Signifyin(g) in Geni Guimarães's *a cor da ternura* and *the color of tenderness*: translating black brazilian people and texts.

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Resumo:
O artigo analisa as potencialidades translatórias do conceito literário da *Signifyin(g)* de Gates (1988). De acordo com o conceito, a produção literária negra engendra dupla vocalidade, o que esclarece conversa entre dois textos negros, através de relações interraciais e intrarraciais. A partir da dupla vocalidade negra – raça A e raça B conversam – constrói-se, também, a dupla vocalidade translatória – língua A e língua B dialogam. O conceito de *Negritice* se responsabiliza pela dupla vocalidade racial; a noção de *Translatio* dá conta da dualidade vocal linguística.

Palavras-fonte: *Signifyin(g)*; Negritice; Translatio; Dupla Vocalidade.

Abstract:
The article analyzes the translational potentialities of Gates' (1988) literary concept of *Signifyin(g)*. According to the concept, black literary production engenders dual vocality, which clarifies conversation between two black texts, by means of interracial and intrarracial connections. From the black double vocality – race A and race B talk – the translational double vocality is built – language A and language B dialogue. The concept of *Negriticeness* is responsible for the racial double vocality; the notion of *Translatio* accounts for the linguistic vocal duality.

Keywords: *Signifyin(g)*; Negriticeness; Translation; Double Vocality.

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Introductory Remarks

This article is a discussion of the potential operative dimensions of Gates's (1988) literary concept of *Signifyin(g)*, applied to Translation Studies. Within the field of African American literary criticism and theory, the basic theoretical assumption of *Sygnifyin(g)* is that black texts converse, talk, through the specific dialogical processes of imitation, revision, repetition or difference of linguistic, stylistic, cultural and racial features, which are developed in one precedent work and are, then, re-elaborated in the following one. Within black translation studies, theory and practice, this intertextual dimension of literary Blackness would occur between the source text and the target work. Bearing the notion of *Signifyin(g)* in mind, the discussion I am about to initiate within this article aims at developing a comparative study on translation, seen here as a second level of *Signifyin(g)* – the first one being the literary – due to the fact that translation itself may also be evaluated as a conversational event between the original language and the translated tongue.

The analysis of the present translational *Signifyin(g)* involves African Brazilian Geni Guimarães's (1998) *A Cor da Ternura* and its rendition into English as *The Color of Tenderness*, conducted by Niyi Afolabi (2013). Due to limitation of space, I wish to address my interest in translation to the chapter *Crystal Moment* – or *Momento Cristalino* – leaving the other sections out. The selection of this part of the novel is due to its emphasis on Geni's black family's racial pride, after one of its members reaches professional excellence, becoming a teacher. This instantiation of the singular performance of a black group's empowerment allows me to propose a kind of analysis that will deal with both the lingual and the racial dimensions of translation. My argument stipulates that both lingual and racial renditions of African Brazilian experiences in Guimarães's novel are mutually contributive and reciprocally interdependent. Besides, they reinforce the understanding of the dynamic and political forces of translation. In the analysis, racial translation is encompassed under the concept of *Negritude* and its lingual counterpart is envisioned under the

notion of *Paralatio*. *Negritude* is predicated on the idea of difference between Blacks and Whites, while *Paralatio* signals distinction involving the source and the target languages. On the one hand, *Negritude* tends to shed light on the empowerment of black people's emancipating experiences, having Caliban as its prototypical agent or performer. Therefore, emphasis on Blackness leads to the disenfranchisement of Whiteness among Brazilian Blacks. On the other, *Paralatio* highlights the power of the target rendition, thus focusing on *domesticating* translation, or placing emphasis on the translated language, rather than on the *foreignizing* rendition, or focusing on the source text (Venuti, 1998).

1.   Black and Afro-Brazilian literature, *Signifyin(g)*

The mobility of identity among Brazilian fictional characters and poetic *personae* of African origin, already anticipated in the introduction, also meets Duarte's (2014, 25) attempt to define the concept. His question regarding the definition is "Black literature or African Brazilian literature?" However, before deciding which his conceptual preference is, Duarte discusses the two notions. He mentions, initially, some of the authors who have been endorsing the term Black Literature. Amongst these, he includes the creators of *Black Notebo*oks (*Cadernos Negros*), who, since 1978, when the publication of the anthologies of black texts was initiated, have accepted and endorsed the notion of *Black Literature*. Thus, under this name, literature would be the writing of fictional, poetic, theatrical or critical texts, developed by black people, specifically addressed to the black race in an unapologetically black form. As a result, such an essentialist meaning would exclude names of authors of the stature of Castro Alves, Jorge de Lima and Raul Bopp, Brazilian writers who are not black, but have dealt with *Brazilian Blackness* in their texts. Other thinkers, according to Duarte, defend the term *Black Literature*, not motivated by color, but because of their concern with a black aesthetic promoted by both black and white writers. As a result, *Black Literature* would ally itself to a more elastic sense, thus allowing the inclusion of the writing by those Blacks who

consider themselves as Negroes, and also of those non-black writers who deal with the experiences and ideological, cultural, racial and identity options, especially unique and peculiar to the Blacks and their Brazilian descendants. Racial variations would also include textual elements which, in turn, would go beyond the author's color, would leverage the preference for black trajectory, activate the denunciation of white hegemony and would strengthen the black subjective "Self". However, Duarte rules out the validity of the term *Black Literature*, claiming that "black literature are many, which at least weakens and limits the effectiveness of the concept as a theoretical and critical operator."

