

Cultural Mediation: Challenges of Stylistic Translation in the Francophone African Novel

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ABSTRACT

In the current thesis, I investigate how translation addresses authorial style and what distinct translational practices of meaning-making are revealed by a focus on style. African literature often employs linguistically and socioculturally nuanced stylistic figures within Western languages, like French and English (among others). This poses certain difficulties in the translation process. This research focuses on identifying and analyzing stylistic elements of selected Francophone African texts in relation to their English translations, examining the cultural and linguistic challenges encountered by the translator and how these issues are creatively handled, and exploring the target text's implications for its intended readership. The study draws on excerpts chosen from the translations of *Une si longue lettre* by Mariama Bâ and *L'Aventure ambiguë* by Cheikh Kane and their source texts to examine the original authors' stylistic choices. The research employs the theoretical frameworks of Gideon Toury's Descriptive Translation Studies and the Manipulation Theory of Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere as bases to formulate a more nuanced theoretical framework for analyzing style within the context of translation: the Stylistic-Semantic Translation Model. The data will be subjected to qualitative analysis, which will demonstrate the challenges faced by translators in adapting the styles of Francophone African novelists, including the use of culture-bound terms, repetition patterns, musical/rhythmic effects, gender-specific language, and punctuation. The study proposes strategies for more effective cultural mediation of aesthetics in Francophone African novels. Overall, this research focuses on an optimistic view of translation: first, there is a possibility of apprehending the meaningfulness and intentionality of an authorial style, and secondly, there is a possibility of communicating the latter to an audience that may be culturally, linguistically, and historically distant from the author.

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INTRODUCTION

In the current study, I propose an analysis of style in literary translation, a branch of translation that involves aesthetic texts like novels. I take the author's style to be a defining component of such texts. The author reveals values, identities, emotions, personalities, feelings, and ideas inherent in his or her cultural background and expresses them in specific, unique ways. Translating, therefore, both the *what* and *how* of an author's message, according to Nigerian translation studies scholar Damola Adeyefa, enhances the progress, development, and sustenance of the source culture by rendering it (more) visible to other communities ("Translation" 54). The question necessarily arises of whether the translator, as an individual with their own values and identities, has a style, too. This thesis intervenes in these debates to support the position that translation studies must take the style of the translator into account in considering questions of his or her presence or absence in a text. If a text is to be understood in detail, it matters both what the author says and how they say it. And traditionally, the translator is considered an invisible agent, expected to be faithful while reproducing the source text's style. However, as this research progresses, I will be defending a view that translation is a dynamic form of cultural mediation in which the translator's style or presence is significant.

To grasp the full message contained in the literary text, in the context of translation, requires paying attention to its stylistic figures. In her *Stylistic Approach to Translation*, Jean Boase-Beier emphasizes that a text cannot be understood to the fullest in translation studies unless the reader pays "attention to the style of the text: what is unique to the text and its choices, patterns in the text, and the essential nature and function of the text" (1). Therefore, stylistics contributes to the systematic close reading of a text as it provides a "helpful toolkit and checklists" and the structure of linguistic and cultural elements that can help the reader to comprehend the author's act and art in a given text (Jinfang et al. 125). As a domain concerned with the systematic study of style, stylistics aims at interpreting the main linguistic features

that are conveyed “in words, phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, as well as the intentional meaning of a text” (Adeyefa, “Translation” 55).

More than just being mutually beneficial, stylistics and translation are interdependent. However, Linda Pillière finds the question of style more challenging within the context of translation (225) because style is linked to an individual author’s background, and the publisher can potentially influence the author’s style at the moment of publication. As a result, studies began to show how more scholarly attention is being drawn to explore the significance and the place of style within translation studies (Marpaung et al. 20).

This study focuses on translation as the search for a natural equivalence between source and target languages that accounts for meaning and style. The natural equivalence goes beyond the notion of mere, literal translation by prioritizing the significance of cultural contexts. It points at the work that the mediator must do, seeking and choosing the closest match in the intended language and community’s context that carries both the semantic and stylistic implications of the original text. Translation thus represents the possibility of effective human communication, cultural adequation, and mutual understanding. The search for optimistic possibilities in translation is based on Eugene Nida and Charles Taber’s perspective on equivalence in relation to identity as the criteria for producing effective translations (12), privileging the transmission of message—its meaning, style and form—while showing that form and style are essential to understanding both the meaning of the original and the translation’s effect on the intended audience; implying that, beyond conveying the meaning of the message in an original language to a target reader, attention should be paid to the source text’s style; therefore, both the meaning and the style are pertinent in the translation process. However, according to prior studies, accurate conveyance of the voice, sense, and style of an original writer to a target audience is a delicate task; therefore, the translator will inevitably modify the

voice of the original author if they do not take the stylistic elements of the source text into account during the translation process (Jinfang et al. 125).

One concern of stylistic analysis is understanding how the original author created an effect. And, rephrasing the text to understand its effect results in the notion of “translation as a form of rewriting” (Pillière 225). Previous studies argue that both the precision and the quality of the product are significantly influenced by the stylistic variations in translations (Jinfang et al. 125). This could be evident in literary translation, which creates an interface between the style of the writer and that of the mediator through cultural nuances and aesthetics. Since individuals are never the same, the style of one author is different from another’s. Likewise, languages with their contexts are diverse: for example, this difference cuts across vocabulary use, meaning, sentence structure, and pragmatics.

What is the mediator’s role in the interface between texts, languages, and cultures? More specifically, does the translator have a style that plays into this interface? It is complicated for scholars to explore the translator’s style because there is an ethical stake in the translator’s approach to authorial style. For Radwa Kotait, the translator’s style consists of subconscious choices peculiar to his or her writing, not dictated by the original or the newly created text (238). The style of the translator is therefore an obstacle to be overcome. For Radwa Kotait, attempting to strike a balance between his or her style and that of the source text’s writer, the mediator should only “reproduce as closely as possible the style of the original,” and even the “voice, subjectivity, visibility, thumbprint, and fingerprint” of the translator should not be traceable in the product (238). This brings about, therefore, a focus on producing a good translation, and the translator’s interventions are not fixed: they continually revisit, interpret, and negotiate the text, style, meaning, and cultural contexts.

The notion of faithfulness has to do with the translator’s ability to remain true to the original author’s message and style. Being faithful, therefore, to the source text while

reproducing its natural equivalence probably makes it more complicated for scholars to investigate the style of the mediator. This could be because the latter is viewed as subconscious choices made by the translator, and such choices and patterns are only peculiar to his or her writing—the translator’s style is neither dictated by the source nor the target text (238).

I contend that attention to the translator’s style is necessary for translating authorial style. This principle is important to the African novel, as studied in the present thesis, because style is a unique feature in the literary work, which is sometimes either oversimplified or misrendered in translation. The style risks being compromised during the translation and often moves African literature out of its original context into a global setting. There is greater deviation from, or even deformation of, the source text if the style is not considered during translation. Already, existing studies conclude that there is no perfect translation anywhere: the translator’s aim, therefore, should be to improve the product; ignoring the original author’s style will not translate better. And translating how a message is conveyed will not move the product farther from the source culture or language.

In the current study, I investigate the challenges related to translating the styles of Francophone African writers. This is a stylistic investigation of selected Francophone African novels and their English translations, with a view to identifying and exploring cultural and linguistic challenges encountered by the translators, providing certain solutions for those obstacles, while formulating a theoretical framework that aims towards a holistic analysis of the authorial style in a translational context. My aims in this research are to:

1. Identify and compare specific stylistic figures in selected Francophone novels and their English translations.
2. Explore the cultural and linguistic issues surrounding the translation of the identified stylistic figures.

3. Identify the translation strategies employed by the translators to negotiate cultural and linguistic challenges in the target language.
4. Discuss the implications of the translators' choices for the target audience.

The study draws selected excerpts from the translations of Cheikh Kane's *L'Aventure ambiguë* (1961) and Mariama Bâ's *Une si longue lettre* (1980) and their source texts to examine the original authors' stylistic choices. The two novels were not chosen based on a comparative point of view: they were used as complementary source texts for the selected excerpts. This is with a view to making the findings more generalized within the context of Francophone African literary texts.

Mariama Bâ and Cheikh Kane are known for their distinctive styles, which are influenced by their backgrounds, displayed throughout their manner of language use. Stylistic figures such as culture-bound terms, repetition patterns, musical/rhythmic effects, gender-specific languages, and punctuation are frequently found in the different texts written by these authors, as is common in almost all African literary works. The texts of Mariama Bâ and Cheikh Kane were chosen due to their multiple translations. Also, their versions have been critically received in many languages. As a result, insights from their translations can inform general discourse and questions relating to translating Francophone African texts. Both novels are culturally significant, enriched with several themes that provide a context for analyzing how stylistic features rooted in Francophone African culture can be found or lost in the translation process.

In addition to their themes, both novels are literarily and culturally rich, with similar, creative narrative techniques. They are generally viewed as commentaries on the society and politics of their epoch. Offering critiques of colonial influence, the novels endorse social justice and advocate for change. Through their novels, Mariama Bâ and Cheikh Kane present regular, fundamental Francophone African novelists' styles, such as (but not limited to) the use of

culture-bound terms, repetition patterns, musical/rhythmic effects, gender-specific languages, and punctuation. These elements of style, however, present challenging choices for the translator, as each style seems to have more than just one possible interpretation during the translation. Therefore, there is a need to interrogate these challenges and explore possibilities for a good translation of the styles that enrich the African texts.

In the first section, I will discuss literary translation as a bridge between different cultures and languages, drawing on existing research on translation, revisiting the history and theory of translation studies in relation to African literature, and how stylistic translation began to take shape with African literature. In this context, I will develop a robust definition of style (as a distinctive, creative mode of expression that conveys the author's cultural identity) and discuss the issues around the translator's relationship to style, normative and practical constraints on the creation of the African works, and the production of translations of African literature. Then I will discuss the concept of the translator's role in mediating cultures. I will conclude this section with a review of some pertinent literature, covering the concept of stylistics and translation, the relationship between both fields, and approaches and challenges of translating style in African texts.

In the second section, I will discuss the theories and methodology of the research. The study builds on established theoretical frameworks such as Gideon Toury's Descriptive Translation Studies (Tanyitiku 7) and the Manipulation Theory of Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (1990) to create a more effective model for analyzing styles in a translational context: a bi-layered Stylistic-Semantic Translation Model. The data will be subjected to qualitative analysis, using the newly formulated framework.

The third section presents the selected authors and their respective texts: Mariama Bâ with her *Une si longue lettre*, and Cheikh Kane with his *L'aventure Ambiguë*. I shall give a

brief overview of the novelists and then mention the translators' relationships to their respective source text authors.

Lastly, I will go into the analysis proper: I will identify and compare the selected stylistic elements with their English translations, examine the cultural and linguistic issues around their translations, identify the translation strategies employed by the translators (Ferreira and Schwieter 233), and then discuss the translational implications of choices. Finally, I will conclude the findings and recommend possible solutions to facilitate the translation of Francophone African writers' style into another language.

Part I: Translation, Literature, and Style

The present work centers on the systematic investigation of the analysis of an author's style in a translational context, how existing theories and debates have informed the discourse: Jean Boase-Beier's stylistic approach (*Translation and Style* 2) and Eugene Nida and Charles Taber's notion of equivalence (12), and proposing a more holistic theoretical framework that facilitates stylistic analysis of translation by recognizing the mediator's interventions (e.g., Laurence Venuti's focus on the translator's visibility (*Invisibility* 8), etc.

Translation serves as a conduit and bridge between different cultures and languages for various purposes. As an activity that involves the rendition of meaning and ideologies, translation is as old as the world (Tanyitiku 2). As a task, it involves the "conversion of a particular written language into a target language" in written form (Ferreira and Schwieter 1). This emphasizes the question of moving across languages, from one culture to another. Aben Ahmed argues that three major qualities should be reflected in an adequate translation (139): it should be accurate, clear, and natural. Studies show that these three constructs are indispensable for the successful communication of the message. In this vision, the translator is the cross-cultural ambassador or mediator navigating the complexities of languages, contexts, and cultures.

Translation presents the negotiations of a degree of tolerance that reckons with differences: it is required when mutual understanding in communication is significantly affected. Whether as an act, an art, or a discipline, as posited by David Katan, translation is bound to the beliefs and values of a given culture (30), with cultural translation defined "as any translation that is sensitive to cultural as well as linguistic factors" (32); since culture is usually viewed as difference, the indispensability of translation becomes evident when this difference impacts communication in significant ways (Ferreira and Schwieter 17).

Translation as a field has embraced a significant revolution since the term “Translation Studies” emerged, which was coined by James Holmes in his essay (Bassnett and Johnston 13), presented in the Translation Section of the Third International Congress of Applied Linguistics, in August 1972, in Denmark (Holmes 66). The new term draws more scholarly attention to the field as the term enables thinkers to consider its ability to contextualize translation as an independent field, yet capable of relating to all other fields.

Language and aesthetics form parts of the peculiarities of literature, with an attention to its process and product:

Literature, as an art of language or artistic language construction, is characterized by a series of peculiarities which distinguish it from other forms of linguistic communication, shaping the texts which materialize as linguistic objects where special attention is paid to language, both in terms of its production and reception (Tomás and Chico-Rico 115).

The definition above emphasizes one of the properties of literary translation. If the text translation is equally referred to as a literary piece, then the transfer of the source meaning, aesthetic features, and other peculiarities is involved during the translation process. Prior research shows that for many years now, “literary fiction and nonfiction” have remained “central to studies of translation” (Wittman et al. 438); and that “literary translation is considered a porous category” that can simply be referred to “as the product of a translator” who mimics the literary form of an existing text to produce a “work designed to be read as literature.” The practice of this form of translation is extensively argued by both translation researchers and literary translators to be “an ancient and traditional field of translation” (Rothwell et al. 1). Studies also show that this form of translation has an “essential textual dimension” (Thomás and Chico-Rico 115).

