Other subjectivities and a parable of African literature in “Jumping Monkey Hill”

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Resumen
En este artículo, nos proponemos examinar la configuración discursivo-enunciativa de la subjetividad, en particular, la materialización de las identidades culturales y de género en el cuento «Jumping Monkey Hill» de Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, y su re-enunciación en el texto traducido al español. En este sentido, nos valemos de los aportes de la traductología feminista en su perspectiva de género, de los estudios del discurso respecto del análisis sociológico del *ethos* y de la teoría queer con el propósito de evaluar las (a)simetrías de poder lingüístico, las representaciones estereotípicas y el vocabulario sexista que representan a las mujeres y la (in)visibilidad de las identidades gais y lesbianas tanto en el discurso primigenio como en la traducción. En este marco teórico-metodológico y a partir de un análisis de casos, reflexionaremos acerca de la manera en que se traducen y/o negocian las subjetividades e identidades *otras* que (re)interpretan la alteridad y (des)estabilizan las categorías hegemónicas de la sexualidad. Por otra parte, nos preguntamos acerca de la ética de traducción que queda desplegada en el texto traducido a partir de la re-enunciación del *ethos* por parte de la figura traductora.

Palabras clave: representaciones estereotípicas, identidades otras, subjetividad, traducción, ética.

Abstract
In this article, we intend to examine the discursive-enunciative configuration of subjectivity, in particular, the materialization of cultural and gender identities in the story “Jumping Monkey Hill” by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and its re-enunciation in the translated text into Spanish. In this sense, we use the contributions of feminist translation studies in its gender perspective, discourse analysis regarding the sociological analysis of ethos and queer theory with the purpose of evaluating the (a)symmetries of linguistic power, stereotypical representations and sexist vocabulary that represent women and the (in)visibility of gay and lesbian identities both in the original discourse and in the translation. In this theoretical-methodological framework and based on an analysis of cases, we will reflect on the way in which other subjectivities and identities that (re)interpret otherness and (de)stabilize the hegemonic categories of sexuality are translated and/or negotiated. On the other hand, we ponder on the ethics of translation that is displayed in the translated text from the re-enunciation of the ethos by the translator figure.

Keywords*: stereotypical representations, other identities, subjectivity, translation, ethics.*

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Introduction

The short story "Jumping Monkey Hill[1]" by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009a) offers us a reflection on two questions. On the one hand, it allows us to examine the configuration of subjectivity, in particular, the discursive-enunciative materialization of cultural and gender identities based on the analysis of the author's *ethos* (Amossy, 2009) that is shaped in the English text, and the reconfiguration in the text translated into Spanish (Spoturno, 2017, 2019). On the other hand, it enables us to evaluate if the translation of sexuality or *other* identities into Spanish is proposed as heteronormative or if, on the contrary, the translator (re)interprets these subjectivities or alterities and destabilizes the hegemonic categories of sexuality in the translated text. In the consideration of these two questions, we will also delve into the ethics and politics of translation (Tissot, 2017; Ergun, 2021). This exploration will encompass the unfolding of translation procedures both at the discursive level and within the context of production, circulation and reception. At the same time, we will ask ourselves if it is possible to read the short story as a parable of African literature. In other words, we would like to know if it could be read as a short story about writing itself or, following Mwangi (2009), it might be interpreted as a *metafictional* text.

An English publishing house for an African story, and a British writing competition for African literature

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (1977-) is an Igbo writer who was born and raised in Nigeria. She moved to the United States to attend university and regularly lives there. She represents the Anglophone Nigerian diaspora and is well-known for her commitment to women's rights activism, yet she has sometimes been criticized (Oliva, 2016; Beck, 2017; Lecznar, 2019) for her views on certain subjects and her stance against racial discrimination. She belongs to the so-called third generation of Nigerian writers[2] (Nadaswaran, 2011), Igbo women writers who have raised their voices in modern African literature to decolonize prejudices and challenge cultural and gender stereotypes. These new voices representing the Nigerian diaspora arose at the turn of the twenty-fist century, touching upon novel topics related to cultural, racial, and gender-related oppression in the postcolonial world. Their writings are encoded in self-reflexive techniques and have a metafictional agenda of feminism (Mwangi, 2009), which escapes the limitations of the so-called West for African literature. Most of these women writers break away from tradition to tell urban stories anchored in the everyday life and raise issues considered taboo for the majority of Nigerian society: homosexuality, lesbianism, sexual transgressions, trafficking in girls, mistreatment and domestic violence or abuse, abortion, polygamy, among others (Pucherová, 2022; Aragón Varo, 2011; Zabus, 2011). Adichie, like other Nigerian writers of her generation, portrays "fragmented and complex

