

CONCLUSION

This research is intended to uncover the various processes – state, institutional and individual - which led to the creation of *Hijack Stories* (2000). It is also interesting to see the interplay of these processes within the framework of a particular cultural relationship between South Africa and the rest of the world. Furthermore, we see that translation takes place at the intersection of the processes of state, institution and individual. The timing of this research report is also significant as it occurs at a milestone period of increased international interest in and acclaim for South African films. To reiterate South African producer Anant Singh, South African film has never received so many awards and accolades in such a short period.

Let us first take a moment to recall how *Hijack Stories* (2000) first became of interest and, subsequently, the subject of this research report. Were it not for the French subtitles on the locally screened trailer, another South African film would have passed by virtually unnoticed by the researcher. It was this oddity of foreign subtitles on a trailer for a local film that drew attention and, in retrospect, was really a snapshot of the dichotomous existence of *Hijack Stories* (2000): a South African film, shot in South Africa, starring well-known South African actors, crewed by a predominantly South African crew, yet funded, produced and marketed internationally. German South African director Oliver Schmitz transcended the boundaries of South African and non-South African to unite the global ensemble who would create *Hijack Stories* (2000). Thus this first impression of *Hijack Stories* (2000) became the point of entry into the journey of this film.

As was discovered, the use of French trailer for local audiences arose out of a question of cost. In hindsight, this is a true indication that South Africans are not the intended audience. Moreover, the fact that the French and British DVD

releases of the film are more easily attainable than the South African DVD reinforces the fact that *Hijack Stories* (2000) was made for international rather than local consumption.

An essentially process-oriented descriptive approach was adopted in this research, by examining extra-textual factors within the system in which the text is situated. Such an approach has uncovered the social structures and actions of individuals (Thompson 1984) which helped shape *Hijack Stories* (2000): South Africa's apartheid past (state); the effect of the latter on the film industry (institution) during the period and subsequently; and the experiences of people involved in the film (the individual) and their subjectivities.

Starting with state, the country's apartheid system was restrictive in terms of the content of films as well as who could watch what films, based on purely racial parameters. The main outcome of these artificial restrictions is the stunted growth of a movie-going culture across all racial and social groups. The effects are harshly felt in the institution as film makers – the individuals - struggle to acquire financing for films as most local investors are not willing to invest in films which will play to such scant local audiences. Very often, as we have seen with *Hijack Stories* (2000), investment from abroad is sought for a film to be realised. A key reason for Schmitz's relocation to Germany was the financial difficulty faced when trying to make a film in South Africa¹.

Although international investment in films forms part of a global trend in film making, we have discovered on this journey that it also arises from the interest of the outside world in South African content. Why is there so much foreign interest in South Africa? Huggan, Appadurai and Liu have helped us to understand this.

¹ However, there is enough evidence to indicate that change is happening with improved infrastructure in the film industry, resulting in increased local financing of films, as was the case with *Zulu Love Letter* (2004) and *Tsotsi* (2005). The recent spurt of international attention on local films is also likely to help maintain and boost these changes, and to boost local audience numbers watching local films, further encouraging local investment.

We started off by acknowledging that *Hijack Stories* (2000) is a cultural commodity and that its value lies in its *South Africanness*. This value to the outside world is contingent, accumulated through a surrounding social network and historical factors. Because of the country's unique history - its past of colonialism, an oppressive minority-occupied apartheid government followed by a relatively peaceful transition, all of which form the construct of state - South Africa continues to prick the curiosity of the international community.

In the case of *Hijack Stories* (2000), the constructed ideas and notions of South Africa in the imaginaries of French and British audiences are packaged in the film's character portrayal, dialogue and commercial presentation. Attached to the French and British DVD releases of *Hijack Stories* (2001; 2000) are the appropriate semiotic markers or sales tags to feed these imaginaries: crime, race, violence, and poverty contrasted against affluence.

This is unlike the South African DVD of *Hijack Stories* (2003) which instead focuses on the relationship between Sox and Zama to sell the film to local viewers. During the research process, it was discovered that many black South Africans who have seen the film feel strongly about its stereotyping, and how little relation the characters and situations bear to real life. This again underscores this clearly was not a film made for local consumption.

One such black South African who feels this way is *Hijack Stories* (2000) co-scriptwriter Rampolokeng, and here it is interesting to note the difference between the roles individuals see themselves playing, and what actually transpires. In this case, Rampolokeng anticipated that much more of his creative contribution would appear in the final product. Instead, he felt that very little of his work appeared on screen, leaving him disappointed.

Hijack Stories (2000) was also created within the greater context of globalisation which has influenced the film by creating new and more avenues of

communication and interaction, ultimately facilitating multinational collaboration. Globalisation has also facilitated the worldwide movement of *Hijack Stories* (2000) – fuelled by the value of South African content to the Western world. An indispensable factor to this movement is translation which makes the film accessible to audiences outside South Africa.

The translation process in the case of *Hijack Stories* (2000) was not as straightforward as one would expect, in that the script was multilingual to begin with and that it was the basis of the English and French translations. Instead, it was discovered that the translation process, starting from idea to script to subtitles, was rather back-and-forth and even back-to-front. According to Schmitz (2006), he first wrote an initial draft in English, followed by a second draft in English, Zulu and township slang with Rampolokeng. This script was then sent to London, accompanied by English translations of the non-English dialogue which was checked for British viewers. A final script was then prepared and became the basis for the English subtitles. A French translation for both the subtitles and dubbing was then carried out using the same English script.

We therefore see how much interlingual movement there has been in the script of *Hijack Stories* (2000), which is unlike the conventional translation process of one language to another. Instead, we see how the script (in its infancy) started in English; it was enriched and completed with other South African languages and slang; and then these non-English sections were retranslated into English for the British; and finally into French. Also noteworthy is that the subtitling process is translation within translation in that information has to be condensed in order to adhere to the various limitations of subtitling.

In conclusion, we see that translation is not only a question of having a text, acknowledging its context, and then translating the text. Instead, translation finds itself at the intersection of all the social structures and the various factors within

them (social, cultural, financial, political, etc.) rather than just being at the crossroads of text and translator.

Having reached the destination of this research journey, we find ourselves at a new and better vantage point of this local film in translation which contributes to the body of documented knowledge in this springtime of the South African film industry.

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