

Fabiano Eloy Atilio Batista
(Organizador)

A arte

e a

cultura

e a

formação humana

2

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Editora

Ano 2022

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APRESENTAÇÃO

“A arte é necessária para que o homem se torne capaz de conhecer e mudar o mundo” (FISCHER, 1987, p. 20)¹.

Estimados leitores e leitoras;

É com enorme satisfação que apresentamos a vocês a coletânea **“A arte e a cultura e a formação humana”**, dividida em dois volumes, e que recebeu artigos nacionais e internacionais de autores e autoras de grande importância e renome nos estudos das Artes e das Culturas.

As discussões propostas ao longo dos 30 capítulos, que compõem esses dois volumes, estão distribuídas nas mais diversas abordagens no que tange aos aspectos ligados à Arte, à Cultura e à Diversidade Cultural, bem como discussões que fomentem a compreensão de aspectos ligados à sociedade e à formação humana.

Assim, a coletânea **“A arte e a cultura e a formação humana”** busca trazer uma interlocução atual, interdisciplinar, crítica e com alto rigor científico, a partir das seguintes temáticas: artes, música, cultura, sociedade, identidade, educação, narrativas e discursividades, dentre outras.

Os textos aqui reunidos entendem a “[...] arte como produto do embate homem/mundo, [considerando] que ela é vida. Por meio dela o homem interpreta sua própria natureza, construindo formas ao mesmo tempo em que se descobre, inventa, figura e conhece (BUORO, 2000, P. 25)².”

Nesse sentido, podemos lançar diversos olhares a partir de diferentes ângulos que expandem nosso pensamento crítico sobre o mundo e nossa relação com ele. As reflexões postas ao longo desses dois volumes oportunizam uma reflexão de novas formas de pensar e agir sobre o local e global, reconhecendo, por finalidade, a diversidade e a compreensão da mesma como um elemento de desconstrução das diversas desigualdades.

A coletânea **“A arte e a cultura e a formação humana”**, então, busca, em tempos de grande diversidade cultural, social e política, se configurar como uma bússola norteadora para as discussões acadêmicas nos campos das Artes e da Cultura.

Por fim, esperamos que os textos aqui expostos possam ampliar de forma positiva e crítica os olhares e as reflexões de todos os leitores e leitoras, favorecendo o surgimento de novas pesquisas e olhares sobre o universo das artes e da cultura para formação humana.

A todos e todas, esperamos que gostem e que tenham uma agradável leitura!

Fabiano Eloy Atilio Batista

1 FISCHER, Ernest. **A necessidade da arte**. 9. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Guanabara Koogan, 1987.

2 BUORO, Anamelia Bueno. **O olhar em construção**: uma experiência de ensino e aprendizagem da arte na escola. 4ª edição. São Paulo: Cortez, 2000.

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RACIAL AND TEXTUAL TRANSLATION IN THE NOVEL *IO, VENDITORE DI ELEFANTI*, BY PAP KHOUMA: *SIGNIFYIN(G)*, ESHU AND IDENTITY MOBILITY IN BLACK FICTION

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ABSTRACT: When the Afro-Brazilian poet Trindade (2008) describes himself, in verses such as “a black woman took me to Church” and “another black woman took me to Macumba”, he transfers the experience of the Orisha Exu from the divine level to the human realm. Similar to the dual mobility of Trindade’s “lyrical self,” Eshu celebrates his own dual representation in two-headed sculptures of himself. In the field of the literary theory of African descent, the duality of the poet and that of the Orisha rearticulate themselves, through Gates’s (1988) concept of the *Signifyin(g)*. From Gates’s perspective, the *Signifyin(g)* works as the black literary specificity of building dialogue between two black texts, or two cultural realities. In this sense, this study aims at delineating the “call-and-response” process, by means of which the original novel *Io, Venditore di Elefanti* by the Italian-Senegalese novelist Pap Kouma (2015) and its translated version into English as *I Was an Elephant Salesman* establish dialogical complementarities. Within the racial scope, intertwining and split tend to occur between Western Italianness and

African Senegaleseness; within the linguistic arena, disagreements and harmonies between Italian language and English tongue are created. The analysis of both the interracial and the intertextual distinctions and agreements is based on the discussion of specific translational axes, combining the rendition of the black subject with that of the black text. Both racialized and linguistic conversation through *Signifyin(g)* and Eshu helps us understand the translational process as a dialogic play between two distinct cultural worlds and two specific black literary products. In the case of the translation of the black subject (the Senegalese [African] immigrant living in Milan), there is the approximation, remoteness, or fusion of black and white cultures values, captured by the concepts of *Negríceness*, *Negrítude* and *Negríticeness*. In the sphere of the translation of the black novel, there occur similarity, differentiation and combination between the source and target texts, endorsed by the notions of *Paralatio*, *Similatio* and *Translatio*.

KEYWORDS: *Signifyin(g)*. Eshu. Translation. Negríceness. *Translatio*.