From what precedes, the mediator not only translates word for word, phrase for phrase, and sentence for sentence, but also translates the text in its wholeness, as a genre that merits literariness. The literariness present in the text-translation is influenced by language diversity as well as the choices made by the mediator. For that reason, Eugene Nida and Charles Taber emphasize that “translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style” (12). The definition encompassing the translation of both sense and style reveals that the source text might undergo certain modifications during translation, and the question of style comes to mind during this modification. The current study privileges equivalence over the concept of a mere linguistic correspondence, which might not thoroughly deepen my analyses of cultural representation in a stylistic context.

The style of an author carries both the conscious and unconscious meanings of a text. In her *Translation and Style*, Jean Boase-Beier submits that “literary translation can be seen as the translation of style because it is the style of a text that allows the text to function as literature,” and the style is considered “a direct reflection of the author’s choices” (132). This implies that there is something more than just the message conveyed in a text, which can be easily accessed at the surface. Through the style, we can discover deeper, hidden components and elements of culture accompanying and complementing the totality of the message. Therefore, it is unarguable that the message can be incomplete without the style.

a) **African Literary Translation**

In the African context, identity, language, and translation as tools are all woven into the discourse of literature and translation. Language, identity, and style here are situated within a cultural context and are collectively viewed as a whole, defined identity. In this subsection, I will give a general overview of language as an inherent conduit of identity, and then the usage of language within the translation itself for various purposes.

The culture of a society is mirrored through the language spoken by the society. Existing works of prominent African scholars recognize the positions of thinkers in relation to the question of language throughout various eras in different places around the continent. Mid-twentieth-century thinkers like Ngugi Wa Thiong'o define the relationship that exists between a nation's language and the ideology of the people who speak it (36), advocating for a mental independence of the African society from the colonial presence. Building on the above, Frantz Fanon connects the significance of language with the world and culture (30), language being considered a sword of resistance against external influence. And, African writers use this sword for attacking (14) cultural and religious assimilations, as well as for defending and preserving their heritage. According to him, speaking a language is living the cultural world of that language and being part of the civilization of the language (14). Boris Diop, similarly, throughout his "Écrire en Afrique Francophone, ou l'impossible innocence" (2021), emphasizes that a language is made up of the identity and ideologies of the nation to which it belongs (114). If it is dominated, then the identity and ideologies of such people are dominated.

In addition, language in the African context is more recognized in terms of what it can do: an instrument capable of cultivating a sense of equality among the diverse societies of the world. Later scholars like Bachir Diagne and Wale Adebaniwi argue that "the world of language is a world of inequality and domination" because Pierre Bourdieu's sociological approach to translation declares this inequality among languages (315). From Bachir Diagne's perspective, using language for translation purposes has an aim: to establish a relationship of "equivalence and reciprocity between the identities" and make these identities stand on a foot of equality so that we can all understand ourselves from language to language (14).

Praising a translation, in essence, will imply praising the equality and plurality of all the languages involved, no domination of one over the other. Bachir Diagne acknowledges the existing notion that translation in the African context is a form of domination vis-a-vis the local

language. In his opinion, we should try to remember this form of domination while celebrating translation. But he desires that this domination of the central language over the African (peripheral) languages should come to an end. Every language then becomes central; none is at the peripheries of the world (19). What Bachir Diagne is advocating for is the reconciliation, equality, and horizontality of the plural identities, whereby everyone is considered as being central.

From what precedes, it can be noted that language as a weapon in writing seems like a double-edged sword: first, African writers employing foreign languages in literature or translating African literature into foreign languages make their voices heard in other cultures. Secondly, writing in African languages or translating foreign texts into African languages is not only decoding and exposing the secret of foreign communities but also esteeming African languages, identity, and culture, making them visible, equal to others.

The second aspect of African literary translation relevant to the present study is the two-level interface with translation that the continent has experienced. Paul Bandia describes the relationship between translation and African literature in two phases (21): the pre-writing and post-writing translation phases. The pre-writing translation moment is also known as “writing-as-translation,” which implies “intercultural or intermedial writing,” in Paul Bandia’s words (21–22). The concept of “writing-as-translation” evidently, significantly considers the act of transforming the African indigenous ideas, oral traditions, etc., into writing. The term identifies writing as an act derived from translating existing cultural and linguistic features, thus portraying writing as a kind of translation. The significance of the “intercultural or intermedial writing” is rooted in the emphasis on the fact that writing a text involves a complex process that mediates between textual, visual, or oral media and different cultures (22).

The pre-writing translation moment reflects the interaction among cultural peculiarities before the pen would ever be put on paper. It is a moment of the writer’s contemplations on

how to negotiate between African oral thoughts and writing: that is, original thoughts and the mental process, languages to be used in the writing, etc., serve as the issues that emerge in the writer's mind before they embark on the actual writing. This could be what I can refer to as the first act of translation, which takes place between the African author's mind and his or her paper. This first activity implies the author translating these African oral traditions from the mind-level onto a physical paper. In addition, the pre-writing translation phase is confronted with a lot of questions beyond linguistic choices: political issues in relation to the colonial presence and cultural equivalence. Paul Bandia discusses and lists examples of African scholars known for this moment of pre-writing translation (22–23): Chinua Achebe from Nigeria, who chose to write in English; Francophone African scholars such as Ahmadou Kourouma (among others), who engaged with pen, given that the pre-writing translation phase goes with the experience of the Négritude movement (23).

The efforts of Chinua Achebe or Ahmadou Kourouma are contrasted by Wa Thiong'o Ngugi, who contributes through writing in African languages. Literature written in the African languages will eventually be translated into English and other languages. Wa Thiong'o Ngugi argues that putting African languages into writing will improve literacy among Africans and then upgrade the status of the African languages to become prestigious and equal to the colonial, world languages.

As for the post-writing translation moment, the task is complex. It is usually not just a retranslation but also the translation of another translation, as posited by Paul Bandia: "The translation of African literature, whether self-translation or institutional translation (i.e., a professional translator working with a publisher), has always been a double translation process whereby a fictionalized text—which is itself a translation from oral to written language, from a peripheral language culture to a global language—is in turn translated into another alien

language (whether global or not) far removed from the source language culture of the original” (27).

Why the notion of double translation? It is because, first, the African literary works—cultural expressions—undergo the process of being translated or fictionalized from oral languages into the written form. Secondly, (re)translating this written form into other languages is the concept of the post-writing moment. The translator is, therefore, expected to be mindful of the oral nuances present in the African literature rendered into a written form.

b) On Style

In reading African literature, like other world literature, there is more than just what is said: how it is said. African authors have continued to influence their target communities through the translation of their works rich in aesthetics: “poetry, plays, literary books, literary texts, as well as songs, rhymes, literary articles, fiction novels, novels, short stories, poems, and many others” (Tanyitiku 3–4).

The notion of style throughout the present work carries both individual and collective identity. Individual identity is inherent in a writer: this concept of authorial style is also known as idiosyncrasies—the regular and distinctive manner of language use that is peculiar to an individual author (Kotait 238). And a collective identity, because the individual identity in question shapes and is shaped by the universe of the writer. Universe, in this context, does not only refer to the writer’s experience and history but also his or her society, culture, etc.

Therefore, style is the individual peculiarity, distinctiveness of diction, or sound and word manipulation that is implicitly present in the author’s mind and universe and so manifests (un)consciously in the course of writing. The notion of style, however, earns competing views from various thinkers because some consider it to be core and indispensable, co-constructed by both the author and the translator, while others see it as a problematic aspect in literary translation, etc.

The subject of style is gradually becoming a popular discourse in translation as an interdisciplinary field, especially in contemporary literary translation contexts. Style is now, according to Enaka Tanyitiku, a “trope of literary translation theory and practice” (1). This Enaka Tanyitiku’s claim means that style is central, significant today. Enaka Tanyitiku adds that the style can be considered as the “textual strategies that critique literary texts, explain why certain forms are preferred by writers over others, clarify how figures of speech work, and describe both literary and non-literary texts” (1).

Style is central to literary works as well as to the translation of these works. The favorite style definition of Jean Boase-Beier in her *Translation and Style* accentuates the meaning or cognitive state (132–134) of the speaker in a literary work, characterized as “the perceived distinctive manner of expression” (2). This can, besides linguistic elements, involve both the subconscious and conscious ways of expression attributed to the speaker by the text. However, I contend that the writer of the text, either implicitly or directly, weaves historical and cultural perspectives into their writing. No text writes itself. Therefore, style can be considered as the (sub)conscious mode of expression a given text assigns to its narrator(s), reflecting some inherent traits of the spirit and universe of the writer of such text.

From what precedes, the source of style is worth debating within the context of translation as a process and a practice. Per Jean Boase-Beier, the relationship of style and translation and the study of translation exist in three forms. First, the translator’s understanding of the original text: “In the process of translation, the way the translator understands the style of the source text will affect the way the text is read and understood, and what opinions or attitudes are attributed to its speakers or characters” (*Translation and Style* 1). Second is the translator’s style: “the way the target text is written by the translator will also be influenced by the choices the translator makes, and style is the outcome of choice (as opposed to those aspects of language which are not open to choice). So, the translator’s style will become part of the

translated text” (*Translation and Style* 1). Third is the reader’s understanding of the translation’s style and its possible relationship to the source text (*Translation and Style* 1).

Apparently, the three forms mentioned above present a chain of complex interactions between style and translation. And “to pay attention to style in the study of translation means to consider how all these factors are reflected in the text and its translation” (Boase-Beier, *Translation and Style* 2). This implies that the question of style is beyond the mere use or choice of language. In translating a text, focus on style has to do with a close reading and holistic analysis, without neglecting the factors discussed above.

One of the differences between writers is their universe. A writer is surrounded by a universe that influences his or her mind during the production of the text. That is, the difference between writers can be traced to their historical, religious, cultural, and figurative perceptions of the world (Dovletkireeva and Magomadova 1). Known for its aesthetic features, the literary text is made up of imagery shaped by factors mentioned above, unlike non-literary works. An instrumental factor in the process of translating an author’s style, as suggested by Gengshen Hu, is preserving the “ecologies of the source text, and vice versa” (249). That is the way to convey the style successfully. The ecologies, in Gengshen Hu’s words, expand the definition of the term universe by emphasizing the complex network of relationships between the writer’s experience, history, background, culture, etc., and how this web of connections influences the author’s mind and creativity.

A style of a (literary) writer is an expression of such an author’s ecologies: by this claim, as Hervé Toussaint notes, translation appears to be a sensitive responsibility and commitment (97). In his “Le style en traduction: un aperçu conceptuel,” Damola Adeyefa posits that each writer’s style is rooted in his or her attitude, culture, and natural point of view (93). If an author’s style involves, as Damola Adeyefa asserts, unique “recurrent patterns in linguistic choices, methods” (“Translation” 57), used in a literary text, and if such patterns are a product

of his or her mindset (Boase-Beier, *Translation and Style* 133), reshaped by the author's ecologies, then the accurate representation of this style in another language is clearly difficult. My later analyses in the current study will demonstrate how the translator is open to multiple choices due to the difficulties presented by the complexity of the ecologies of author.

Besides the visible recurrent linguistic patterns and methods, the challenging question is how to understand and translate the author's intent in his or her style. Jean Boase-Beier emphasizes that the acceptability of expressions and the connotation of terms change over time (*Translation and Style* 135). Such changes can cause issues for the mediator, such as the following questions: How can one know what the original author meant over time? How can one interrogate if the connotation of the original author's words has eventually changed at the epoch of translation?

An authorial style is subject to multiple interpretations, and the farther the translator is from the source author's ecologies, the more difficult the translation task becomes. As Luisa Marino asserts, the translator's sociocultural background and other various contexts can make the translation difficult because the translator can only interpret the source text based on his or her own universe and different contexts (A229).

The existing cognitive style of the mediator, influenced by his or her ecologies, is also a source of challenge for translating another writer's style because the former tends to interfere with the latter. The study of Mona Baker et al. tends to emphasize how notable studies have been carried out on the linguistic features of the translator's style in relation to his or her mind (55–76). Also, external influence from other agents, such as the publishers, the original author, directors, editors, etc., negotiates the final decision on the translation (15). And, therefore, the translator's spirit is not the sole decision-maker, though he or she is expected to concentrate on the main tasks of stylistic and thematic comprehension of the source text, harmonizing diverse

structures of languages, and harmonizing the structures of the author's style (Adeyefa, "Translation" 64).

There are several constraints on producing or translating the African literature. One of the normative and practical constraints on the production of African literature, according to Babatunde Ayeleru, is that African authors write from a depth of culture, often lacking sufficient appreciative terms in expressing their thoughts literally (9). Here, Babatunde Ayeleru is referring to the African culture and its languages, which are foreign to the colonial languages. This depth of African culture from which African literature is reproduced is not something its writers can exhaust. Therefore, it might be difficult for these writers to always find adequate equivalents in the existing lexicon of the colonial language they are writing. This sometimes results in the lack of literal expression in the colonial language. The African writers have the option to find a creative, stylistic way to express their worldviews by incorporating African cultural nuances into their works while employing the colonial language(s) as a writing tool.

To translate an African novel is to translate the African's thought, influenced by their universe, and expressed in textual form. This could be a task requiring more effort in order to predict and assume the correct, hidden intention of the novelist. It is (more) challenging if the translator is distant from the original author's universe.