In order to challenge the concept of *Black Literature*, to which he does not adhere, Duarte (2004, 26) decides to use the term *African Brazilian Literature*, the one of his preference. He justifies his choice, explaining that

> The term African Brazilian, due to its semantic configuration refers to the tense process of cultural mixing underway in Brazil since the arrival of the first Africans. A process of ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural hybridization. (...) To Luiz Silva (Cuti), it works as an attenuating element, which would dilute the political sense of identity affirmation contained in the word *Negro*. Admittedly, by embracing the full range of phenotypic variation inherent in miscegenation, terms like African Brazilian or African Descendant carry with them the risk of taking the same sense of the sign "brown" (pardo), present in the IBGE statistics as despised by fundamentalists of racial pride, translated in the slogan "100% Negro".

Although Duarte (2014, 27-42) alerts to the risks associated with the term, his commitment to the concept *African Brazilian Literature* is founded on the idea of openness and blending that the concept entails. He admits that black experience in Brazil should not be taken as coming from one source only, but as encompassing variations exceeding beyond experiential

essentialism. The various positions listed by Duarte in order to enable the replacement of *Black Literature* with the term *African Brazilian Literature* go in the same direction. Among these, two stand out. The first one encompasses the idea that the African Brazilian writer would be a subject of his own enunciation, whose authorship and origin cannot be reduced to the level of exclusivity without nuances or other borrowed elements. The second one connects itself to the notion of point of view. In a society like Brazil, contaminated by all kinds of pitfalls leading the African Brazilian subject to perceive himself/herself as a dispossessed being, the point of view, more than the color of the skin, becomes something relevant. And Duarte explains that "as important or more than the explanation of authorial origin, is the place from which the author expresses his/her worldview." Duarte's profession of faith in the concept of *African Brazilian Literature* comes, as some other literary critics think, from the need to associate the term with a more pluralistic orientation, dialectics, multiplicity and openness to countless racial shades and matrices. Such guiding and forming ingredients of *African Brazilian Literature* are embodied in five elements dear to Duarte. These are theme, authorship, point of view, language and public, which, according to the author, validate "the existence of *African Brazilian Literature* in its fullness."

   My personal experience commenting on *African Brazilian Literature* welcomes Duarte's (2014) five elements, due to their crucial centrality within the scope of his characterization of the term. However, I would like to bring to the discussion the idea of intertextual dialogue, as a theoretical supplement to the position held by the Brazilian literary critic. This supplementarity goes by the name of *Signifyin(g)*, a concept held by the African American literary critic Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (1988, xxv). In his characterization of the notion, Gates states that *Signifyin(g)* is the metaphor, or the trope, which can explicate the dialogue through which some black writers lead their writing, consciously or unconsciously, to establish with other texts, written previously. He writes that this intertextual conversation is only possible because the black text is a book that talks – *The Talking*

Book –, embedded within a literary and cultural tradition that has two voices. Gates tells us that "the black tradition is double-voiced. The trope of 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 depiction in sculpture as possessing two mouths." This black dialogue among texts happens through these four conversational modes: imitation, revision, repetition and difference.

My personal position is that the description of *Signifyin(g)*, that is, of the dialogue among black texts within *African Brazilian Literature*, can be analyzed through the application of these three distinct concepts: *Negriceness*, *Negritude* and *Negriticeness*. This conceptual triad is associated with the double-voiced figure of the Orisha Eshu. According to Gates (1988, 37), when the deity utilizes his two mouths to communicate, he always generates a third alternative. In his words, during communication, Eshu has the power not only to join the parts that are apart, but has also the strength to make himself the sum of the separate parts. He is "the past, the present and the unborn," a creative or generative phenomenon, which can be characterized as "two, it becomes three." Similarly, the joining and the sum of *Negritude* and *Negriceness* (*NEGRIT+ICENESS*) will generate *Negriticeness*.

2.   Gates's *Signifyin(g)* as Talk between Black and White Texts

Interconnection between the individual and the collective, as prescribed by Delueze/Guattari (1986), identified by Grewal (1998) in Morrison's novels, and developed by Guimarães(2013) in *The Color of Tenderness*, in which her female character Geni's individual activities are coincident with her family's collective expectations, can be associated with Gates' (1988) concept of *Signifyin(g)*. My resorting to Gates's concept, in this part of the discussion, intends to validate the expansion of this kind of novelistic individual-collective interaction to the broader literary sphere of the literature of African descent in general, where the individual's new text

inserts itself in the collective literary milieu of the novels already established by black writers locally, nationally and internationally.

In his seminal work *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Criticism*, Gates (1988) designs the analytical qualities of *Signifyin(g)* and argues that African-American literary production results from its black authors' capacity to perform conversation between previous and later texts, based on four dialogical devices: imitation, repetition, revision or difference. In Gate's words, due to its conversational properties, *Signifyin(g)* is depicted as a double-voiced black tradition, in which later texts talk to previous ones. The orisha Eshu with his two mouths – sculptures of the deity show one mouth looking back, or searching the past; the other is gazing forth, or scrutinizing the present – epitomizes black literary double-voicedness.

Within the artistic or literary scope of Gates's (1988, xxii) *Signifyin(g)*, both Eshu and double-voicedness are inseparable aspects, thus contributing to enriching the qualities of black literature, from a postcolonial perspective. This postcolonial movement between the past and the present, between the today's text and the works from the past, this double-voicedness metaphorically sponsored by Eshu, is validated by Gates as a phenomenon that is nurtured by both colonization and decolonization, or by white texts and black novels. Regarding the literary colonization of the black author, that is, regarding the influence of literary Whiteness on black literary development, Gates explains that "black writers, like critics of black literature, learn to write by reading literature, especially the canonical texts of the Western traditions. Consequently, black texts resemble other, Western texts." Gates's validation of this interpenetration of both black and white literary production is seen by François Vergès (2005, 75) as the interdependence involving both Center and Periphery and "these interactions between metropolis and colony."Vergès argues that "the colony is not this outdoor space to the metropolis, but a space that affects ideas, representations, social and political movements in France, and vice versa. Citizenship, national identity, strategies of representation, the practices of

inclusion and exclusion are considered in light of these interactions between Metropolis and Colony." One can say about this proximity between Gates and Vergès that Gates is thinking of the ancient slave, whom, he believes, has been signifying since the very moment he first stepped on the soil of the New World. Vergès, on the contrary, is looking at the contemporary African and diasporic black writer, whose texts are written after African Nations have become independent and freed themselves from Western domination. Between Gates's gaze at the white-black interconnections in literature and Vergès's look at the interactions between the metropolis and the colony, time flows, participates and contributes. With time, cultural development, literary maturity or artistic achievement, and a sense of independence have led contemporary black writers to an opposite position: they have changed their focus and abandoned white influence in favor of black models.