RESUMO: Quando o poeta afro-brasileiro Trindade (2008) se descreve, em versos como “uma negra me levou para a Igreja” e “outra negra me levou para a Macumba”, transfere a experiência do orixá Exu do nível divino para o reino humano. Semelhante à dupla mobilidade do “eu lírico” de Trindade, Exu celebra sua própria dupla representação em esculturas com as duas cabeças de si mesmo. No campo da teoria literária dos afrodescendentes, a dualidade do poeta e a do orixá se rearticulam, por meio do

conceito da *Signifyin(g)* de Gates (1988). Na perspectiva de Gates, a *Signifyin(g)* funciona como a especificidade literária negra de estabelecer diálogos entre dois textos negros, ou duas realidades culturais. Nesse sentido, este estudo busca delinear o processo de “chamada-e-resposta”, por meio do qual o romance original *Io, Venditore di Elefanti* do romancista ítalo-senegalês Pap Kouma (2015) e sua versão traduzida para o inglês como *I Was an Elephant Salesman* estabelecem complementos e suplementos dialógicos. No âmbito racial da análise, o entrelaçamento e a divisão tendem a ocorrer entre a italianidade ocidental e a senegalidade africana; na arena linguística do estudo, criam-se divergências e harmonias entre a língua italiana e a língua inglesa. A análise das distinções e acordos inter-raciais e intertextuais baseia-se na discussão de eixos tradutórios específicos, combinando a interpretação do sujeito negro com aquela do texto negro. Tanto a conversa racializada quanto a linguística por meio da *Signifyin(g)* e Exu nos ajudam a entender o processo tradutório como um jogo dialógico entre dois mundos culturais distintos e dois produtos literários negros específicos. No caso da tradução do sujeito negro (o imigrante senegalês [africano] morando em Milão), há a aproximação, afastamento ou a fusão dos valores das culturas negra e branca, captados pelos conceitos de *Negritude*, *Negritude* e *Negritice*. No âmbito da tradução do romance negro, ocorrem semelhança, diferenciação e combinação entre os textos de partida e de chegada, endossados pelas noções de *Paralatio*, *Similatio* e *Translatio*.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Signifyin(g)*. Exu. Tradução. *Negritice*. *Translatio*.

Come ci si sente da clandestini? Male. Oltretutto, si entra in concorrenza con chi sta male quanto noi. Um immigrato deve subire, tacere e subire, perché non ha diritti. Deve reprimire dentro de sé ogni reazione, svuotarsi di ogni personalità. Subire con la consapevolezza che questa è l'unica possibilità. **PAP KHOUMA**, *Io, Venditore di Elefanti*, 2015: 14.

How does it feel to be an illegal Immigrant? Terrible. Mostly because you have to compete with people just as bad off as you. An immigrant has to put up with everyone and everything. He has to keep quiet and accept the worst of everything because he has no rights. He has to suppress every reaction, empty himself of his personality, and face the fact that there's nothing he can do. **REBECCA HOPKINS**, *I was an Elephant Salesman*, 2010: 04.

OPENING COMMENTS

The two epigraphs – one in Italian, another in English – introduce the theme of black migration on Italian soil. Along with gains, losses and exchanges between migrant subjects, the country left and the nation sought, migration presents itself as displacement and, as a consequence, as the potential construction of various identities. As a result, there occur the presence of two distinct but complementary displacements: the racial and the textual. In the racial scope, it is the black subjects – the Senegalese – those who feel clandestine in Italy. Kouma, the Senegalese narrator, also clarifies that “An immigrant has to put up with everyone and everything”. (KOUMA 2010: 04) [*Um immigrato deve subire, tacere e subire, perché non ha diritti*]. In the textual field, we see a novel that moves from Italian to English

and, while in motion, it accounts for losses, gains and linguistic and cultural exchanges in its translated version.

If it is true that the act of migrating entails a relevant list of human losses, gains and exchanges – both racial and textual – it is also plausible to say that people’s migration is articulated with people’s translation. Due to the perception that migration and translation are harmonized in a triangulation that still involves tradition, we can admit that a possibility of discussing black diasporic literature may be derived from the close connection between the concept of *Signifyin(g)* and the conceptual energy of the orisha Eshu. Since the trade of Africans to the Americas, both the concept and the orisha have been associated with identity triangulation, made up of tradition, migration and translation. Thus, the encounter involving the two elements – the literary in association with *Signifyin(g)* and the racial in connection with Eshu – happens in the event of the dialogue between two distinct phenomena potentially leading to the generating of a third situation. In the literary sphere of *Signifyin(g)*, the conversation between two black texts contributes to the birth of a third literary work. Similarly, in the racial sphere of Eshu, the dialogue between the deities and the humans leads to the inevitability of a third orientation. In both cases, the third alternative will always generate more meaning. In other words, through *Signifyin(g)*, the encounter of two black texts tends to generate a third one; under the auspices of Eshu, the alliance between the gods and men will lead to a third auspicious moment of communication. In view of the triangulation involving the concept and the orisha, it can be proclaimed that, according to the philosophical-religious experience in Yoruba, “*two, it becomes three*”. In other words, the union of the previous two elements under negotiation will lead to a third one, which begs to be born. Dealing with such a kind of triangulation, it can be said, then, that the black world, both in the literary arena and in the racial (religious) sphere, rearticulates itself within an evolving movement, which results in identity mobility.

Thus, the thesis that supports the triangular process under the Eshu’s spell of the statement “*two, this becomes three*” can be read in these terms: “*a tradition moves towards translation through migration*”. Here, the terms tradition, migration and translation arise from the racial relations they are capable of establishing. Therefore, what emerges from the thesis is that, out of the encounter between tradition and migration, translation emerges. Thus, tradition as an original entity, when touched by migration, leaves its original stage and reaches the future stage of translation. Thus, black translation – the literary through *Signifyin(g)*; the racial by means of Eshu – is always what diasporic Blackness seeks to encompass. As a result, tradition and migration are the two basic terms that attest to the phenomenon of both racial (Eshu) and textual (*Signifyin(g)*) translation.

