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Jovana Karanikij Josimovska

Inclusion and Exclusion by Means of Language in Italian Migrant Literature

The general aim of this work is to emphasize on the literary phenomenon of Italian migrant literature, through a study on the discursive techniques and procedures of inclusion and exclusion of persons or groups, applied in the texts belonging to the mentioned literary subgenre. The term *Italian migrant literature*, is used to indicate a literature «*prodotta da autori che scrivono in una lingua (nazionale) diversa da quella della fonte della propria provenienza, nella quale possono o no aver già scritto precedenti testi e/o continuare a scrivere, praticando o meno anche l'autotraduzione, in tutte e due le direzioni*[1]» (Gnisci, 2003, p. 8). The objective of this work is to share some results of a wider research on Italian migrant literature, by proposing a methodological approach, which is different from a purely literary approach. At this point it is important to note that the examined texts belong to a particular literary category, both from thematic and linguistic points of view. The development of migrant literature in Italy has passed through different stages so far: first it was offered in the big bookshops as something new and kind of «exotic». Subsequently, diminished interest had been noted in publication houses and therefore, more limited production was left in the hands of the associations and small publishing houses concerned with the subject-matter.

The third period is indicated as that of «normality», marked by award-winning authors, a reacquired interest of the public and «hybridization», as a distinguishing feature. More recent studies identify an ultimate phase, which goes along with the increased awareness of the phenomenon of migration in Italy, in all the aspects of society (Mazza, Pittau, 2013). Literary critics and scholars have been following the development from different points of view: thematic, linguistic, editorial etc. Since this literary genre has been subject of previous studies by the author of the present article, on this occasion it would be only briefly mentioned that the general tendency of authors in terms of subject matter is to narrate their own experiences, encounters and collisions with a new and different environment, sometimes even using a clearly allusive fiction. Besides its specific features from the thematic point of view, there are elements in the texts that can be observed from a sociolinguistic perspective. Even Fulvio Pezzarossa, a distinguished scholar in this field, admits that «*la circoscritta cerchia di ricercatori che sino a poco addietro hanno voluto misurarsi con l'argomento hanno dovuto in prevalenza attingere a risorse alternative a quelle di stretta estrazione letteraria*[2]» (Pezzarossa, 2011, p. XVIII). Sociolinguistics, as one of the sciences of language that is concerned with the relationship between language, society and culture, has the duty to «*comprendere il rapporto tra lingua e società e cultura*[3]» (Klein, 2006, p. 25), offers different methods and tools for research and analysis.

The scholars have already noticed the wide-ranging use of language, by the authors of migrant literature. Reflecting on the representation of the «foreigner» in the collective consciousness of people, in contemporary Italian literature, including literature by migrant writers as well, Mauceri and Negro (2009) pay attention to the role of the language, in those representations, such as: auto-diegetic or hetero-diegetic narration, the considerable choice of interlanguage spoken by the foreigner characters, the unexpectedly proficient use of dialect as well as the use and abuse of the language, especially the polite form, in order to indicate position of power. Further interest of Mauceri and Negro in this perspective, is the use of language considering its performative function. Therefore, in their analysis the use of Italian language as the new «figurative place of residence» by the foreigner characters has various functions, such as:

an act of rebellion towards the proper family by a teenager migrant, an act of defense in troubled situations, an instrument that serves to hide the real origin etc. The research presented here has been conducted following the same viewpoint, i.e. taking into consideration how the use of language concretely affects the identity of the authors, and in particular, builds their social relationships in terms of in-groups and out-groups.

The research on which this work takes its cue, examines the various linguistic techniques and strategies used by the authors for the construction of membership groups and for the expression of social identity. Three autobiographies of migrant writers have been examinated: *Il mio viaggio della speranza dal Senegal all'Italia in cerca di fortuna* (2006) by Bay Mademba, *Il mio nome è regina* (2010) di Marie Reine Toe e *In fuga dalle tenebre* (2007) by Jean-Paul Pougala.

