free rein to his/her vision of my text.

### Co-operation between translator and illustrator

As a translator, there is usually no co-operation between yourself and the illustrator. Most of our translations are of foreign books, and published in co-production with large international publishers. Therefore, illustrations are already completed and cannot, in most cases, be altered.

The co-operation, in this case, is not between translator and illustrator, but between translator and *illustrations*. And the most creative part of translating illustrated children's books is often interpreting the illustrated material and using it, in addition to the written text, as an aid for choosing, for example, character and place names.

When I translated Chris Riddell's *Ottoline and the Yellow Cat*, for instance, I decided to call the main character (Ottoline Brown) Willemien van Rooyen. Willemien, because of the similarity to the original name, but also because the somewhat old-fashioned illustrations seemed, to my mind, to echo in this somewhat old-worldly Afrikaans name.

And the surname Van Rooyen came directly from the fact that red is the only colour that Riddell used in his illustrations for this book. Also, the illustrations of various characters in

the story served as a visual cue for the Afrikaans names – a bat-eared chihuahua became 'Fiefie Vlerremuiz die Vyfde' (also known as 'Vreezloos Vlerremuiz').

The strange, hairy bog-creature called Mr Munroe became 'meneer Knuffel' in my translation, because I figured he looks like a plush toy, which is called a 'knuffelbeest' in Dutch. (And I personally find 'knuffel' a nice word for describing a hug.)

In rare instances, co-productions are printed locally, usually with black-and-white books, and publishers are able to tamper with the illustrations somewhat. Therefore, in these cases a translator can sometimes suggest that a certain picture be left out if it contains elements that local children might find difficult to understand, such as the concept of bus passes or school cafeterias.

In conclusion: Illustrations are a somewhat unique element of children's literature. Children's book writers usually supply the material for illustrators to work with. The opposite is usually true for translators of children's books – where the illustrator, together with the author, supply you with material to create a finished book.

As a writer, my experience is that every illustrator, whether through direct co-operation or not, becomes co-author of my books.

As a translator, illustrations form an interesting part of the challenge of successfully translating a children's book.

## Some thoughts on co-operation in producing a multilingual dictionary

**Albert Venter**

The Centre for Political and Related Terms in Southern African Languages (CEPTSA) was formed in 1998 with the objective of helping to establish bilingual (English/Afrikaans) and in the long run multilingual (in SA's other official languages) specialist terminology in the political and related fields.

The centre functions in terms of regulations approved by the university council, under a management committee consisting of academics from RAU (now the University of Johannesburg – UJ) with a director, permanent members and ad hoc collaborators.

The Centre has produced the following:

- *Modern Political Dictionary* (MPD); third revised edition to be released soon
- Glossary of core terms with definitions in English, Afrikaans, Northern Sotho, Zulu, Tswana and Xhosa as the precursor to an eventual multilingual defining MPD. The Centre has already finalised 1 000 terms and is now working on a further 1 500.

The Centre also handles ad hoc enquiries from translators on a continuous basis and without charge.

### Requirements for a technical dictionary

A proper **needs analysis**, including who the users will be, is essential, as this influences

the scope, form and content of the data corpus.

A **steering committee** or working group must control the planning and execution of the product throughout. The availability of the right expertise together with continuity in the composition of the working group is of cardinal importance.

The combination of **disciplinary expertise** and **terminographic and lexicographic expertise** in the working group is essential. Technical terms have to be linguistically checked and certain lexicographic requirements must be met. CEPTSA has had a number of skilled people involved in its work: Susan Botha, Louis du Plessis, Theo Neethling, Don Marais, Anton Loubser and Pierre le Clus as disciplinary specialists and Bertie Reyneke and Judi de Beer as very experienced, senior lexicographers.

Careful **planning** of the project is a prerequisite for success. Consulting with other bodies that have run similar projects is useful, but their model cannot necessarily be followed slavishly. The planning must give attention to the dictionary's macrostructure, microstructure, *modus operandi*, collaborators, resources, record-keeping, costs and funding, and publication.

Just as any team must have a captain, so there must be a **leader** for the project to head the working group and manage the project. In addition to knowledge in his own specialisation, he must have leadership qualities, be able to maintain good interpersonal relations and act as an effective chairperson of the working committee. He must be able to ensure that the team's proceedings are orderly, that contributions remain relevant, that discussions do not develop into pointless arguments or idiosyncratic viewpoints and that justification takes place in an objective way.