This change in direction does not make colonization vanish from gaze. Actually, it makes colonizing forces concomitant with decolonizing enterprises. As a result of the concomitance of these two orientations, colonization is led to become porous, to weaken and make room for the new decolonizing perspective. Gates (1988, xxiv-xxiii) acknowledges black adoption of this new ideal, saying: "free from the white person's gaze, black people created their own unique vernacular structures and relished in the double play that these forms bore to white forms. Repetition and revision are fundamental to black artistic forms, from painting and sculpture to music and language use." Repetition and revision of both white and black artistic forms give black authors' literary production its peculiarity, which recaptures Eshu's double-voicedness through *Signifyin(g)*. For Gates, leading examples of the decolonizing black double-voicedeness are the novels by Ralph Ellison and Ishmael Reed. Their narratives are novels, whose literary antecedents "are both white and black novels". Gates goes on to say that "One can readily agree with Susan Willis that black texts are "mulattoes" (or "mulatas"), with a two-toned heritage: these texts speak in standard Romance of Germanic languages and literary structures, but almost always speak with a distinct and resonant accent that signifies (upon) the various black vernacular literary traditions, which are still being written down." Mulatto novels

are double-voiced literary events which highlight Eshu's double-voicedness within black literature. With the orisha's intervention, this productive literary metaphor for black novels' polarity between black and white, colonization and decolonization, metropolis and colony, and Center and Periphery is under control. Separation, rivalry or conflict among these dualities are mitigated and, in the place appears mutual contribution. In the place of polarity, comes in plurality; connection of the parts replaces separation of parties. The fusion of antagonizing elements is Eshu's responsibility. The Yoruba deity encompasses in himself these three elements: the past, the present and the "unborn". He is capable of making these three aspects exist simultaneously, without philosophical conflict. Gates (1988, 37) describes Eshu as the force that eliminates contradiction among these three antagonizing aspects, because

> Esu(Eshu) represents these stages, and makes their simultaneous existence possible, without any contradiction, precisely because he is the principle of discourse both of messenger and as a god of communication (…) What appears in a binary system to be a contradiction resolvable only by the unity of opposites is more subtly – and mysteriously – resolved by the Yoruba in the concept central to the Ogboni secret society that "two, it becomes three".

If one takes Eshu's acceptance of, or struggle against, binarism, as it is proposed by Gates in his association of *Signifyin(g)* with the orisha, to the field of the flow between colonization and decolonization one can also apply to that the expression that "two, it becomes three". That is, the sum, not the separation, of colonization and decolonization leads to postcolonization. Thus, the postcolonial experience results from the relationships existing between colonization and decolonization, between metropolis and colony, and the Center and the Periphery. Or from Gates's perspective, it grows between literary Blackness and Whiteness. Vergès

(2005, 86) acknowledges the postcolonial flows as an important aspect for the dismantling of binarism. She writes that

> The concept of flow is important because it breaks with the idea of a static thought, frozen, which would only work from the outside. The researches underline the porous frontiers between groups, adaptability, improvisation of groups who do not have the economic or political power. What the concept of flow seeks to emphasize is the transnational and transcontinental aspect in conflict with a thought favoring the idea of a national identity or ethnicity, pure, unchanged. Transculturation, intermingling, hybridization, creolization: a series of concepts has been proposed to describe the cultural processes and practices of borrowing and bricolage.

Such a kind of postcolonial fecundity in terms of ideas, concepts and practices is similar to Eshu's plurality and *Signifyin(g)*'s multiplicity, due to the fact that these three notions – Eshu, *Signifyin(g)*, the postcolonial – are nurtured by the flow, not the statics. In other words, purity is exorcized or extirpated and its place is taken by *métissage, créolization,* or impurity. Brazilian literary critic Duarte (2014) expresses similar ideas regarding African Brazilian Literature.

Willing to expand the idea of flow one step further, I turn to Tyson (1999, 363). The thinker reaffirms what has already been said here about the fact that postcolonial ideas and practices converge with African American literary sensibilities and peculiarities. Tyson stresses the fact that postcolonial criticism is a body of theories, concepts and assumptions which help us look at the African American literary experience from the point of view of the artistic production of a former colonized group of people. The intersection between the literary production of Black American writers and postcolonial criticism is made explicit in Tyson's words. "Postcolonial and African American criticism", this critic writes,

are particularly effective at helping us see connections among all the domains of our experience – the psychological, ideological, social, political, intellectual, and aesthetic – in ways that show us just how inseparable these categories are in our lived experience of ourselves and our world […]. Postcolonial and African American criticism also share a number of theoretical assumptions and political concerns because both fields focus on the experience and literary production of peoples whose history is characterized by extreme political, social, and psychological oppression.

Besides, Tyson (1999, 363) also distinguishes one body of thought from the other, explaining that postcolonial criticism "tends to be rather abstract and general in its analyses" while African American criticism "tends to be more concrete and specific" (TYSON 1999: 363).