Conversational techniques and procedures

Gabriella B. Klein, in *Nozioni e strumenti di sociolinguistica* (2006) emphasizes that the procedures and their respective conversational techniques are the means to common accomplishment, in interpersonal, dynamic social action. Klein points out that, thanks to the conversational strategies, speakers manage to indicate their consent, or identification or solidarity with an event, a person, a social group etc. Then, resorting to studies in the ethnography of communication, represented by Gumperz and the interpretive sociolinguistics, in particular Peter Auer's studies, Klein reports four types of techniques, used as analytical categories in the present research: code-switching, quoted speech, formulaic speech and negotiation of meaning.

Code-switching: terms from other languages and Italian language used irregularly

The term «code-switching» refers to the change in the use of a language or language variety, within a discourse. As a particular linguistic phenomenon, it has been object of interest both to psycholinguists and sociolinguists. It has been often linked to bilingual and multilingual communities, even though it can refer to shift from one language variety or register within utterances in one language. Normally, said Klein (2002), this technique is employed when there is a change of situation, or topic, but also when the subject wants to convey a meaning implicitly[4]. Holmes (2013) finds that besides on general factors in language choice such as participant, setting and topic, code-switching is also closely related to the identity and the relationship between the participants in the interaction and can be an expression of solidarity, as well as marker of ethnic identity or it can be motivated by affective reasons. It isn't a phenomenon reserved only for speech, and it is also seen in the written form of the language. The reasons that make poets and authors shift from one language/variety/register were questioned by Sebba (2012), who concludes that, language mixing in written texts, is involved in the construction of identity in different ways. Furthermore, Mahootian (2012) finds the code-switching in contexts of dominance of one language as an act of defiance or as a call for globalization, as well as a shift of social status and as a tool in order to redress the power imbalance between languages. Valeria Villa (2012) in a paper dedicated to plurilingualism in the Italian migrant literature, writes about code-switching in relation to the diatopic varieties present in the dialogues between the characters in some of the most famous novels of the Italian migrant literature. In this case, code-switching refers to the shift from standard Italian to regional Italian or different dialects. Villa has noted the utilization of this technique, especially in situations where a person is required to quote his own words or those of the interlocutor. Villa, in this regard, observes that authors use this technique for various communicative purposes, such as, to put on stage orality, to distinguish the characters regionally, with an ironic function, or to portray a character from generational perspective. Another type of code-switching, individuated by Villa, is achieved by going beyond the Italian sociolinguistic space and inserting words, sentences and entire quotations belonging to the native languages of the writers, within the narrations. Villa describes this phenomenon as a case of «neo-plurilingualism» and the author of the present paper had already used this case as an example in terms of intercultural communication function of these texts, in two papers dedicated to Italian migrant literature (Karanikikj, 2012). Sometimes, authors perform code-switching through the use of single terms from their native language or respective proper names within sentences written in Italian, with the aim to obtain the simple effect of estrangement (distancing effect) and in this way to reproduce in certain manner the sensation that same foreigners have towards Italian language. As Vanvolsem says regarding the first novels belonging to the migrant literature, but our examples confirm it is true also for the works from its advanced stage, they represent «*festa di lingue*», i.e. «festival of languages», as the languages are also topics, they are nominated, and they are switched within the texts themselves (Vanvolsem, 2011, p. 13). In other cases, however, entire sentences are reported, which in turn recall proverbs or expressions related to something typical of the author's native culture and traditions. In many cases, the author, through a technique known as «explicitation» within translation studies, clarifies the meaning of the estranging element in the course of the narration itself. In this way the literature becomes a kind of *cultural mediator*. Groppaldi (2012, p. 42-55) referring to the use of language and its relation to the identity, in the novels of the Algerian-born writer Amara Lakhous and the importance of the variety of languages and dialects of his characters, recalls other interpretations of this phenomenon, such as: *eteroglossia* or *bi-glossia letteraria*. Nonetheless, the author believes that in the case of Lakhous, it could not be defined as simple play with code-switching, or even mixing.