Also, the translation is hardly realized in isolation by the mediator, due to the influence of other factors. The translator is also likely to face the question of who indeed determines the final product. The presence of the publisher, editor, or other circumstances can threaten the quality, approval, and acceptability of the translation, constituting, therefore, many voices instead of the translator's voice alone (Pillière 245). While I acknowledge the issues discussed in this section (i.e., emphasis on the style of an original author), I stand to argue for a visible position of the mediator because his or her interpretive and stylistic choices reshape the product in one way or the other.

c) **On the Translator**

The current subsection centers on the translator's position, personality, and culture in relation to translating the authorial style. I maintain that the translator's personality, style, influenced by his or her ecologies, greatly contributes to the reshaping of the product, thereby revealing his or her contributions through the interpretive process of the original text.

The mediator's presence could be referred to as the possible interventions that create the new text. The style of the mediator can be displayed through his or her interventions. Many scholars have discussed what Aline Ferreira and John Schwieter refer to as the "Traditional Translation Theory," which encompasses notions such as the translator's presence should not be apparent in the translated version (i.e. invisibility); the translator's position is expected to be neutral and that the translator should avoid any personal interventions of his or her own (i.e. neutrality); and the translator must "remain faithful" to the content and style of the original writer (i.e. author's intent). One of the fundamental reasons for the Traditional Translation Theory is the emphasis on translation accounts and theories about the need for the faithfulness of translator to the original author's intent. Thus, the translator is considered a traitor once the translation deviates from the author's intent. The original author is identified with his or her sole authority (Ferreira and Schwieter 221). These and other factors contributed to hiding the translator.

Disclosing the presence of the translator remains, therefore, a sensitive issue, and this thesis argues for a rethinking of these existing perspectives. One way the translator could be felt in the translation is at the sensitive point of rendering the source style, where there is a possibility that he or she could enhance it or obscure it in the target cultural context. Some basic terms used to indicate the translator's presence, according to Şehnaz Gürçaglar, include "fingerprints, voice, feel, implicit translator," and so on (524). However, can it be assumed that the translator is felt throughout the translation? I argue that the question should not be about

the absence or the presence of the mediator; it should be about the degree to which his or her presence should be seen in the product, since, inevitably, the translator appears throughout the translation.

The translator assumes a full, notable responsibility. He or she is a target audience and a source of interpretation. He or she is the reader and interpreter of the original and the writer of the newly created text. Thinkers like Jean Boase-Beier support this view of the translator's position as a premier reader (*Translation and Style* 4): As the mediator, the translator reads the original text first for himself or herself and then for the target audience. The reading involves a deep interaction with the given text to decode the what, how, where, when, why, etc., of each context. The source text's style affects the translator, and this original effect should be evaluated as well. Secondly, the translator is a writer of the target text; therefore, as an author of the newly written text, he or she determines the choices of style present in the translated version (*Translation and Style* 5).

From what precedes, the translator, as an individual writer, possesses his or her unique way(s) of writing due to his or her training and ecologies, which consequently inform the product: one of the main arguments of the current work. The concept of the translator's choices is what Susan Bassnett emphasizes in her *Translation and World Literature* when she discusses translation as a kind of substitution for the original text. In her opinion, translation is just evidence of "a reader's reading," who himself or herself originates from another epoch, experience, and culture. Translation stands to replace the source text where the latter is inaccessible (3) due to language diversity.

It is arguable to conclude that if a translation finally appears as perfect as the original, then it might not be a translation but the same copy of the original. Therefore, the translator's interventions, as supported by the present study, must be identified and valued. Albaladejo Tomás and Francisco Chico-Rico refer to the notion of substitution as "text edition" since the

translation is a newly reproduced text from an existing one. Both substitution and text edition can also be described as a type of “literary criticism” of the original, whereas the translator assumes the responsibility of an exponent of the original and writes another text through critical evaluations of the former. In addition, the critic’s absence is not present in the target text, as he or she is the author of the new text (116).

We can now see that the translator, from Albaladejo Tomás and Francisco Chico-Rico’s perspective, is not only a reader but also a text producer. The literary translator’s aim, as supposed, is to convey the literariness of the original text into the product (117). The existing debate has been around the degree of equivalence, resemblance, and distance, at all levels, between the original and the target texts. Throughout his “Le Style en traduction: un aperçu conceptuel,” Damola Adeyefa discusses that, since the translator is a writer, the translator as an individual possesses their own way of writing: style. And the aesthetics, originality, validity, and effectiveness of a literary work are all kept in the author’s style (74). This reminds us that the appearance, authenticity, effectiveness, and validity of the text-translation are determined by the mediator’s style, the one responsible for the new text.

The debates about faithfulness are tricky because the mediator tends to dismiss the original author’s voice at a certain point for one reason or another. It is significant to interrogate how loud the original author’s voice seems to be in the translation. The presence of the translator in the new version, in certain ways, has more effect on the intended readers.

Beyond the old debate about faithfulness is the concept of acceptability. What is translation if it is inaccessible, unreadable, and unwelcome to the target audience? What would be the aim of a translation that does not appear linguistic, cultural, and stylistic to the target community? Those and many more questions can make the mediator consciously shape the target readerly effects (Oneț and Ciocoi-Pop 224). Gayatri Spivak’s contribution to the discourse of the political power of the translator as a writer can be seen in her *Can the Subaltern*

Speak? published in 1988. She acknowledges the importance of the translator and that he or she possesses a certain level of authority over the target text and that such power should be used to (re)present the voice of the Other successfully instead of marginalizing them.

The interference of the authorial style with that of the translator presents certain obstacles, and the current study aims to investigate the obstacles of stylistic translation in the Francophone African context. In practice, two authors are involved: the original and the mediator. The mediator's task is unending, subject to revision, as cultures and other contexts of life evolve. In the next section, I will discuss, from a Francophone African context, the methodology and theories employed in the present study to discuss the stylistic translation and its challenges.

d) Review of Scholarship on Style in Translation

Many scholars like Damola Adeyefa, Luisa Marino, Annalisa Federici, Enaka Agbor Bayee Tanyitiku, etc., have investigated certain aspects of style in relation to translation practice, and these serve as a bedrock for the current research to contribute to the discourse of translation. Style and translation are linked together in translation discourse. Damola Adeyefa's work on "Translation, Stylistics and Imperativeness of Transliteration in African Literary Translation" (2022) examines translation and stylistics as a field. The author discusses the significance of the interdisciplinary connection between stylistics and translation (68) with the aim of proposing possible strategies for translating cultural nuances in African literary works. The findings demonstrate that researching African style vis-a-vis translation involves considering both the *what* and *how* of the text-translation's structure and the possible incongruity emerging from the manipulation of the source text. In the study, Damola Adeyefa suggests that transliteration is arguably the best strategy for investigating an African author's style in a literary work (53). His analyses tend to come from the point of view of Anglophone

African authors. So, I built this thesis on his study while extending my analysis to encompass how Francophone African novelists' styles are translated into English.

The source of style, its relevance, and the interaction between stylistics and translation are discussed throughout the present research, drawing on Luisa Marino's "Stylistic Approaches to Translation: An Overview" (2022). Luisa Marino relies on existing studies to examine the source and the development of the interface between Stylistics and Translation Studies (A221). The author base their analysis on selected excerpts from the Italian translation of Sarah Ladipo Manyika's *Like a Mule Bringing Ice Cream to the Sun* (2016) and its source text, to provide general insights into the relationship between Stylistics and Translation Studies, how this interaction can facilitate the translator's task, and the functions of style in the analysis of fiction (A232–A233). Luisa Marino's study describes the evolving field of research where stylistic analysis and translation converge. My current research builds on this study and further encompasses the critique of employing (individual) styles in writing and challenges related to translating the author's style.

Annalisa Federici's study (2023) is like that of Luisa Marino (2022), and it focuses on a stylistic approach to literary translation. Their study is based on the interconnectedness of "periodical, reception and (stylistic) translation studies" (57) to expand ongoing discourses of the French translation of Virginia Woolf's texts. From a translational stylistic point of view, the author analyzes certain translated excerpts published in periodicals and tends to evaluate the various stylistic effects of these selected passages (63). The study indicates that the translation of stylistic elements in those extracts was carried out through two main strategies: domestication and foreignization. My study includes these two strategies in the analyses to appreciate the mediator's interventions. Insights on the significance of cultural mediators and "cultural transfer" drawn from Annalisa Federici's work serve as one of the bases for my arguments on the mediator's presence in the target text, as discussed throughout this study (73).

Annalisa Federici's research is narrowed down to certain translated extracts of Virginia Woolf's works in periodicals in interwar France. I extend their method and strategies to the translation of style within the African literary text, specifically the Francophone literary works. I investigate the styles of Francophone African novelists as could be generally common to the African (non)fictional world of the twentieth century.

The current research investigates the challenges of stylistic translation, and the study of Enaka Agbor Bayee Tanyitiku (2024) builds a foundation for this thesis. Enaka Agbor Bayee Tanyitiku explores the challenges of translating style in the African prose, basing their analysis of the study on 15 excerpts chosen from *Clandestinement votre* by Charles Tsimi, which could contain potentially difficult styles for translation. The author uses Descriptive Translation Studies to collect the qualitative data and uses Descriptive and Inferential Statistics to analyze the quantitative data (7). Both translation and literary theories were employed in the study. The author finds that the writer's diction, voice, and tone present styles that are difficult to translate due to certain constraints, finally suggesting that understanding the source text's culture could be a solution for translating both the message and the style.

Many assumptions in the research are not generalized because they are from a personal point of view, since the author is a potential translator. While building on this research, the current thesis formulates a more comprehensive theoretical framework from both Descriptive Translation Studies and the Manipulation Theory, and the analysis is based on already translated Francophone African texts. Likewise, the discussions in the present thesis are not intended to account for the context of self-translation, either. Therefore, I compare the source texts with the creative interventions of other translators of these (selected) Francophone African novels.

Part II: Theoretical and Methodological Frameworks

The current research, as shown in this section, builds on certain foundational studies. The data analysis is based on a bi-layered theoretical framework I call the Stylistic-Semantic Translation Model. This newly formulated model, founded on the Descriptive Translation Studies and the Manipulation Theory (discussed hereafter), helps to frame a holistic strategy for comprehending the translation's issues as well as the mediator's interventions. I also give a preliminary explanation for the empirical techniques and strategies used in the study, as well as contextualizing the scope regarding analyzing the translation of the stylistic elements in the selected Francophone African novels: *Une si longue lettre* by Mariama Bâ and *L'Aventure ambiguë* by Cheikh Kane.

Analyzing an author's style in translation studies is more significant when it examines the complex interactions between the source text and its translated version, rather than considering style as a self-contained property of either the original or the translated text. Kirsten Malmkjær (among others) agrees that stylistic analysis within the context of translation should not be handled as an isolated feature of either the translated text or its source version. In emphasizing Jean Boase-Beier's words, Annalisa Federici acknowledges that the evaluation of the dynamic relationship between a literary translation and style is evidently challenging (4). And, in her "Translational Stylistics: Dulcken's Translations of Hans Christian Andersen" (2004), Kirsten Malmkjær recommends that the relationship between the target text and its original must be investigated through comparative methods (16). However, previously, stylistic analysis vis-a-vis the translation of "a source text and its translation" was rejected on principle by scholars like Mona Baker who, in his "Towards a Methodology for Investigating the Style of a Literary Translator" (2019), according to Annalisa Federici, affirmed that: "... a translator cannot have, indeed should not have, a style of his or her own, the translator's task being simply to reproduce as closely as possible the style of the original" (60).

The present thesis intervenes in these debates to support the position that translation studies must equally take the style of the mediator into account in considering the mediator's presence/absence in a text. Analysis in this context will shift the focus of translation from being just a derivative practice to being a creative practice as well. In addition, this shift towards the aspects of creativity is important if we are to keep holding onto the view of Lawrence Venuti (among others) about the indispensability of the mediator's visibility in translation. What I stand to advocate for is neither to dismiss the authorial style nor the style of the translator: both are authors and should have their unique styles. However, I choose to follow Kirsten Malmkjaer in arguing that the translator should use his or her style in a way that best (re)presents the source text's writer's style in the translation (15).

a) **Descriptive Translation Studies**

Descriptive Translation Studies is one of the theories on which the perspective and the analysis of the current study are built. In her *Stylistic Approaches to Translation*, Jean Boase-Beier asserts that the invention of this descriptive model can be traced to both James Holmes (1988) and Gideon Toury (1980) (5). However, I opt to follow the methodology proposed by Gideon Toury (1995), based on the research questions.

The Descriptive Translation Studies of the theorist Gideon Toury has been used since the 1970s not with the aim of prescribing the way literary translations are expected to be done, but instead, describing literary translations "as they were done" (Vandaele 102). As a reaction against what Enaka Tanyitiku calls the existing theoretical prescriptive studies (7), which is the traditional prescriptive approach to translation theories, Gideon Toury invented the descriptive model as a means of prioritizing the idea of norms in literary translations (Ben-Ari et al. 153, Toury, *Descriptive Translation* 200–204), the sociological constraints that help guide, shape, and regulate the translator's behavior (Dolmaya 347). The argument is that the style of the translated version should correspond with "the genre, of the target language, or of the linguistic,

literary, or cultural system into which the target text fits” (Boase-Beier, *Stylistic Approaches to Translation* 5).

