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Translation – Transculturation. Measuring the perspectives of transcultural political action

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In an interview with the Austrian newspaper *Der Standard* on the debate around originality, individuality and plagiarism, Peter Weibel observed that the concept of the artistic original only makes sense "in the context of the concept of property that is set out in the Austrian Civil Code", in other words that it is a concept of capital. And because, in art at least, existing material is always taken up and carried onwards, concepts like copy, appropriation or plagiarism must be seen in a more democratic way: in art, said Weibel, there is no such thing as magnificent originality.[1]

There are clearly parallels between Weibel's statements and some concepts of translation that have been developing recently. In these, translation is no longer considered mimetically, as the secondary product of a sacrosanct original, as a reproduced,

feminine, subservient version of a source text representing the masculine, strong and active (father/author). Instead it is seen as the product of pluridimensional agency, a "never-ending transaction between the uncertain poles of cultural difference"[2] engaged in by subjects who move along borders and advance the production of cultural difference. This destabilizes the view of translation as a 'bridge between cultures' or makes it obsolete, since – if we draw on postcolonial theories of culture – translational transfer takes place between cultures that are already contaminated in themselves. Translation has thus long left the protected enclosure of the philological culture of translation, and is increasingly becoming a central category of cultural theory and the politics of culture.[3]

This kind of approach to translation focuses attention on questions that attempt to re-define 'translation between cultures' and highlight, among other things, those factors of translation relevant to the construction of culture. Against this background, I will first briefly outline the various stages that have led to the expansion of the translation category, before turning to the conditions underlying the manipulative and emancipatory features of translation. I will then discuss translation's potential for political agency on the basis of a range of different concepts. Throughout, the paper will fluctuate between a conventional concept of translation and what has in recent times been called 'cultural translation'.

Metamorphoses of translation

Since its beginnings, theoretical reflection on translation, at the centre of which lie issues of mediation and strategies of cultural connection, has pointed out the complexity of the transfer process.

Friedrich Schleiermacher, for example, offers an interesting case of translation's confrontation with the alien and the Other. For Schleiermacher, a foreignizing move of the readers towards the writer or a domesticating move of the writer towards the readers – a pair of concepts that he introduced into translation theory – describe the fundamental procedures regulating the relationship of self and other in translation. Each translation, according to Schleiermacher, locates itself somewhere between these poles; he himself gives precedence to the 'foreignizing' type, because he accepts the foreign as a value in itself and wishes to pass that experience on to the reader.[4] This dichotomizing view dominated discourse on translation until well into the twentieth century – unaltered, at least in its own time, by Walter Benjamin's groundbreaking essay "The Task of the Translator"[5] – and was further fed by the discussion within linguistic approaches in the 1960s and 1970s. For decades, that discussion had followed the postulate of 'equivalence', influenced above all by the euphoric expectations around machine translation. Linguistically oriented research was, for a long time, dominated by this concept of equivalence, which tries to describe correlations between linguistic units of the source and the target text and which initially postulates the unchanged identity of the message being transferred.[6] Some work of this kind includes the situational context inasmuch as it claims that substituting textual material in one language with equivalent textual material in another language can only occur within a pre-determined situation.[7]

The view of the translation process was at this time – in the 1980s – thus still extremely narrow. That did not change significantly in the subsequent years, although an important step towards breaking open rigidly hierarchical and purely text-oriented notions was taken by the 'functionalist' approaches which, in the process of

negotiating a 'translational skopos', privileged the translational product and hence dethroned the sacred original. However, these approaches too remained caught in dichotomy.

It was only with the 'cultural turn' in the humanities and natural sciences that a real change in concepts, models and procedures occurred. For translation studies, this meant a pioneering expansion of the field of view and an elaboration of questions that began, initially focusing on the study of translation practices, to take account of issues like contextual situation or historical embeddedness. This brought the macro-context of the object of research, the translation product, to the fore. If, at first, issues of cultural 'transfer' were still discussed mainly as individual culturally specific problems (that is, primarily as lexical problems considered from a cultural perspective), this dimension was soon extended to the level of discourse. Asymmetries in translation processes were subsequently addressed,[8] and reflections on translation from feminist, postcolonial and ethnographic points of view, querying the traditionally essentialist views of translation, have increasingly entered the canon of research (initially in an Anglophone context).