Besides, this specific linguistic code could be better described as *transliguistic,* according to Groppaldi, who finds in the Italian of the migrant literature new and original meanings of the Italian terms resulted from the cultural encounter. It could be easily presumed that the authors of the works examined for the purpose of this paper use that type of code. Even so, here we must point out the need for making a distinction between the texts examined by Villa and Groppaldi and those examined here.

In particular, the works examined here belong to the particular genre of autobiography. In fact, autobiographism has been accompanaying the migrant writings since the first publications in a greater or smaller manner. In order to make a clear distinction which works to include, we refered to the notion of *autobiography* offered by Lejeune (1975), where the criteria of autobiography is set by the coincidence of the author-narrator and the protagonist marked by the proper name. It doesn't exclude the strong reference to the personal story of the author, that other novels not following this criteria might have. Instead, it means that the situations described and the attitude of the writer-narrator-protagonist are much more truthful and there are further communicative purposes to be achieved. Another important selection criteria regards the issue of co-authorship which marked the publications of the migrant writers in the first period, since both the narrator's name and the language editor's, a native speaker usually journalist or writer himself, appears on the cover, practice often described as *scrittura a quattro mani*[5]. In order to have greater insight into the authors' expression in Italian language, the specific cases of co-authorship were excluded during the selection.

In the examined texts we often find words and phrases that serve as estranging element, often marked in italics. So, in Bay Mademba's work (2006) we can distinguish two types of such elements, in the first case it comes to words taken from other languages which the author has been in contact with, usually languages spoken in the countries where he stayed during his journey to Italy, such as:

> *Lui è entrato e ha chiesto* ***passaport, passaport****. E noi a dire* ***passaport jok, passaport jok****, che significa niente passaporti! "****Luffén abé, luffén abé****" cioè: "per favore fai il bravo, per favore, fai il bravo", gli abbiamo detto*[6] (Mademba, 2006, p. 13).

> *Ecco l'ABC del venditore senegalese in Grecia. In primis i numeri:* ***uno*** *(uno),* ***dio*** *(due),* ***tria*** *(tre),* ***tessera*** *(quattro)*[7] (*Ibid.*, p. 25).

Although the main communicative purpose in this case is the one indicated above, i.e. to reproduce the occurred events with greater plausibility, and to make the Italian reader aware of the different realities in Italy and abroad, it has been seen that the reported speech of other language also serves as a means of inclusion within a group. His knowledge of more languages allows him to position himself within a group and to tackle difficult situations:

> *I clienti mi avrebbero capito anche se avessi detto in francese: "****regarde ce livre, si t'interesse, tu peux le prendre****"*[8] (*Ibid.*, p. 29).

> *facevo da guida sia perché ero il più alto di tutti, sia perché conoscevo abbastanza bene la lingua del posto per seguire le indicazioni che ci impartiva il nostro accompagnatore turco. "****Tavarusc,*** *silenzio", ci diceva; "tavan tus,* ***camminate piano****", oppure "****vas,*** *di corsa*[9]*"* (*Ibid.*, p. 15-16).

Another type of elements are terms in Italian, but used irregularly, deliberately modified in gender and number, or other terms in Italian highlighted in their meta-linguistic use, or reported through self and other-quotation. Pougala wrote about an episode of his life when he worked as an itinerant peddler, in Italy called commonly and with pejorative connotation «vu cumprà», used this expression in order to win the affections of his potential clients. He uses this linguistic approach in a very original way by reversing the roles, ascribing the derogatory term to his potential customers. This type of role-reversal, described as «linguistic mask» has been noticed by Groppaldi (2012,

p. 53) in relation to the Amara Lakhous' novels as well. In Pougala's autobiography the author's strong metalinguistic awareness can be noticed, while he plays with his new identity, his language proficiency and the stereotypes of the Italians towards certain social categories.