1. Hereafter, and unless otherwise stated, all references to this story will be made by the abbreviation JMH, the publication date and the corresponding page number.

2. This first generation of writers is characterized by giving entity and voice to the African experience by answering the Eurocentric postulates derived from the British or French colonization of the African continent. It also focuses on the enunciation of the consequences of colonization and the demystification of stereotyped representations of Africa (Whittaker and Msiska, 2007). The stage of disillusionment after African independence is reflected in the texts of the second generation of French and Anglophone writers who reject the use of the English language. By virtue of politico-ideological and sociological questioning of the use of the language of the colonies, the second generation proclaims the use of African ethnic languages (Ashcroft Griffiths & Tiffin, [1989] 2002, p. 130).

identities, Afropolitan identities, different ways of being African in the new world order[3]" (Rodríguez Murphy, 2015, p. 59).

JMH was first published in the British magazine *Granta* in 2006, and later included in the short story collection *The Thing Around Your Neck* (2009a) under the Fourth Estate publishing house, founded in 1984 on a small budget and later acquired by Harper Collins, a worldwide publishing company, in the year 2000. In an interview, Adichie (2009c) commented that the writing of the story is autobiographical and was inspired by a very unfortunate event that occurred during the celebration of the Caine Prize for African Writing in 2003, an award created by the European community to recognize and honor stories written in English by African authors. During the event, Adichie recounts an unfortunate experience where she had to endure the presence of a "sexist and lecherous" prize administrator (2010b). To her dismay, this individual also took it upon himself to define what an African story was and to dictate what could be considered authentically African to a group of young, impressionable writers from various African countries. "So, if you were writing about Zimbabwe you couldn't write about people who fall in love, you had to write about the horrible Mugabe," Adichie declared (2009d).

In the short story, the participants in the writing competition are all expected to produce a story, the award being a publication in the *Oratory*, a British magazine. Moreover, the mention of the Lipton Prize at JMH —sponsored by the British Council and financed by the Chamberlain Arts Foundation (a fictional organization presumably overseen by the Lord Chamberlain, the senior officer of the royal court, as noticed by Tunca, 2018)—echoes the Caine Prize. Furthermore, the lewd and condescending attitude towards Adichie (a person of flesh and blood) on the part of the then administrator of the award is a mirror of what happens to the protagonist of JMH, Ujunwa, a young Nigerian writer who participates in the contest and who is harassed by Edward Campbell, a British man with a posh accent, who is in charge of the organization and election of the winner. In this regard, Ujunwa thinks it is odd that the African Writers Workshop is being held at *Jumping Monkey Hill*, a resort outside Cape Town which attracts foreign tourists, with maids and fine teas and cobblestone paths, and where people eat ostrich medallions, smoked salmon or chicken in orange sauce. Continuing with the topic of harassment, this, in turn, is replicated in the experiences of the protagonist of Ujunwa's story, Chioma, who is sexually harassed in a job interview. In fact, Ujunwa's short story mirrors the sexual harassment she experiences at the hands of Edward throughout the workshop. Although all the other participants have noticed the ways Edward sexualized Ujunwa, none of them has said or done anything to stop him, as the following passage illustrates:

> She should not have laughed when Edward said, 'I'd rather like you to lie down for me.' It had not been funny. It had not been funny at all. She had hated it, hated the grin on his face and the glimpse of greenish teeth and the way he always looked at her chest rather than at her face and yet she had made herself laugh like a deranged hyena. […] the white South African said Edward would never look at a white woman like that because what he felt for Ujunwa was a fancy without respect.
>
> "You all noticed?" Ujunwa asked them. "You all noticed?" She felt strangely betrayed. (Adichie, 2009, p. 58).
>
> No debería haberse reído cuando Edward le había dicho: «Preferiría que te tumbaras». No había tenido absolutamente ninguna gracia. Lo había detestado, como había detestado la sonrisa de su cara, los dientes verdosos que había entrevisto, o cómo le había recorrido todo el cuerpo con la mirada, deteniéndose en los pechos en lugar de la cara, y sin embargo se había obligado a reír como una hiena

3. Our translation. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are ours.

> enajenada. […] la sudafricana blanca observó que Edward nunca miraría así a una blanca, porque lo que sentía por Ujunwa no era respetuoso.
>
> —¿Lo habéis notado todos? —preguntó ella—, ¿lo habéis notado todos? (Adichie, 2018, pp. 116-117)

In the Spanish version, the procedures evident in the enunciation of the translated discourse (Spoturno, 2017) reveal an attenuation of the harassment on the part of Edward as expressed in the English version. We can notice that in the translation of *grin* in English, the translator chooses the word *sonrisa*, which does not fully convey the sarcasm communicated with a wide smile that *grin* connotes. Moreover, the use of the past simple with an idea of repetition in the expression "the way he always looked at her chest rather than at her face" in English is rendered into Spanish as *pretérito pluscuamperfecto*. According to the Real Academia Española dictionary, the perfective tense places the action, process or state expressed by the verb in a moment before another, equally past, but does not suggest repetition. Besides, in Spanish, the translated sentence omits the use of the adverb *always*, which is not compensated in the translated text in any way. However, in Spanish, there is an expansion and generalization of the harassment provided by the expression «o cómo le había recorrido todo el cuerpo con la mirada» (Adichie, 2018, p. 343), which is not present in the original text.

As we can observe, the harassment of women flies both in reality and in fiction, in Adichie's own real experience, in Ujunwa's fictional experience and in Ujunwa's own fictional and untitled story represented by Chioma's sufferings.

Additionally, as we have previously mentioned, the prizes for African literature are in charge of people who respond to the Western canon. In view of this fact, the stories are valued according to hegemonic, sexist and patriarchal parameters. In JMH, Edward dismisses short stories written by women. In the case of a Senegalese female writer, he rejects it for not being representative of Africa and for including a character who reveals to her family that she is a lesbian. Edward says that homosexual stories are not reflective of Africa. Ujunwa asks "which Africa?" Paradoxically, Edward explains that he is trying to find the "real Africa" and not impose Western ideas on African values. He considers Africa as an inherently violent and tragic place. In Edward's conception, homosexuality is un-African and would not attract the western reader. He seeks stories that are sensational and exciting, not ones about normal (and non-violent) day-to-day life in Africa. He aims to assert his personal agenda through the writings. Yet, in another passage, Edward concedes that the story of one of the participants is undeniably ambitious:

> the story itself begged the question "So what?" There was something terribly passé about it when one considered all the other things happening in Zimbabwe under the horrible Mugabe. Ujunwa stared at Edward. What did he mean by "passé"? How could a story so true be passé? (Adichie, 2009, p. 57)

The fact that these contemporary writers (Ujunwa, the lesbian Senegalese as well as the gay Tanzanian) have their own writing agenda on feminism, homosexuality and "un-African" topics (as seen through the eyes of the western readers) is directly connected to the possibility of opening up new paths in the deconstruction of colonial, patriarchal and heteronormative parameters constructed upon African literature. As Eisenberg (2013) has argued, JMH exposes "the position of the African writer from whom only certain narratives are being solicited» and condemns «the act of attacking the limits on creativity" ―here, in the specific context of a short story competition. Then, talking about himself, Edward says that African literature had been his cause[4] for forty years, "a