   Both African American experience and postcolonial ideas and practices can also be associated, due to the idea of flow. Bearing in mind this notion of flow empowering both Eshu's and *Signifyin(g)*'s influence on black texts' dialogical and conversational dimensions, let me pose two distinct questions: (1) can one apply Eshu-*Signifyin(g)*connections, as they have been discussed so far, to black literature other than its African American specificity?; (2) can one utilize Eshu-*Signifyin(g)* encounter as a translational theory? The two questions are answered positively. The first positive answer comes from Gruesser (2007, 14-57), who not only argues that "Signifyin(g) proves to be especially valuable in analyzing how texts within specific genres respond to other texts", but also asserts that "the theory can be usefully applied to texts outside the African American literary tradition," in which it was genuinely born. Gruesser enlarges his comprehension of the subject by attesting that "Signifyin(g) is a uniquely black rhetorical concept, entirely textual or linguistic, by which a second statement or figure repeats, or tropes, or reverses the first." The positive answer to the second question will be tackled in the next sections of this

study, in which I will deal with two specific modalities of translation practices, the racial and the lingual ones.

3.   Translation Connecting *Negriticeness* and *Translatio*

   This section intends to establish the bases of a personal theoretical proposal. In it, I postulate that literary *Signifyin(g)* can work as translational theory. I wish to assume that both racial and lingual translation benefit from Gates's (1988) idea of *Signifyin(g),* due to the dialogical intertextuality nurturing the concept, which, as I believe, can also feed the practice of translation, because of the fact that the concept is originally thought of by Gates as a conversational play between two texts. My personal design aiming at transposing the concept of *Signifyin(g)* from literary criticism and theory, as Gates announces it, to translational analysis, as I wish to use it, accepts the fact that translational *Signifyin(g)*may ally itself to the idea that both people and texts translate themselves or are translated as well. Therefore, Martins (2013, 56) suggests that, in order to become translatable subjects or entities, both people and texts must migrate from their original human or linguistic environment to a new one. In other words, migration moves people and texts from one racial or lingual tradition to another. The author defends the idea that "tradition (racial, lingual) becomes translation (racial, lingual) through migration (racial, lingual)." Resulting from historical events, in special black slavery, racial migration involves a back and forth displacement between both black and white traditions, which turn the New World into an appropriate environment for the encounter of distinct cultures. The argument is that:

> Racial traditions migrate with people who displace themselves and when they move from one tradition to another they translate themselves, becoming either faithful to the values they bring with themselves or identify with the cultural environment that houses or accepts them. However, this is not what always happens. As a fluid concept, many times, translation goes

> beyond the isolating polarity of the two traditions and, thus, encompasses reciprocity, exchange, mixture of the two parties, traditions, subjects or objects involved in the process.

Considering the idea of translational conversation, a tradition's displacement cannot be solely reduced to the racial field, but must be extended to linguistic phenomena. Thus, one must admit that Lingual migration is likewise a back and forth movement between both an original linguistic and a receptive language tradition. Here, Martins (2013, 58) reiterates that translation, from its lingual perspective,

> happens when it involves something parallel to what I have mentioned above regarding racial translation: an encounter of languages. Here, I validate what was announced in our original thesis: that migration allows traditions to translate themselves. In other words, the dispersion of texts, through the dialogue of writing with rewriting, makes lingual translation take place. Here, again, the dichotomy between source and target tradition can also, sometimes, be overlapped and overcome by the hybridization of the two traditional poles.

Within this personal design for the phenomenon of translation, its racial version includes these three distinct stages: *Negriceness*, *Negritude*, or *Negriticeness*. And the lingual modality of translation displaces itself among these three spheres: *Paralatio*, *Similatio*, or *Translatio*. Both racial and lingual rendition works in trios due to their association with three specific theories of translation: *Domestication*, *Foreignization*, and *Hybridization*. For instance, the first trio includes *Negriceness*, *Paralatio* and *Domestication*, which highlights the hegemonic forces of the receptive traditions, both racially and lingually; the second trio comprehends *Negritude*, *Similatio* and *Foreignization*, which opposes itself to the previous one by emphasizing the racial and lingual energies of the tradition

in displacement; the third one encompasses *Negriticeness*, *Translatio* and *Hybridization*, whose power is applied to provide constraints to the polarity that limits the perspectives of the two previous trios, due to their dichotomous features. However, these trios are not always fixed, but can vary sometimes and assume other configuration as, for example, *Negritude*, *Paralatio* and *Domestication*, the case we will see here later.

4.1. Negritude as Racial Translation

A look back at Geni's experiences in Guimarães's (1998/2013) *The Color of Tenderness* or *A Cord a Ternura*– from breastfeeding to teaching career – informs the reader that the protagonist is in the process of translating herself racially. Therefore, she embodies *Blackness*. Geni's racial translation takes place mostly within the world of her black family, a fact that associates her with the idea of *Negritude*. Martins (2007, 258) conception of *Negritude* is that the concept validates and affirms the kind of value that "concentrates on the cultural energies of people of African descent.". By focusing "on the positive aspects of Negritude", Martins's (2013, 64) analysis of the concept comes close to the way Césaire (2004, 89) conceptualizes it. Together with Senghor, Césaire is the creator of the neologism *Negritude* from which Martins derives his view of the notion. Césaire sees the concept as the courageous affirmation of our *Blackness*, saying that "all this has been Negritude: search for our identity, asserting our right to be different, every demand made of a recognition of this right and respect of our communal personality."In Césaire's passage, three words seem to excel in importance: identity, difference and personality. They take part in Geni's racial development as a black woman living in a Brazilian rural environment. There, Guimarães's novel exemplifies the enactment of Geni's family's strong "personnalité communautaire" designed by Césaire in the concept of *Negritude*. However, in the case of Geni, the construction of this "communal personality" is not a fact yet, but a wish, a process, which depends on the enactment by the family of this "reconnaissance de ce droit et du respect de notre personnalité communautaire" – "recognition of this

right and respect of our communal personality" – in order to turn itself into real experience. Both Geni and her family do everything to put black identity, difference and personality into practice. For this to happen they resort to a kind of racial experience of *Blackness*, which owes much of its quality to the ways both the earlier and contemporary African Brazilians have been dealing with through migration, tradition and translation of their own life and that of their ancestors, over the centuries. Just think of the trade of Africans to Brazil and consider slave-ships, slavery and diasporic displacement and you will be able to picture the magnitude of African descendants' dislocation in space and time and their invaluable contribution to the making of the Brazilian experience.