> *Accettò facilmente la mia proposta di vendita. Mi cimentai così con un nuovo mestiere che mi era particolarmente congeniale. Per richiamare attenzione di potenziali acquirenti puntavo soprattutto sull'effetto sorpresa, ricorrendo a un italiano affettato con un largo uso di congiuntivi, quanto a forme di autoderisione del tipo "**Dai non fare come un vu cumprà**" che suscitava ilarità e simpatia tra i turisti italiani"*[10] (Pougala, 2007, p. 113).

In other situations, he uses forms of the Sicilian dialect, in order to avoid a dangerous situation. Therefore, this combination of self-quotation and code-switching is used as a means of exclusion. An example of similar use of the above mentioned techniques can be found in Mademba's novel as well.

> *Quando mi chiesero che cosa facessi a Parigi e perché avessi quella carta d'identità, **risposi sforzandomi di imitare quel tanto di pronuncia siciliana che avevo appreso scherzando con dei compagni di università di origine siciliana: "Troppa curiosità può costare la vita."***[11] (*Ibid.*, p. 129).

> *Grazie all'idea di rivolgermi a tutti come un fratello, ho avuto immediatamente successo e sono riuscito a ingranare nel mio lavoro. Ma una volta che mi rivolsi ad una persona chiamandolo **fratello**, lui mi rispose sprezzante: **sorella**! "Ma perché mi chiami "sorella" dico io. E lui: "non sono tuo fratello". "Certo". gli spiego io, "non sei un fratello di sangue, ma sei un fratello di genere umano". Allora lui "È vero." In Senegal siamo tutti fratelli e sorelle, anche se non è per sangue. Io uso dunque la mia cultura, la mia etica, la mia spontaneità nel mercanteggiare con clienti chiamandoli fratelli*[12] (Mademba, 2006, p. 13).

> *A volte però, nonostante la mia buona volontà può succedere che qualcuno si comporti male. Siccome io sono molto aperto, solare, che sorride, che dice parole buone, una volta ho visto due fidanzati e ho detto "Ma che bella coppia" e la donna:* ***Vaffanculo****, vai al tuo paese*[13]!" (*Ibid.*, p. 36).

The examples provided above illustrate how the transformation within the text indicates the author's placement of belonging to a membership group or not. If the word is highlighted through a passage quoted from the words of others, then it means that the author dissociates himself from that group or that kind of behavior, as in the case of «*vaffanculo*», a swearword, or «sister» a neutral term used in derogatory way by others. In most cases, the author turns to further explicitation. Nevertheless, in other cases a graphic transformation, such as punctuation marks, is used to call for a particular use of the term by the author and his categorization regarding that use.

Quoted speech

Quoted speech is, in fact, identified as a technique in itself. Klein (2006) distinguishes various types of quotations such as: The quotations of a person, of group or larger collectivities, whose speech reported directly can be transmitted through two perspectives: self-quotation, i.e. quotation of one own's words or of the proper in-group and consequent identification with the content of the quote, and the other-quotation, which implies distancing from certain milieu indicated by the quote.

In Pougala's novel (2007), the self- and other-quotation technique is used very often to call attention to the membership category ascribed to the author by others, sometimes quite a dramatically. The quotation is often accompanied by the author, who explicitly confirms its position regarding the categorization.

> *Quando mi vide fare i compiti, mio cugino si arrabbiò ancora di più e sbottò: […] Ti ho offerto la chance della tua vita, cioè stare qui e lavorare per me. E tu cosa mi rispondi? Che hai i compiti? Perché* ***i poveri*** *sono cosi stupidi? Devi lasciare quello che stai facendo per occuparti dei miei figli. […] Conclusi che sapevo che* ***i poveri*** *erano stupidi, come aveva affermato, e che era proprio per rimediare a parte di quella stupidità che volevo continuare e portare a termine i miei studi*[14] (Pougala, 2007, p. 82-83).

