

François Tissot (1826-1830), mais en précisant qu'elle "n'a sans doute pas fait pour la langue anglaise ce que M. Tissot a fait pour la latine" (p. 9). Quant à ses idées sur la traduction, il semblerait qu'elle les ait plutôt puisées auprès de plusieurs traducteurs, écrivains et critiques contemporains, qui n'ont toutefois pas donné à leurs intuitions ou thèses, consignées dans des préfaces et des comptes rendus, le format d'un traité ou d'une théorie. On connaît, autour de 1830, les principales voix qui informent le débat: Vigny traducteur d'*Othello* (1829), Nerval traducteur des *Poésies allemandes* (1830), plus tard Chateaubriand traducteur du *Paradis perdu* (1836). Il s'agit, pour ces auteurs-traducteurs, de prendre la mesure de la longue tradition des Belles Infidèles afin de substituer à celles-ci un modèle d'écriture traductive qui cherche à mieux aligner la posture traductive sur la posture auctoriale. Ce modèle en quelque sorte fusionnel de la traduction romantique, très bien analysé par Efim Etkind (1982), cherche à trouver un moyen terme entre l'imitation et la version alors jugée trop littérale.

L'ouvrage de Mme de Rochmondet reflète "l'ambivalence de la position des traducteurs entre 1830 et 1840, ou même des traductions qu'ils produisent, hésitant entre la version littérale érudite et la traduction-communion, elle-même cousine des Belles Infidèles" (xv) et Benoit Léger parvient avec excellence à décrire, à partir des exemples fournis par Mme de Rochmondet, l'attitude complexe que cette dernière adopte vis-à-vis des questions de traduction (génie de la langue, diction, fidélité, etc.), comme vis-à-vis des méthodes d'enseignement de l'anglais. Il identifie également les partis pris éthiques et esthétiques de Mme de Rochmondet, ceux du moins que peuvent révéler ses choix d'auteurs et de textes, ses façons de les traduire ainsi que les commentaires qu'elle apporte aux traductions anciennes ou contemporaines des mêmes textes.

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***La production de l'étrangeté dans les littératures postcoloniales*. Eds. Béatrice Bijon and Yves Clavaron. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2009. 331 pages. 978-2745318855**

This book is a collection of twenty-two essays exploring the place of "étrangeté" (foreignness or alterity) in postcolonial literatures. Edited by Béatrice Bijon and Yves Clavaron, both French professors of comparative literature, the volume grew out of a conference held at the University of Saint-Étienne in January 2008. As Bijon and Clavaron observe in their introduction, alterity is more often associated with colonial representations of the colonized than with postcolonial writing (8). Edward Said's seminal study of Orientalism, for example, examines European depictions of the Muslim East as a foreign, exotic culture. Taking this reflection in a different direction, the essays gathered here ask how this representational tradition has been transposed in postcolonial writing. The contributors propose that rather than simply dispensing

with the concept of alterity, postcolonial writers have replaced the unidirectional attribution of foreignness to the colonized “other” with a more complex understanding of alterity as a force that operates within as well as between cultures, and which inhabits the self as well as the other. Following the lead of Édouard Glissant, several of the essays imagine postcolonial alterity as opacity, that is, as resistance to the totalizing and reductive potential of representation.

The volume begins with a section titled “Cartographies de l'étrangeté,” which explores various ways in which the political, economic, and cultural map of the world has changed in the wake of decolonization. The following four sections are organized by region, and examine literature from Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and finally Australia, the Pacific, and India. Though a few of the essays consider diasporic writing, the volume's regional organization constitutes something of an impediment to the consideration of either transnational literary production or the postcolonial dimensions of contemporary European and North American societies.

The most innovative feature of *La production de l'étrangeté* is the adoption of the theoretical framework of postcolonial studies by a group of scholars writing in French. Until recently postcolonialism has had relatively little impact in France. French intellectuals have tended to regard it as an Anglo-Saxon import that is allied with a tradition of divisive identity politics. Over the last decade, however, this state of affairs has begun to change. A number of French social scientists and historians have acknowledged the relevancy of postcolonial studies to the French social and political landscape, and in conjunction with this shift some of the key works of postcolonial theory, for example Ashis Nandy's *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (1983), and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (1987), have belatedly been translated into French. French literary scholarship has been somewhat slower to take the “postcolonial turn.” Allusions to concepts such as the “hybrid” and the “subaltern” remain rare in French literary criticism, and although interest in “francophone” writing (literature from former French colonies) has increased markedly over the last decade, the work of writers from former British or Spanish colonies is still not widely studied by French scholars. If *La production de l'étrangeté* is any indication, however, this situation may also be poised to change. The essays collected in this volume deploy the full conceptual armory of postcolonial theory (they abound in references to the “hybrid,” “métissage,” the “subaltern” and “third space” . . .), and examine texts from a broad array of former colonies.

But while the volume's engagement with postcolonial theory represents an innovative departure, its translation of this body of thought from English into French is somewhat disappointing. The editors' introduction, in particular, reads as a reductive survey of some of the best-known concepts of postcolonial thought. Rather than exploring the distance between postcolonialism and French republican thought, or addressing the relationship between postcolonialism and *francophonie*, the editors simply translate arguments made in English into French, applying them to texts in what are essentially predictable ways. A second, related weakness is the failure to offer a thorough and nuanced definition of the postcolonial. The essays examine texts from different regions published at different moments and that reflect very different conditions of production. What features characterize these texts as postcolonial and justify their juxtaposition? Curiously, it is only toward the end of their introduction that Bijon and Clavaron offer a definition of postcolonial literature (14). Though their

characterization of it as writing that manifests particular attentiveness to the legacies of colonization and the modes of agency of people living under domination is reasonable enough, it neglects important questions such as the relationship between oppression that results primarily from colonization, and modes of subjection that are associated with more contemporary asymmetries of power, for example economic globalization. The editors note that a well-known English language collection, *The Empire Writes Back* (1989), has frequently been criticized for providing a monolithic account of power and resistance that opposes the metropolitan center to the postcolonial margin, and thereby reinscribes the colonial binarism (14-15). They state that they will avoid this trap by treating the postcolonial as a “fluid and polysemic category.” But acknowledging a problem is not the same thing as rectifying it, and while the essays collected here are in their own right historically and culturally specific, the project as a whole manifests the very tendency that the editors identify as a failing.