Studies by experts like Clifford (1997, 248) and Hall (1992) have signaled the humane contributions of diasporic cultures and people to the host cultural environment. Defining Diaspora as "a home away from home," Clifford (1997, 27-28) reminds us that "diaspora cultures" result from the "ways people leave home and return, enacting differently centered worlds, interconnected cosmopolitanisms."Additionally, Hall highlights diaspora's meaning as a movement from one tradition to another, as a passage from one tradition that is ours to another that belongs to others. The difference between these two thinkers being that Hall does not see the return to the prior tradition possible while Clifford (1997, 261) does. In her living experience of the Brazilian Blackness within which she is inserted, Geni does not consider – at least not consciously – her return to African original Blackness. On the contrary, she knows that she has to "negotiate and resist the social reality of poverty, violence, policing, racism, and political and economic inequality," without abandoning her black Brazilian setting. By remaining loyal to her rural black cultural habitat in Brazil, Geni, together with her father, mother, brothers and sisters, becomes able to "articulate alternate public spheres, interpretive communities where critical alternatives (both traditional and emergent) can be expressed." She succeeds through personal education and professional success as a teacher, with emotional support and financial help from the family.

From Hall's (1992, 309-310) point of view, Geni replaces one tradition with another, faithfully hoping she does not have to mingle with the white culture. This supporting attitude toward *Blackness*, apart from Whiteness, gives her a sense of identity stability. Such a feeling of being close to the black heritage of her own family, according to Hall, makes her think she can "restore [her] former purity and recover the unities and certainties which are felt as being lost."Geni's tradition-based identity derives from the feeling that she can keep daily contact with the black culture created by her own family. In Hall's words, one feels that Geni believes "it may be tempting to think of identity in the age of globalization as destined to end up in one place or anther: either returning to its 'roots' or disappearing through assimilation and homogenization." Fortunately, for the best or for the worst, Geni opts to integrate her family with her African-Brazilian roots.

Bearing in mind the facts involving Geni and her family, Clifford's words, Hall's comments and other theoreticians' contribution can help us better understand the magnitude of the concept of *Negritude*. For this to happen effectively one must retake the idea of flow that moves among colonization, decolonization and postcolonization. Colonized, decolonized and postcolonized people, like Geni and her family, have become effective attempts to "create sociopolitical structures that are derived from their own history and culture" (Cone 2007: 04), as nationalist thinkers advocate. For instance, in literature, Shakespeare's (1994, 18-19) *The Tempest* provides an instantiation of the colonized's nationalism and postcolonialism in the depiction of Caliban – a prototypical representation of *Black Nationalism* and *Negritude* – who articulates the dismissal of Prospero, the white European who has taken over his island and, as a result, represents Whiteness usurping colonized people's material properties and culture. On two distinct occasions, the overthrowing of the European settler is portrayed in Caliban's confrontation to Prospero's presence in his mother Sycorax's island. On the first occasion, Caliban claims the ownership of the island, calling out "the island is mine, by Sycorax my mother/which thou tak'st

from me." Then, his claim is made visible through the curse he casts upon Prospero:

> All the charms
> Of Sycorax: toads, beetles, bats, light on you! (…)
> You taught me language, and my profit on't
> Is, I know how to curse: the red-plague rid you
> For learning me your language.

As a colonized being, Caliban's struggle for autonomy and independence, activated through his desire to repossess Sycorax's island, has later been repeatedly reshaped by the works of various black and white thinkers and writers. With greater or lesser violence, aggression or determination, these new Calibans within Black transnational letters, Geni included, have spread their nationalist agenda. And, therefore, they have signified upon both Caliban's emancipating resistance and rebellion against Prospero's power and upon colonizing social and political structures designed by colonialist enforcement in Sycorax's former territory. Roberto Fernández Retamar (1989, 14), for example, signifies upon Caliban's rebellious act by reclaiming him, with passion, as representative subject of racial struggle, saying that "our symbol then is not Ariel, as Rodó thought, but rather Caliban.[...]I know no other metaphor more expressive of our cultural situation, of our reality. [...] what is our history, what is our culture, if not the history and culture of Caliban?" This instantiation of the resisting *Signifyin(g)* continues with Fanon (2004, 2), who examines the decolonizing agenda of Black nationalism as it is represented by Caliban's quest for self-determination as a desire for black people's struggle for liberation and, thus, states that decolonization infuses the black colonized subject with "a new rhythm, specific to a new generation of men, with a new language and anew humanity. Decolonization is truly the creation of new men." This "new humanity" of the Negro that Fanon reiterates by associating it with both black Nationalism and Caliban is taken up by Memmi (2007,169-170) as the

break through by means of which the colonized Black (and others) asks himself:"how can one get out of that, except through the rupture, the explosion, every day more violent, of this vicious circle. Due to its own internal fatality, the colonial situation calls for revolt" against the colonizing Whiteness and the West. Hand in hand, both black humanity and rupture pave a significant trajectory and find in Afro-American thinker West (1993, 85) a more purposeful formulation, this time not directed against the Western colonizer or the white oppressor, but in favor of the cultural values of African origin. It is, West contends, "a nostalgic search for the African parent," a search that takes shape in the answer to Du Bois's (1986, 821) question, given by the Negro's regained humanity, "what, after all, am I? […] am I a Negro?" Imbued with this self-determined and independent humanity, the new black being or subject or self fully immerses himself into the Black culture, an attitude that Ferreira (2004, 81) claims to be characterized by a "period in which the person plunges into the Black Nationalism" in order to escape from the white values. Ferreira argues that the Negro's "interest in 'Mother Africa' becomes evident."