4. Our emphasis. Unless otherwise stated, all instances of underlined text should be understood as our emphasis.

lifelong passion that started at Oxford" (Adichie, 2009, p. 53). At breakfast the next day, his wife, Isabel, an animal rights activist, asks Ujunwa, who exhibits "exquisite bone structure," whether she comes from Nigerian royalty. Ujunwa wants to ask if Isabel ever asks such things of people in London, but instead says that she indeed came from royal stock and is actually a princess: "and came from an ancient lineage and that one of her forebears had captured a Portuguese trader in the seventeenth century and kept him, pampered and oiled, in a royal cage" (Adichie, 2009, p. 54). Isabel says she can always spot royalty, and asks Ujunwa to support her anti-poaching campaign, adding that the Africans do not even eat the "bush meat". The African participants of the writing contest coming from Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Senegal, Tanzania also ponder on the racism they experience at the hands of Europeans and on the significance of African literature:

> The Zimbabwean said Achebe was boring and did nothing with style, and the Kenyan said that was a sacrilege until she recanted, laughing, saying of course Achebe was sublime. The Senegalese said she nearly vomited when a professor at the Sorbonne told her that Conrad was really on her side, as if she could not decide for herself who was on her side. Ujunwa began to jump up and down, babbling nonsense to mimic Conrad's Africans, feeling the sweet lightness of wine in her head (Adichie, 2009, p. 55).

As we can notice, there is a harsh criticism about western discourse on Africa culture and values as well as on the African stereotypes as epitomized by English literature. The fiction embedded in the story serves as a bridge to criticize and bring to the fore the urge to unveil real stereotypes held in the so-called Western world, undo preconceptions and speak from within of African culture and literature. The metafiction creates reality, real stories for real people in an Africa of the twenty-first century stripped of its own prejudices.

Diverse subjectivities and reshaping African stereotypes from within

In JMH, reality and fiction are amalgamated in a continuous interweaving not only through the configuration of the author's *ethos* that is constructed in the discourse from the modalities of saying, but also through the reworking of the previous ethos (Amossy, 2009) at the level of metadiscourses (interviews and articles) which, in this case, reinforces the ideas projected in the source text. As indicated previously, the aim of this study is to explore the nature of the translator's discursive presence (Hermans, 1996; Schiavi, 1996; Suchet, 2013) focusing our analysis on the examination of the translation procedures intervening in the rendering of the source postcolonial hybrid text into the translated Spanish version carried out by Aurora Echevarría (2010a). Accordingly, we will turn to the notion of *ethos* as paramount to analyze the Author's image in discourse and how this is rendered in the translated text by Echevarría to build the translator's *ethos* (Spoturno, 2017).

In her attempt to delimit the notion of *ethos*, Amossy (2009) provides an integrated rhetorical model building up on the contributions of disciplines such as rhetoric (Aristotle's art of persuasion[5]), sociology (in the case of Bourdieu's theory of language and power[6]), and the pragmatic-semantic perspective adopted by Ducrot (1984) in the context of his theory of polyphony,[7] which identifies

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5. In Aristotle's terms, *ethos* designates the image of self-built by the orator in their speech in order to exert an influence on the audience. This image is produced by a manner of speech rather than by its message: the orator does not claim their sincerity but speaks in such a way that their sincerity appears to the audience. Apart from *ethos*, the other two proofs are *logos*, referring to both discourse and reason, and *pathos*, meaning the emotion aroused in the audience.
6. As Amossy (2001) states, for Bourdieu (1982), the power of words derives from the connection between the social function of the speaker and their discourse. The notion of *ethos* is composed of the exterior authority enjoyed by the speaker and legitimated by their religious, political, intellectual, or literary positions.
7. Polyphony, as defined by Ducrot (1984), means the presence and interaction of different voices in discourse even in the context of the same utterance.

the configuration of the *ethos* inside the verbal exchange. Ducrot (1984) defines *ethos* as a discursive phenomenon not to be confused with the social status of the empirical subject. Amossy's model for the construction of *ethos* is characterized by the notion of stereotype as playing a crucial role in fashioning the image of self. She maintains that in order to be recognized by the audience, the speaker and the audience have to be bound up with a *doxa*, linked to a shared representation or a fixed collective schema so as to gain argumentative authority. For her, the institutional status of the writer as "being in the world" and the verbal construction of the speaker (or *locuteur*) as "discursive subject," far from being incompatible, overlap and strengthen one another. In this sense, she claims that the efficiency of speech is neither purely external nor purely or solely internal to discourse. Amossy (1999, 2012) concludes that the image of the author is materialized in the literary text by an array of implicit beliefs, assumed stereotypes or pre-existing schemes held by members of a community, by the tone and style of writing as well as by the linguistic and encyclopedic competence of the speakers (or *locuteurs*).