There are many different reasons for the late emergence of an expanded concept of translation and of more sustained attentiveness to insights from the disciplines concerned with culture and other branches of knowledge. On the one hand, translation studies is a very young discipline, which for a long time struggled for recognition and whose representatives, under pressure both from competing neighbouring disciplines and from the public at large to defend their legitimacy, for many years spent their energy on building institutions and a research infrastructure instead of being able to concentrate on the pursuit of innovative approaches (for which, additionally, the necessary basic research had not yet been done). Another factor arises from the practical

orientation of the discipline, which continues to favour reference to pragmatic texts and, accordingly, issues of professional training. Integrating new media into the practice and (at least partially) the theory of translation has further exacerbated this situation from an ideological point of view.

Postcolonial studies: a period of reorientation

For a long time, translation studies' theoretical and methodological elaboration of cultural approaches was dependent on impulses from other disciplines and academic fields. Alongside insights from ethnography and anthropology, concerned with the 'crisis of ethnographic representation', an especially crucial stimulus was provided by postcolonial studies and its attempts to overcome ethnocentrism, which brought to the fore a fundamental reconsideration of the positioning of 'original' and 'translation'. Work within postcolonial studies to examine heterogeneous concepts of difference in the formation of cultural identities, too, are currently proving productive for translation research. Homi Bhabha's endeavour to develop a new concept of translation can serve as a basis for this: in the context of the debate on centre/periphery and cultural overlaps, Bhabha proposes a "translational culture" as a new point of departure for the study of cultural encounter, thus revealing translation's potential to construct culture:

> Culture [...] is both transnational and translational. [...] The transnational dimension of cultural transformation – migration, diaspora, displacement, relocation – makes the process of cultural translation a complex form of signification. The natural(ized), unifying discourse [...] cannot be readily referenced. The great, though

> unsettling, advantage of this position is that it makes you increasingly aware of the construction of culture and the invention of tradition.[9]

Hybridity, as the central figure of Bhabha's cultural theory, is seen as an active challenge to the dominant cultural power, a force that transforms the cultural from a source of conflict into a productive element and thereby opens up a 'Third Space'. But what insight can be gained from this Third Space for translational questions? As an in-between space, a transition the imagining of which allows us to glimpse "the incompatible, the silenced, the unconscious",[10] the Third Space must be understood not as a static, identity-bestowing unity but as a process: "a place can be described, but its history has to be rewritten again and again".[11] The potential for tension that inheres in the Third Space as a space of agency and conflict contributes greatly to the dynamism with which new significations emerge. If only for that reason, the figure of the Third Space makes no sense without constant renegotiation. If the aspect of negotiation in the translation process is taken into account, that implies first of all that strategies of demarcation and exclusion are no longer relevant. Instead, antagonistic and oppositional elements gain a voice in the negotiations located in the Third Space and their negative polarity is dissolved; the failure of efforts to translate or mediate becomes transparent, although of course this does not mean that antagonisms can ever be completely neutralized. It seems obvious that the figure of negotiation has particularly rich potential for the problem of translation, given that the act of mediation is always inherent in the process of translation, and that an element of negotiation is always inscribed in the act of mediation.

As we see from the contribution of postcolonial theory to the study of the translation phenomenon as an emancipatory force

(Homi Bhabha here presented as a case in point), translation can be viewed as a reinterpretation, as a constant repositioning of transferred signs which casts existing orders into question and leaves open many different possible contextualizations. Instead of arbitrary attributions of meaning, context-dependent interpretations are made which break open previously fixed assumptions and, in their continual creation of uncertainties, produce things that have never existed and that cannot be brought back to an original state.

But do these observations really stand up to critical scrutiny? Does cultural hybridity help us reach a point where we "now all understand each other" and "can successfully translate each other"? [12] Or is Jan Nederveen Pieterse right to ask: "Hybridity, so what?"[13] To what degree can Bhabha's concepts really be applied to the translation-related questions I have raised here? With regard to the political relevance of what Bhabha says, a first step will be to note that he sees difference as a category with a clear claim to power: "The concept of cultural difference focuses on the problem of the ambivalence of cultural authority: the attempt to dominate in the *name* of a cultural supremacy which is itself produced only in the moment of differentiation".[14] This means that the positing of difference itself is what produces the attribution of superiority and inferiority, while the current public debate on 'cultural diversity' and 'multiculturalism' perpetuates this pattern of western superiority.