This analysis suggests that black literature is one of the aesthetic *loci* in which the statement “*two, it becomes three*” is manifested concretely, based on the combination of tradition, migration and translation. Previous intercontinental (Africa, Americas, Caribbean, Europe) and interlinguistic (English, French, Portuguese, Spanish) studies developed by

this researcher, regarding black writers, have already confirmed the plausibility of such approach. (MARTINS, 2013) In the reflections that will be under development, both the novel *Io, Venditore di Elefanti* by Pap Kouma (1990/2015) and its English translation as *I Was an Elephant Salesman* by Hopkins (2010) will consider how textual and racial factors mutually interact. Such an mutual interweaving of the textual and the racial make it possible to ascertain the scope of the thesis, which not only problematizes the translational links between tradition, migration and translation, but also enhances the identity characteristics of mobility under the auspices of the expression “two, it becomes three”.

IDENTITY TRIANGULATION WITHIN PAP KOUMA’S *IO, VENDITORE DI ELEFANTI* [*I WAS AN ELEPHANT’S SALESMAN*]

In the analysis of *I Was an Elephant Salesman* [*Io, Venditore di Elefanti*], Senegalese Kouma’s (2010) inaugural novel, I seek to demonstrate the two translational stages that both black characters and black texts go through, as it happens with the narrator of he narrative and his Senegalese friends. Racially, the Senegalese citizen who leaves Africa and settles in Italy moves from his African tradition to Italian tradition, through migration. Linguistically, Kouma’s novel displaces itself from the Italian literary environment into the English textual sphere, through linguistic migration. In this sense, it can be briefly said that the original version of the is the narrative of the African Pap Kouma who migrates from Senegal, settles in Milan (Italy) and, from there, narrates his migrating history and those experiences of some of his companions.

Kouma opens a personal account of his space dislocation by insisting on his identity as a Senegalese migrant on European soil. He stresses that

I come from Senegal. I used to be a salesman. Let me tell you everything I’ve been through. It is a hard job, selling, only for the toughest souls in this world. You can’t be the type to give up easily. You have to use your legs and be insistent – even if they slam every door in your face. I have no idea what makes a person good at selling but I do know that those of us from Senegal have a gift. (...) But we kept selling. If we sold, we could afford to sleep with a roof over our heads and eat. This wasn’t always the case, but often it was. It was by selling that I learned Italian. (KHOUMA 2010: 01-03).

In addition to his Senegalese citizenship, Kouma’s (2010) reveals the activity of selling elephants [little African images] he performs and what happens to him during the practice of selling objects of lower value. He suggests that selling is a difficult job because it requires walking, physical efforts and mental persistence, in view of the resistance of potential customers to acquire his *elefanti*. He insists that the sale of *elefanti* in Milan is what guarantees all Senegalese some money, food and shelter. The crowning achievement of the immense selling struggle in a strange land, however, is not only survival, but essentially a cultural or linguistic gain, when he confirms that “It was by selling that I learned Italian” [*Vendendo ho anche imparato l’italiano*] (KHOUMA 2010: 03).

The Senegalese intercontinental mobility from Africa (Senegal) to Europe (Italy) and their daily displacements within the city of Milan due to the activity of selling handicrafts bring the narrator and his friends closer to the idea of translation as a specific kind of “mobile celebration”, proposed by Hall (2006), when the Jamaican intellectual devotes himself to conceptualizing cultural identities in postmodern times. Here, I approach the concepts of tradition, migration and translation to the cultural identities that Hall associates with and characterizes the concept of “moveable feast” by which the construction of the identity of post-modern subjects is encompassed. “Identity becomes a ‘moveable feast’”, writes Hall (2006), insisting that the identity, from the postmodern perspective, is

Formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems which surround us. It is historically, not biologically, defined. The subject assumes different identities at different times, identities which are not unified around a coherent “self”. Within us are contradictory identities, pulling in different directions, so that our identifications are continuously being shifted about. (HALL 1992: 277).

From Hall’s (2006) words conceptualizing identity and expanding its notional ramifications, some of its aspects deserve to be highlighted. First, Hall stresses the idea that identity is historically built in the cultural systems to which it belongs; then, he argues that the diversity and the difference involving the concept are revealed within the cultural dimensions of an “incoherent self”; finally, he believes that identities move into different directions, thus causing identifications in constant displacements. All in all, the Jamaican thinker warns us about his theoretical formulation with a categorical statement about a certain kind of innocence with which we insist in considering identity formation. “If we feel that we have a unified identity from birth to death”, Hall clarifies, “it is only because we build a comforting story or ‘narrative of the self’ about ourselves” (HALL 1992: 277). However, Hall closes his argument advising us that “the fully unified, completed, secure and coherent identity is a fantasy” because “we are confronted by a bewildering, fleeting multiplicity of possible identities, any one of which we could identify with – at least temporarily” (HALL 1992: 277). Luckily for Hall, he is not alone in his nuanced characterization of identity as the narrative of the “moveable feast” of an incoherent self. In order to corroborate Hall’s insightful theoretical position concerning the concept of identity and its conceptual connections with the “narrative of the [moving] self”, allow me to add three other contributions intending to associate identity building with the process of narrativization of people’s concrete experiences. Like Hall, Appiah (1997) also considers identity building as a socially constructed phenomenon which occurs through self-narrative occurrences, explaining that “Made up stories, made up biologies, and made up cultural affinities come with every identity; each is a kind of role that has to be scripted, structured by narrative conventions to which the world can never really conform (APPIAH, 1997: 243). Sommers (1994) clearly sides both Hall’s and Appiah’s considerations as she declares that “it is through narratives and narrativity that we form

our social identities” and, resulting of such a statement, she insists, “we all become what we are (although ephemeral, multiple and changing) because we are located or we locate ourselves (almost always unconsciously) in social narratives almost never of our own making (SOMERS, 1994: 606). In addition, Baker (2006), in turn, also corroborates the positions of Hall, Appiah and Somers on the identity interdependencies involving the person, the narrative and the identity. However, she goes one step further by suggesting that literature is the locus of narrativity par excellence, by writing that “literature is a powerful institution for disseminating public [ontological, private, too] narrative in any society” (BAKER, 2006: 33).