According to Tunca (2018), the fact that the story takes place in a Cape Town resort called *Jumping Monkey Hill* (the Caine Prize event was held at *Monkey Valley Resort*), in which the visitor probably expects to find monkeys hopping around, is no more than a nod to a non-African guest. At the same time, just like the visitor, we could assume that the implicit reader of the source text (Schiavi, 1996) is none other than the western audience that expects to find references to the indigenous fauna of the continent when reading an African story. However, in the terms of Amossy (2009), the authorial figure in JMH breaks that expectation and does not introduce monkeys in the narrative scene or describe situations that a possible implicit reader of African tales might expect: wild characters, *guerrillas* and massacres. Is there, then, the possibility of envisioning this narrative strategy as a way to blur preconceptions and stereotypical ideas about Africa, embodied *ad nauseam* in Western literature on the African continent? Furthermore, another question arises: Who enables whom to write and about what in African literature?

Following Amossy (2009) and regarding the configuration of the previous *ethos* as established outside the fictional work, Adichie (2008; 2009b) reflects on the construction of a single story of Africa, on the images shaped by the materialization of stereotypes in Western literature (Conrad, Haggard, Lindqvist, Blixen, among many) that brutalize, dehumanize and ridicule African people. In this respect, stereotypes (trans)form reality, and the perception of multiple subjectivities of certain groups or communities is subjugated to a single and incomplete view. For Adichie (2008), there is not a monolithic, unique authenticity and subjectivity about Africanity. She claims that she likes to write about "class, race and gender" (2008, p. 51), an unusual agenda for the first-generation of African writers like Chinua Achebe. In fact, she subverts stereotypes associated with African people created from outside. From a transnational feminist translation perspective, Castro and Ergun (2018) propose using translation in a more conscious and strategic way as a tool for propagating the works of silenced writers and, in this way, transforming existing literary canons as a tool for crossing borders and allow for plurality, against all discrimination in a more egalitarian world. To this end, they point to the (ethical) role translation has in enabling (or disabling) cross-border alliances to challenge prevailing hegemonies. Just in this direction, the Author in JMH as a discursive figure sets her own agenda. To subvert the (Western) agenda and to counter Edward's belief that a story like Ujunwa's, a female writer who explores local, gender and other identity issues, "[…] is implausible…This is agenda writing; it isn't a real story of real people" (Adichie, 2009, pp. 60-61), Ujunwa crosses the border and dismantles the production, circulation and context of reception of a typical African story and of typical African characters. She writes her own feminist agenda against stereotypical western preconceptions and African taboos.

Regarding the existing translations both in Spain (2010a) and in Argentina (2018), we must point out that these were in charge of Aurora Echavarría, with extensive experience in the professional field. In both cases, the translation assignment carried out by the renowned Random House publishing house, a company with an international presence, does not present any adjustment in relation to the River Plate variant, the language variant characteristic of Argentine speakers. In this way, the "same implicit reader is configured for two different contexts of circulation. Both versions present a prologue by Paula Bonet. Bonet is a Valencian artist and writer, who publicly declares herself a feminist and activist committed to women's rights. In the prologue, she reviews the vicissitudes that women go through in the short story collection, *The Thing Around Your Neck*, where JMH appears, and ponders on Adichie's voice to discuss issues such as race, gender, and rupture of stereotypes.