In this particular example, an exclusion from a group of the protagonist is carried out and even highlighted by the use of self- and other-quotation. We could say that the protagonist, identified by the others as an «orphan and «poor», is excluded from the group of «rich» and «successful» people right from the beginning. Nevertheless, the quotation speech here serves to call into question, and then confirm by the author himself, the category he belongs to, but the features of that category as well. The example shows that the author's objective is not only to change the category he belongs to, but to show through his diligence and hard work that the features of the category could be changed, and therefore opportunities for success in life would be available.

In Maria Reine Toe's novel we observe similar excerpt on identification and consequent exclusion in relation to the «skin color», a subject present in the other novels as well:

> ***"Ha detto che non è colpa sua se questi stati africani sono pericolosi", biascicò senza il coraggio di guardarmi in faccia.*** *[…] Stati africani? Adesso guardando il colore delle facce che mi circondavano, il sospetto che mi aveva irritato in aeroporto si stava rivelando giustificato. Eravamo tutti neri lì. Era grottesco e indisponente, ma proprio in Africa, in un Paese che – era evidente – faceva di tutto per negare la propria collocazione geografica, stavo vivendo la prima discriminazione razzista della mia vita. Non potevo essere certa, ma ero convinta che gli altri passeggeri, gli europei, fossero stati alloggiati in un albergo di categoria superiore*[15] (Toe, 2010, p. 162-163).

In Pougala's novel we find similar excerpt on identification and consequent exclusion in relation to the «skin color»:

> *Visitai cinque indirizzi fornitimi dalla scuola solo per sentirmi dire ogni volta che la stanza non era più disponibile. Rientrai in segreteria molto seccato e* ***la segretaria, assai imbarazzata, mi spiegò in un inglese approssimativo che i rifiuti erano dovuti al colore della mia pelle***[16] (Pougala, 2007, p. 108).

It should be noted that in the first case a quoted speech has been used in the text in form of direct speech, while in the second case it comes in form of indirect, i.e. reported speech. That means that in the second case attention should be paid to the introductory verb as well. Here, the answer of the secretary is presented as «an explanation», which further suggests a cause and effect relationship of the narrated events, and in turn makes for the reasonability of the situation, i.e. the exclusion becomes justifiable in the context in which the story is based. In other words, the «rejection due to a skin color» seems like something *normal* even for the staff of the University for Foreigners. In this way, the quoted speech contributes ultimately to the construction of meaning within the texts.

Negotiation of meaning

Another relevant technique is that of negotiation of meaning. It's a technique employed especially in the context of conversation through the so-called repair procedures. The meanings of crucial terms that indicate in-group membership or shared values are presented as questionable and then «negotiated», that is to say explained by the author who positions himself in relation to the meaning of the same term.

Renata Testa (1995), in relation to her research in the field of conversation analysis presents the process of negotiation of meaning as a series of «explicative transactions», through which the process of making sense and the interpretive activities between the interviewer and the interviewee is established and maintained. The process in that context is initiated through a progressive correction and replacement of connotations, considered incompatible, with others considered to be more appropriate to the image that the speaker intends to present, in the way that in the end we could speak of a process of a construction of social identity by two people. In reference to the present research, this process is carried out by highlighting the relevant meanings identified by the writers themselves, which serve as indicators for interpretation, in the course of reading the text. As we could see in some of the excerpts given above, the authors themselves perform negotiation of meaning within the texts through the techniques of quotation and the accompanying explicitation.

The previous example of negotiation of meaning of the word «*fratello*» (brother), taken from Mademba's novel, is quite illustrative. The author marks the relevance of the term by code-switching., since it is a written text, he puts the word in italic, and then through the reported dialogue the meaning of the term is being negotiated. After the end of the process of negotiation and that the intended meaning has been accepted, the author manages to position himself as a «brother» in relation to group he is referring to.

The meaning of the same term has been negotiated in Pougala's work as well, although it has acquired an ironic connotation. First of all, he states that he would like to live in Africa among his «*fratelli*» from whatever country they come from but in the next paragraph, he marked the same word with inverted commas, after being robbed by two persons he previously addressed with the term mentioned above.