For Bhabha, accepting these premises allows us to locate potential for change at the peripheries, where the 'new arrivals' marked by hybridity are able to use subversion or mimicry to undermine the strategies of the powerful.[15] However, does that not in fact imply interpreting the world from a central perspective, one that ignores or has lost sight of the periphery? And does it not lead to hybridity

itself being 'liquefied'? Hybridity as the result of cultural translation claims to defeat western ethnocentrism: yet it is precisely here that the danger arises of a western world striving towards uniformity, an anti-ethnocentric model that threatens to become universalized and that, despite all its sympathy for subversive strategies, rather fixes the western model than uncovers its discursive contradictions.

Not for nothing has the concept of hybridity been repeatedly criticized in recent years. Hybridity, the arguments run, is rootless, serves only the elite, does not reflect deeper social realities[16] and implies pure origins. Nikos Papastergiadis even goes as far as to say that in optimistic ways of viewing hybridity, "hybrids were conceived as lubricants in the clashes of culture; they were the negotiators who would secure a future free of xenophobia".[17] It is not possible to address all these points in detail here. For now I would like to pick out the question of 'pure origins', in the process also returning to translation. Terry Eagleton picks up the view – put forward also by Edward Said – that all cultures are hybrid, that none is pure or constitutes a homogeneous fabric,[18] pointing out that "hybridization presupposes purity. Strictly speaking one can only hybridize a culture which is pure". He does, citing Said, concede that "all cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic".[19] Let us not forget, though, that precisely from a historical perspective notions of so-called 'pure origins' and cultural affiliations claiming homogeneity have been predominant for centuries: patriarchal attitudes have postulated sharply drawn borders between genders; the aristocratic view postulated 'blue blood', while the nationalist philologists around Herder saw language as a vessel for the genius of the nations, quite apart from the 'racial' perspective which postulated a clearly delineated hierarchy of 'races'. The appropriation of

language and cultural artefacts for national and nationalist projects is familiar enough from the very recent past and our immediate neighbourhood as well.[20] The processes of hybridization that are largely visible and perceptible (and to a great extent also recognized) today can, in contrast, be interpreted as the result of enhanced awareness arising from massive changes in social and economic structures.

If we ask ourselves how far these processes of transformation imply cultural translation, here understood as largely congruent with hybrid processes, or whether cultural translation is what makes these changes possible in the first place, then the historical component must first be discussed. Historically, does cultural translation only occur at a particular moment – the moment when an 'imagined purity' has to be overcome? Mixing and porosity between cultures is not a monopoly of the modern era, as is sometimes claimed; the adoption of symbols and practices is a historically observable fact, and engenders hybrid conditions of different kinds. More relevant here is the question of the tension between the assertion, or construction, of western uniqueness – in the formations I have set out – and the notion that "every society is 'complex', every culture is 'polyphonic' and 'heteroglossic', and every subject is entangled in an internal dialogue of interacting voices".[21] Here, detailed attention is required in each case to the power relations that condition the specific situation, helping determine the interpretations and the selection mechanisms within these processes of cultural translation.

The connection between culture and translation is also discussed by Doris Bachmann-Medick. She proceeds from the assumption that due to the processes of interpenetration, the site where what she calls the 'overlapping of cultures' occurs can itself be characterized as a site of translation. This implies that culture in itself is already

translation.[22] However, the question arises here whether this stretches the concept of cultural translation too far and whether it risks making the perpetual and ceaseless process of translation into a fixed given. Looking at the socio-economic, political, gendered, ethnic or generational conditions that underlie each translation process indicates that what seem such arbitrary processes are in fact significantly constrained by the specific negotiation processes necessary for every act of translation, and in no translation can we imagine isolating individual elements of the process. It also seems relevant that translation as a social and cultural phenomenon only exists when there is interaction – when, in other words, in each particular translational act texts, signs, messages are created with an eye to 'reception'. This is distinct from the transfer process, where elements are transferred that in their original contexts were not necessarily designed to be transferred.[23]

