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Image created in Edmonton, Alberta

Adapting Source Culture

Semi-finalist

Here is a visual representation of a 'domesticated' Nigerian Igbo society as it is often constructed through the process of interlingual translation—a traditional Igbo chief bears French baguettes instead of the ofo (sacred symbol), a village town-crier who plays a French tambourine in lieu of his ogene (traditional musical instrument) and defaced indigenes no longer identified by their cultural attire. Individuals, cultural elements and spaces are deformed, reconstructed and homogenized when French translators manipulate and minimize foreign elements in a given Nigerian literary text. My research focuses on the translation of Igbo culture and cultural elements into French. It examines translation challenges specific to African/Nigerian writing while discussing and exemplifying such cases of domestication in the image. The juxtaposition of traditional huts and skyscrapers in the image attests to the blending that results as the translators try to balance French and Nigerian cultural differences. This is the image of reconstructed identity and reality that my research tends to uncover through textual analysis and interviews of French translators, in order to find out how they dealt with Nigerian culture/ideology and to ultimately identify their translation norms/principles. This image is inspired by my reading of a Nigerian novel translated into French.