However, to stop the assimilation of white values and start appreciating and living the Black values of Negritude is still a reactive attitude, necessary but incomplete for the emergence of a "black humanity" that invigorates *Blackness*. Thus understood and lived, that is, in isolation and apart from Whiteness, Blackness is denounced by Glissant (2005, 27) as something coming from an atavistic culture. He teaches us: "the atavistic cultures tend to defend (…) the status of identity as a single root and to exclude the other." Exclusive identities, such as the nationalist, which is based on values of African origin only, are seen as "purified identities". "Purification", Robins (1991, 42) explains, "aims to secure both protection from, and positional superiority over, the external other." As this is an identity marked by antagonistic polarity between two worlds, or two opposing traditions (that of the ex-slaves and that of the owners of slaves), Hall (2006, 310) believes that the "purified" Negro – that is, the Nationalist Black – finds it "tempting to think of identity in the age of globalization as destined to end

up in one place or another," that is, in the West or in Africa. Nationalist Afro-Brazilians like Geni and her family opt for Africa. As we have seen from Caliban to today, racial mobility of people of African descent contemplates this long historical perspective. Historically, African Brazilians have also gone through migratory displacement as slaves, within our country, during and after slavery was abolished. Diasporic displacement, dislocation or migration of racialized subjects reflect postcolonial experiences in Bhabha's (1988, 241) view, as he writes that

> The contemporary postcolonial discourses are rooted in specific histories of cultural displacement, whether as a "middle passage" from slavery to servitude, as a "trip out" of the civilizing mission, the accommodation of the massive migration from Third World to the West after World War II, or the movement of economic and political refugees within and outside the Third World.

My personal assumption here is that Geni not only personifies Caliban's decolonizing attitudes and, therefore, signifies upon the entire collection of ideas discussed above, from the Cuban Retamar to Indian Bhabha, but also proudly and successfully affirms her proactive Brazilian Blackness or *Negritude* and nationalism.

4.2.   Paralatio as Lingual Translation

Both *Negritude* and *Paralatio* follow a movement that is similarly unidirectional, but distinctly oppositional. As for unidirectional dispersion, on the one hand, as racial displacement, *Negritude* remains faithful to Blackness, or Geni's original racial background as we have seen within her personal and family experience. On the other, as lingual dispersion, *Paralatio* moves from source language (Brazilian Portuguese) or its original linguistic tradition, to the target text (English) or the language tradition that is not its. Race and language give them distinctiveness within their mobility.

Therefore, while *Negritude* stresses Geni's reinforcement of black vitality, *Paralatio* focuses on the linguistic dynamics of the derived text, the translated one.

Here, *Paralatio* deserves a consideration, apart from the concept of *Negritude*, which, borrowed from Martinican poet Aimé Césaire, was briefly discussed above. As a concept, Paralatio is a coined word, aimed at dealing with linguistic dispersion within translation. It was created after two other words, *Paraphrase* and *Translatio*, through the combination of the first part of *PARA*phrase (PARA) with the second half of Trans*LATIO* (LATIO), resulting in the neologism PARALATIO, which encompasses the idea that paralatic translation and, therefore, resembles the linguistic and cultural qualities of the target language and culture. From this very perspective, Schleiermacher (1992, 40-49) explains that any translation based on paraphrase seeks to solve linguistic and cultural problems by expanding or limiting the terms in the target text. The way the German theorist sees intertextual exchange, a paraphrasal translation "seeks to overcome the irrationality of languages" by dealing "with the elements of both languages", and gets its effect "by increasing or decreasing them." He summarizes this process saying that "the translator leaves the author in peace as much as possible and moves the reader toward him." And he clarifies that, in this case,

> The translator is endeavoring, in his work, to compensate for the reader's inability to understand the original language. He seeks to impart to the reader the same image, the same impression that he himself received thanks to his knowledge of the original language of the work as it was written, thus moving the reader to his own position, one in fact foreign to him.

The translator's endeavors to make the translation reader's life easier when he reads a translated text are accompanied by other theorists dealing with paralatic translation, those whom Landers (2001) calls targeteers or

free translators. Thus, *Paralatio*, as a process of interlingual rendition is also known as free translation. Translational freedom is seen by Chesterman (1997, 02-13) as change, when a text moves from language A to language B. He argues that texts (idea and language) "spread and change as they are translated (…) In this light, a translator is not someone whose task is to conserve something but to propagate something, to spread and develop it: translators are agents of change. Translators, in fact, make a difference." For him, "free translation tends to prioritize functional equivalence", which ties us to the idea that "translators have the right to translate just how they feel, exploiting a wide range of relations between source and target" language or culture.

Besides Chesterman (1997), other translation theorists and practitioners give distinct labels to free rendition of source texts in motion to the target languages. For instance, Landers (2001, 49) names it fluency and transparency and characterizes fluent and transparent rendition as

> Most translators judge the success of a translation largely on the degree to which it "doesn't read like a translation". The object is to render Language A into Language B in a way that leaves as little evidence as possible of the process. In this view, a reader might be unaware he/she was reading a translation unless alerted to the fact. Whether adopting this perspective or not, upon beginning a project the translator must decide to what point transparency is a desideratum.

Freedom within translation associated with translation success and creativity is also analyzed by Amorim (2005, 57), who argues that "free or creative translation would have found an invaluable space within American poet and translator Ezra Pound, who conceived translation as a form of criticism and creation." Gentzler (2009, 80) adds valuable contribution to the purpose of paralatic rendition of texts by asserting that Nida also privileges free rendition. He affirms that for Nida "the biblical translator

should not underestimate communication. On the contrary, they should bring it to the fore, using any linguistic resources and theory of communication available to help them with the task."