What contribution do the categories and procedures of postcolonial studies ultimately make to a reorientation of translation studies along emancipatory lines? An expansion of the concept of translation, which has received valuable input among other things from anthropology and which above all has articulated a clear rejection of ethnocentric or national-culture variants of 'translation', has been accompanied by a reinforcement of the attribution of socio-political relevance to the agents involved in the translation process, first and foremost the translators themselves. This has given translation and translators more sharply drawn, politically marked features. The application of postcolonial studies to translation studies is not, however, restricted to the use of particular concepts; rather, it has meant more recognition of translation's significance for a deeper understanding of the power relationships and relations of alterity that form the basis of every translation. But for translation studies, the application of a

postcolonial frame of reference means first and foremost expanding the perspectives of the field of research and elaborating transcultural viewpoints that also encompass self-reflexive elements. Yet it is precisely here that we find deficits. Although postcolonial studies has brought radical changes in perspective and cast doubt on dominant models marked by ethnocentrism, its potential for an emancipatory view and its radical, sustained application to translation have not been sufficiently pursued. In his essay "When was 'The Post-Colonial'? Thinking at the Limit",[24] Stuart Hall observes that the concept of the postcolonial "re-reads 'colonisation' as part of an essentially transnational and transcultural 'global' process – and it produces a decentred, diasporic or 'global' rewriting of earlier, nation-centred imperial grand narratives. [...] [The postcolonial] obliges us to re-read the binaries as forms of transculturation, of cultural translation, destined to trouble the here/there cultural binaries for ever".[25] The potential for translation that is derived from these challenges applies as a matter of priority to those implications of translation that are capable of transforming it into transcultural political action.

Cultural translation and its more far-reaching political relevance

Concepts of 'cultural translation' were developed by, among others, anthropology and ethnography, and from there found their way into translation studies. As early as the 1930s, Bronislaw Malinowski spoke of a two-sided translational process between observers and observed in the context of ethnography, and the observers made interpretive use of their observations on the basis of the evidential force of their eye-witness status; it was the authority of the author that transformed subjectivity into "objective knowledge".[26] The responses to this were multiple, ranging (for

example in the wake of the *Writing Culture* debate) from the call for consideration of the asymmetrical circumstances under which this cultural translation was realized to the demand for inclusion of the overlaps, internal conflicts, blending and especially the historical processes of colonialism which brought about this translation and the ignoring of which ultimately triggered the 'crisis of representation'. Stephen Tyler admits the failure of all cultural translation when he writes: "Because the [ethnographic] text can eliminate neither ambiguity nor the subjectivity of its authors and readers, it is bound to be misread, so much so that we might conclude [...] that the meaning of the text is the sum of its misreadings".[27] Tejaswini Niranjana,[28] in turn, aims to show in an Indian context how translation in both the traditional and the metaphorical sense contributed significantly to the construction of an essentialized and ahistorical 'Indian culture' which was to take up an inferior position vis-à-vis the British colonial power.

Concepts like that of transculturation attempt to escape these accusations. The term 'transculturation', coined in 1940 by Fernando Ortiz in a Latin American context, describes dynamic cultural phenomena by encompassing the various phases of the transition processes between cultures.[29] Angel Rama has extended it to literary studies as a set of metahistorical instruments and a mechanism of resistance against appropriative cultural processes within neo-colonial discourses.[30] Silvia Spitta takes the elaboration of the concept a step further by viewing translation as part of transculturation processes: she offers the example of translations of "cultura popular" from Quechua into Spanish, where the transfer of oral tradition into a western written tradition and adaptation to a western canon plays an important role. She outlines a similar process through the bible translations into Quechua made

by Catholic priests evangelizing the Andes region. The priests lived in the region in order to study Andean cosmology – with the outcome that they often (in the eyes of the Church) became ineffective evangelizers.[31] Here, the key issue is attention to the repercussions on the cultures involved in these often violent cultural overlaps, since it promises to reveal the inclusion and exclusion mechanisms of the various interconnected articulations, practices and positionings. But can this kind of procedure only be applied on a theoretical, conceptual level, or can it also be extended to the exposure of a politics of exclusion? The concept of transculturation seems to contain a harmonizing expectation of mutual consideration that disguises the power relations in which these practices are inscribed. To trace those relations and uncover the conditions of their constitution is a task of prime importance in the study of transcultural political action. One starting point in this direction would be the investigation of the mechanisms of interpenetration, implicit in the concept of transculturation, which underlie the process of culture.[32]