Leadership and management skills are of paramount importance: CEPTSA is lucky to have Pierre le Clus as a dedicated and skilled chairperson of its working group.

The sustained involvement of **members** with the correct characteristics is essential. Knowledge in their area of specialisation is naturally very important, but they must also be able to function as part of a team, have good interpersonal relations and preferably have a feeling for language. The team must not be too large either – experience has shown that a working group of 30 to 40 members can simply not deliver a good product within an acceptable period.

Members of the working group have to

commit and keep on committing for a decade or more (we have been going for 15 years)! Small is beautiful; large is unwieldy.

The **working method** selected can either doom such a project or bring outstanding results. Success requires good excerpting and ordering of terms, regular joint discussion by the working group, individual research, feedback, joint decision-making, effective communication, careful record-keeping and professional data capturing.

There needs to be method in our madness too: excerpting of terms must be methodical, personal face-to-face meetings combined with e-mail correspondence makes for the accurate translation and definition of terms, and robust dialogue is essential.

Transparent responsible **financial management** is a *sine qua non*, particularly since a project of this nature is generally reliant on donations and grants to do its work. RAU-UJ provides this service, giving the sponsors the necessary confidence.

The components of a modern **electronic office** are essential to accomplish the work: computers, e-mail facilities and Multiterm as a lexicographical database are indispensable.

### CEPTSA's functioning

Although the Centre's working committee has reduced in size over the years, it is still composed of highly qualified experts supported by a very competent terminologist.

The Centre works according to the principles set out above, shown by practice to be fruitful. The first edition of the MPD was published after 12 years of work; the third, considerably revised edition will be coming out soon, six years after the first edition, and 2 500 core terms with definitions in English, Afrikaans, Zulu, Northern Sotho, Tswana and Xhosa should be ready early in 2011.

A factor that greatly retards progress is a lack of adequate funding. Continuous requests bring only sporadic results, which hinders the Centre's work. Nonetheless, it is a privilege to work on a project like this and the team is committed to delivering a product that will benefit users and contribute to linguistic empowerment in South Africa.

Money makes the world go round and it also makes dictionaries and glossaries of terms happen. We thank UJ/RAU and the SA Reserve Bank for support during the last decade or so: to the tune of about R400 000. This source has now all but dried up, but CEPTSA will keep on working.



**Albert Venter** is professor in Politics at the University of Johannesburg. He has lectured in Political Science/ Politics for the past 30 years, and has been involved in the MPD project since 1994.



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# Roots-kultuurfees, -konferensie en -uitstalling

Die Roots-kultuurfees, -konferensie en -uitstalling is van Maandag 21 tot Woensdag 23 September op die kampus van die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland (UWK) aangebied. Die leuse van die program wat oor die drie dae gestrek het, was 'Nuwe roetes na nuwe wêreld'.

Die oorkoepelende onderwerp van die museumuitstalling in die voorportaal van die universiteitsbiblioteek was 'Nuwe insigte oor die ontwikkeling van Afrikaans as 'n taal van Afrika wat van Nederlands verskil en 'n plaaslike idioom van 'n eiesoortige aard ontwikkel het'. Die uitstalling is geborg deur die Departement van Kuns en Kultuur en is voorberei deur die Afrikaanse Taalmuseum, die Genadendal Sendingmuseum en die Iziko-museums van Kaapstad. Dit is ondersteun deur die Stigting vir die Bemagtiging van Afrikaans, die Nederlandse Ambassade, die Vlaamse verteenwoordiging in die Belgiese Ambassade, asook die koerant *Die Burger*.

Die aand van 21 September is 'n gala-geleentheid waarby verskeie bekende kunstenaars opgetree het, in die Groot Saal van die UWK aangebied. Die volgende twee dae het verskeie orkeste (o.a. Roosbeef, 'n Nederlandse rockgroep), sangers en kultuurgroepe (bv. Namibiese leerders wat tradisionele danse uitgevoer het en volkspelers) die feesgangers op verskillende sentrale plekke vermaak. Tydens die verskeidenheidskonsert wat Dinsdagaand in die hoofsaal plaasgevind het, het sangers soos Steve Hofmeyr en die Gumboot-dansers opgetree en Woensdagaand is die kultuurfees afgesluit met die opvoerings, *Moeder Lena* en *Kap Aan*, asook 'n sokkerkabaret met UWK-studente.