My initial speculation that tradition becomes translation through migration receives, now, a supplementary assumption involving a domesticating modality of textual translation from the perspective of paralatic renditions. Venuti (1998, 67) explains that, when translation "domesticates foreign texts," that is, when it follows *Paralatio*, it brings to them "linguistic and cultural values that are intelligible to specific domestic constituencies" employing "a translation strategy that rewrites the foreign texts in domestic dialects and discourses", and transforming domestication into "a choice of certain domestic values to the exclusion of others." I will argue, then, that a text 'traditions' itself into a culture that receives it through free translation at the same time that the source text *A Cor da Ternura* acclimatizes itself to *Paralatio* under the linguistic and cultural force and will of the target language of *The Color of Tenderness* that receives it.

4.3. Analytical Perspectives of Negritude and Paralatio

The model for translation analysis discussed above has designed three distinct trios: (1) the one amalgamating *Negriceness*, *Paralatio* and *Domestication* indicates the accommodation of source people, and texts within source culture, under target cultural and linguistic environment; (2) the other including *Negritude*, *Similatio* and *Foreignization* reveals resistance of source human subjects and texts race and language to being assimilated by the target racial and lingual environment accommodation by empowering both source race and language; and (3) the last one dealing with *Negriticeness*, *Translatio* and *Hybridization* fuses both accommodation and resistance of original race and language. The analysis that is about to happen hereon wishes to integrate the race of the second trio (*Negritude*) with the language of the first one (*Paralatio*), therefore making racial

resistance and lingual accommodation work together. As a result, *Negritude* goes together with *Paralatio*.

The extract of Guimarães's novel *The Color of Tenderness* chosen for the intensive analysis of both racial and lingual translation is titled *Crystal Moment* or *Momento Cristalino*. The reason why I chose this chapter has to do with the fact that it seems that the events portrayed in it by the narrator Geni represent a very high point within her empowered Blackness. In the chapter, her academic success is at the center of her black family's life and, therefore, shows the moment of her graduation ceremony, celebrated by her together with her family. This is the moment when we see racial translation taking place along with black decolonization. The decolonizing racial translation is symbolized by *Negritude*, which does not only evidence resistance to Whiteness – the same way Caliban also resists to Pospero – but also shows an invaluable affirmation of a certain black humanity, which Césaire (2004, 80) refers to as "It makes reference to something more profound, exactly to a sum of experiences that have come to define and characterize a form of human fate as history has made it: it is one of the historical forms of the status accorded to man." Césaire's words on *Negritude* corroborate the idea of Blackness that empowers the experience of Geni's family. This is an affirmative Blackness, which leads Geni's family to move in search of educational excellence, represented by her certificate, speech and career.

According to the analytical model prescribed – *Negritude*, *Similatio*, *Foreignization* – lingual translation should follow *Similatio* as its orientation. However, contradicting my expectation, lingual translation will onward be metaphorized by the concept of *Paralatio*. This is due to the massive presence of elements indicating linguistic domestication of the Brazilian Portuguese, as the source language, by English, as its target language.

In this first excerpt of Geni's narrative below,

> **I – Negritude:** Para dezembro foi marcada a data para realização do evento. Minha colação de grau. Em casa conversamos e decidimos que todos da família estariam presentes. Decidimos ter que calçar e vestir todo mundo adequadamente, como exigia a ocasião (Guimarães, *Corda Ternura*82)
>
> **Paralatio**: December was set for the realization of the ceremony. My graduation. At home, we discussed what dress to wear and which shoes to put on – all befitting of the occasion. (Trans. Afolabi 75)

the family's *Negritude* shows itself "comme prise de conscience de la différence, comme mémoire, comme fidelité et comme solidarité » (Césaire 2004 : 83) or «as awareness of difference, like memory, like loyalty and solidarity ». This is the *Blackness* that relates to her family's collective preparation for her graduation ceremony, which happens in December. The reader is informed that the whole family will participate and will need clothes and shoes appropriate for the solemnity of the occasion. *Paralatio* indicates the lingual translation of the domesticating kind, and, thus, privileges fluency within target language. Fluent rendition masks real translation, by making translation and the target language coincide. In this regard, Landers (2001, 49) explains that "most translators judge the success of a translation largely the degree to which it 'doesn't' read like a translation." The result of translational fluency's prevalence over lingual resistance is that the target language overcomes the source text, and domesticates it. One example of this translationally fluent strategy is the expression "*Para dezembro*", a temporal adverb in the source text, which is retaken in the target excerpt as the subject "*December*" by English translator Afolabi. Besides, in the nominal level of the rendition, "*todo mundo*" becomes "*all*" and the adverb "*adequadamente*" is translated as the verb

"*befitting*". Finally, the translator reduces the sentence "*como exigia a ocasião*" to the expression "*of the occasion*", thus engendering syntactic rendition.

In the next passage,

> **II – Negritude:** Fizemos o balanço e, vendo a escassez do dinheiro, concordamos no seguinte: só compraríamos tudo novo para mim. Os outros só comprariam aquilo que não tivessem mesmo, de jeito nenhum. Portanto, compramos roupa para um, sapato para outro e assim por diante (Guimarães, Cor da Ternura 82).

> **Paralatio**: We evaluated things based on scarcity of Money and came to terms with the following: we would only buy new items for me. Others would buy only what they lacked. For one we'd buy a dress, for another, shoes – and so on (Trans. Afolabi 75).