A descriptive examination of the translations in the context of Gideon Toury’s model is not considered a mere comparative assessment of the original text and its translated version. Therefore, Gideon Toury (1995) suggests a three-stage methodology that should be observed in the systematic analysis of translations when applying Descriptive Translation Studies:

The analyst first selects target phenomena regarded as translational phenomena from the viewpoint of the target system. These translational phenomena are prior to, or independent of, the source text. In the second step, the analyst verifies these translational phenomena against the source text through a comparative analysis in the form of a problem/solution pattern. The purpose of this analysis is to establish translational relationships between source-text and target-text. Lastly, the third step consists of the reconstruction of the process of decision-making of the solutions for the respective problems (Tanyitiku 7).

From the explanation above, it is convincing that the Descriptive Translation Study ensures that translation is analyzed as a process, product, and function through the explanation (or description) of the translational phenomena. The process, as claimed by scholars, implies the thought process of the mediator, while the product is the texts “involved in the translation event.” The function in this context is the what, where, when, and why of the translations as well as the effects of the translations on the target audience (Ferreira and Schwieter 25).

Gideon Toury’s model is a tool for the analysis of this study and therefore serves as part of the foundations for the bi-layered Stylistic-Semantic Translation Model. First, from the selected novels, I will identify and explain observable stylistic regularities/patterns present in the selected target novels, considering their acceptability. Then I will juxtapose these target translational phenomena with the respective source texts with a view to detecting changes that

occur in the translation and possible challenges resulting from translating the authorial style, as well as identifying the strategies used by the translator. Finally, I will attempt to reconstruct possible effects of the translations on the target audience and propose possible solutions where needed.

b) Manipulation Theory

The Manipulation Theory is the second theory that supports the main arguments of the current thesis. In the 1980s, Descriptive Translation Studies gave birth to Manipulation Theory, which explicitly holds the claim that the translated text is a result of some sort of manipulation by the mediator (Hermans, *The Manipulation* 11). The Manipulation Theory is a school that emphasizes the view that a perfect translation remains impossible since the mediator, for certain reasons, will “inevitably mix noise in the translation.” Lefevere then popularizes this theory of translation as a rewriting literary manipulation, by justifying various purposes that could lead the mediator to manipulate the source text (Yu and Hongying 412).

The Manipulation Theory holds a claim that a writer’s style, in the translation process, undergoes certain levels of manipulation. And in this view, the translator as a mediator is considered a manipulator for rewriting a source text. In the 1990s, Susan Bassnett collaborated with André Lefevere in expounding this Manipulation Theory, in their *Translation, History, and Culture*, as they came up with what is now popularly known as the Cultural Turn. The Cultural Turn tends to emphasize the role of translation in cultural development, thereby indicating the shift of translation studies from text to culture (Yu and Hongying 412). The term implies a drastic movement from the initial focus of the field, which is textual and linguistic concerns, to an interdisciplinary focus. The term defines translation as a cultural construct and an act that relates to and impacts cultures and identities.

The interdisciplinary nature of this theory, from the perspective of Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (1990), embraces insights from various fields like the postcolonial field,

feminist discourse, ideology, etc.; it tends to provide an inclusive platform for diverse discourses. It is worth mentioning that the Manipulation Theory is not a theory opposing Descriptive Translation Studies (Snell-Hornby 50). They are complementary rather than contradictory to each other. In my analysis, therefore, I will identify and consider every possible factor capable of affecting the cultural mediator in translating certain elements of style in the chosen Francophone African texts.

c) **Towards a Holistic Approach to Stylistic Translation Analysis**

The current study derives a new bi-layered theoretical framework—Stylistic-Semantic Translation Model—that builds on and complements the existing theories of translation, especially the ones discussed above. The Stylistic-Semantic Translation Model accentuates that style is distinct from, yet interwoven with, semantics. Style, in this context, encompasses certain linguistic and artistic choices and connotative nuances. Semantics, on the other hand, involves the understanding of the meaning, the content, and its significance displayed through propositions.

This model does not treat style as a secondary element to meaning in a text. More importantly, it conceptualizes style and semantics as intertwined forms. These forms, therefore, are regarded as two layers, emphasizing that every translation—either implicitly or explicitly—deals with the negotiation of the two layers. As an innovative application, stylistic elements are first identified and analyzed distinctly from the semantic features before discussing their interactional relationships in the translation. To this extent, I propose the following methodology:

1. Stylistic analysis: The first step involves analyzing the stylistic elements in the source text, then examining how these are presented in the translation.
2. Semantic analysis: This is the analysis of the stylistic features—within a semantic context—across both the source and the target texts.

3. Stylistic-Semantic Interaction: Here, both stylistic and semantic nuances are brought into dialogue. A comparison is made between both texts, with attention to justifying, describing the translation, rather than prescribing it.
4. Mediator's Impact: This is the final phase in the Stylistic-Semantic Translation Model. It examines the mediator's interventions between both cultures: how the original culture is (re)presented in the newly created text, and the possible impression the target reader could get from the source culture. The stylistic-semantic interaction between the different texts does not happen on its own: an agent is responsible for the various negotiations taking place. Even the interpretations of the original evolve the more the source text is revisited, leading to frequent intervention and rewriting. This model advocates, in reference to Lawrence Venuti, that the mediator's presence should be equally recognized as that of the original author (*Invisibility* 8). Building on ideas first developed by Antoine Berman in *The Experience of the Foreign: Culture and Translation in Romantic Germany* (1992), Lawrence Venuti, throughout his *Rethinking Translation. Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology* (1992) and *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (2008) claim that the translator as a mediator has two different options: one, the mediator can domesticate the original text. This could be a way of blending the source text into the everyday language of the target audience. The second option is that the mediator can foreignize the source text. One of the ways to achieve this could be by choosing to keep the foreignness of such text through a more literal translation. The concepts of domestication and foreignization are what linguists claim to be the macro translation strategies (Ferreira and Schwieter 233). The translators of the chosen Francophone African novels tend to choose one of these options at a time to translate the original author's style into English. In the analysis, I will show whether the translation strategy used by the mediator is domestication or foreignization.

Applying either of the two strategies in stylistic translation will have one effect or the other on the intended community. At the end of the analysis, I discuss the possible implications of the mediator's stylistic choices for the English-speaking audience: how the text-translation is possibly understood and received by the target community.

d) Data, Data Collection, and Data Analysis

I classify the data I will be analyzing in this study into two categories: primary and secondary data, which give me an original scope considered the basis of my study. The primary data are collected from the two selected source texts and their translations: 1) *Une si longue lettre* by Mariama Bâ, published in 1980 by Nouvelles Éditions Africaines du Sénégal, translated as *So Long A Letter* by Modupe Bode-Thomas; and 2) Cheikh Kane's *L'Aventure ambiguë* (1961), published by Julliard, translated as *Ambiguous Adventure* by Katherine Woods. The two Francophone African novels are chosen based on the unique stylistic devices employed by these Francophone African authors in addressing the various, crucial themes of their works.

My focus in the analysis of the texts mentioned above is on the stylistic figures present in these novels and how they are translated, with or without success. The excerpts from these novels (for analysis) will fundamentally consist of certain translational phenomena of the styles used by the authors. The excerpts are chosen based on a comparative approach through the methodology of Descriptive Translation Studies, assessing how style is manipulated or preserved. Each excerpt represents an example of translational phenomena that show certain challenges in translating style. Overall, the chosen excerpts cover several issues relevant to cultural mediation, including the addition or omission of certain stylistic nuances and semantic adaptation or preservation. For my analysis, I will be referring to the first text (*Une si longue lettre*) as Bâ ST1. Its English version (*So Long A Letter*, by Modupe Bode-Thomas) will be referred to as Bâ TT1. The second source text (*L'Aventure ambiguë*) will be referred to as Kane

ST2, while I will refer to its English version (*Ambiguous Adventure*, by Katherine Woods) as Kane TT2.

Secondary data come from the sources that study, critique, and interpret the primary data and theories discussed in this research. The secondary data form the bedrock on which this thesis is founded; these sources contribute to the validity of the work. In this corpus-based descriptive research, I analyze the qualitative data collected from the chosen texts previously discussed.

The analysis is based on the Stylistic-Semantic Translation Model, whose steps account for stylistic analysis, semantic analysis, stylistic-semantic interface, and the mediator's impact. The model ensures that the stylistic feature is clearly identified in the original text; it shows how it is modified or retained in the translated version; then it defines the reception of the target text, and how much the mediator's presence or absence is felt in the product. In order to detect possible shifts between the original texts and their target versions, chosen excerpts are compared with their respective translations in the English language. From the data collected from the selected Francophone African novels, the translational phenomena of the authors' styles appear as culture-bound terms, repetition patterns, musical/rhythmic effects, gender-specific/gender-neutral languages, and punctuation.

After identifying these stylistic figures, I evaluate the possible linguistic/cultural issues that arise in the process of translating these stylistic elements. This is followed by identifying the strategies that the mediator employs to convey these Francophone African authorial styles into English. And, the translation strategies, as claimed by Enaka Tanyitiku, refer to the "operational norms" (4) that represent the various methods applied by the mediator in translating stylistic figures in a literary translation.

Part III: Presentation of Selected Authors and their Texts

For background's sake, I will provide a general overview of the two selected Francophone African authors and their respective selected texts, whose styles serve as a case study in the present research, relying on prior studies. An African novel is a work authored by an African, whether in the diaspora or present on the continent, and deals with questions and subject matters relating to the continent and/or the "living conditions and life of Africans" across/beyond the borders (Tanyitiku 4). Francophone African novelists take the liberty of what Damola Adeyefa calls the stylistic eccentricity in their novels to portray the indigenous image and the traditional riches of their land ("Translation" 67). The notion of eccentricity here cuts across the creative freedom exercised by the writer to reveal specific African cultural uniqueness. They connect their experience, history, and identity to their literary writing.

a) Mariama Bâ

Mariama Bâ is known as a prominent author with distinction. She is classified among "the first generation of female Senegalese" authors (Azado 422); and through the narrative style and the themes of her novels, she has earned a prestigious position for herself in literary discourse (Deokate and Cherekar 124).

One of the crucial experiences capable of shaping Mariama Bâ's inspiration in writing is the death of her mother while Mariama Bâ was still very young. Moving into the house of her grandparents, where she was eventually brought up, adds another experience to her existence (Hamidouche 60). Born in 1929, her early life was spent under the colonial administration in Senegal (Swoboda 143). Religion and the Koranic school were part of the growing forces in the community where Mariama Bâ grew up. And thus, she has more than enough to write about these themes. Her formal education in the 1930s was a result of her strong determination to step out of the existing norm of the society where only the masculine gender is encouraged for such education: neither the grandparents nor the Senegalese

community of that epoch believed in the significance of education to a girl (Amissine 16), since theologians' discourse in the country was disputing the right of the feminine gender to school (Hamidouche 60).

Mariama Bâ gave herself to personal development and excellence, as evident in her brilliant performance in school. This quest for excellence is woven into her authorial style. A set of experiences finds its way into Mariama Bâ's works: marriages and divorces. She had the experience of living with three consecutive husbands as a result of divorce. After all, her ambition was to ensure the education of her offspring, the sustenance of her career, and her writing. She birthed new dreams and was ready to champion a civilized movement for the improvement of the feminine life, especially in Africa, working in many feminist associations. It is equally worth mentioning that Mariama Bâ also experienced wealth. As a member of the rich elites, her grandfather, as well as other men of her large family, had, at a certain time, assumed renowned positions in Senegalese society (Hamidouche 60).

b) Une si longue lettre

Mariama Bâ's *Une si longue lettre* (an object of my analysis), remains one of the significant novels in the literary world. It received, according to Hudson (Weems), the "first African publishers" Noma Award (63). Mariama Bâ's interest lies in criticizing the life of African women in relation to colonialism, civilization, and religion (Deokate and Cherekar 124). Uzoamaka Azodo argues that her intended audience is everyone everywhere, and her works portray both men and women in general with no "discrimination to race and creed" (422).

The life of Mariama Bâ can be studied throughout the novel. Published before she died in 1981, Anna Swoboda argues that *Une si longue lettre* is a "semi-autobiographical and an epistolary novel," as conveyed in the title of the work. In the text, Aissatou Bâ is the addressee of the long letter being written by her friend Ramatoulaye Fall. Both characters were born under

colonial rule in Senegal, attended school together, and grew up after the country's independence. Their lives were shaped by both tradition and Western civilization (143). Therefore, the novelist's life is an integral part of the study of *Une si longue lettre* (Amissine 16). Both her childhood, education, adulthood, marriages, and social activities enormously inform her writing and stylistic eccentricity.

Une si longue lettre is widely accepted in many languages across the world. The account of Tobias Warner reveals that, shortly after its first publication in 1979, this popular text was already published "in more than half a dozen translations, including English" (1239). This number grew, and the novel is now "translated into over seventeen different languages and adapted into stage plays and television films in Wolof" (Ndiaye 178–180).

Though less (biographical) information is available on the translator, Felix Faniran (among others) acknowledges Modupe Bode-Thomas' excellent work of making this novel available for the English-speaking community (189). The original author, Mariama Bâ, and her English translator Modupe Bode-Thomas have some things in common, according to the account of Adeboye Gbadegesin and Oremeyi Shaibu, though both writers are from different African countries. Like Mariama Bâ, the translator is a teacher at The Polytechnic, Ibadan, Nigeria. Both women have a common sociocultural experience as Africans (289). Therefore, I recognize the translator's closeness to Mariama Bâ's life and culture.

The content includes psychic issues surrounding Ramatoulaye's marriage with Modou Fall, when the thirty-year-old home transitions into polygamy. Among the central themes of this Francophone African novel is "the life of women in the patriarchal society in Africa" (Deokate and Cherekar 125). Such a life is like Mariama Bâ's, as she wrote this roman "through the eye of her first-person narrator, Ramatoulaye, who writes a long letter to her childhood friend, Aissatou" (Amissine 55), who resides in America. The content of the letter is the novel itself, as the text opens with the salutation, "Aissatou" (Bâ, *Une si longue lettre* 7).