Die omvattende konferensieprogram was hoofsaaklik 'n Suid-Afrikaans-Nederlandse dialoog oor die dinamika van taal, kultuur en erfenis. In die heel eerste besprekingsgleuf was prof. Jakes Gerwel in gesprek met prof. Antjie Krog en prof. Geert Buelens van die Universiteit van Utrecht. Hulle het gepraat oor taalbetrekkinge tussen die Nederlandsprekende wêreld en Suider-Afrika. In een van die besprekings op die tweede dag van die konferensie het dr. Mariëtta Alberts as verteenwoordiger van die Pan-Suid-Afrikaanse Taalraad en dr. Willem Botha van die

*SAVI is uitgenooi om deel te neem aan die Roots-kultuurfees, -konferensie en -uitstalling in Kaapstad in September vanjaar, spesifiek om te praat oor die rol van vertalers in die uitgewersbedryf. Marianne Peacock het namens SAVI opgetree. Hier doen sy verslag oor die konferensie en op die volgende paar bladsye is die teks van haar toespraak.*

Woordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal oor leksikografie en terminologieskepping gepraat. 'n Ander onderwerp wat vir lede van SAVI belangrik is, was dié van mnr. Quintus van Rooyen en prof. Mbulungeni Madiba van die Universiteit van Kaapstad, naamlik 'Vertaling as verryking/kulturele kontak'. Mnr. Van Rooyen het veral die belangrikheid van vertaling en tolking vir beter kommunikasie in SA beklemtoon. In die bespreking oor die uitgewersbedryf en vertaling het dit geblyk dat daar in Nederland, waar daar 'n sterk leeskultuur bestaan, 'n baie groter behoefte aan vertaling uit ander tale in Nederlands is as wat daar in Suid-Afrika bestaan vir vertaling uit Engels en vreemde tale in Afrikaans.

Peter Bergsma, wat 13 van JM Coetzee se boeke in Nederlands vertaal het, se praatjie oor sy werk as vertaler was ook besonder interessant. Hy is onder andere betrokke by die Vertaalhuis in Nederland, waar vertalers kan tuisgaan terwyl hulle daar navorsing doen vir hul werk.



Aspekte van Afrikaans – van die Roots-uitstalling



Artikel deur Marianne Peacock. Marianne is 'n geakkrediteerde SAVI-lid en 'n vryskutvertaler in die Weskaap.

# Die werk van vertalers en hul rol in die uitgewersbedryf

*“Omdat die opvoedkundige uitgewers besef dat hul vryskutwerkers ’n baie belangrike rol speel om te verseker dat hulle kwaliteit-produkte aan die mark verskaf, doen groter uitgewers moeite om taalpraktisyns se vaardighede te verbeter”*

## Die Suid-Afrikaanse Vertalersinstituut

Ek is hier om ’n inset te lewer namens die Suid-Afrikaanse Vertalersinstituut (SAVI), ’n professionele organisasie vir taalpraktisyns wat al meer as vyftig jaar bestaan. Almal wat by die taalbedryf betrokke is, bv. vertalers, tolke, teksredigeerders en proeflesers, kan by hierdie organisasie aansluit. SAVI verskaf egter nie werk nie, maar deur lid te wees van SAVI kan taalpraktisyns kontakte opbou en kan hulle in die databasis opgeneem word wat op die SAVI-webwerf verskyn. Hul kontakbesonderhede en spesialisterreine word daar verstrekkend en hulle kan dus direk deur werkgewers, soos projekbestuurders in die uitgewersbedryf, gekontak word. Alle besonderhede van lede word nie op die webwerf verstrekkend nie. Indien kliënte dus meer besonderhede verlang, kan hulle die SAVI-kantoor bel of e-pos.

SAVI is die enigste organisasie wat professionele akkreditasie in Suid-Afrika verskaf, deur ’n akkrediteringseksamen wat ’n hoë standaard stel.