To close, I would like to offer some preliminary thoughts on a concept that seems productive for the questions I have addressed so far. This is the figure of the *homo sacer* as set out by Giorgio Agamben. Agamben starts from the distinction between bare life (*zoe*) and political existence (*bios*), that is, a human being's natural existence and legal being. He traces this distinction in a journey through western history, proceeding from the idea that the constitution of sovereign power requires the production of a biopolitical body. The 'protagonist' of Agamben's book *Homo Sacer* is "bare life, that is, the life of *homo sacer* (sacred man), who *may be killed and yet not sacrificed* [...] An obscure figure of archaic Roman law; in which human life is included in the juridical order solely in the form of its exclusion".[33] *Homo sacer* is considered

the key figure of today's global power constellations, manifesting itself most clearly in the prisoners in the Nazi concentration camps, where law and deed, rule and exception, life and death became impossible to distinguish. This member of the 'living dead' is found, says Agamben, in the stateless person and refugee as well as in coma patients and, especially, the Taliban and Al-Qaeda prisoners in Guantánamo Bay.

In the following I will attempt to put the figure of the *homo sacer* to work for translational concerns, despite the fact that the people discussed here are extreme examples – 'exceptions', in Agamben's terms. Agamben is concerned to show how people fall between the stools of legal orders, to point up the production of this interstitial space that is generated by the law. But what perspectives result from this space – might they enable us to disrupt the logic of the 'state of exception'?[34] The way that Agamben ties together inclusion into and exclusion from the law has a special significance for this question: the *homo sacer* may be killed without reprisal, but he must not be sacrificed. The one does not appear imaginable without the other, or rather constitutes itself out only out of the other. The interstitial space within which the *homo sacer* 'operates' can be associated with dimensions of transition from which in turn (here following Bhabha) new positions emerge.[35] These – in contrast to the ontological figure of the *homo sacer* in Agamben – do not leave the participants untouched or able to return to a previous state. In this way, the interstitial space, as the 'primal scene' of every formation of a political community,[36] becomes a site of translation, not least because a border between *zoe* and *bios*, between 'bare life' and 'political and legal life', cannot be discerned. This is where we may locate the political dimension of the concept, as it emerges in, for example, the translators deployed in Guantánamo. The continual overstepping of roles as male and

female ‘soldiers’ on the one hand and as interrogation interpreters on the other creates many tensions for those involved.[37] The doubling becomes visible at moments when knowledge of direct violations of human rights indirectly allows interpreters to grasp the existence of the *homo sacer* for the first time, while they are simultaneously part and executor of lawlessness without, in reality, themselves being able to make unproblematic use of a right like that of refusal to serve.

But it is here that we may locate the potential which enables a transgression of borders. For as the epigraph of *Homo Sacer*, a quotation from Carl von Savigny in 1800, says: “Law has no existence in itself; its essence is rather the life of human beings […]”. Here the two spheres of ‘law’ and ‘life’ correspond to one another and become a ‘zone of indistinguishability’. Agamben develops from this notion the conceptual figure of the “threshold of order”, the point at which order comes into contact with what does not belong to it – indicating a translation process in which a potential space of productive renewal is opened up. What is apparently untranslatable, because immovably anchored in ‘law’, can here no longer be distinguished from ‘life’, which – in our example – lends the Guantánamo translator the determination to escape from outlaw status and end her shaming activity: “When it’s over after one more prisoner and a couple of hours, I tell the interrogator that I do not want to do this again.”[38]

Although the transhistorical figure of the *homo sacer* has not been sufficiently discussed in terms of its political relevance, especially in the context of ‘outlawed existence’, it seems to possess potential for an emancipatory perspective on translation – one opening up a sphere where what is to be translated becomes capable of leaving its isolation to contextualize itself anew.