(Un)-Gendering identities in JMH and reinforcing stereotypes in the translated text

In this section, we reflect on the way in which the Author challenges the stereotypes that represent women, and gay and lesbian identities in JMH. Specifically, the discursive-enunciative materialization of cultural and gender identities is constituted by the presentation of women-objects of men's desire. Women are also subjected to silent and naturalized harassment: "the man says he will hire her [Chioma] and then walks across and stands behind her and reaches over her shoulders to squeeze her breasts" (Adichie, 2009, p. 54). They endure submissive silence: "But why do we say nothing?" (Adiche, 2009, p. 60), and face feelings of inferiority and inequity. Sexist language and gender oppression is also evident in the following examples: "his eyes were never on her face but always lower" (Adichie, 2009, p. 57) or "Would you like me to stand up for you, Edward?"/ "I' d rather like you to lie down for me," he said (Adichie, 2009, p. 57). Regarding the translation into Spanish, especially, of the fragments that contain sexist lexicon («nunca se detenía en la cara sino <u>más abajo</u>», Adichie, 2018, p. 113) and situations of harassment and discrimination («¿Quieres que me levante, Edward?» —ofreció./ —Preferiría que te <u>tumbaras</u> —respondió él, Adichie, 2018, p.114), a recreation of the sexualization of women is evident in Berman's election for the *letter* (1985), i.e., the literal rendering of word-for-word in the target language. In the procedures evident in the translated text, the pattern of discrimination is consolidated without eradicating the linguistic asymmetry or the stereotypical representations of women.

Before analyzing the configuration of gay and lesbian identities in the original text, it should be noted that homosexuality in Africa is considered as a theme imported from the West, as a non-African issue (Zabus, 2011). In Nigeria, for example, there is a law that punishes gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people for displaying affection in public, with punishments of up to fourteen years in prison. In this context, writing about these issues already entrusts an act of "rebellion" (Zabus, 2011). The fact that the writers who venture to write about these issues are women makes it doubly subversive. Thus, heteronormative and canonical patterns in African literature are subverted, and sexuality is made visible and (re)interpreted from a feminist, non-binary epistemology. We can quote here the following excerpt in which not only the stereotypical idea of Africa is questioned, but also that of the canonical and representative literature of the continent:

> Edward chewed at his pipe thoughtfully before he said that homosexual stories of this sort weren't reflective of Africa, really.
>
> "Which Africa?" Ujunwa blurted out. (…)
>
> Edward chewed further at his pipe. Then he looked at Ujunwa in the way one would look at a child who refused to keep still in church and said that he wasn't

> speaking as an Oxford-trained Africanist, but as one who was keen on the real Africa and not the imposing of Western ideas on African venues. (Adichie, 2009, p. 58)
>
> —¿Qué África? —balbuceó Ujunwa.
>
> Edward mordió más la pipa, luego miró a Ujunwa como uno miraría a una niña que no quiere estarse quieta en la iglesia y dijo que no hablaba como un africanista formado en Oxford, sino como alguien que tenía interés en el África real y no en la imposición de las ideas occidentales sobre los habitantes africanos. (Adichie, 2018, p. 115)

Furthermore, in this fragment we can spot gender stereotypes at play: a father imposing his views on a child in a condescending manner. Ujunwa is not capable of realizing that Edward is being well-informed about what he has just said. Confronted with this scene, Ujunwa remains silent. She chooses silence, unable to utter a word and fight back. This patriarchal condescending attitude towards Ujunwa is a sign of men's dominance and, at the same time, a kind of abuse for the position of power he pretends to hold.

In the translated text, it is interesting to note that the translator uses the term *balbucear* (babble) in Spanish for the expression *blurt out* in English instead of *soltar sin pensar* o *de golpe*, which connotes a greater degree of spontaneity and impetus before what is said. According to Flotow (2019), feminist discourse is always sensitive to traditional heteronormative questions and exposes the sexist layers in society. And as regards Tunca (2010), gender values are culturally specific fabrications, and by no means essential expressions of a universal philosophy, as hegemonic Western discourse would have us believe. Following the translation procedures, the translator *ethos* (Spoturno, 2017) constructed in the translated text replicates that of the source text, drawing on gender stereotypes yet intensified.