From what was theoretically established in the previous paragraphs, the reader may infer that a novel like Khouma’s (2010) *I Was and Elephant Salesman* (Io, Venditore di Elefanti) will become the appropriate narrative setting in which we can visualize the confluence bringing self, identity, mutability and narrativity together. From here onward, I will assume that, within this novelistic narrative, Khouma’s cultural identities and those of his Senegalese partners are elaborated as the *narrative of the self* of those migrants selling *elefanti*, who roam the streets of Milan, while trading their African objects with Italian purchasers. The personal account of these Senegalese companions in a strange land occurs at three distinct levels, all of them functioning as valid strategies of identity building and survival in a hostile world. The first *identity* level associates the Senegalese Khouma and friends with the unidirectional search for the local Italian culture. Their endorsement of Italianness suggests a movement towards the western cultural experience within the Italian environment. The desire to incorporate aspects of the Italian life motivates them strongly because the group of foreigners envisions in the desired Italianness strategic and practical advantages that they, as migrants, lack, as for example, the Italian “*Green Card*” (Permesso di Soggiorno), the major document of legal stay in the country. Khouma clarifies his option and that of his friends writing about their future projects concerning individual and collective success in obtaining the “*permesso*”. “Many stay. They work ... and meet Italian girls. They fall in love. There are weddings ... Babies are born”, (KHOUMA 2010: 138), writes Khouma. The second identity level is opposed to the first one. In this second moment, other Senegalese salespeople despise and reject the benefits envisioned within the Italianness acquired by the first group of Senegalese. As a consequence of their denial of Italianness, this new contingent of migrants still aspires to recover their original cultural African values, left behind in Senegal when they decided to come and live in Milan. This second modality of identity narrative encompasses a movement towards the African cultural world, which can be here labeled Senegaleness. In fact, the original Senegalese life back in Africa seduces them again, because they really hope to find “the real Senegalese elephants” back in their homeland. Khouma evaluates this alternate narrative marked by the return home, declaring that “many of the guys rip up their *permessi di soggiorno* and return to Senegal because they want nothing more to do with Italy” (KHOUMA 2010: 143). The result of this dichotomous relationship between the desired Italianness and the wished Senegaleness

creating two distinct groups of Senegalese migrants in Milan leads to the occurrence of the double “*narrative of the self*” concerning the *elefanti* salesmen. This identity dichotomy not only generates an impasse, but also launches identity antagonism within the Senegalese migrants who are living in Milan.

The question here is how to challenge the identity polarity that separates the two groups of Senegalese who live in Milan. The ideal answer for this question we will find in Hall (1992) again, as the Jamaican theorist of the cultural studies admits that the construction of identity articulated itself as “moveable feast”, thus implying both dislocation and celebration. As a result, if Italianness or Senegaleseness freezes the migrant’s “self narrative” at one end (Italy) or the other (Senegal), preventing mobility and celebration to occur, these elephant salespeople will never conform to the equation “two, this becomes three”, that Gates (1988) envisions within Eshu’s racial properties. In other words, through the triangulation Gates perceives in the orisha, he urges that the “two” be able to advance to the “three”. This appealing movement towards the mingling of Italianness with Senegaleseness is expected, thus allowing the elephants salespeople to seek and build a kind of *Senegalianness* for themselves. In fact, *Seneglianness* is the possible, potential and desirable creolization if the aim is to have a clear view of the cultural identity similar to Hall’s (1992) slogan of the “moveable feast”. The close relationship existing between Hall’s slogan and creolization urges us to deal with Glissant’s (2005) perspective regarding identity development. So, resorting to the thesis dear to Glissant (2005) that “the world is becoming creolized”, allows one to accept the view that the world is turning into the kind of “moveable feast” that Hall clearly cherishes. In this regard, the idea of creolization, according to Glissant, insists on the perception that “today, the cultures of the world brought into contact with one another in a fulminating and absolutely conscious way are transformed, exchanging between themselves”. (GLISSANT 2005: 18). As a result, due to such a amalgamating and galvanizing properties of distinct cultures, Glissant adds, people are abandoning “the belief that the identity of a being is only valid and recognizable if it is exclusive, different from the identity of all other possible beings” (GLISSANT 2005: 18). The Martinican thinker of the creolization closes his arguments in favor of the cultural amalgamation of people, bringing to the front the idea of the *rizomatic identity*, according to which, within the composite cultures, “the identities are factors resulting from creolization, that is, from identity as a rhizome, from identity no longer as a single root, but as a root reaching out to other roots” (GLISSANT 2005: 27). In Kouma’s (2010) novel, he most visible case of cultural creolization or rizomatic galvanization involving an Italian and a Senegalese can be seen in the quote below. In it, Kouma writes: “the officer comes over to me. He places his hand on my customer’s shoulder and says, ‘go ahead. Don’t be so stingy, buy something. Don’t be wasting this young man’s time’. (...) I have great memories of Trezzano. I always sell a lot there, no matter where I try” (KHOUMA 2010: 86).