## Die belangrikheid van vertalers vir die uitgewersbedryf

Volgens statistiek wat ingewin is, is die uitgewersbedryf verreweg die grootste kliënt van vertalers in Suid-Afrika. My kliënte is hoofsaaklik opvoedkundige uitgewers; dus gaan ek spesifiek op hulle fokus. Opvoedkundige uitgewers het die afgelope dekade baie van vertalers gebruik gemaak omdat die meeste van hul Afrikaanse tekste, behalwe vir

die vak of leerarea Afrikaans (Huistaal of Addisionele Taal), vertalings is van manuskripte wat in Engels geskryf is. Sulke maatskappye is van vryskutters afhanklik vir vertaling. Geweldig baie nuwe materiaal moes ontwikkel word vir die drie fases van die Nasionale Kurrikulum vir skole, en ook vir VOO-kolleges. Daar word egter nie net in Afrikaans vertaal nie, maar ook in die ander amptelike tale. Sommige uitgewers vertaal ook, veral letterkundige werke, uit Afrika-tale in Engels, met die oog daarop om dit in skole voorgeskryf te kry. Dit lyk egter of die keurders van letterkundelyste vir skole tot dusver nog nie gretig is om vertaalde werke voor te skryf nie.

Omdat die opvoedkundige uitgewers besef dat hul vryskutwerkers ’n baie belangrike rol speel om te verseker dat hulle kwaliteit-produkte aan die mark verskaf, doen groter uitgewers moeite om taalpraktisyns se vaardighede te verbeter deurdat hulle gratis werksessies aanbied vir gereelde werkers. Sommige maatskappye stel ook ’n huisstydokument beskikbaar sodat terminologie met ’n hoë gebruiksfrekwensie en aspekte soos die gebruik van klein- en hoofletters, afkortings en punktuasie in alle publikasies eenvormig is. Ek het onlangs toe ek ’n vertaling vir hulle gedoen het, ’n baie omvattende styldokument van ’n uitgewer ontvang wat beslis deur ’n taalkenner saamgestel is. Daar is uitgewers wat nie sulke huisstydokumente verskaf nie. Dit kan daartoe lei dat daar nie eenvormigheid is in die leerstof wat uitgegee word nie en dit bemoeilik ook die taak van hul vryskutwerkers – vertalers, redigeerders en proeflesers. Die feit dat geen huisstylriglyne gegee word nie, kan ook afbreuk doen aan die kwaliteit van die leerstof wat uitgegee word.

## Vertaling as taalpraktyk. Kan almal wat tweetalig of meertalig is, vertaalwerk doen?

Taalkennis en twee- of meertaligheid beteken glad nie dat iemand ’n goeie vertaling sal kan lewer nie. In Suid-Afrika is die vertaalprofessie nie gereguleer nie; dus mag enige iemand hier as vertaler werk. Vertaalwerk is ’n kreatiewe proses. Goeie vertalers het ’n uitmuntende beheer oor die teikentaal (ver-

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*SATI was invited to participate in the Roots cultural festival, conference and exhibition in Cape Town in September this year, specifically to discuss the role of translators in the publishing industry. SATI member Marianne Peacock represented the Institute on this occasion. On the previous page she reports on the conference, mainly a South-African–Dutch dialogue on the dynamics of language, culture and heritage. This article is the text of her presentation. She makes the point that translation is not something any bilingual or multilingual person can do successfully, discusses the resources used by translators, mentions some of the common pitfalls in translation and talks about why one should use a professional. Publishers in the school market in SA are one of the largest employers of freelance translators and it is important for them to have a good relationship with their translators to deliver a quality product.*



kieslik die huistaal) waarin vertaal word, sodat die vertaling idiomaties en grammaties foutloos kan wees, maar hulle moet ook die brontaal (die taal waaruit vertaal word) baie goed ken. Goeie vertalers beskik oor die taalgevoel om te weet wat die regte woord op die regte plek is, hulle vertaal die betekenis van die bronteks, nie woordeliks nie, sodat die vertaalde teks lyk asof dit oorspronklik in die teikentaal geskryf is. Dit moenie soos 'n vertaling lyk nie, maar die boodskap moet behou word. Dit gebeur dikwels dat daar twee of meer woorde vir 'n begrip is, soos maatskaplik en sosiaal vir die Engelse woord *social*. Nou-ja, dis nogal 'n tameletjie om te weet wanneer jy nou juis maatskaplik (gewoonlik met betrekking tot die welsyns-aspek) moet gebruik en wanneer dit wel sosiaal (meer die politieke inslag) is. Goeie vertalers verwar nie 'vals vriende' soos herken en erken nie, of vertaal nie *familiar* met 'familiêr' nie. Hulle begaan nie spelfoute nie (spel bv. nie sprinkaan met 'n 'g' of skryf reuse spinnekop as twee woorde nie). 'n Goeie vertaler is toegewyd, kom sperdatums na en is uiters noukeurig; daarom moet die vertaling 'n paar keer met die spreekwoordelike 'fynkam' deurgestaan word voordat die finale produk vir die kliënt gegee word.

