

Translating World-View: representational hybridity in Anglophone Nigerian narrative fiction

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ABSTRACT

Anglophone African writing is often compared to or contrasted with translation. One of the differences between the two is that in the former source and target language come into contact not only in the process of creating the text, but also in the reality portrayed in this text, as this reality itself constitutes an arena of past and ongoing translation. Translation is therefore not only the medium, but also often the object of representation in Anglophone African literature.

The distinction between translation as medium and translation as object forms the backbone of this thesis. Rather than conceptualizing Anglophone African writing – and by extension the linguistic hybridity that is typical of these texts – as a form of self-translation on the part of the author, as has hitherto been the case, it approaches the issue of linguistic hybridity by making a distinction between (i) the self-translation of an embodied textual agent, (ii) other-translation in the form of narratorial intervention, and (iii) translation that functions merely as medium, without being attributable to a textual agent.

A theoretical framework of linguistic hybridity is built up that integrates the relation between medium and object and thus enables us to investigate whether and how linguistic hybridity potentially has an impact on the mental representations the reader constructs when interacting with the text and, consequently, whether and how target-text shifts in linguistic hybridity can affect the text's meaning potential. In particular, it investigates how linguistic hybridity interrelates with the reader's construction of (i) the perspective from which the story events are perceived, (ii) the textual agents' cultural identity and (iii) the narrator's attitude towards the narrated cultures. If target-text shifts in linguistic hybridity affect the target-text reader's mental representations of the text, it follows that these shifts potentially also have an impact on the world-view the target-text reader constructs for the implied author and the world-view she constructs for herself.

KEYWORDS: Anglophone African writing, linguistic hybridity, mind-style, perspective, postcolonial translation studies, self-translation, translational mimesis, world-view.

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