In the conjunction of Hall’s (1992) *moveable feast*, Glissant’s (2005) *rizomatic*

creolization and Gates's (1988) eshuist equation of "two, it becomes three" and *Signifyin(g)*, the identity mobility and mutability of the black subject in black literature moves from the past to the present to the future. The "three" of the equation is the future (the not yet born), while the "two" is divided between the past and the present. For the analytical purposes of the novel under scrutiny here, I postulate that, in Kouma's novel *I was an Elephant Salesman*, two major types of identity movement will be delineated, a racial one and a textual one. The racial move seeks to account for the identity triangulations of the Senegalese blacks in their connection or disconnection involving Italian Whiteness and Senegalese Blackness; the textual is interested in evaluating the identity triangulation of the novelist text, in its displacement from Italian to English, the language to which the source text is transferred. In order to characterize racial triangulation, I wish to use three concepts, *Negríceness*, *Negrítude* and *Negríticeness*. When I stick to textual triangulation, I aim at employing these following three conceptions, *Paralatio*, *Similatio*, *Translatio*. Both within racial and textual translation, Italianness, Senegaleseness and Seneglianness will be dealt with analytically.

RACIAL AND TEXTUAL IDENTITIES: ESTABLISHING CREOLIZATION THROUGH TRANSLATION

The joint contribution of *Signifyin(g)* and Eshu to the analysis of Kouma's (2010) novel involving its both source and target versions calls for the definition of two additional terms. For that, I resort to Gates (1988) who, in a seminal essay, establishes the racial aspects that bring *Signifyin(g)* and Eshu together. When he explains the concept of *Signifyin(g)*, Gates clarifies that "the black tradition is double-voiced. The trope of the Talking Book, of double-voiced texts that talk to other texts, is the unifying metaphor within this book. *Signifyin(g)* is the figure of the double-voiced, epitomized by Esu's depictions in sculpture as possessing two mouths". (GATES 1988: xxv) Having two voices [*Signifyin(g)*] and possessing two mouths (Eshu) compose the elements bringing together the concept and the orisha. So, similarly, Gates envisions within Eshu a double vocality, when he considers that the orisha has two mouths. The double-mouthed orisha is able not only to combine two distinct worlds but also to add them up, thus turning into a pluralistic deity. From Gates's assertion, "if plurality comprises one form of Esu's power, a second form is his power to connect the parts. Esu is the sum of the parts, as well as that which connects to parts (...) He alone can set an action in motion and interconnects the parts" (GATES 1988: 37).

Based on the vocal duality of both the *Signifyin(g)* and Eshu, I propose, from now on, the analysis of both racial and textual translation of Kouma's novel, as the a realization of the interracial and intertextual phenomenon of "two, it becomes three". I will start from the association of the black voice with the white voice, characterized by the concept of *Negríceness* together with the relationship involving the textual voice of Italian with the textual voice of English, symbolized in the concept of *Paralatio*.

This chosen excerpt

NEGRICENESS: Finché scoppia la notizia: alla fine del 1986 si sparge la voce di una legge speciale che consentirebbe a tutti i clandestini di fruire del permesso di soggiorno. (...) Un bel giorno mi cade l'occhio sopra un manifesto dei sindacati. Parla proprio del nostro permesso di soggiorno. Gioia immensa. (...) Riesco persino a promuovere un incontro: siamo solo quattro. Ma i quattro ne convincono altri. Per la prima riunione quasi ufficiale, in una sala che ci ha concesso il sindacato, siamo in dodici. Nasce la nostra associazione. (Khouma *Io, Venditore di Elefanti* 2015:121-122).

PARALATIO: Things proceed like this until the news breaks at the end of 1986. Word has it that a special law is going to allow all illegal immigrants to have a *permesso di soggiorno*. (...) One glorious day I spot a poster put up by the labor unions. It's all about our *permessi di soggiorno*. An immense joy comes over me. (...) I even manage to organize a meeting. It's just the four of us. But we four convince others and so there are twelve of us at the first meeting, which we hold in a room that the union has given us for the occasion. Our association is born. (Khouma trad. R. Hopkins 2010:117).

shows how the Senegalese are involved in the acquisition of the Italian cultural values. Their desire to acquire and actual acquisition of foreign values is here named *Negríceness*. For these Senegalese migrants *Negríceness* may be taken as their survival strategy in a foreign country. In addition, theoretically, *Negríceness* can also be known as the racial assimilation through which black people aim at possessing the white values they think they need to have. The positive thing about assimilating someone else's culture is that you open yourself up to the other. The negative side is that you tend to ignore the cultural values that you brought from your own country. This play between the acceptance of the foreign culture and the rejection of indigenous values remains at the core of the concept of racial or cultural assimilation, domestication or *Negríceness*. In Khouma's (2010) *I Was an Elephant Salesman*, the *Negríceness* of the Senegalese migrants is marked by the difference between the blacks they are and the blacks they want to be, in Italy. The desire to become Italians or to possess the cultural assets of the western country leads them to defeat a strong powerful way for them to perceive themselves as Italians: the so-called "*Green Card*", which in Italy is titled *Il Permesso di Soggiorno*, or the legal document that would grant them the right to stay in Italy, to live there, with a status almost equal to that which the Italian citizens have. Wishing to obtain this residence permit, the Senegalese organize meetings, meetings are held and, with the help of the union, an association is created. As a result, when they finally become Italians, that is, when they perceive themselves as Senegalese with Italian *Permessi di Soggiorno*, unfortunately they distance themselves from Senegal and, consequently, become different from those Senegalese who do not yet have, or do not wish to obtain, the Italian legal certificate. According to Memmi (2007), these new black Italians – colonized subjects – look at the Italian world positively and such a cultural

positivity is strongly desirable by the migrant. The Italian values are desired because, as Memmi puts it, this country “does not suffer from any of their [the migrants’] needs, it has all the rights, it enjoys all the goods, it benefits from all the prestige; it possesses the riches and the honors, the technique and the authority.” (MEMMI 2007: 162-163) Memmi concludes that, as a result of his weakness before such a strength, “the colonized’s first ambition will be to match this prestigious model, to resemble it until he disappears in it” (MEMMI 2007: 162-163).