Dit is só dat by opvoedkundige uitgewers die redigeerder die veiligheidsnet vir vertalers is. Groot dele van 'n swak vertaling moet herskryf word en die vertaler kry gewoonlik geen terugvoering oor foute wat begaan is of foutiewe vertaling nie. So 'n reggetimmerde vertaling, is ook nooit werklik goed genoeg nie. Ek voel dat dit 'n redigeerder se plig is om aan die projekbestuurder of uitgewer verslag te doen oor 'n vertaling, ten einde meer gehaltebeheer te kan uitoefen, maar dit is gewoonlik nie deel van die werkopdrag van 'n redigeerder nie. Na my mening behoort uitgewers so 'n verslag van 'n redigeerder te vereis ten einde beter gehaltebeheer toe te pas. Daar is 'n akroniem *GIGO: Garbage in, garbage out*, wat ook vir swak vertalings geld!

### Tariewe van uitgewers vir vertaalwerk

Gedeeltelik as gevolg van die kredietkrisis en ook omdat die meeste leerstof tot by Graad 12 nou ingefaseer is, het opvoedkundige uitgewers die eerste ses maande van vanjaar minder werk vir vryskuttaalpraktisyns gehad. As gevolg van nuwe voorleggings vir die Grondslagfase (Gr. R tot Gr. 3) was daar sedert Junie weer 'n groter aanvraag na werk. Behalwe vertaling in die amptelike tale, word vertalings ook vereis in tale soos Portugees,

bv. vir die buurstaat Angola, en uitgewers wat aan ander buurlande soos Botswana boeke verskaf, moet vertalers in of van daardie land kry. Die Setswana wat daar gepraat word, is baie dieselfde as die Setswana wat in Suid-Afrika gepraat word, maar daar is plek-plek verskille.

Vertalers word gewoonlik per woord of per 100 woorde betaal – soms volgens die getal woorde in die bronteks en soms volgens die vertaalde aantal woorde in die teikentaal. Volgens 'n opname wat in 2008 landwyd deur SATI uitgevoer is, was die gemiddelde tarief per woord verlede jaar 46c per woord. Dit het nie net op die uitgewersbedryf betrekking gehad nie. (Meer inligting oor die tariefopname is op die SAVI-webwerf beskikbaar.) Tariewe wissel ook soms volgens die moeilikheidsgraad, die dringendheid, bv. moet die vertaler dalk deurnag werk om die sperdatum te haal, en die uitgewer se begroting vir die projek. Vir tegniese vertalings en VOO-fase leerderboeke sal die tarief waarskynlik hoër wees as bv. vir 'n Lewensvaardighede-leerderboek vir Graad 3.

Vir vertalings uit Wes-Europese tale is die tarief per woord meer as tussen Engels en Afrikaans. Omdat daar ook nog nie genoeg bevoegde werkers is wat in en uit Afrika-tale vertaal nie, en laasgenoemde vertalers ook nog nie oor al die nodige naslaanbronne, soos woordeboeke en terminologielyste beskik nie, word hulle ook meer betaal. Dikwels moet hulle self terme ontwikkel omdat dit nog nie in die spesifieke taal bestaan nie. Die posisie sal hopelik verbeter namate meer bronne beskikbaar raak.

Uitgewers beding soms spesiale tariewe wanneer hulle baie groot vertaalprojekte het en vir kinderboeke wat baie illustrasies en min woorde per bladsy bevat, kan 'n vertaler nie per woord betaal word nie. Dit is gewoonlik kreatiewe werk waar o.a. liedjies, rympies, raaisels en speletjies vertaal moet word.