> *Volevo vivere in Sudafrica, volevo ritornare in Africa, perché era la mia vita, tra la mia gente, che fossero camerunesi o sudafricani,* ***erano i miei fratelli.*** *Due giorni più tardi, come al solito quando rientravo in albergo, lasciata la mia borsa e scesi in strada. Andai nel negozio di fronte per comprare pollo arrosto e patatine fritte per la cena. Mentre aspettavo, notai due ragazzi che chiacchieravano e ogni volta che li guardavo, mi sorridevano; sorrisi anch'io dando loro dei* ***"fratelli"****. Una volta ritirato il pollo,* ***mi voltai per andarmene,***

> ***ma quei due bravi fratelli, mi fermarono, uno mi puntò la pistola alla tempia e l'altro un coltello affilato alla gola, dicendomi di non muovermi***[17] (*Ibid.,* p. 205).

Conclusion

Klein notes that according to Gumperz, the identified strategies represent «contextualization convention» or «contextualization cues» at the same time, for their function pointing out social and metaphorical meanings is not explicitly verbalized. Often it is thanks to the combination of various strategies and means of expression of different levels that the message can be interpreted. These premises offered by interpretive sociolinguistics, are especially useful in studying language within complex socio-linguistics contexts, where various social and communicative networks coexist, are being formed and maintained through different social activities, such as the communicative one which proves out to be the one of the most considerable, proceeds Klein (2002, p. 58-59).

Therefore, the choice of the author to switch the language or the variety previously used or to quote part of conversation from his memory shouldn't be considered as a pure stylistic preference. Instead, the results of the research show that the strategies and techniques selected by the authors have strong reference to the described sociocultural context and, can act as indicators of the relationships in particular, among the different groups considered relevant by the author. Most importantly, the examples reported above demonstrate that the author's sense of belonging to those groups is not fixed and stable, but is dependent on the context. The use of the word «*fratello*» by two different authors, and by the same author within the same fragment could serve as an illustration.

From that perspective, Italian migrant literature seems to be one of the outcomes of the coexistence of the variety of social networks, like never before in Italy. Even though the literature represents a different kind of communication than the one the studies forming the theoretical basis of this paper start from, i.e. conversation analysis, the above examples demonstrate precisely that it is a combination of the conversation techniques and strategies, among others, within the texts through which the author's social identity is being built.

Ultimately, this «atypical» analytical approach to literature, makes it possible to explore the author's intent in relation to the complex sociolinguistic reality of modern Italy, where the meanings of the apparently «everyday» and «ordinary» language forms are being discussed, negotiated and re-defined by the use of the different social actors who in turn, construct their social identity in that way.

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Notes

[1] «literature written by authors who write in a (national) language other than that of their origin, having or not having written previously other texts in that language and/or continue to write, even practicing self-translation in both directions». My translation. This definition and the consequent term have been chosen for the purpose of the paper, which is not focused on the definition of this literary tendency, besides, it examines the impact of this writing on the collocation of the authors within various social groups. Nonetheless, it should be pointed out that it was one of the first attempts to describe the changed literary panorama in Italy in the early 1990s and its definition is still arguable among scholars. An overview of the issue is offered by Benvenuti, 2011.

[2] «the restricted circle of researchers who until shortly ago wanted to compete with this issue had to draw mainly on alternative resources to those of strictly literary extraction». My translation.

[3] «grasp the relationship that exists between linguistic phenomena and social and cultural phenomena». My translation.

[4] The first case has been described by Gumperz (1982) as «situational code-switching» which takes place when one of the speakers, the context or the topic changes, while the other case is defined as «conversational code-switching».

[5] «Writing with four hands». My translation.

[6] «He entered and asked *passaport, passaport.* And we said*: passaport jok, passaport jok,* which means we don't have passports. "*Luffén abé, luffén abe",* that is: "please be good, please, be good," we told him». My translation. Bold emphasis mine.