If, on the one hand, *Negricezness* resembles racial domestication as we have seen in the previous paragraph, *Paralatio*, on the other hand, represents textual assimilation. *Paralatio* is marked by the difference between source and target texts. Italian is the language of the original version of the novel and English is the language into which the original text is translated. The linguistic difference between the source language and the target tongue is the most valuable feature of *Paralatio*. Chesterman (1997) confirms that “translators are agents of change. Translators, in fact, excel at difference” (CHESTERMAN, 1997: 02). Through the work of translators, difference between languages A and B serves to domesticate the original text in order to highlight linguistic and cultural specificities of the target language. Chesterman proposes three distinct translational devices leading to guarantee intertextual or interlinguistic differentiation. They are: the synonymy, which deals with the meaning of words; the syntax, which accounts for the structure of the sentences; the pragmatic, which refers to the elimination, or addition, of terms in the sentence. In the context of paralytic synonymy, translator Rebecca Hopkins distinguishes the word [*clandestini*] from the expression [*illegal immigrants*], differentiates [*be*] from [*glorious*], separates [*sindacati*] from [*labor unions*] and, for the words [*incontro*] and [*reunione*] validates the same word [*meeting*]. To give visibility to the paralytic domestication of the Italian language in English, as in synonymy, the syntax marks the difference between the source text and the target text. Syntactically, the American translator Hopkins differentiates the Italian phrase [*si sparge la voce*] from its English counterpart [*Word has it*]. It also distinguishes the sentence [*that consentirebbe a tutti*] from its translation as [*is going to allow all*], replacing the Italian conditional [*consentirebbe*] with the continuous future of English [*going to*]. In Hopkins’ translation, the English phrase [*I spot*] does not look like [*mi cade l’occhio*]. Further on, the phrase [*parla proprio del*] is not syntactically similar to [*It’s all about*]. Hopkins takes the Italian adverbial locution [*in una sala*] and transforms it into the sentence [*we hold in a room*]. The active sentence [*nasce*], Hopkins rearranges it into the English passive [*is born*]. The semantic and syntactic differences between the source language and the target language are still present in the pragmatic *Paralatio*. Pragmatically, the translator Hopkins expands the Italian nominal locution [*Gioia immensa*] by transforming it into the English sentence [*an immense joy comes over me*], with the addition of the sentence [*comes over me*], absent in the original. The word [*quattro*] is treated pragmatically as the nominal locution [*the four of us*]. Finally, Hopkins differentiates the phrase [*siamo in dodici*] by turning it, in English, into

[there are twelve of us].

If it is true that, as Gates (1988) states, both *Signifyin(g)* and *Eshu* are carriers of dual racial and textual vocality, then within *Negríceness* there is the first voice of interracial difference, while within *Paralatio*, one can verify the first vocalization of intertextual distinction. In both cases, the power of domination is embodied, on the one hand, within Italianness, represented by the “*Permesso di Soggiorno*”; on the other, within the way the translator Hopkins empowers the linguistic and cultural characteristics of the English language to the detriment of Italian tongue. However, the duality of *Signifyin(g)* and *Eshu* seeks to balance this unbalanced pendulum, making it possible to energize the weakened side of duality by placing the translational emphasis on Senegaleseness and the Italian language, rather than on Italianness and English tongue.

Within the excerpt that follows,

NEGRITUDE: Vengo dal Senegal. Ho fatto il venditore e vi racconterò che cosa mi è successo. È un mestiere difficile, per gente che ha costanza e una gran forza d’animo, perché bisogna usare le gambe e insistere, insistere anche se tutte le porte ti vengono sbattute in faccia. (Khouma *Io, Venditore di Elefanti* 2015:11).

SIMILATIO: I come from Senegal. I used to be a salesman. Let me tell you everything I’ve been through. It’s a hard job, selling, only for the toughest in this world. You can’t be the type to give up easily. You have to use your legs and be insistent – even if they slam every door in your face. (Khouma trad. R. Hopkins 2010: 01).

Negritude, or Khouma’s certificate of racial pride and that of many Senegalese migrants, clearly manifests itself in its association with Senegal, these immigrants’ homeland, and with the sale of African elephants, the most recurrent economic activity among immigrants living in Milan. Through Khouma’s narrative, one can notice, on the one hand, the distance from Italianness represented by the *Permesso di Soggiorno*, and, on the other, the approach to Senegaleseness metaphorized by the African *elefanti* objects the migrants sell. Regarding the act of selling elephants, the reader is informed that Khouma and his Senegalese friends sell various things, or *elefanti* (the elephants represent objects that come from Africa or are ordinary imitation of those existing on the black continent). It is through selling that Khouma and the Senegalese highlight not only their Africanness, but also their humanism. According to Césaire (2014), “the sum of experiences lived” by Africans defines and characterizes their “human destiny as history did” (CÉSAIRE, 2014: 81). The black humanism that Khouma and his black brothers and sisters represent in the sale of the elephants is a ministry that requires physical, psychological and racial will and resistance from the African salespeople. As Khouma (2015) writes, the Senegalese salespeople are “the toughest souls in this world” (...) who “have to use your [their] legs and be insistent” (KHOUMA 2015: 11). Such a kind of physical and spiritual strength make them to survive on his tough diasporic trajectory in the West, represented by the city of Milan, in Italy. This internal and external power that characterizes this group of Senegalese migrants is activated against all doors that close in

the face of the African salesperson.