[1] Peter Weibel, "'Ich bin ein Original'. Ein Originalinterview mit Peter Weibel von Robert Misik", in: *Der Standard, Album,* 25 February, 2006, A1–A2 (my translation).

[2] Sherry Simon, "Translation, Postcolonialism and Cultural Studies", in: *Meta* XLII.2, 462–477, here 475.

[3] Cf. Doris Bachmann-Medick, "Einsturzgefahr beim völkerverbindenden Brückenbau. Übersetzungsfragen in der Weltgesellschaft", in: *Frankfurter Rundschau* 286, 7 December, 2004.

[4] Friedrich Schleiermacher, "Ueber die verschiedenen Methoden des Uebersezens", in: Hans Joachim Störig (ed.), *Das Problem des Übersetzens,* Stuttgart: Goverts 1963, 38–70 ("On the different methods of translating", translated by Douglas Robinson, in: *Western Translation Theory*, ed. Douglas Robinson, Manchester: St. Jerome 1997, 225-238).

[5] Walter Benjamin, "Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers", in: *Gesammelte Schriften. Band IV.1. Kleine Prosa. Baudelaire-Übertragungen* (ed. Tillman Rexroth, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp 1991, 9–21) ("The Task of the Translator", translated by Harry Zohn, in: *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti, London: Routledge 2000, 15–25).

[6] See Otto Kade, *Zufall und Gesetzmäßigkeit in der Übersetzung,* Leipzig: Verlag Enzyklopädie 1968, 90.

[7] See J.C. Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation. An Essay in Applied Linguistics,* London: Oxford University Press 1965, 35.

[8] See, for example, Kurt Müller-Vollmer, "Übersetzen – Wohin? Zum Problem der Diskursformierung bei Frau von Staël und im amerikanischen Transzendentalismus", in: Beate Hammerschmid and Hermann Krapoth (eds), *Übersetzung als kultureller Prozess. Rezeption, Projektion und Konstruktion des Fremden*, Berlin: Schmidt 1998, 11–31; Doris Bachmann-Medick, "Literatur – ein Vernetzungswerk. Kulturwissenschaftliche Analysen in den Literaturwissenschaften", in: Heide Appelsmeyer and Elfriede Billmann-Mahecha (eds), *Kulturwissenschaft. Felder einer prozeßorientierten wissenschaftlichen Praxis*, Weilerswist: Belbrück 2001, 215–239, here 229.

[9] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, London: Routledge 2004, 247 f.

[10] Endre Hárs, "Hybridität als Denk- und Auslegungsfigur. Homi K. Bhabhas theoretisches Engagement", in: www.kakanien.ac.at/beitr/theorie/EHars1.pdf, 2002 (accessed 31 March, 2008; my translation).

[11] Thomas Wägenbaur, "Hybride Hybridität: Der Kulturkonflikt im Text der Kulturtheorie", in: *Arcadia* 31.1/2, 27–38, here 38 (my translation).

[12] See Nausikaa Schirilla, "Können wir uns nun alle verstehen? Kulturelle Hybridität, Interkulturalität und Differenz", in: *Polylog* 8, 36–47.

[13] Jan Nederveen Pieterse, "Hybridität, na und?", in: Lars Allolio-Näcke, Britta Kalscheuer, Arne Manzeschke (eds), *Differenzen anders denken. Bausteine zu einer Kulturtheorie der*

Transdifferenz, Frankfurt/Main 2005, New York: Campus, 396–430.

[14] Bhabha, *The Location of* Culture, 50 f.

[15] On this, see also Schirilla, "Können wir uns nun …", 45.

[16] Nederveen Pieterse, "Hybridität, na und?", 399.

[17] Nikos Papastergiadis, "Tracing Hybridity in Theory", in Pnina Werbner and Tarik Modood (eds), *Debating Cultural Hybridity. Multi-Cultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-Racism*, London: Zed 1997, 261.

[18] See Edward Said, "Kultur, Identität und Geschichte", translated by Wilfried Prantner, in: Peter Weibel (ed.), *Inklusion : Exklusion. Versuch einer neuen Kartografie der Kunst im Zeitalter von Postkolonialismus und globaler Migration,* Cologne: DuMont 1997, 37.