[7] «Here is the ABC of the Senegalese vendor in Greece. First of all the numbers: *uno* (one), *dio* (two*), tria* (three), *tessera* (four)». My translation. Bold emphasis mine.

[8] «Customers would understand me even if I had said in French: "*regarde ce livre, si t'interesse, tu peux le prendre"*». My translation. Bold emphasis mine.

[9] «I was at the head of the group, I was leading it either because I was the highest of all, and because I knew the local language well enough to follow the directions given by our Turkish guide. "*Tavarusc*, silence", he was saying; "tavan tus, *walk slowly*", or "*vas*, hurry-up"». My translation. Bold emphasis mine.

[10] «He easily accepted my proposal of sale. So, I decided to try out a new job

that I was particularly congenial to. To call attention of potential customers I was aiming above all at the surprise effect, using a mannered Italian with an extensive use of subjunctive, as well as some forms of self-mockery "*Come on, don't act t like a vu cumprà*", which aroused laughter and sympathy among Italian tourists». My translation. Bold emphasis mine.

[11] «When they asked me what I was doing in Paris and why I had that identity card, *I said forcing myself to mimic as much the Sicilian accent that I had learned joking with my Sicilan friends from university*: "*Too much curiosity may cost you your life*"». My translation. Bold emphasis mine.

[12] «Thanks to the idea of addressing everyone as a brother, I was immediately successful and was able to make a headway in my work. But once I turned to a person calling him brother, he replied contemptuously: sister! But why do you call me "sister", I say. He goes: "I'm not your brother". "Sure." I explain myself, "you're not a blood brother, but you're brother by a mankind". Then he goes: "It's true." In Senegal we are all brothers and sisters, even if it is not by blood. So I use my culture, my ethics, my spontaneity in haggling with customers calling them brothers». My translation. Bold emphasis mine.

[13] «But sometimes, in spite of my good will it can happen that someone behaves badly. Since I'm very open, cheerful, someone who smiles, who says good words, I once saw a couple and I said "What a beautiful couple!" and the woman said: "*Fuck you,* go to your country!"». My translation. Bold emphasis mine.

[14] «When he saw me doing my homework, my cousin became even more angry and blurted: […] I offered you the chance of your life, that is, to stay here and work for me. And what do you answer me? You have homework? Why the *poor* are so stupid? You have to leave what you are doing to take care of my children. […] I concluded that I knew that the *poor* were stupid, as he had said, and that was exactly to make up for part of that stupidity that I wanted to continue and complete my studies». My translation. Bold emphasis mine.

[15] «*"He said it's not his fault that these African states are dangerous", he mumbled without the courage to look at me straight in the eyes.* […] African states? Now looking at the color of the faces around me, the suspicion that had irritated me at the airport was turning out to be well-founded. We were all blacks there. It was grotesque and churlish, but it was right in Africa, and in a country that – it was obvious – was doing its best to deny its geo-

graphical location, that I was experiencing the first racial discrimination of my life. I could not be sure, but I was convinced that the other passengers, the Europeans, had been accommodated in a hotel of superior category». My translation. Bold emphasis mine.

[16] «I visited five addresses given me by the school only to be told each time that the room was no longer available. I returned to the secretary's office fed up and *the secretary, very embarrassed, explained to me in broken English that the rejection was due to the color of my skin*». My translation. Bold emphasis mine.

[17] «I wanted to live in South Africa, I wanted to return to Africa, because there was my life, among my people, whether from Cameroon or South Africa, *they were my brothers*. Two days later, as usual, I returned to the hotel, leaving my bag and took to the streets. I went in front of the store to buy roast chicken and chips for dinner. While I was waiting, I noticed two guys who were talking and every time I looked at them, smiled at me; I smiled too, taking them for "**brothers**." Once I picked up the chicken, *I turned to leave, but those two good brothers stopped me, one of them pointed the gun at my temple and the other a sharp knife to the throat, telling me not to move*». My translation. Bold emphasis mine.