

Batchelor, Kathryn & Bisdorff, Claire (Eds.). (2013). *Intimate enemies: Translation in francophone contexts*. Liverpool University Press. ISBN 978-1-84630-867-2. \$ 79.

“If the translator has to be counted among the [author’s] enemies, he is a particular species of enemy, as indispensable and intimate as a friend” (p. 95). In making this statement, inspiration for the volume’s title, award-winning Guadeloupean author, Maryse Condé, not only expounds her views on the author-translator relationship but also aptly encapsulates the tensions inherent in the inextricable dualism of writing and its so-called necessary evil, translating. This necessary evil, characterized as parasitic and even vampiric by Bleton and Chénétier (as cited in Wecksteen, 2013) is, however, not the focus of this fourth volume in the New Series published annually by the Society for Francophone Postcolonial Studies (SFPS). The stated objective of the editors, Kathryn Batchelor and Claire Bisdorff, is to “stimulate and enrich debate among scholars across a number of academic domains, and in particular that the emphasis laid on the positive power of translation will shift discussions from what is lost, or threatened, through translation to what might be gained and strengthened, both in literature and in society and global relations more generally” (p. 12). Ambitious in its goal, the volume seeks to bring to the fore the underexplored and underexploited topic of translation in postcolonial contexts. The front cover image, from Cheikh Hamidou Kane’s 1972 *Ambiguous Adventure*, further serves to exemplify the paradoxical “amicable conflict” in author-translator relationships.

The volume is divided into three major sections: The translation market: publishing and distribution; writing and translating in practice; translation challenges and new avenues in postcolonial translation theory. With a relatively even distribution of contributions, four in the first section, six in the second and five in the third, the volume’s geographical inclusiveness permits a panoramic view of the history, practice, and current state of translation in postcolonial francophone Africa, Indian Ocean and the Caribbean. Of the seventeen contributors, Ananda Devi and Maryse Condé are writers. The remaining majority are translation researchers with Carol Gilogley, Marjolijn de Jager, Christine Pagnouille and Christine Raguet also engaging in translation. Véronique Tadjó, like Condé, writes but also translates. Translator Richard Philcox is the sole contributor to not be actively engaged in writing or translation research.

In the first section, Moradewun Adejunmobi’s “Literary translation and language diversity in contemporary Africa” and Ruth Bush’s “Publishing francophone African literature in translation: Towards a rational account of postcolonial book history” focus on the publishing industry in Francophone Africa calling for the translation of African literature into a greater number of major world languages and provide an overview of the British and French publishing traditions in Africa, respectively. As the title suggests, indigenous writing strategies in Madagascar, Mauritius, Reunion, the Seychelles and the Comores are the focus of Peter Hawkins’ “Translation and its others: Postcolonial linguistic strategies of writers from the francophone Indian Ocean” and in “Publishing, translation and truth”, Audrey Small reflects on the role of publishing and translation as “gatekeepers” of knowledge using a case study of representations of Patrice Lumumba.

In the second section, three of the six contributions are interviews. Maryse Condé and her husband, who is also her translator, Richard Philcox, highlight the underlying conflicts and subsequent concessions, albeit unwilling, in the author-translator duo in “Intimate enemies: A conversation between an author and her translator”. In “Translation: Spreading the wings of literature” author Véronique Tadjó is interviewed by one of the volume editors, Kathryn Batchelor. For Tadjó, writing and translating are the bedrock of peace and co-operation; she likens translation to Ricard’s “hospitalité linguistique”. Julia Waters presents a shortened translated version of Ananda Devi’s reflections on her career in writing and translation in “Ananda Devi as writer and translator: In interview with Julia Waters”. The remaining three contributions consist of a theoretical reflection and

experiential commentaries. Marjolijn de Jager, translator, likens translation to a Sisyphean yet political act aimed at highlighting and righting wrongs and laying a foundation for a better planet in “Translation – A listening art”. Kathleen Gyssels and Christine Pagnouille discuss the significance of Léon-Gontran Damas’ poetry and their experiences in translating his third poetic work in “The *Négraille*’s testament: Translating black-label”. Christine Raguet provides a personal reflection in “Translating heterophony in Olive Senior’s stories”.

The third section offers a reflection on challenges in translating authors of the Caribbean (Patrick Chamoiseau and Edouard Glissant), Africa (Alain Mabanckou) and the Indian Ocean (Ananda Devi). Carol Gilgley in “Subverting subversion? Translation practice and malpractice in the work of Patrick Chamoiseau” and Claire Bisdorff in “‘Un art de la fugue’: Translating Glissant’s poetry, fiction and *prose d’idées*” discuss the Caribbean. Kathryn Batchelor deals with Africa in “Postcolonial intertextuality and translation explored through the work of Alain Mabanckou”. The Indian Ocean is covered in Julia Waters’ “Ananda Devi as transcolonial translator”. The volume’s final section concludes with Paul Bandia’s overview of writing and translation strategies within the postcolony in “Translation and current trends in African metropolitan literature”.

Inscribed in a tradition of inquiry on translation and postcolonialism dating back to works such as Bassnett and Trivedi’s *Postcolonial translation: Theory and practice*, and Maria Tymoczko’s *Translation in a postcolonial context*, the greatest merit of the volume is that it brings together a breadth of information commencing with the publishing industry as a major player in translation, on mutually enriching perspectives on this previously disparately discussed subject matter. The volume can be seen as contributing to a needed turn or shift in postcolonial studies, to direct investigations on translation as a coalescing force impacting positively on identity studies in postcolonialism and a re-balancing of the inequalities in power and dominance. From metaphor or metonym to object of scientific investigation, the translation act takes centre stage thereby creating new spaces which offer the possibility of exploring new paradigms. By recalibrating the place translation occupies, the volume equally affords the discipline of translation studies the space to further explore postcolonial studies thereby fulfilling, in part, its objective. Regrettably, the volume fails at two critical levels: to engage “a number of academic domains” as its reflections, as espoused in the title, centre on translation studies and postcolonial Francophone studies and to engender “through translation [...] what might be gained and strengthened [...] in society and global relations more generally” as its key focus is literature. Nonetheless, *Intimate enemies: Translation in francophone contexts* provides scholars in translation studies, postcolonial studies and francophone studies a balanced, reliable and thought-provoking body of knowledge sure to become indispensable.

References

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