SAVI is nie 'n statutêre liggaam nie en is volgens wet nie daarop geregtig om tariewe aan te beveel nie. Wat belangrik is omtrent die tariewe van vryskutvertalers, is dat hulle 'n gespesialiseerde diens lewer en daarvolgens betaal behoort te word. Taaldienste is nie minder werd as bv. die dienste van 'n elektriesien nie. Indien taalpraktisyns gevra word om te kwoteer en die kliënt die laagste kwotasie aanvaar, kan dit dalk 'n geval wees van *'when you pay peanuts, you get monkeys'*! Die kliënt mag egter beslis nie uitgebuit word nie. Volgens SAVI se etiese kode behoort lede van die Instituut hulle te laat lei deur die beginsel van regverdigheid.

*“Dit is só dat by opvoedkundige uitgewers die redigeerder die veiligheidsnet vir vertalers is. Groot dele van 'n swak vertaling moet herskryf word en die vertaler kry gewoonlik geen terugvoering oor foute wat begaan is of foutiewe vertaling nie.”*

*“As ’n mens jou vraag op die ZaLang- poslys stel, kan jy amper seker wees daar gaan êrens in Suid-Afrika ’n Zalanger wees wat jou gaan antwoord of voorstelle gaan maak om jou probleem op te los.”*

Om buitensporige tariewe te vra, is beslis onaanvaarbaar.

### Naslaanwerke en terminologielyste

Sonder die nodige naslaanwerke en navorsing kan geen vertaling goed genoeg wees nie. Vir taalpraktisyns wat in Afrikaans en Engels werk bestaan ’n groot verskeidenheid vakwoordeboeke en terminologielyste. Verder is die *Feitegids*, ’n omvattende kernensiklopedie, en *Skryf Afrikaans van A tot Z* ook baie nuttig. Terminologielyste word opgestel deur vakkundiges en taalpraktisyns, bv. lyse van ingenieursterme, geologisterme, rekenarterme en aardrykskundeterme.

Geen taalpraktisyn wat tussen Engels en Afrikaans vertaal, kan sonder die jongste uitgawe van die *Afrikaanse woordelys en spelreëls*, die *HAT*-verklarende woordeboek en die *Pharos Afrikaans-Engels/English-Afrikaans* bielie van ’n woordeboek wees nie. Baie woordeboeke kan op die rekenaar geïnstalleer word, soos die *Woordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal* wat natuurlik nog nie volledig is nie.

Die Internet is ’n nuttige naslaanbron, hoewel ’n mens nie altyd daarvolgens kan gaan nie, want enigiemand kan deesdae inligting op die Internet beskikbaar stel en taalgebruik en spelling in baie dokumente hier, laat dikwels veel te wense oor. ’n Mens vind tog dikwels ’n term wat jy soek op die Internet wanneer jy dit nêrens anders kan vind nie.

Sommige vertalers spesialiseer in ’n sekere vakgebied, bv. Rekeningkunde of Aardrykskunde, maar moes dit natuurlik ook die eerste keer doen; daarom is dit moontlik om vertaalwerk te doen van ’n teks waarvan jy nie die terminologie alles ken nie, want dit kan nagevors en nageslaan word as die betekenis goed vertaan word. As jy dan meer tekste van dié aard vertaal, raak jy al hoe meer bedrewe, sodat jy byna niks meer hoef na te slaan nie en die vertaling vinnig kan afhandel.

### Ander vertaalhulpmiddels

Dit is noodsaaklik dat ’n vertaler ’n speltoetser op die rekenaar installeer, hoewel hierdie programme wat ontwikkel word, ook sommige gebreke het. *Pharos* se speltoetser merk bv. alle samestellings met ’n rooi streep as verkeerd.

Daar is ook elektroniese hulpmiddels, soos *Wordfast*, ’n vertaalprogram waarvoor jy ’n lisensie koop wat na drie jaar hernu moet word. Ons in Suid-Afrika word as ‘agter-

geblewe’ beskou en kry dit goedkoper. Dit word oor die Internet bestel. Hierdie program het ’n geheue wat ’n mens dan opbou, wat beteken as die terme keer op keer in ’n vertaling voorkom, hoef dit nie weer getik te word nie, want die geheue verskaf dit outomaties. Dit versnel die vertaalproses.