One of the protagonist's aims in writing the letter is to update her recipient on her experience. She is obligated by the Islamic tradition to stay in seclusion for a certain number of days as a result of Modou Fall's sudden death. Ramatoulaye also uses the letter as a means of relieving herself of the mental "burdens she has to cope" with in the new phase of her life, as she recalls not only the events of Modou Fall's death but also her experience and that of her friend, Aissatou (Amissine 55).

Aissatou is a perfect recipient of such a long letter because she has a similar life. The marriage of the protagonist with Modou Fall has a wonderful beginning, like Aissatou's marriage with Mawdo Ba. The respective in-laws of both friends subjugate them, and both homes were broken by polygamy. According to African societal norms, Ramatoulaye and Aissatou should still maintain their faithfulness and commitment to their respective husbands till death separates the couple, even if the wife is abandoned, neglected, or maltreated by the men (56).

Aissatou's decision that differs from her friend's is the immediate step she takes to divorce her husband, Mawdo Ba, when he marries a second wife, Nabou. After this divorce, Aissatou proceeds to obtain her degree in diplomacy, which eventually allows her to take a role in the Senegalese embassy in America. Ramatoulaye remains loyal and dutiful to Modou Fall, even after he marries Binetou as a second wife. Ramatoulaye probably believes that he would care for her children. But Modou Fall's death left Ramatoulaye as the only person to bring her children up.

Another difference between the friends is the respective social classes of their husbands: Aissatou belongs to a goldsmith father but married Mawdo Ba, the medical doctor, even at the expense of her mother-in-law's disapproval. Ramatoulaye, on the other hand, is more educated than Modou Fall. However, she agrees to marry him over her family's objection. Throughout

her *Une si longue lettre*, Mariama Bâ weaves the various themes strategically through her distinctive style as an African author.

c) **Cheikh Kane**

The second Francophone African novelist of interest in the present study is Hamadou Cheikh Kane. Just like Mariama Bâ's *Une si longue lettre*, studies reveal that *L'Aventure ambiguë* reflects some personal experiences of Cheikh Kane. Moreover, the author himself (Cheikh Kane) confirmed this to Janet Patricia Little in an interview. His childhood was influenced by his relatives. It was in 1928, in the Djallobé country, that Cheikh Kane was born to a "traditional Toucouleur family" whose patriarch (known as Alpha Ciré Diallo) hailed from Yirlabe province and came to settle in St. Louis (Senegal) in the nineteenth century (Ba-Curry 112). It was through this region that the Islamic religion invaded Africa in the eleventh century.

Therefore, Cheikh Kane grew up in a religious civilization, just like the character of Samba Diallo in the novel. At the age of ten, he got enrolled in a French school where he encountered French language. Before then, Peuhl was his only language. One of his childhood preoccupations was the recitation of the Koranic verses, and this made its way into his texts (Kane et al. 3). After his Koranic school, Cheikh Kane studied French in Dakar and then went for his law studies in France. After his studies, he rose to prominence in the Senegalese nation.

d) **L'aventure Ambiguë**

Cheikh Kane's *L'Aventure ambiguë* is another well-recognized Francophone African text. The author began to write it from the year 1952 until it was finally published in 1961 (Mohamed 600). Like Mariama Bâ's *Une si longue lettre*, Cheikh Kane's *L'Aventure ambiguë* is known as "one of the most widely read novels in African literature in French" (Correa 83) and won the award of "Le Grand Prix Littéraire d'Afrique noire d'expression française 1962" after its publication in 1961 with Julliard (Kane et al. 5).

Later, Katherine Woods translated *L'Aventure ambiguë* as *Ambiguous Adventure* (1963). Like Modupe Bode-Thomas of *So Long A Letter*, little is known of Katherine Woods' background vis-a-vis *Ambiguous Adventure*. However, I am holding the claim that the translator's acquaintance with the source author's ecologies is, doubtlessly, necessary to detect the right context and perspectives defining the source in units and as a whole.

Right from the beginning of the novel, Paris is on the other side, and the author's birthplace is in Senegal, in a village whose name is represented by "L." The author, through the main character, Samba Diallo, compares his mystic religious experience in his native country with that of science or civilization (Kane et al. 3–4). The people he grew up with, his Koranic studies, his formal education, his travels, and his civil service (among others) impact his writing and stylistic idiosyncrasies.

The novelist indirectly narrates the features of his personal life, including the internal and external factors that influence him and the time of his existence. The origin of the ambiguity in the text is the coincidence of the author's observation of facts and the philosophical interpretation he gives to these observed facts (Kane et al. 4). Prior research also holds a claim that ambiguity is evidently present in the way the novelist characterizes the African cultures from a postcolonial perspective.

Cheikh Kane's *L'Aventure ambiguë* describes the Cheikh Kane's escapades embedded in "the existential philosophy of the protagonist, Samba Diallo" (Chigbu et al. 118). From a religious point of view, scholars note that this text seems to be "the first major work of African fiction to construct an explicit defense of African Islamic life and faith against the European ideological and cultural menace." The language and the themes that make up this classical novel, as posited by Cherif Correa, attract readership from all African secondary schools and universities (83) for being one of the great fictions known all over the world (Mohamed 600).

This text has been added to the curriculum of the Senegalese system of education, thereby making it available to most Francophone students to encounter it, accordingly (Correa 83).

In a sociopolitical context, the novel was published shortly after Senegal's freedom from the French administration. The text represents more than a mere celebration of African independence: the post-independence issues faced by the African society are clearly documented in the narrative. Through this novel, Cheikh Kane invites the world to consider the advantages and the disadvantages of "independence in novel terms" (Correa 83). In addition, the text reveals the "growth stance of Diallobé" as a nation reacting to Western education and civilization (Chigbu et al. 118).

In the text, the protagonist, Samba Diallo, from the Diallobé folks in Senegal, receives a Koranic education under the supervision of Thierno. As a young child, the protagonist hardly understands many lessons he is taught from the sacred book, though he is devoted to memorizing and reciting the verses. The Diallobé people eventually decide to enroll him in the French school. This could be an attempt to learn the Western culture so that the Diallobé can adjust to the spreading civilization around the world of the time.

Unfortunately, delving into this Western culture and civilization through education does not achieve Diallobé's initial goal. Through his philosophy studies, Samba Diallo is gradually separated from his religion and his Diallobé culture. This presents the ambiguous adventure of Samba Diallo, leaving his identity in-between his roots and the West, and the struggle is how to reconcile both worlds.

Part IV: Analytical Framework

In this section, I will be analyzing the data collected from Mariama Bâ's *Une si longue lettre* and Cheikh Kane's *L'Aventure ambiguë* and their respective translations. I will give specific examples of elements of style and their translations within the chosen excerpts, followed by their analysis, from both novels. These styles are common to both source texts' authors. For this work, all instances of the novels cannot be examined, but specific excerpts are chosen in order to demonstrate and support my arguments in answering the research questions.

a) Authorial Style of Culture-Bound Terms

Many scholars like Helen Gibson, Yang Yu, and Xiao Hongying (among others) have contributed to the debate about introducing the culture-bound terms, examining how such terms seem challenging to translate. Helen Gibson's work pays attention to the strategies used by the translator to surmount these challenges (80). In the study of Yang Yu and Xiao Hongying, these specific words are referred to as "Culture-loaded words" and "lexical vacancies" because such words are made up of aesthetics and peculiarities that lack an equivalence in the intended culture and linguistic system. They reflect the sociocultural elements of a source community in such a unique way that they have no adequate representation in the sociocultural and linguistic context of the intended audience (413).

And, these lexical vacancies, or culturally loaded words, or, as Helen Gibson calls it, culture-specific language (21), occur throughout Francophone African novels, including in Mariama Bâ's *Une si longue lettre* and Cheikh Kane's *L'Aventure ambiguë*. One of the writers' objectives in using culture-bound terms, arguably, is to magnetize the reader's attention to the source culture and to fascinate the cultural weight and contexts of such terms in the reader's mind (Hamidouche 158–159). Another function of these terms is to express local, culturally bound realities, perhaps as much for an internal audience as for an external one.

Bâ ST1: Le « Zem-Zem », eau miraculeuse venue des Lieux Saints de l’Islam, pieusement conservée dans chaque famille, n’est pas oublié (Bâ, *Une si longue lettre* 10).

Bâ TT1: The *Zem-Zem*, the miracle water from the holy places of Islam religiously kept by each family, is not forgotten (Bâ, *So Long a Letter* 3).

In the excerpt above, the style of Mariama Bâ highlights the religious word « Zem-Zem » through the quotation mark, an example of a culturally significant term. This emphasizes the general notion that religion is part of a people’s culture. Mariama Bâ, employing « Zem-Zem, » shows how African religious practices are evident in Francophone African literature.

Semantically, the word is a proper noun in Arabic for a well near Mecca that is considered holy by Muslims. The water, in Bâ ST1, is a symbol of spiritual purity, blessing, and faith: those solidify the protagonist’s (and each family’s) spiritual and cultural identity while passing through evil circumstances. This suggests that one of the functions of religion in African culture is as a source of strength and hope, and thus, connecting Mariama Bâ’s audience not only emotionally but also spiritually. In the Bâ ST1, the term « Zem-Zem » is immediately followed by its description or definition, as shown in the excerpt, and the Bâ TT1 preserves the propositional meanings. The definition aims at affirming collective identities, to internal readers, by echoing shared cultural ideas. However, the use of the description or definition in this text can also point to an orientation towards external readers who might not be acquainted with the Islamic practices.

How to properly present the religious nuance tied to the (Francophone) African culture is one of the challenges of translating this excerpt, as this gives room for multiple interpretations of keywords such as « miraculeuse, pieusement, conservée, » which contextualize the significant nuances of « Zem-Zem » in the author’s universe. The « Zem-Zem », placed at the beginning of the sentence, followed by a piece of information about its

sense and essence, carries a specific feeling in relation to the Islamic observance in Mariama Bâ's community. This could be a sensitive context that should be represented in the target text. As part of Islam, the term « Zem-Zem » has a transnational and translingual presence that creates straightforward translational equivalents. It is a loanword in French, as it is in Wolof and in English.

Since the equivalent exists in English, the mediator stays faithful to the original, exposing the English-speaking audience to the cultural identity seen in the Bâ ST1. The translator as a mediator is therefore taking a step to link the target readership directly to the source text. However, a significant aspect to consider is perhaps whether Bâ's readers, in French or in English, are aware of the significance of the term, especially those who are foreign to Islam. While the Bâ TT1 above presents an instance where style is respected, it can be compared with the translation below, which presents a foreignization of the stylistic feature in the Bâ ST1.

Bâ ST1: « Je ne comprends pas. » Elles non plus ne comprenaient pas l'entrée de Modou, une « personnalité », dans cette famille de « ndol » ^(Pauvres), d'une extrême pauvreté (Bâ, *Une si longue lettre* 59).

Bâ TT1: 'I don't understand.' They did not understand either the entrance of Modou, a 'personality', into this extremely poor family (Bâ, *So Long a Letter* 40).

In the Bâ ST1 above, the word « ndol », equally placed in quotation marks, is consciously used by Mariama Bâ as a cultural referent peculiar to her societal background. This could be another attempt made by her to connect her French audience to her universe through the Bâ ST1. Conveying a sociocultural significance, the term semantically signals a deeper meaning than can be expressed as simply as "poor." And, beyond an economic description, the meaning of « ndol » involves an inherent reality of poverty, or what I can call an existential situation of life,

shaped by poverty. Such a situation could be identified sometimes with the lower social class, in terms of lack of power and access to resources, within the sociocultural context.

The cultural term « ndol » is not an English term; it is, therefore, difficult to translate literally or directly. Mariama Bâ, in the Bâ ST1, decides to leave this Wolof term in quotes and provides a footnote to briefly indicate its sense. First, the translator is faced with variable options: he or she can decide to domesticate this Wolof word and translate its footnote, or vice versa. He or she can foreignize the Wolof word and translate its footnote or vice versa. Also, he or she can foreignize or domesticate this term without a footnote. And, lastly, the translator chooses to translate just the footnote made by the original author. This is just as important as the nuances of the word. Part of the experience of the French text is an encounter with Wolof, and the question, again, is whether the French reader grasps all the sociocultural nuances of the term.

On the other hand, linguistic encounters of this kind, according to thinkers like Xiaofan Li, are at best superficial and at worst exoticizing (192). The translator, therefore, tries to present the target version as more readable by not emphasizing the appearance of « ndol » in the target version: the translator only presents the meaning of such a term to the English audience. The concept of « ndol » in the target text does not include any sociocultural nuances connected to the ecologies of the original author. This could be because translating the footnote alone tends to offer a more generalized description; the target audience might not have the possibility of knowing the weight and peculiarities of an original word (omitted by the translator). However, a casual reader of the English version, to some extent, can easily have a general understanding of the translation without any additional knowledge of the original author's sociocultural milieu. The only issue is how not to risk losing the authenticity of the translation.

Naziha Hamidouche have equally identified certain cultural identifiers in Mariama Bâ's *Une si longue lettre*. In her words, Naziha Hamidouche asserts that the terms are selected by Mariama Bâ to convey certain cultural nuances relating to specific cultural referents (158–159). And these culture-bound words are used in the novel to best represent the author's intent in the source text. They remain peculiar to Mariama Bâ's ecologies while, to some degree, lacking a direct equivalence in the target language. Similar terminologies are used in Cheikh Kane's *L'Aventure ambiguë*.

Kane ST2: —Dis-moi, Samba Diallo, qu'est-ce qu'un Diallobé?