On the other hand, *Similatio*, or the power of the Italian language over English tongue in the work of translation, is represented by the maintenance of words, phrases and structures as they are in the source language when they arrive at the target language. As the notion of *Similatio* suggests here, the translation aims at insisting on the linguistic, cultural and textual similarities between the two languages involved in the process. Linguistic and cultural similarities between language *A* and *B* is the phenomenon that tends to distinguish *Similatio* from *Paralatio*, whose purpose, as we have demonstrated above, was to establish differences between source and target languages. The initial case of similar translation lies in the name of the country mentioned. At the lexical level, the American translator Hopkins keeps the word [*Senegal*] intact in English. Hopkins's other similar decisions regarding lexical items include the words [*gambe*], [*porte*] and [*faccia*] which are translated into English as [*legs*], [*door*] and [*face*], respectively. At the level of the nominal locution, Hopkins decides to transfer the expression [*anche se*] as [*even if*] into English. At the syntactic level, the Italian sentence [*Vengo dal Senegal*] remains similarly identical to its English counterpart [*I come from Senegal*]. Here, Venuti's (2002) words help us understand the process of *foreignization* that involves the way the concept of *Similatio* encompasses the process of translational similarity. The translation theorist affirms that the process of *foreignization*, or decolonization, within textual translation, "forces the national language and culture to register the strangeness of the foreign text" (VENUTI, 2002: 155).

As we have previously demonstrated, both racial and textual translational dislocations are measured with black people's racial duality and black text's linguistic duplicity as well. On the one hand, racial and textual double voicedness regarding distinct traditions is clarified through *Negríceness* and *Paralatio*. On the other, both racial and textual duality concerning resembling traditions is explained through *Negrítude* and *Similatio*. However, these two opposing modalities of translation analysis – differentiation and similarity – do not seem sufficient strong to guarantee the effective realization of a true translation. Within the phenomenon characterized by the expression that "*two, this becomes three*", the translation that interests us here is not associated with differentiation (*One*), nor with similarity (*Two*), in isolated ways. On the contrary, it advances towards the combination (*Three*) by means of which the ideal modality of translation takes place in order to become both the combinatory phenomenon, which, at the same time, performs the interracial creolization and the intertextual hybridization. Through creolization Glissant (2005) proposes a step beyond the dual vocation of Gates (1988). The Martinican thinker emphasizes that it is through creolization – or the mingling of opposite races – that single-rooted cultures tend to be controlled in order to make room for creolized cultures, or "composite cultures (...) [in which one builds] identity as a rhizome, identity no longer as a single root, but as a root reaching out to other roots" (GLISSANT 2005: 27). It is from this rhizomatic perspective of the encounter of racial, linguistic, cultural and textual roots (traditions) that we will develop

identity as a “moveable feast” that Hall (1992) talks about. For the purposes of the analysis that follows, festive mobility is explained by the concepts of *Negritiveness* and *Translatio*.

The excerpt that follows

NEGRITICENESS: In una paninoteca mi sono fatto amici i due baristi. Sono giovani e mi mettono a disposizione un tavolino, su cui espongo la merce. Loro mi fanno anche pubblicità: “comprate qualcosa da questo ragazzo. Non potete andarsene senza aver comprato nulla”. Poi annotano su una lavagnetta il nome di chi tentenna o proprio non vuol comprare. Vanno avanti così tutte le volte che si fa vedere, finché non si arrende. Due ragazzi con un Citroen due cavalli si offrono di accompagnarmi a casa. (Khouma *Io, Venditore di Elefanti* 2015: 92).

TRANSLATIO: I make friends with two guys working behind the counter at a sandwich shop. They're young and they let me use a table to set up my stuff. They even advertise for me: “buy something from this guy. You can't leave without buying something.” Then they write the names of the customers who hesitate or just don't want to buy. They do this every time someone comes into the place until they give in. Two guys with a *Citroën Deux Cheveux* offer to bring me home. (Khouma trans. R. Hopkins 2010: 85-86).

Introduces the analysis of Negritiveness. The concept highlights black people's experience, which can be defined as the double consciousness. In relation to the duplicity inherent to black identity building in the world, Negritiveness works as racial translation and, at the same time, makes room for black subjects' alliance with both the quest of the western parent and the search for the African parent. The above excerpt is here taken as the racialized literary place, in which Khouma's double consciousness and that of his Senegalese co-salesmen occurs when they maintain personal contact with Italian citizens while selling their African elephants, on the streets of Milan. Here, the Senegalese Negritiveness is associated with the street selling of the elephants and derives from the fact that they accept the help from Italian people. Khouma's narrative of his Negritiveness begins with the friendship he establishes with two bartenders (baristi) “in una paninoteca”. In this “sandwich shop”, or cafeteria, two young Italian baristi provide Khouma with a table on which he displays his elephants and other products. However, that is not all. These Italian bartenders also help him advertise his African stuff, inviting, and even ordering customers to purchase the Senegalese products. They insist, incessantly, with their own clients to become Khouma's customers. However, if some resist buying something from the Senegalese vendor, the baristi write their names on a piece of paper as a way to press them. That is what the bartenders do. Whenever Khouma arrives at the paninoteca willing to sell his elephants there are customers in the sandwich shop. In addition to the bartenders' complicity with Khouma's selling routine, other Italians on the streets of Milan help him and enhance his life as a salesman in some other ways. For example, two Italian young men decide to offer Khouma a ride to his place in their Citroën car. This kind of solidarity between Khouma and the Italians who decide to support him in Milan, is seen by West