In this sense, the feminist discourse built in the original text from Ujunwa's intervention becomes a kind of intellectual activism that promotes the questioning of existing privileges and asymmetries. However, in the translated text, that force suggested by the verb *blurt out* in English is mitigated, becoming an almost imperceptible whisper in Spanish. In JMH, the configuration of the *other* identities is given by the very introduction of the theme, sometimes dismissed as "vain" and target of jokes, due to marginal remarks by the person responsible for the enunciation ("They teased the Tanzanian about his interest in jewelry —perhaps he was gay, too?", Adichie, 2009, p. 60), due to the use of marked heterogeneity shown in italics or with the word in quotation marks, following Authier-Revuz[8] (1984):

> The Senegalese said her story was really *her* story, about how she mourned her girlfriend and how her grieving had emboldened her to come out to her parents although they now treated her being a lesbian as a mild joke and continued to speak of the families of suitable young men. The black South African looked alarmed when he heard "lesbian." (Adichie, 2009, p. 55)
>
> La senegalesa dijo que su relato trataba de ella en realidad, de cuánto había llorado la muerte de su novia y cómo el dolor le había infundido valor para acudir a sus padres, aunque ellos trataban su lesbianismo como una pequeña broma y no paraban de hablarle de familias de jóvenes casaderos. El sudafricano negro pareció alarmarse al oír el término «lesbianismo». (Adichie, 2018, p. 111)

In the translated text, we observe that the italics disappeared in the reconfiguration by the translator's discourse (Spoturno, 2017), blurring and attenuating the *other* identity; furthermore,

8. Authier-Revuz (1984) defines unmarked revealed heterogeneity as manifesting itself in discourses in which there is no readily delimited frontier between the one and the other. Free indirect speech, irony, antiphrasis, imitation, allusion, pastiche, reminiscence, and stereotype are informed examples of this kind of heterogeneity.

being a lesbian becomes an abstract noun in Spanish, *lesbianismo*, highlighting the condition of female homosexuality but hiding the person. At the beginning of the passage, the Senegalese said that "her story was really *her* story", playing on the two senses of the phrase. On the one part, we might interpret her story as being her homosexual, lesbian story; on the other hand, and based on that first reading, it could be inferred that her story, with the possessive adjective highlighted in the original text, is opposed to *his*tory, the histories of men, as a way to rewrite patriarchal (hi)stories. In the context of translation, the portrayal of a *happy lesbian* ("The Senegalese shrugged and said no matter how many dreams the old man had, she would still remain a happy lesbian and there was no need to say anything to him.") (Adichie, 2009, pp. 59-60) as *lesbiana* without the evaluative qualifying adjective that conveys happiness raises thought-provoking questions about the translator's choices and their impact on the original meaning and representation. To address the hegemonically defined spaces of indeterminacy and silence, queer theory endeavors to employ and reshape symbols and images connected to the global gay prototype (Baer, 2018). It takes on the task of deconstructing gender binarism while embracing translation as a space open to negotiation and transformation (Spurlin, 2017). In doing so, it establishes a platform where diverse and multiple subjectivities converge, facilitating a transnational alliance capable of confronting and surmounting oppression and discrimination (Castro and Ergun, 2018). As Epstein and Gillett (2017) argue, translation as a queer practice (from the paradigm of imitation or equivalence to the place of difference or heterogeneity) stands as the perfect metaphor for what is queer. The paradigm of equivalence between languages and the binary construction of gender and sexuality are equally illusionary. From the preceding examples, it can be observed that *other* subjectivities in the translated text are attenuated by the procedures of generalization or omission evident in the translated discourse. The translator's *ethos* configures a less marked presence of gay and lesbian identities in the Spanish version, either by blurring their materialization or omitting it. In this sense, we can conclude that the (un)gendering of gay and lesbian identities in the original text turns into a reinforcing of stereotypes in the translated text, constructing a different *ethos* in both versions.