Il avait parlé pour dire quelque chose. Le charme se rompit. Samba Diallo éclata de rire. —Ah, tiens, on t'a parlé de moi... Un Diallobé... Eh, bien, ma famille, les Diallobe, fait partie du peuple des Diallobé. Nous venons des bords d'un grand fleuve. Notre pays s'appelle aussi le Diallobé. Je suis le seul originaire de ce pays, dans la classe de M. N'Diaye. On en profite pour me plaisanter...

— Si tu es Diallobé, pourquoi n'es-tu pas resté dans le pays des Diallobé? (Kane, *L'Aventure ambiguë* 70).

Kane TT2: “Tell me, Samba Diallo,” he ventured, “what is a Diallobé?”

He had spoken for the sake of saying something. The enchantment was shattered. Samba Diallo burst out laughing.

“Ah, they have been talking to you about me. . . . A Diallobé. . . . Well, my family, the Diallobé, belong to the Diallobé people. We come from the banks of a great river. Our country is also called the Diallobé. I am the only one from this country in M. N'Diaye's class. They take advantage of that to joke about me.”

“If you are a Diallobé, why didn't you stay in the Diallobé country?” (Kane, *Ambiguous Adventure* 58–59).

Throughout the text, Cheikh Kane used the word “Diallobé” as a distinctive cultural identifier. The Kane ST2 not only shows language markers but also a sociocultural identity of the protagonist, conveying information on his family, ethnicity, nation, and geography. The country is called “Diallobé,” and the citizens from the “Diallobé” country are referred to as the “Diallobé.” Perhaps, the protagonist’s name can be considered a derivative of his country’s name: Samba “Diallo” from “Diallobé,” and whereas Diallobé is treated as invariable throughout the text.

Semantically, therefore, “Diallobé” can be said to be a place, a people, a community, and a lineage. Both excerpts reveal a social and ethnic pride, as they (Kane ST2 and Kane TT2) operate with an explanatory mode for an external reader who is foreign to the (West) African ethnolinguistic world. The protagonist is expected to explain himself to a foreigner, like the text explains Africa to the world. This seems to be as didactic as ironic to readers at the same time.

This act of explaining the self is perhaps an instance of a cultural translation in the context of this dialogue. As for internal readers, it is perhaps absurd to define an African identity within the colonial context because such an explanation seems redundant. The translator, however, presents the culturally specific term “Diallobé” consistently, keeping its ethnic and societal nuances. The ethnolinguistic pattern of “the Diallobé ..., the Diallobé people ..., the Diallobé country ...,” is maintained to share the socioculturally nuanced information through the narrative. That demonstrates the foreignization of the “Diallobé” as a style of the author contained in Kane ST2, as against the strategy used in the translation of the Kane ST2 below.

Kane ST2: —Très bien, cela me suffit! Et le visage de Lucienne s’éclaira. Je sais maintenant que ta négritude te tient cœur (Kane, *L’Aventure ambiguë* 155).

Kane TT2: “Very well, that’s enough for me,” and Lucienne’s face brightened. “I know

now that your heart is possessed by your being a Negro—your Negroness, if I may coin a word.” (Kane, *Ambiguous Adventure* 141).

In the Kane ST2 above, the speaker employs the culturally and historically complex French term “Négritude,” which came into existence through Francophone African and diaspora writers and scholars like Aimé Césaire, Léopold Senghor, and Léon-Gontran Damas, during the movement of Négritude (Lambert 248). Cheikh Kane, integrating the term “Négritude” consciously into his novel, is perhaps a deeper reverence for the definition of Samba Diallo’s origin and ethnic pride.

The “Négritude,” as used in the Kane ST2, is a culturally loaded expression that carries both literary and socio-political significance, and the excerpts perhaps reveal the protagonist Samba Diallo as one who has consciously embraced his condition of identity. That gestures towards the author’s involvement with societal and cultural movements that recognize the (Francophone) African identity and reclaim selfhood. Semantically, the history of the term here is especially important, since there are not just parallel, but connected movements of Black expression in English and in France before, and leading up to this period. Examples of such movements include the *Négritude* and the *Harlem Renaissance* (among others).

One of the challenges of translating the “Négritude” is the conciseness of its equivalence in a language like English because of the complex cultural historicity, politics, and significant confession of identity that are all embedded in the term. In addition, accurate (re)presentation of the “Négritude” in English without losing the agreeable affirmations of the (Francophone) African pride in context is another possible obstacle. The time of the publication of *L’Aventure ambiguë* is also crucial in this context (i.e., 1961), and “Négritude was born in the 1930s,” as stated in Emily Sheffield’s account (3). The word “Negro” in English is now seen as an artifact of that time. The English in the Kane TT2 is a fascinating translation because it eschews any attempt at making the Négritude movement known to the English reader, but

also gives up on any equivalent English movement! And, instead, it invents a point of origin of identity, with no history: “Negroness, to coin a word.”

Such a strategy of translating « Négritude » can have many effects on the target readership. “Negro–your Negroness” attempts to generate, to some extent, a free flow in the Kane TT2, instead of curiosity or acquaintance with the cultural referents inherent in the « Négritude. » The translator identifies the term and opts for creativity as a means of conveying its heavy weight in the context. While the target text reader might find the translation easy to read, the positive sociocultural and ethnolinguistic affirmations or connotations of the term might not be all present in the reader’s mind. Nevertheless, the translator’s attempt to create a newly coined term, “Negro,” prevents the English readers from feeling absolutely alienated from the original text. While many scholars might prefer to foreignize this term, the mediator’s style here appears more visible through her creativity in adapting the Kane ST2 above.

b) Repetition as an Authorial Style

In Francophone African novels, repetition patterns are one of the common styles displayed by the authors for various reasons. And translating these repetitions by breaking their patterns can create a significant effect on the target readership. In her *Translation and Style*, Jean Boase-Beier accentuates the notion of pattern as a “way of foregrounding” certain specific features of a text, and that altering an existing or potential pattern can lead to a “foregrounding effect” (151). This situation of foregrounding is applicable in the context of repetition. However, Mona Baker et al., in their “Corpus Linguistics and Translation Studies: Implications and Applications,” posit that repetition patterns are rarely observed in translation: they are either avoided or exaggerated. In their opinion, altering repetition patterns is one of the “universal features” of translation caused by “constraints which are inherent in the translation process itself” (246). They then argue that the change in repetition patterns stands as one of the differences between a source text and its translated version (234). In Francophone African

novels, the authorial style is enriched with the classical form of narration accompanied by repetitive nuances that are influenced by the oral tradition, religious background, and other possible factors present in the author's universe (Kane et al. 14). Below is an example of repetition, and the translation respects the original style.

Bâ ST1: Et je m'interroge. Et je m'interroge. Pourquoi ? Pourquoi Modou s'est-il détaché? Pourquoi a-t-il introduit Binetou entre nous ? ... Je m'interroge (Bâ, *Une si longue lettre* 83).

Bâ TT1: And I ask myself. I ask myself, why? Why did Modou detach himself? Why did he put Binetou between us? ... I ask myself questions (Bâ, *So Long a Letter* 59).

First, in the Bâ ST1 above, the repetition of « Et » emphasizes the weight of the speaker's curiosity or inquiry, or confusion. The « Et », semantically, indicates an effect cumulation of the speaker's obsession and emotion. This repetition pattern is modified in the Bâ TT1. One of the challenges in translating the repetitive style is the inability to (re)present it directly in the cultural narrative norms of the English language system, to suggest the meditative mood present in the Bâ ST1. Another challenge is how to retain the weight of the repetition if, by any means, it cannot be observed in the target language.

My second observation is on the repetition of « je m'interroge ». I find the English rhythmic, but differently; it's through the variations on "I ask myself." There is a kind of balance in the Bâ TT1, of the phrase "I ask myself" and an additional word: "W+P. P+W. And + I ask myself. I ask myself, why?" (Bâ, *So Long a Letter* 59). However, the translational challenge can be found in the French verb « s'interroger », which does not have an equivalent with the exact same semantic and syntactical qualities in English. « Je m'interroge » is perfectly acceptable as a complete sentence in French, as seen in the Bâ ST1, needing no arguments, whereas "I ask myself" almost always takes an additional argument in an English context.

The translator presents the author's introspection and persistence that question the unknown, uncertainty, and yet minimize the redundant elements of language in the Bâ TT1. This signals that the mediator understands the Bâ ST1 as the product of Mariama Bâ's style, influenced by her (Mariama Bâ's) ecologies, where repetition serves an emphasis on internal issues or conflict. For the excerpts below, the mediator's intervention is seen in the domestication of the repetitive style of Mariama Bâ in the Bâ ST1.

Bâ ST1: Un taxi hél  ! Vite ! Plus vite ! Ma gorge s  che. Dans ma poitrine une boule immobile. Vite! Plus vite! Enfin l'h  pital! L'odeur des suppurations et de l'  ther m  l  s. L'h  pital! Des visages crisp  s, une escorte larmoyante de gens connus ou inconnus, t  moins malgr   eux de l'atroce trag  die (B  , *Une si longue lettre* 8).

B   TT1: A taxi quickly hailed! Fast! Fast! Faster still! My throat is dry. There is a rigid lump in my chest. Fast: faster still. At last, the hospital: the mixed smell of suppurations and ether. The hospital–distorted faces, a train of tearful people, known and unknown, witnesses to this awful tragedy (B  , *So Long a Letter* 2).

In the B   ST1 above, Mariama B   uses « Vite! » repeatedly, expressing the urgent condition in which the speaker is situated. With a rising tempo, the consecutive use of « Vite! » is then preceded by the adjective « Plus » to express a moment of ascension in the speaker's tension and anxiety: from « Vite! » to « Plus vite! ». The semantic feature is tightly webbed with the style, as the protagonist's mind and other happenings at the hospital are expressed by this descriptive and imperative urgency conveyed by both the B   ST1 and B   TT1.

Through the rhythmic repetition pattern, Mariama B  's audience can perhaps perceive sensitivity and time. One of the possible challenges of translating these repetitive elements is how to neither under-translate nor over-translate the author's intent and tempo. The translator is also faced with the choice of an awkward or exaggerated translation. Another aspect to

consider is the fragmentation or the shortness of French sentences, which convey remarkable effects in the text, especially in the Bâ ST1.

The translator decides to clearly describe the situation of the speaker through the representation of the speaker's sense of urgency in the Bâ ST1. The author, through the Bâ ST1, reminds the readers about her sociocultural milieu, where orality impacts literature. One of the ways that the translator mirrors Mariama Bâ's orality in the Bâ ST1 is by introducing the adverb "quickly" into the Bâ TT1, thereby reinterpreting the panic and a sharp immediacy of the protagonist's soul and circumstances in the hospital. Another intervention is the redoubling of the sense of the adverb « vite » in Bâ TT1, where the translator presents the "Fast" five times in Bâ TT1 as against the four times appearance of « Vite » in Bâ ST1. Also, the translator amplifies the sense of urgency in Bâ TT1, as a means of drawing the English reader closer enough to the heartbeat of the protagonist in the situation described by the Bâ ST1. The translator achieves this through the introduction of the word "still" following the simple, literal translation of « Plus vite! »: "Faster!" Therefore, the authorial style is adapted in the Bâ TT1. The choice of adaptation here can make the target audience perceive the situation of the speaker as more intense than required, thereby accentuating the weight of the speaker's quest. Similarly, the translation of the Kane ST2 below presents a partial foreignization of Cheikh Kane's stylistic figures in the translation.

Kane ST2: —Je sais aussi qu'il faut le sauver. Il faut construire des demeures solides pour les hommes et il faut sauver Dieu à l'intérieur de ces demeures (Kane, *L'Aventure ambiguë* 21).

Kane TT2: "I know also that He must be saved. We must build solid dwellings for men, and within those dwellings we must save God (Kane, *Ambiguous Adventure* 11).

In the Kane ST2 above, Cheikh Kane uses « il faut » three times, indicating a possible connotation of necessary actions that are deeper than explicitly immediately understandable.

There is an effect of ethical imperative made by rhythmic insistence that anchors the solemnity and the significance of the ideas expressed in the Kane ST1. Semantically, within the Kane ST1, « il faut » seems to mirror an ethical mandate and a cultural commitment in the speaker's community: such commitment as spiritual and physical salvation.

The repetition of the imperative « il faut » combines both form and meaning to showcase reflection. Such repetitions are common in religious settings—like in Cheikh Kane's universe—and are used to accentuate truths and morals. One of the issues surrounding the translation of this stylistic anchor is the deeper connotations conveyed in the impersonal French verb « falloir », which repeatedly occurs in the Kane ST2. And the translator is expected to assign an agent to the equivalence of the « il faut » in the Kane TT1.

To adapt the Kane ST1 to English, the translator maintains the fluidity, to some extent, as the «il faut» is neutralized into a passive form, not attaching a particular agent to it. For the remaining elements of repetition, the translator attributes verbs to the English personal pronoun “we” in the Kane TT1. The target audience can, therefore, have an impression that the speaker is included in the actions being called for.

c) **Musical/Rhythmic style**

In a literary work, like in the Francophone texts by Mariama Bâ and Cheikh Kane, musical or rhythmic effects contribute to enhancing the audience's aesthetic experience. The authors employ these elements as a means of enhancing the overall narrative flow, mood, and emotional nuances conveyed in the texts through structural and phonetic features. Instances of musicality or rhythms play out throughout the chosen novels. The following is an example of Mariama Bâ's rhythmic style in the Bâ ST1. And the translation respects the original author's style in the rendering.