Die gratis e-poslys *ZaLang* is m.i. ’n baie nuttige ondersteuningsnetwerk vir Suid-Afrikaanse taalpraktisyns omdat jy altyd daar raad kan vra met probleme wat jy nie kan oplos nie en taalaangeleenthede kan bespreek. As ’n mens jou vraag op die *ZaLang*-poslys stel, kan jy amper seker wees daar gaan êrens in Suid-Afrika ’n *ZaLanger* wees wat jou gaan antwoord of voorstelle gaan maak om jou probleem op te los. As jy op ’n Sondag voor jou rekenaar sit, sien jy ook op *ZaLang* jy is nie alleen nie, want ander vryskutwerkers swoeg ook naweke. Onlangs was daar ’n antwoord van ’n taalwerker wat eenuur die nag van ’n kampeerterrein af ’n terminologielys wat hy opgestel het, aangestuur het!

### Vertalers moet omsien na hul eie belange

Vertalers wat vir opvoedkundige uitgewers werk, kry nie outeursgeld nie, maar in die geval van algemene boeke, soos letterkundevertalings, ontvang die vertaler dikwels self ’n gedeelte van die outeursgeld. By die Kaapse boekeskou vanjaar het die vertaler Michiel Heyns bv. gesê dat hy en Marlene van Niekerk dit so beding het dat hulle albei outeursgeld op die boek *Agaat* wat hy vertaal het, kry. Vertalers van letterkundige werke sit soveel van hul hart en siel daarin dat ek dink dit is nie minder as reg nie. Die Engelse vertaling van *Agaat* was vanjaar die wenner onder die werke op SAVI se kortlys van vyf inskrywings in die kategorie literêre vertaling vir die 2009 SAVI-prys. (Die vier ander kategorieë waarvoor SAVI pryse toeken, is niefiksie, kinderliteratuur, diensvertaling en woordeboeke. Dit was vanjaar die vierde keer dat die SAVI-pryse vir voortreflike vertaling toegeken is.)

Vertalers moet na hul eie belange omsien deur te alle tye professioneel op te tree en uitstekende diens aan kliënte te lewer. Op hierdie manier sal hul werk na waarde geag word en kan hulle sorg dat hulle billike behandeling ontvang en na verdienste betaal word.

Die Suid-Afrikaanse Vertalersinstituut verwag dat sy lede altyd die hoogste etiese en morele standaarde in hul onderhandelings met kliënte sal handhaaf.

# Commemorating translators

It appears that the Unesco celebration of International Translation Day is not the only one of its kind.

To those in the profession, it is gratifying to see internationally recognised figures publicly acknowledging the value of what we do. When Mr Paulo Coelho was in Armenia in 2004, he visited the area of Oshagan on Holy Translators' Day and laid flowers on the tomb of Mesrob Mashdots, the creator of the Armenian alphabet and a translator.

According to reports on the occasion, Mr Coelho was particularly impressed by the fact that the Armenians sanctified their translators, who enlightened their people after the alphabet was discovered. Mr Coelho said that in all his tours around the world, he had never encountered such a practice. He later wrote an article, syndicated in newspapers around the world, on his visit to Armenia and specifically his impressions from Holy Translator's Day.

Mr Coelho was accompanied on his visit to Oshagan by Khatchig Mouradian, the translator of Mr Coelho's book *The Alchemist* into Armenian. His impressions of the day can be read in his story 'The Other Side of the Tower of Babel' from his book *Like the Flowing River*.

Holy Translators' Day (Targmanchats ton) is a religious holiday observed on 13 October. This national holiday is celebrated only in Oshakan and Armenia and is dedicated to the creators of the Armenian alphabet, Mesrop Mashtots (spelling of name seems to differ) and Sahak Partev, translators and interpreters of the Bible.

The Armenian alphabet was invented (created) in order to translate the Bible into Armenian and paved the way for the first Golden Age of Armenia. Over the centuries, Armenian writers, philosophers, mathematicians and scientists have taken inspiration from the Holy Translators' legacy to achieve excellence in scholarship, creativity and world acclaim in spite of long periods of devastation, attack, conquest and subjugation.

St Mesrob Mashtots, an Armenian monk, theologian and linguist, was born in 361 or 362 AD in Hatsik, Province of Taron, historical Armenia, and died on 17 February 440 AD in Vagharshapat, Armenia. St Sahak, also known as 'Isaac the Great' and Sahak Parthev, owing to his Parthian origin, was born in 338 AD and died between 439/441 AD, aided St Mesrob in the invention of the Armenian alphabet.

Article by Gabriele Wussow. Gabriele is a SATI member and freelance translator in the Western Cape. Information for this article was taken from various websites and Wikipedia.

