

# Literary translation and the intellectual patriot in socialist Tanzania

**Serena Talento**

*University of Bayreuth*

Between 1962 and 1985, Tanganyika, later Tanzania, engaged in a nation-building project based on *ujamaa* or Tanzanian socialism. In these years of transition, literary translation was a favoured activity of Tanzanian political activists and leaders; moreover, it played an important role in forging a cultural nationalism. In this paper, I discuss the relationship between *ujamaa* and translation practices, focusing on the way translation was used to position the intellectual patriot within the political context of a nationalist agenda of self-reliance. The article is drawn from an analysis of translation flows, translators' trajectories and the discourse on translation into Swahili. Literary translations and the discourse on translation were the arena for conceptualising issues relating to the role of translators as patriots, the nature of literary imports and the acceptability of literary forms. All these issues reveal the agents' negotiations between local and global systems. The article sheds light on the unique contributions of translated literature to the interplay between the construction of both new national political spaces and literary ones, offering insight on the procedures through which change and innovation occur in a literary field and on the development of cultural nationalism.