Bâ ST1: Sa conduite est conditionnée: une belle-sœur ne touche pas la tête d'une épouse qui a été avare, infidèle ou inhospitalière (Bâ, *Une si longue lettre* 11).

Bâ TT1: Her behaviour is conditioned: no sister-in-law will touch the head of any wife who has been stingy, unfaithful or inhospitable (Bâ, *So Long a Letter* 4).

In the excerpt above, Mariama Bâ carefully employs specific diction in the Bâ ST1, which creates a smooth flow, a harmony through the melody of the vowel sounds. The sequence of soft sounds found in the assonance is then complemented by the alliteration in words such as « conduite, conditionnée, touche, tête » in the Bâ ST1. Semantically, this rhythmic style carries the author's spirit, unveiling a sequence of melodic thoughts. The chant-like rhythms produced by the combination of these sounds remind the reader of Mariama Bâ's culture and society, known for its oral storytelling style.

The excerpts reveal a social principle present in the protagonist's culture: "no sister-in-law will touch the head of any wife who has been stingy, unfaithful or inhospitable" (Bâ, *So Long a Letter* 4). The musical pattern of the Bâ ST1 echoes the significance of this rule as a socially valued norm of the protagonist. One of the challenges is how to successfully convey the melodic transition between the words and their sounds, as well as the source author's musical mood in the Bâ ST1. Part of language diversity is the phonetic difference, especially between French and English. And (re)producing an equivalence of the poetic devices, like assonance and alliteration, encountered in a Francophone African novel into another language can be clearly challenging. The translator is hereby faced with the choice of translating thought for thought, words for thoughts, or seeking a strictly linguistic representation of the original author's rhythms.

There is a broad issue: while the translator focuses on preserving the content, the musicality of the Bâ ST1 is rarely transferred into the Bâ TT1 due to structural differences between the French and English phonological systems. However, there remains some alliteration and assonance in the Bâ TT1 (sister, stinky, touch; head, has, inhospitable). Adapting the Bâ ST1 this way does not repeat the original author's exact rhythmic quality and

cadence for the readership of the target Bâ TT1. The source text's reader might have a different auditory experience, while the target reader could have an auditory experience present in the original because such rhythms are still recreated using the target language's phonological systems. Such instances recur in the following excerpts, but the translator chooses the domestication strategy to render the rhythmic style.

Bâ ST1: Daba rageait, blessée dans son orgueil. Elle répétait tous les surnoms que Binetou avait donnés à son père : Vieil homme ! Ventru ! Le Vieux !... (Bâ, *Une si longue lettre* 60).

Bâ TT1: Daba was furious, her pride wounded. She repeated all the nicknames Binetou had given her father: old man, pot-belly, sugar-daddy! ... (Bâ, *So Long a Letter* 40).

Again, the Bâ ST1's short sentence or phrasal structure with exclamation marks reveals the intense cadence describing Daba's speech, which mirrors an oral storytelling, shaped by the author's universe. The rhythm in this context evokes a particular state of mind in Daba. Each exclamation mark enriches the lyrical, performative presentation that reveals Daba's emotion. In addition, the alliteration in « Vieil ... Ventru! » and « Vieux! » contributes to the dramatic flow. This refers, perhaps, to the African oral traditions of women's speech, in which social memories and personal emotions are conveyed in speech through lyrical, repetitive, and rhythmic nuances.

Semantically, the bruised ego of Daba and the social effect of oral insults on an honorable, elderly man are all reflected in the list of nicknames that the speaker repeated in the excerpts. Beyond a mere diction of the speaker, the nicknames are cultural, stylistic nuances, probably revealing a mode of conversation I can call a social verbal challenge. Again, the translator is faced with obstacles such as lyrical representation of Daba's speech in English, but tries to translate the dramatic, intense cadence evident in the speech, the punctuation, and the choice of words.

The translator's main goal, as evident in the Bâ TT1, is not to present a literal translation of the rhythmic and musical effects found in the Bâ ST1. The three exclamation marks present in the Bâ ST1 become just one in the Bâ TT1. Daba's emotional nuance, expressed in the repetition of those nicknames and very strong punctuation, is smoothly presented to the Bâ TT1 readership. Again, examples of domestication strategy continue in the translation of the Kane ST2 below, as the translator, while navigating the various challenges of fidelity and equivalence, prioritizes other effects of the Kane TT2 over the rhythmic style.

Kane ST2: Toujours en considérant l'enfant, il fit une courte prière, mentalement: « Seigneur, n'abandonne jamais l'homme qui s'éveille en cet enfant, que la plus petite mesure de ton empire ne le quitte pas, la plus petite partie du temps... » (Kane, *L'Aventure ambiguë* 16).

Kane TT2: Still looking closely at the child, he made, mentally, a short prayer: "Lord, never forsake the man that is awaking in this child. May the smallest measure of Thy sovereign authority not leave him, for the smallest instant of time ..." (Kane, *Ambiguous Adventure* 5).

Cheikh Kane's novel, too, is enriched with inherent rhythm and musicality. In the Kane ST2 above, the structure of the complex French sentence produces a melodic cadence. In addition, the sound devices, such as assonance and alliteration, played out throughout the Kane ST2, creating an emotional introspection of a suitable atmosphere of prayer uttered by Samba Diallo's master. That could be like an example of the experiences that can be found in the author's society, where religious performance and recitations are shaped by solemnity and orality.

Building faith and hope, the prayers in the excerpts seem like rising in ascending notes, carrying deep metaphysical concerns and pleas for safety, intimacy, and perpetuity. Semantically, the rhythm emphasizes the sacredness and relevance of the prayers, as structured

by the author to transmit values to the child. The translator's concern is perhaps with the right choice of words to convey the tone in the Kane TT2: whether to use archaic or informal diction to mirror the prayer mood of Samba Diallo's Master. Also, whether to choose to adapt the sound devices is another question.

While translating the prayer mood using religious terms, the mediator focuses less on the sound devices and the musicality of the Kane ST2. Though the religious terms here are archaic in everyday speech, they continue to be somewhat common in religious discourse, and even more so in the mid-twentieth century, as at when *Ambiguous Adventure* was published. Therefore, the target reader might understand the message of the Kane ST2 because older religious texts still contain an archaic register.

Kane ST2: Il ferma les yeux pour chasser la vision. Vivre dans l'ombre. Vivre humblement et paisiblement, au cœur obscur du monde, de sa substance et de sa sagesse... (Kane, *L'Aventure ambiguë* 82).

Kane TT2: The knight closed his eyes to banish the vision. To live in the shadow, to live humbly and peaceably at the obscure heart of the world, to live from his own substance and his own wisdom. . . . (Kane, *Ambiguous Adventure* 70).

Cheikh Kane's mood seems like a contemplation in the Kane ST2 above. The assonance and alliteration inform the rhythm of the Kane ST2. The lyrical flow, as well as the repetition of « Vivre » enhances the tone. This repetition seems to produce a refrain-like impression that dominates such a contemplative moment, initiating a measured tempo, inspiring the reader to meditate on the semantic features at the end of each sentence.

The semantic functions of the rhythms in these excerpts are metaphysical, examining the status of man at its lowest level, tranquility, darkness, and wisdom. The musicality blends the mood with the orality, all of which plays out in the character's inner being, and then allows the reader to see through the thoughts of the knight.

However, the translator is expected to resolve a syntactical ambiguity of the Kane ST2: this happens if we are to ask a question of what or whom the genitive clause « de sa substance et de sa sagesse » really refers to. Does this genitive clause refer to the world? its « cœur obscure »? Or to « il », the knight? Such instances also show that issues like preserving the Kane ST2's introspective rhythm, as well as the repetitive sound devices, the knight's emotional state, are worth considering. And the translator's innovative choice is perhaps seen in attributing this genitive clause to the knight, using the pronoun "his." This situates the knight right amid his own thoughts, and no external reference is made to anyone else in the vision. It is also a sensitive task to keep the reflective tone used in the Kane ST2. Another challenge is finding coherent sentences in English that ensure a smooth transition between ideas, as presented in the Kane ST2.

As seen in the Kane TT2, the translator maintains a repetitive structure of certain phrases of the Kane TT2 that reflects the sound devices contained in the Kane ST2. For example, "to live in the shadow, to live humbly and peaceably ..." (Kane, *Ambiguous Adventure* 70). This also tends to reflect the introspection of the knight's thoughts while closing his eyes. As the translator manipulates the sound devices in search of equivalence, a fluidity is created like that of the Kane ST2; however, with another set of sounds (i.e., those of the target language).

d) Use of Gender-Specific Language

The novelists introduce gender-sensitive terms in their works (un)consciously due to the general claim that language, culture, and religion cannot be separated. The action of using gender-specific terms in the Francophone African novel is tied to the authors' ecologies. The translator is hereby expected to be aware of the power and ideological relationships existing in the context of the source text (Marino A223) while negotiating meaning. I will apply this perspective to analyze certain excerpts from the selected Francophone African novels.

Bâ ST1: La belle Mosquée « Médinatou-Minaouara » n'était pas encore édifiée à la gloire de l'Islam ; mais, dans le même élan pieux, hommes et femmes priaient en bordure de la route. « Pour se convaincre de la survie des traditions, il faut sortir de Dakar », murmurait Tante Nabou (Bâ, *Une si longue lettre* 44).

Bâ TT2: The beautiful Medinatou-Minaouara mosque had not yet been built to the glory of Islam, but in the same pious spirit, men and women prayed by the side of the road. 'You have to come away from Dakar to be convinced of the survival of traditions,' murmured Aunty Nabou (Bâ, *So Long a Letter* 28).

The above Bâ ST1 now represents an instance of the text where Mariama Bâ's style reflects a socially pertinent, gendered social structure. In the Bâ ST1, « hommes » and « femmes » are explicitly spelled out, which does not connote any gender bias. In foreignizing these stylistic features of the Bâ ST1, the translator finds the equivalence of these terms in English without opting for alternatives like "man" or "humanity," signaling an instance of foreignization; this can be compared with the following Bâ TT1 below, where the author's style is domesticated:

Bâ ST1: Que de générations a vu défiler ce même paysage figé ! Tante Nabou constatait la vulnérabilité des êtres face à l'éternité de la nature. Par sa durée, la nature défie le temps et prend sa revanche sur l'homme (Bâ, *Une si longue lettre* 43).

Bâ TT1: How many generations has this same unchanging countryside seen glide past! Aunty Nabou acknowledged man's vulnerability in the face of the eternity of nature. By its very duration, nature defies time and takes its revenge on man (Bâ, *So Long a Letter* 27).

In the Bâ ST1 above, the word « générations » used by Mariama Bâ is a gender-neutral or gender-inclusive term that does not specify a masculine or feminine concept. The word « Tante » is gender-specific, referring to a woman, translated into English as "Aunty" in the Bâ TT1. Semantically, « l'homme » is arguably a social and cultural masculine concept that is the

universal, default male, but can mean the generality of human beings, or humanity, or the male gender. The phrase « les êtres » is a gender-neutral term used in the Bâ ST1. It does not prioritize one gender over the other. This perhaps reveals the social realities of Mariama Bâ's universe.

The English audience of the modern era, where gender neutrality is emphasized, might perceive little or no gender inclusivity in the Bâ TT1. As the meaning of words changes over time, the issue is how to translate the sense of the gender-specific terms into English in such a way that they would remain coherent and semantically valid through different epochs. However, more immediately, the translators are looking to ensure the success of their texts in the present, as well as satisfy the publisher's requirements at the time of the publication. Such questions might influence the translator's choice of words in adapting the Bâ ST1 into English, as both the « êtres » (human being) and « l'homme » (humankind) become "man" in the Bâ TT1. Instances of foreignizing strategy are often used in the translation of the following excerpts from Cheikh Kane's *Ambiguous Adventure*, as shown in the Kane TT2.

Kane ST2: Le maître croyait profondément que l'adoration de Dieu n'était compatible avec aucune exaltation de l'homme. Or, au fond de toute noblesse, il est un fond de paganisme. La noblesse est l'exaltation de l'homme, la foi est avant tout humilité, sinon humiliation (Kane, *L'Aventure ambiguë* 33).

Kane TT2: The teacher believed profoundly that the adoration of God was not compatible with any exaltation of man. But, at the bottom of all nobility there is a basis of paganism. Nobility is the exaltation of man, faith is before all else humility, if not humiliation (Kane, *Ambiguous Adventure* 23).

In the Kane TT2 above, Cheikh Kane employs the term « homme » repeatedly. Semantically, both terms can point to two contexts: they can indicate gender neutrality, and they can also be

perceived to be gender specific. The translator can also view the application of these words in a philosophical context, which aligns with the universal default male gender.

However, as a literary work, the translator must decide whether to translate the philosophical nuance at the expense of a modern gender-neutral context. The translator's choice, as seen in the Kane TT2, is the adaptation of the philosophical context. The target text's reader who is familiar with such context might not consider the gender-specific nuances conveyed in the text.

Kane ST2: —Monsieur le directeur d'école, disait le maître, quelle bonne nouvelle enseignez-vous donc aux fils des hommes pour qu'ils désertent nos foyers ardents au profit de vos écoles? (Kane, *L'Aventure ambiguë* 19).

Kane TT2: "Monsieur School Principal," the teacher was saying, "what new good are you teaching men's sons, to make them desert our glowing hearths for the benefit of your schools?" (Kane, *Ambiguous Adventure* 19).

Cheikh Kane's use of « Monsieur ..., fils ..., hommes ... » and the pronoun « ils » is a deliberate decision in the novel (i.e., a stylistic element), with no intention toward gender bias. Semantically, the terms carry masculine concepts but accentuate the traditional norm of the default male in Cheikh Kane's culture, like the example of Mariama Bâ's excerpts above: a language usage that reflects a reality of the author's universe. However, the Kane ST2 suggests that either only boys were being educated or that only the education of boys, leading to reduced farm labor, was problematic. That could be tied to the history related to children's education in Cheikh Kane's society of that time, and the question remains: how much attention should be paid to the modern context at the expense of historical accuracy, since the translation is not done for only a single epoch?