## What are freelances?

In recent article in his column 'World Wide Words', Michael Quinion discusses the fact that the term 'freelance' can be traced back to Sir Walter Scott, who introduced the term in his 1819 novel *Ivanhoe*. His 'free-lance' characters were medieval mercenaries who pledged their loyalty (and weapons) to lords and kings, for a fee. The word is not recorded before Sir Walter Scott introduced it in that book.

This is its first appearance:

I offered Richard the service of my Free Lances, and he refused them – I will lead them to Hull, seize on shipping, and embark for Flanders; thanks to the bustling times, a man of action will always find employment.

[*Ivanhoe*, by Sir Walter Scott, 1819. 'Free', of course, means 'unbound', not 'without cost'.]

Quinion goes on to say that Sir Walter Scott is credited with either popularising or inventing many words and phrases, to the extent that he is marked as the first user of more than 700 in the *Oxford English Dictionary* and lies third behind the Bible and Shakespeare in innovation in that work. He is recorded as the first user of, for example, Calvinistic, blood is thicker than water, clansmen, cold shoulder, deferential, flat (meaning an apartment), Glaswegian, lady-love, lock, stock and barrel, Norseman, otter hunt, roisterer, Scotswoman (in place of the older Scotchwoman), sick-nurse, sporran, weather-stain and wolf-hound. He also introduced his readers to many obscure old terms, especially from the Scots language and from chivalry.

"His 'free-lance' characters were medieval mercenaries who pledged their loyalty (and weapons) to lords and kings, for a fee."



# Help for sworn translators



A manual on sworn translation is available from the SA Translators' Institute

This comprehensive manual on sworn translation arose as a result of a lack of clear guidelines on exactly how sworn translators should be going about their business. Many conventions and requirements have arisen over the years, but they were not put together in a single

source. Newcomers to the profession had difficulty finding out what they were supposed to be doing.

The manual should obviate these problems. It covers all aspects of sworn translation, from the requirements to qualify as a sworn translator to details of the various conventions, in addition to containing samples of documentation commonly used in South Africa.

## Contents

1. What are sworn translators and sworn translation?
2. Legislation relating to sworn translation
3. What this means in practice
4. Your stamp and certification
5. Guidelines and conventions relating to sworn translation
6. Charging for sworn translations
7. Duties of a commissioner of oaths
8. Getting yourself known
9. Sworn/court interpreters and interpreting
10. The SATI exam for purposes of becoming a sworn translator
11. Useful resources for sworn translators

Annexure 1: Text of the Hague Convention relating to apostilles

Annexure 2: Samples of certificates issued to sworn translators

Annexure 3: Samples of stamps used by sworn translators

Annexure 4: Samples of certification statements used by sworn translators

Annexure 5: Samples of covering sheet for multiple sworn translations

Annexure 6: Covering letter for file of translated photocopies of documents for use in a court case

Annexure 7: Copy of regulations appointing sworn translators as commissioners of oaths

Annexure 8: Pro forma documents to be submitted when being sworn in

Annexure 9: Samples of common documentation

The manual is in A4 format and soft-covered, with 100 pages. It costs R120 per copy for Institute members and R180 for non-members.

To purchase a copy of the manual, contact Marion Boers on 011 803 2681 or [publications@translators.org.za](mailto:publications@translators.org.za).

# Marketing Solutions

Based on a highly successful workshop by Tina Potgieter, this book is a self-help guide to marketing your freelance business. The book teaches users to –

- assess where their business is at currently
- define exactly what their business needs are
- determine what their clients' needs are
- devise client-driven marketing strategies
- assess their competition
- determine which marketing methods work best for their business
- network successfully
- develop a practical marketing plan
- leverage themselves and build a successful business

A5 format, soft-covered, with 38 pages of excellent tips, many practical examples and implementable ideas.

Cost: R60 per copy for SATI members and R80 for non-members. To order, contact Marion Boers on 011 803 2681 or [publications@translators.org.za](mailto:publications@translators.org.za).



## Other publications

The Institute has produced a special volume to celebrate its 50th anniversary, giving an overview of SATI's history since its establishment on 25 August 1956. Copies are available from Marion Boers at R100 each.

The information on setting oneself up as a freelance language practitioner published in *Muratho* in October 2003 proved very popular and is being consolidated and issued as a stand-alone publication. It covers a range of issues and offers plenty of practical advice for those starting out in the profession. The publication date is not yet available.