Translation ethics as a space of negotiation

In this last section, we confront the ethics and politics of translation, delving into the intersectional power dynamics that come into play during the production, circulation, and reception of the translation (Tissot, 2017; Ergun, 2021). These dynamics manifest in the translated text through the re-enunciation of the *ethos*, as the translator's subjectivity becomes intertwined with the responsibility for enunciation, both at the discursive and pre-discursive levels (Spoturno, 2019). Following Tissot (2017), transnational solidarities claim an egalitarian approach to cross-border feminist struggles and offer a useful analytical category to understand the intertwined complexities of colonial legacies, global histories, local contexts, and the ways in which feminist politics relate to them (p. 29). Tissot argues that translation plays a central role in this context. It serves as a mechanism for cross-border encounters and, from a gendered perspective, a feminist politics of translation emerges. Through this approach, we can challenge the institutions and social norms founded on false universal categories and dichotomies, like male vs. female, white vs. black, and center vs. periphery. These ideas have been disseminated and perpetuated through globally dominant languages, such as French in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and English since the nineteenth century. The author also acknowledges that adding newly translated voices to transnational conversations would, therefore, disrupt the conceptual foundations of western imperialism in all its universalist manifestations and lay the groundwork for a more egalitarian political order (p.30). He concludes that:

> [a]side from the choice of the text to be translated, which implies that other texts of equal importance remain untranslated, the process of choosing the "right" words

> in the target language raises ethical questions: What is revealed by and who is heard in that choice, what/who is silenced, what is altered of the other's voice? (Tissot, 2017, p. 37)

Thus, in this context, for Tissot, a feminist ethics of translation would take into account the specific context of the other, while remaining in dialogue with the universal. It would forge a multiplicity of voices and subjectivities without absorbing the other into the translated culture and erasing cross-cultural differences and idiosyncrasies. In the same line of reasoning, Ergun (2021) wonders how to lay the groundwork to build cross-border affinities and solidarities of resistance and how to translate the other, so that we connect with them outside the assimilative and oppressive parameters of the binary logic. In other words, she ponders on how to translate ethically. As a matter of plurality, connectivity, and alterity, translation invites us to arbitrate a cross-cultural mediation among linguistic and heteronormative differences. At the same time, translation involves mediation to empower marginalized communities and create alliances of solidarity and resistance. In short, the author tries to answer how to translate the linguistic-cultural other, without subjecting it to the binary logic of assimilation. For Ergun (2021), a feminist ethics of translation is proposed as a situated process of mediation and transnational solidarities and alliances, revealing the political subjectivity of the translator in the textual and intertextual choices that challenged the status quo.

Conclusion

JMH deploys self-reflexive means to deliver a trenchant critique of race, culture, and gender-based power structures (Tunca, 2018). In this sense, contemporary feminist African writers develop their own political, ethical, and writing agenda, an agenda that escapes the limitations of the West. There is space for African literature beyond the western limitations and stereotypes imposed for centuries. Metafiction and self-reflexivity could facilitate a better understanding of African culture and fiction and its reception. Contemporary (feminist) writers have their own political, ethical, and writing agenda.

However, as evident from the analysis of cases, the asymmetries concerning the linguistic power that represents women persist due to the replication of a sexist lexicon in the translated text. As for the translation of *other* subjectivities, the binary representations of gay and lesbian identities are intensified around an interpretation of alterity that imposes distance and non-negotiation. In this sense, translation is proposed as heteronormative. Regarding the translation policy, the translator does not use paratexts to dismantle and expose the patriarchal stereotypes and the sexist language assigned to women.

Regarding the ethics of translation, only African women writers, as a counter-hegemonic power, cross the border of what can be said and allowed, opposing Western and essentialist visions of sexuality in the context of African literature. Thus, we can observe that a number of contemporary feminist African writers set their own political, ethical, and writing agenda. Indeed, what is revealed is the fact that there is space for African literature beyond the Western limitations and stereotypes imposed for centuries. To accomplish this, metafiction and self-reflexivity used to criticize race, culture, and gender-based structures could facilitate a better understanding of African culture and fiction and its reception. However, the cultural and literary industry continues to be under the hegemony of Western men like Edward Campbell or large publishing companies that impose an agenda.

Just as the story focuses on the self-reflexive techniques to challenge stereotypes associated with African culture, so should the translation ethics focus on self-reflexive procedures —as Tissot points out—so as not to conceal plurality, gender oppression and racial discrimination. The voice of *others* should unquestionably be heard in the translated text.

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