Geni's racial translation reaffirms her family's *Negritude*. Through Geni's words we are informed that the family prepares itself in order to be present in the graduation ceremony of its most successful daughter who becomes a teacher. Due to financial scarcity, they are led to make cuts in what would be proper and needed. During the discussion of the preparation, they agree that some would wear the old things if they were still wearable; others would have news things if the old things were not manageable. Due to her condition as the center of the celebration, only Geni would have new clothes and shoes. As she is the first teacher in the family nobody complains about the special attention she deserves from everybody. Regarding *Paralatio*, the fluent rendition of the source passage occurs in both syntactic and nominal level. Syntactic transfer relates the sentences "*Fizemos o balanço*" to "*we evaluated things*"; "*vendo*" to "*based*"; and "*concordamos no*" to "*came to*

terms with". In addition, translator Afolabi reduces the sentence "*aquilo que não tivessem mesmo, de jeito nenhum*" to the short sentence "*what they lacked*". Finally, Simple Past tense "*compramos*" becomes "*we'd buy*", a second future form. As for translation involving nouns, Afolabi rends the expression "*tudo novo*" as "*new items*", discards the rendition of the conjunction "*portanto*", and deals with "*a dress*" as the equivalent to "*roupa*".

The paragraph below

> **III – Negritude**: No dia, todos estavam nervosos, mas arrumaram-se muito cedo para a cerimônia. Meu pai cortou o cabelo do Zezinho, do Dirceu e dos outros homens da família. Depois o Joãozinho cortou o do meu pai. (Guimarães, *Corda Ternura*82-83)
>
> **Paralatio:** On my graduation day, everyone was nervous but they all got ready on time for the ceremony. My dad cut Zezinho's hair, that of Dirceu and other men in the family. Afterwards, Joãozinho cut my father's hair (Trans. Afolabi 75).

displays the excitement taking possession of Geni's family members. This is a moment of the family coming together "comme solidarité", a kind of solidarity through which everybody helps each other. Geni's father cuts the sons' hair and has his hair cut by Joãozinho. Paralatic rendition of the source passage involves the manipulation of nouns. For instance, the expression "*no dia*" is enlarged in order to become "*on my graduation day*"; the adverb of time "*muito cedo*" is rendered as "*on time*", and the pronoun "*o*" is replaced by its equivalent noun "*hair*".

   In the excerpt below,

> **IV – Negritude**: Vez em quando, encorajava-os com um riso. Meu pai, ao lado da minha mãe, estava pleno, altivo, sereno. Com os olhos, acompanhava todos os meus movimentos, engolindo salivas de prazer. Minha mãe me bebia através dos ares do meu pai, que, embevecido, ajeitava a gola da camisa, propositalmente, me segredando que estava feliz (Guimarães, *Corda Ternura*83).

> **Paralatio**: From time to time, I encouraged them with a little smile. My father was sitting by my mother. They were following my contagious gestures with their attentive eyes. My mother was also watching through the lenses of my father, who to his delight, adjusted his collar as a gesture that all was well and that I was doing fine (Trans. Afolabi 75-76).

Geni's association with *Negritude* includes the description of the sentiments involving the family, feelings that are at the center of the narrative. She concentrates her attention on both the father's and the mother's behaviors regarding her. Her words focus on their pride, which reveals itself in their eyes, mouth, body movements and in the way the father praises Geni greatly, telling her he is very happy with her own achievement. Again, paralatic translation involves both nominal elements and syntactic structures. Regarding the rendition of nouns, Afalabi decides to move to English the expression "*vez em quando*" as "*from time to time*". Besides, the expression "*com um riso*" arrives at the target text with the addition of the adjective "*little*", therefore becoming "*with a little smile*". The opening expression "*com os olhos*" is thrown to the end of the sentence as "*with their attentive eyes*", enlarged by the adjective "*attentive*", not referring any longer to the singular pronoun "*he*", but to its plural form "*they*". The noun

"*ares*" is replaced by the word "lenses". In addition, the expression "*a gola da camisa*" is reduced to "*collar*". Also, the word "*movimentos*" becomes "*gestures*". The adjective "*embevecido*" moves as the expression "*to his delight*". Within the syntactic sphere, paralatic translation amplifies source language's domestication by the target text. It is the case of the sentence "*estava pleno, altivo, sereno*", whose rendition is discarded. Translator Afolabi also transforms the implicit pronoun "*he=my father*" into its plural form "*they*", which includes Geni's father and mother. The sentence "*me bebia*" has its intensified meaning mitigated by the equivalent "*was also watching*". Finally, the sentence "*me segredando que estava feliz*" is strongly enlarged in order to become "*as a gesture that all was well and that I was doing fine*". As a result, Geni's father's personal reaction becomes something impersonal.

Concluding Conjectures

Aiming at delineating my concluding remarks on both the racial and lingual translatability of Guimarães's novel *A Cor da Ternura* into *The Color of Tenderness*, it is plausible to assert that Duarte's (2014) characterization of the literary production by black Brazilian authors as *African Brazilian Literature* rather than *Black Literature*, as some writers have been postulating as the only valid alternative, adds invaluable contribution to the ideas I have assumed in this article, concerning analytical openness leading to a more inclusive appreciation black letters within the environment of Brazilian literary production in these initial years of the 21th century.

For its proposal of Geni's personal and potential translatability, evolving within African Brazilian community deeply concerned with its members' racial and lingual empowerment, the novels *The Color of Tenderness* and *A Cor da Ternura* show themselves as the repository of the idea that translation results from the migration of one tradition to another tradition. It is visibly detectable that both Geni – the major character of the novel – and the novels translate themselves: Geni becomes a teacher; the novel travels to

another language, English. The concepts regarding *Brazilian Blackness* (*Negritude*), the metaphors (*Caliban*), the identities (*Nationalist*) together with the concepts regarding textual Blackness (*Paralatio*), the translational processes (*Transparence*) and the translational identities (*Domesticating*) have provided an instigating, though complex, appreciation of translatability involving both people's and text's migration from one tradition to another, thus resulting in both black people's life change and black text's textual transformation, leading to unprecedented possibilities of analysis and appreciation.

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