

# THE VIOLENCE IN ABSENCE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since Derrida's "Des Tour's de Babel" (1987) the relationship between violence and translation has been carefully explored by translation study fields. Either considering its impact in literature (Jacques De Moraes, 2011), in matters of equivalence (Rodrigues, 2000) or even in cultural violence (Niranjana, 1992), the concept of violence in the act of translation was deeply inserted in the academic pool. Even though such studies are highly relevant, especially to revitalize the thinking in translation and free it from dated and rather simplistic notions such as the equivalence in Nida (1964), they are unintentionally ignoring another very significant aspect of the subject: the violence in the *absence* of translation. This other type of violence involves the notion of cultural imperialism (Schiller, 1976) and it can be easily found in the very selection of what is considered "translation material", particularly in what is chosen to be translated to the general audience. Always translating from the same source-culture can be a tool used by this type of imperialism to spread a one-sided version of the world to other cultures. Conversely, one could argue that, therefore, translating from authors and source-cultures that are not usually targets of that practice can undermine that cultural imperialism and even create a more diverse cultural environment.

It is important to highlight that cultural diversity has a direct connection with social representativeness, especially by its power of breaking stereotypes. It is also through cultural diversity – or the lack of it – that is possible to find the social ideals, and, more importantly, one can also discover what sometimes is not so subtly ignored by the general society, for the lack of cultural exposure. In the two extremes of this situation, it is possible to identify the current situation of literature in Brazil: we translate constantly from the same sources, while completely ignoring others.

When we consider the almost non-existent translation of African Literature written in English to Portuguese, this problem becomes evident. Brazil is a translating country and, given the influence exercised by the English-speaking countries, it is not a surprise that most of the translations are made from English to Portuguese, but what English? As it was said, not only do we translate a lot from the same source language, we also translate a lot from the same source-place. A very relevant amount of literature is

published in English in African countries, and this amount is mostly ignored not only by the general audience of literature, but also by the Brazilian academic field. In part, this is due to translation. By not selecting African books and authors, translation studies and translators in general are, at the same time, victims and perpetrators of the cultural imperialism, in a never-ending cycle that must be broken in name of diversity.

In addition, people's problematic perception of identity (Fearon, 1999) and sense of belonging (Trend, 2016) are subjects that are starting to get investigated only now by cultural and psychological studies, due to its alarming range in a globalized society, but it has been literarily explored by African writers for years now, because of all the consequences of the African diaspora. It would not be the first time that researches can use literature to understand the human psyche and its problems better, as they did with Kafka and Goethe in the past.

## **2. RATIONALE**

Translating African Literature is an act that serves different purposes and can integrate several areas in one work. By translating this literature, it is possible to diversify the market in an inclusive way, raise awareness to the fact that the Africa that people usually think they know do not correspond to the reality of Africa and create a wider scope to research not only in the translation studies field, but also in the literature studies. All of that without considering the positive impacts that this literature can have in its connection with psychological aspects of people's life by exploring the crisis of not belonging in the way that only literature can explore certain aspects of life.

By continuously ignoring African cultural production, we are unwillingly perpetrating an unequal and prejudiced social environment that reflects directly in our reality, considering our historical constitution as a country. Including Africa in the cultural mainstream is a need that we are making a huge effort to ignore, even in the official curriculum of History in high school, for example, despite all the direct influence exerted in Brazil by several African tribes due to the African Slave Trade, which lasted through three of the incomplete six centuries of "Brazil's" existence. Learning about this historical and brutal abuse may help us to understand nowadays reality, not only in Brazil, but also in Africa, and achieve a more human view of the overall situation, which is obviously

lacking for centuries now, also due to this absence of cultural representation of this people that were stereotyped as “less than humans” so long ago.

### **3. OBJECTIVES**

The aim of this project is to translate Lily Mabura’s book, “How Shall We Kill The Bishop” (2012), keeping in the horizon of the translation important aspects such as Derrida’s deconstructivism as explored by Arrojo (1992), seeing the original and the translation as equally valuable and taking into account the identity of “the other” that can be identified in another culture.

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