(1994) as a valuable interracial action capable to make life and the world better. From the African American philosopher's perspective, what really happens between the baristi, the car owners and Khouma can be associated with West's seminal notion of "love ethic", which he better characterizes by saying that "a love ethic is done through one's own affirmation of one's worth – an affirmation fueled by the concern of others. A love ethic must be at the center of a politics of conversion" (WEST 1994: 29). In other words, "a politics of conversion" bringing Blackness and Whiteness together tends to validate the Senegalese's and the Italians' reciprocal struggle, thus leading both groups to establish interracial dialogue, which seems to be the proper aim of Negritiveness. As a result, the selling of African products allows Khouma to develop personal self-assertion while these Italians' cooperation confirms others' interests in his enterprise

If Negritiveness highlights Senegalese Khouma's double racial identity, who lives off the sale of elephants in Italy with the help of Italians, Translatio is evaluated from now on as the double linguistic or textual identity of Khouma's (2010) novel *I Was an Elephant Salesman*. Through the hand of the translator Hopkins, the source version of the novel migrates from Italian to English. A double translational identity is built by the text through two processes in joint operation: that of Paratlatio explains differentiation between text **A** and **B**; that of Similitatio validates the resemblance involving source and target languages. Regarding the translator's paratlatio decisions, the parallel differences between the two texts and the two languages encompass linguistic variations involving Synonymy, Syntax and Pragmatics. I start with the lexical semantic differences by means of which Hopkins transfers to English the Italian words [baristi], [tavolino], [merce], [qualcosa], [nulla] and [finché] as [guys], [table], [stuff], [something] and [until]. Later, Hopkins makes the Italian locution [in una paninoteca], [il nome di chi], [o proprio] and [tutte le volta] arrive in English as [at a sandwich shop], [the names of the customers], [or just] and [every time], respectively. Paratlatio's syntactic decisions are also a concern by Hopkins. Hopkins establishes differences between Italian and English sentences, among which are [mi mettono a disposizione], [espongo], [loro mi fanno anche pubblicità], [annotano], [vanno avanti], [che si fa vedere], [non si arrende] and [accompagnarmi], whose their English counterparts are [they let me use], [to set up], [they even advertise for me], [they write], [they do this], [someone comes], [they give in] and [to bring me]. When Hopkins deals with translational pragmatics, or the inclusion or suppression of one or more linguistic elements in the excerpt, she suppresses from the target excerpt the corresponding version of the phrase [su una lavagnetta], but inserts the phrase [working behind the counter] in the English version, absent in the Italian excerpt. Hopkins' similitatio decisions, that is, those that associate with Similitatio through favoring similarities between the two languages, are initially found in the lexical realm. The Italian words [amici], [giovani], [ragazzo], [name] and [house] repeat their semantic characteristics in the English words [friends], [young], [guy], [names] and [home]. In the sphere of similitatio locations, it is possible to report the cases of [due ragazzi] and di [Citroen due cavalli] which

are translated into English as [two guys] and as [Citroen Deux Cheveux (sic)], respectively. The syntactic similarity between Italian and English sentences involves [non vuol comprare] and [(due ragazzi) ... offrono] which arrive in the target language as [don't want to buy] and [(two guys) ... offer], therefore clearly demonstrating the purpose of translating *Similatio* and syntax.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Allow me reaffirm as I conclude the analysis that, under the theoretical and practical auspices of the double vocalization of *Signifyin(g)* and Eshu, these Senegalese immigrants who depict themselves as identity-complexed Africans on the pages of the novel *I was an Elephant Salesman*, are triggered by the expression “two, it becomes three” involving the black characters in the triangular movement of tradition, migration and translation. From this migratory triangulation, two translational movements were established: (1) the racial movement leading these Senegalese to walk from *Negriceness* to *Negritude* to *Negritiveness*; (2) the textual dislocation allowing both languages to wander from *Paralatio* to *Similatio* to *Translatio*. As a result, the first outcome of this double displacement was the elaboration of what Hall (2006) calls “moveable feast” as he refers to the subject who “assumes different identities at different times, identities which are not unified around a coherent ‘self’”. (HALL 1992: 277) From this perspective of displacement, the intercultural identifications of the Senegalese, on Italian soil, moved from the assimilationist, to the nationalist and to the catalytic or hybrid identities.

However, the reader will go a step further and advance beyond the racial factor and accept that Khouma's (2010) novel *I Was an Elephant Salesman* comprises what has already been defined by some literary specialists as the Postcolonial Italian Literature under the responsibility of immigrant writers who have moved to Italy and are still arriving at the country. For example, Parati (2010) calls our attention to the cultural contribution of immigrants because “they have radically changed the human, urban and cultural landscape of Italy” (PARATI 2010: XI). Sinopoli (2014) supports Parati's position and takes it a step further, as she clarifies that

Italian culture, in a broad sense, is certainly only at the beginning of a totally post-colonial cultural journey, which can be carried out even under the condition that the works of these writers are recognized as entirely Italian and not restricted to editorial, historiographical or critical ghettos, designed for them” (SINOPOLI, 2014: 143).

From the part of these immigrant writers reach us Khouma's (2010) words, who warns the reader for to the aspect that

the fact is that now their works gradually become part of the Italian cultural heritage: opening media spaces for them is a strong stimulus, an important recognition, a form of mutual integration. It is a great cultural wealth at this

time, plagued by rapid and uncontrollable human mobility" (KHOUMA 2015: 52).

While we accept that postcolonization also encompasses in itself both colonization and decolonization, it is also advisable to refer to both *Negríceness* and *Paralatio* as parts of the racial and textual colonizing experience, respectively; to both *Negrítude* and *Similatio* as racial and textual decolonizing enterprises, respectively; and to *Negríceness* and *Translatio* as racial and textual postcolonizing practices, respectively.

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