The translator, however, decides to foreignize the male concept contained in the Kane ST2: « Monsieur » remains untranslated as a way of revealing the sociocultural nuances in

Cheikh Kane's style. The term « fils » becomes “sons” in the Kane TT2. To some extent, the translator's use of the phrase “men's sons” appears sharp in the contemporary context, indicating that children, especially male children, belong to the men and not the women. This intervention of the translator in Kane TT2 signals the use of the default male in Cheikh Kane's culture. And the target, English-speaking readership, will equally experience such feelings as are present in the Kane ST2.

e) **Punctuation as an Authorial Style**

The question of punctuation in writing is one of the sensitive discourses in a translation context. It is controlled by the linguistic rules available in each language. But in addition to these rules, an editor's preferred style or a publisher's guide can influence the punctuation style of a writer or a translator. One of the challenges is whether, after the publication, the punctuation remains as part of the writer's style.

However, I fundamentally contextualize the question of punctuation style—for the sake of the analysis—as displayed in the two selected texts and their translations, with no special reference to the unpublished manuscripts. I acknowledge that the chosen texts and their translations might and must have been influenced by the publisher and/or the editor before their respective publications. In all, for the sake of analysis, I presume the punctuation styles in both texts and their translated versions to belong to the respective writers, and the analyses are tailored towards this presumption.

Every language, like French and English, is known for using punctuation to create effects. Authors employ punctuation to convey a mood, a sequence of interaction, or to define a context (Tanyitiku 3). In this section, I will analyze the selected excerpts from the perspective of punctuation as a tool of aesthetics and communicative peculiarities.

Bâ ST1: Amie, amie, amie! Je t'appelle trois fois. (Bâ, *Une si longue lettre* 8).

Bâ TT1: My friend, my friend, my friend. I call on you three times. (Bâ, *So Long a Letter* 2).

Mariama Bâ, in the Bâ ST1, uses commas after the first two occurrences of « Amie » to exhibit a rhythmic pattern of pause that accentuates the repetitions. And the translator adapts this effect created by the commas. The third repetition of « Amie! » is closed by an exclamation mark conveying possible emotional intensity in the character's voice.

Semantically, the weight of words or the emotional intensity that is interpretable is embedded in the punctuation. First, the translator must interpret the motive and the motion of the cadence hidden in the call or the repetition of each « Amie » in the Bâ TT1. The Bâ ST1 is made up of simple words and simple sentences. Also, something else worth considering is how to translate the author's spirit without exaggerating.

The translator chooses to create a similar feel for the target reader through the punctuation, and the exclamation mark in the Bâ ST1 becomes a period in the Bâ TT1. Through the domestication of this authorial style, the reader of the target text can figure out any heaviness of mind, or appeal, or other emotional sentiments that are present in the Bâ ST1: the dramatic tone of the Bâ ST1 conveyed by the exclamation mark—which makes an emotional impact on the readership of the Bâ ST1—is perhaps conveyed with this stop or heaviness of the period that came after the third call: “my friend.”

Bâ ST1: Elles oublièrent la source de cette aisance : debout la première, couchée la dernière. Toujours en train de travailler... (Bâ, *Une si longue lettre* 34).

Bâ TT1: They forgot the source of this easy life; first up in the morning, last to go to bed, always working. (Bâ, *So Long a Letter* 21).

In the Bâ ST1, Mariama Bâ uses a colon after the word « aisance » as a means of introducing further information that gives insights into what impact the « easy life. » The ellipsis at the end

of the Bâ ST1 helps the reader by providing more context. Semantically, it emphasizes that the work of labor of the women probably has no end, that it is an ongoing, continual process.

One of the main questions is whether the colon in the Bâ ST1 plays a more nuanced role than usual in the context of the Bâ ST1 above. And the translator chooses to adapt the Bâ ST1 to English using a semicolon. Another issue is how to convey the relentlessness of women as exactly presented in the Bâ ST1: Both « toujours » and « en train » are already used in the Bâ ST1. But these were not sufficient for the source author in expressing her experience, as the speaker narrates the sociocultural realities of women's lives in their society. Therefore, introducing an ellipsis in the Bâ ST1 draws our attention to how women engaged in working regularly, daily, almost forever.

The mediator renders the ST1 in accordance with the punctuation norms of English by using a period—a domestication. Though related thoughts are linked together by the semicolon, there is a tendency for the English-speaking audience to overlook the emotional depth and sentiment tied to the ST1's ellipsis, since the translation does not include the ellipsis. Similarly, in the translation of Cheikh Kane's *L'Aventure ambiguë*, such examples of punctuation creating stylistic effects appear challenging.

Kane ST2: — Grand maître, le chef souhaiterait que vous lui fassiez l'honneur d'une visite, si vos hautes préoccupations vous en laissent le loisir. (Kane, *L'Aventure ambiguë* 41).

Kane TT2: “Great master, the chief hopes that you will do him the honor of a visit, if your high preoccupations leave you the leisure . . .” (Kane, *Ambiguous Adventure* 30).

The Kane TT2 above is an instance where the translator introduces an ellipsis at the end of the translation. The ellipsis is absent in the authorial style of the Kane ST2. Generally, it can be argued that such a decision is influenced by the fact that the translator is used to the habit of Cheikh Kane using this punctuation often since the beginning of the novel. The translator

attempts to predict or reinterpret the original author's voice and thus adapts the Kane ST2 with the introduction of an ellipsis, knowing that this action has no negative effect on the Kane TT2 audience, which can be considered a foreignization of the punctuation because the ellipsis in the Kane TT2 replaces the period in the Kane ST2, creating a possible or potential open-ended break that is implicitly displayed in the character's speech. The Kane TT2 above can be compared with the Kane TT2 below.

Kane ST2: « La Parole doit continuer de retentir en lui, se dit-il. Il est de ceux qui ne cessent pas de prier, pour avoir refermé leur livre de prières. Dieu lui est présence constante... et indispensable. C'est cette présence, je crois, qui lui colle ainsi la peau sur les os du front, lui enfonce dans les orbites profondément excavées ce regard lumineux et calme. ... » (Kane, *L'Aventure ambiguë* 106).

Kane TT2: "The Word must continue to echo within him," the boy said to himself. "He is one of those who do not cease to pray when they have closed their prayer book. To him, God is a constant Presence—constant and indispensable. It is this Presence, I believe, which stretches the skin tight across the bones of his forehead, and sets that luminous and profound expression within the deep—cut orbits of his eyes. ..." (Kane, *Ambiguous Adventure* 94).

Here, Cheikh Kane introduces an ellipsis immediately after « constante » in the Kane ST2. Semantically, this ellipsis represents the weight of the adjective « constante » as used in the Kane ST2, giving it a literal duration across the space of the page. The ellipsis also emphasizes the length of such duration, and the length of how long the divine presence abides with the boy.

The translator's creativity involves the replacement of the ellipsis by a hyphen to connect the speaker's thoughts. Then, in order to accentuate the introspection or the frequent, unceasing nature of the presence of God as conveyed in the Kane ST2, the translator redoubles the adjective "constant" and places it right after the hyphen. This adaptation tends to respect

the original author's punctuation style, though in a visibly creative way. While the repetition of the adjective "constant" in the TT2 can be arguably critiqued as over-translation since the ST2 has no such repetition, it can draw the attention of the English-speaking audience to the weight placed on this adjective by the source text author.

CONCLUSION

The main aims of the current research are to identify the stylistic figures in Mariama Bâ's *Une si longue lettre* and Cheikh Kane's *L'Aventure ambiguë*, compare them with their respective English translations, identify possible challenges arising from the translations as well as the translational strategies used by the translator, and the implications of the target versions for their readers. The study is grounded on the stylistic debate in translation, according to existing research, which implies that literary translation should account for both themes and the artistic tendencies embedded in the text, as well as the translational techniques suitable for a good representation of authorial voice (Tanyitiku 4).

A new approach (i.e., the Stylistic-Semantic Translation Model) is formulated in this thesis to ensure a more detailed analysis that includes the intervention of the cultural mediator. Hereby, the thesis argues for the mediator as a visible, dynamic agent involved in the creative process, as against striving for the traditional view of the translator's invisibility. By this model, specific stylistic figures were identified and analyzed. The observed shifts (e.g., omission, retention, or alteration) of the stylistic features (e.g., culturally specific terms, repetition, gender-specific languages, etc.) follow the four phases proposed by the model in this study: stylistic analysis, semantic analysis, stylistic-semantic interaction, and mediator's impact. The analyses of the excerpts chosen from Mariama Bâ's *Une si longue lettre* and Cheikh Kane's *L'Aventure ambiguë* show the significance of this new model in literary translation analysis.

One of the instances from the analysis is the translation of the cultural term « Négritude, » rendered as "Negro–your Negroness," demonstrating an interplay between style and semantics, and both function as strategic choices in the texts. This can only be seen through the lens of this bi-layered Stylistic-Semantic Translation Model. In addition, the model complements existing theories of translation analysis and has the potential to draw more scholarly attention to stylistic analysis within translation.

The study showed in greater detail that the stylistic choices of an author are an expression of such an author's culture, and the translation is shaped by the target-language norms while the mediator navigates the question of acceptability and faithfulness; the translator is the cultural agent responsible for the task of creating a balance between both texts. Through the findings, I demonstrated how there are certain shifts in the translation of the Francophone African novelist's style. This implies that the authorial style is possible, but difficult to translate and thus requires more attention. Such issues include how to translate culture-bound words, repetition patterns, rhythmic/musical effects, gender-specific languages, and punctuation.

The English translators of the selected Francophone African novels employ translation approaches such as domestication and foreignization as a means of mediating between the Francophone African culture (that shapes the writer's style) and the target (i.e., English) culture. To some extent, the target texts have effects so close to those of the original texts. However, translating specific stylistic effects seems challenging to the mediators, which sometimes demands more of the mediator's creativity in the target texts.

The translational challenges, as analyzed above, are inevitable, given that translation is a written text based on an already written one. The literature reviewed in the study justifies that styles in a (source) text are the "aspect of the text that carries the attitude, the worldview, the voices," and the state of mind of the writer (Boase-Beier, *Translation and Style* 169). Therefore, the complex, aesthetic variabilities of the original could complicate the comprehension and interpretations of such a text by the cultural mediator. The versatility of the text involves the cognitive matrix, the linguistic characteristics, semantics, and phraseology (Dovletkireeva and Magomadova 7).

The translator is a text creator in addition to being a reader, as claimed by Chantal Wright, when she emphasizes the concept of translation as a creative work emerging out of a previous one. And the success of his or her newly created text is contingent on his or her

creative skills as a writer of the new text and as a reader of the source text (163). From this perspective, I problematized, in this thesis, the interface of creativity in search of equivalence and faithfulness. I considered the translator's role as a cultural mediator (Hatim and Mason 223) situated "at the center of the communicative process," where style is regarded as the core of the "interpretative process" (Pillière 243–244). As the mediator, the translator's task, as posited by Chantal Wright, is "as endless as that of the reader" (163). This means that the tasks of the mediator are dynamic and an ongoing process of interpretations, like reading itself. Therefore, as often as the mediator can revisit their new text, there is something to add to or remove from the text-translation.

The mediator is found between the source and the target cultures: the translation passes through his or her manipulation, intervention, or editing. He or she serves as the mirror through which the original author's motive, message, and style are perceived by the target community. Remove the translator, therefore, and there is no translation. This is what Linda Pillière refers to as the "discursive presence" of the mediator (245). The mediator's presence in contact with the authorial voice in the translation process gives rise to challenges of equivalence and faithfulness, seeing that the mediator is not even translating for himself or herself alone but bears a specific target audience in mind.

The (Francophone) African novel, like other literary texts, is culturally loaded with style, thereby requiring acquaintance with the ecologies of the original to minimize the challenges of translating the authorial style. Culture is at the heart of literary translation, especially in Francophone African texts, where "cultural referents" (Tanyitiku 12) seem crucial in the context of other cultures. This is evident, as sociocultural realities are expressed throughout the selected novels. In his "Translation, Stylistics and Imperativeness of Transliteration in African Literary Translation," Damola Adeyefa notes that the fundamental

aim of the cultural mediator is to extend the literary text with its literariness “to a larger audience...” (65).

The mediator, in recontextualizing the literary work, is expected to present the original as a unified whole through a consideration of interrelated, contextual, sociocultural, and artistic components of the source text. Therefore, the mediator should “demonstrate cultural sensitivity,” identifying and considering cultural diversity (Cherouana 83) to produce a “holistic, coherent cultural framework” in the text-translation (Wehrmeyer 114).

There is a possibility of apprehending the meaningfulness and intentionality of an authorial style, and there is a possibility of communicating the latter to an audience that may be culturally, linguistically, and historically distant from the author. The creation of the holistic, coherent cultural framework is dependent on the mediator’s comprehension and representation of the original author’s message in semantic, sociocultural, and stylistic contexts (Minhui 268). The mediator must recognize transferability or translatability and consider its restraints and how to overcome these constraints through appropriate techniques (Tanyitiku 2). It can be agreed upon that the omissions that occur in a translation are a product of the various forms of interpretation and the linguistic asymmetry between the original and the target texts (Hermans, *Translation* 139). The mediator is responsible for the translation’s effects on the readers, and his or her ecologies can inform his style during the process of continual interpreting and rewriting of the source text.

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VITA

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