[19] Terry Eagleton, *The Idea of Culture,* Oxford: Blackwell 2000, 15.

[20] See also Nederveen Pieterse, "Hybridität, na und?", 407.

[21] Martin Fuchs, *Kampf um Differenz. Repräsentation, Subjektivität und soziale Bewegungen. Das Beispiel Indien*, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp 1999, 386 (my translation).

[22] See Doris Bachmann-Medick, "Einleitung: Übersetzung als Repräsentation fremder Kulturen", in: Doris Bachmann-Medick (ed.), *Übersetzung als Repräsentation fremder Kulturen,* Berlin: Schmidt 1997, 1–18, here 13 f.

[23] See Federico Celestini, “Umdeutungen. Transfer als Kontextwechsel mehrfach kodierbarer Kulturelemente”, in: Federico Celestini and Helga Mitterbauer (ed.), *Ver-rückte Kulturen. Zur Dynamisierung kultureller Transfers,* Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 37–51, here 47.

[24] Stuart Hall, “When was ‘The Post-Colonial’? Thinking at the Limit”, in: Iain Chambers and Lidia Curti (eds), *The Post-Colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons*, London, New York: Routledge 1996, 242–260.

[25] Ibid., 247.

[26] Eberhard Berg and Martin Fuchs, “Phänomenologie der Differenz, Reflexionsstufen ethnographischer Repräsentation”, in: Eberhard Berg and Martin Fuchs (eds), *Kultur, soziale Praxis, Text. Die Krise der ethnographischen Repräsentation,* Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp 1993, 11–108, here 31 f.

[27] Stephen Tyler, “Post-Modern Ethnography: From Document of the Occult to Occult Document”, in: James Clifford and George E. Marcus (eds), *Writing Culture. The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography,* Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 122–140, here 135.

[28] Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation. History, Post-Structuralism, and the Colonial Context,* Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press 1992.

[29] Fernando Ortiz, *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar,* Madrid: Cátedra/Música Mundana Maqueda 2002 (Edición de Enrico Mario Santi).

[30] Angel Rama (1982), *Transculturación narrativa en Amérca Latina,* México D.F.: siglo veintiuno editores 2004.

[31] Silvia Spitta, *Between Two Waters. Narratives of Transculturation in Latin America,* Houston: Texas A&M University Press 1995, 23.

[32] To be sure, the question of transcultural political practices depends on context. For the specific area of Latin America, a research perspective has emerged with origins in colonial and neo-colonial resistance, aiming for a subversive penetration of western influences. See Stephanie Schütze and Martha Zapata Galindo, "Transkulturalität und Geschlechterverhältnisse", in: Stephanie Schütze and Martha Zapata Galindo (eds), *Transkulturalität und Geschlechterverhältnisse. Neue Perspektiven auf kulturelle Dynamiken in den Amerikas,* Berlin: edition tranvia 2007.

[33] Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen, Stanford: Stanford University Press 1998, 8.

[34] Or does the 'exception' become perverted into 'normality'? The confessions of Khalid Shaikh Mohammed in March 2007 after torture by the US authorities made of him, in Slavoj Žižek's opinion, a *homo sacer* inhabiting an in-between world. The "normalization of torture", finds Žižek, leads to those in power "trying to break a part of our ethical backbone" (Slavoj Žižek, "Knight of the Living Dead", in*: The New York Times*, 24 March, 2007). We can infer that this may lead to a relocation of the figure of the *homo sacer*, since with it the ethical barriers which have previously prevented a popularization of the figure might largely fall.

[35] “But for me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the ‘third space’ which enables other positions to emerge” (Homi K. Bhabha, “Interview with Homi Bhabha”, in: Jonathan Rutherford (ed.), *Identity. Community, Culture, Difference,* London: Lawrence & Wishart 1990, 207–221, here 211).

[36] See Eva Geulen, *Giorgio Agamben zur Einführung,* Hamburg: Junius 2005, 90.

[37] See Moira Inghilleri, “The ethical task of the translator in the geo-political arena. From Iraq to Guantánamo Bay”, in: *Translation Studies* 1:2, 212-223.

[38] Kayla Williams, *Love my rifle more than you*, London: Weidenfeld, Nicolson 2006, 249.