This point is illustrated by the manner in which the concept of *étrangeté* is defined and interpreted. The editors suggest that foreignness is always experienced in relation to an *horizon d'attente*, and that in the case of postcolonial literature this horizon is embodied by the classics of European and North American literature (7-8). They further propose that when formerly colonized subjects come to writing, the strange becomes the familiar, though since postcolonial writing often preserves a layer of opacity, the colonized other becomes not the transparently familiar but rather the “uncanny” (that which is at the same time familiar and strange) (8-9). Though this analysis is in many ways a compelling one, it manifests several weaknesses. Notably, it is grounded in a model in which the periphery positions itself in relation to the center, i.e. the former colonial power. Though one cannot deny the extent to which postcolonial writers respond to and in some cases rewrite western classics, this model of literary production is too one-dimensional, and leaves out important aspects such as relationships between “postcolonial” writing and the literary traditions of non-western regions, e.g. India, China, and the Arabic-speaking world.

Despite these weaknesses the volume contains several strong essays that represent valuable contributions to the field. Florence Paravy's piece on strange or extreme “strategies of enunciation” in francophone African novels, for instance, avoids the prevalent tendency to treat postcolonial literature as a static corpus by exploring works published in the late 1990s and 2000s (225-38). Paravy suggests that the recent wave of African novels narrated from a perspective of psychosis or animality reflects a new engagement with the problem of the postcolonial subject. In a convincing reading of several recent novels she proposes that writers such as Alain Mabanckou and Daniel Biyaoula attempt to transcend racialized categories of identity by interrogating the parameters of the human.

Another valuable contribution is Kathleen Gyssels's essay on Ellen Ombre, a Dutch-language writer from Surinam who resides in the Netherlands, and whose work has not as yet garnered much attention from either anglophone or francophone scholars (99-112). In her careful analysis of Ombre's multiple self-positioning as an immigrant writer of mixed black/creole and Jewish ancestry, Gyssels shows how ascriptions of otherness are destabilized in cases where multilayered identities cut across dominant categories of identity and difference.

Finally, Jean-Marc Moura's essay on the relationship between images that circulate in the tourist industry and literary representations authored by Antillean writers, turns a helpful cross-disciplinary lens on French Caribbean literature (114-28).

Combining literary reading with sociological analysis (and indeed arguing for the necessity of such an approach), Moura explores how literary works reproduce and/or resist the pervasive images associated with tourism. He shows that while it is certainly pertinent to approach the Caribbean as a region shaped by its colonial past, we must also take into consideration the ongoing impact of forces that are related to but not reducible to colonization, for example economic globalization.

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Santiago Rodríguez Guerrero-Strachan. *En torno a los márgenes: Ensayos de literatura poscolonial.* Madrid: Minotauro Digital, 2008. 172 pp. 978-8461269259.

This brief but densely-packed book from Spain compares the rise of major literary figures in postcolonial societies in the second half of the twentieth century, focusing primarily on African, Indian, and Caribbean writers. Guerrero-Strachan, a literature professor at the University of Valladolid, concentrates on essays written by poets and novelists, including Walcott, Rushdie, Sarduy, and Achebe, using them to analyze common themes and trends in decolonized and neocolonized literary milieus. Invoking Homi Bhabha's notion of hybridity and Edward Said's filiation/affiliation distinction, as well as aesthetic theory from the Frankfurt School, Guerrero-Strachan argues that a wide array of texts from formerly colonized nations in the global south represent the world's best contemporary writing.

In a chapter focusing on the figure of the postcolonial writer in Africa, Guerrero-Strachan suggests that Taban lo Liyong (Sudan), Chinua Achebe (Nigeria) and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (Kenya) form a useful triad for understanding various perspectives on the position of the writer in African societies. The priority placed on political engagement in essays by Achebe and Ngũgĩ is understood by Guerrero-Strachan as fairly typical of African literary discourse, but he uses Liyong's more aesthetic/individualist emphasis to suggest that leftist politics alone does not guarantee the quality of a work, but in fact requires from the author a higher degree of artistic rigor (59).

A chapter on exile glosses theories on language and nationalism by Antonio Tabucchi and Benedict Anderson, and then returns to the interesting case of Ngũgĩ, who in 1986 decides to switch from writing in English to his native Gikũyũ as a mode of cultural/political commitment and literary self-exile. Guerrero-Strachan also identifies here a noteworthy similarity between Bhabha's notion of literary exile as an eccentric "third space" and George Lamming's argument that a writer must understand himself/herself simply to be "where one is" (91), rather than a representative of any particular national or geographical niche.

In a chapter on convergences between western and eastern literature, Guerrero-Strachan compares essays by Juan Goytisolo, Salman Rushdie, and Severo Sarduy. The Spaniard Goytisolo has lived in self-exile in Morocco for many years, a perch that sharpens his critique of Spain's negative stereotypes of Islam, and allows him to theorize that literary influence works in sometimes contradictory ways, appearing occasionally to flow backwards through time and against the inherent centrifugality of colonization. This harmonizes with Rushdie's argument that a writer's vision can only be "stereoscopic" from a non-unitary, marginal socio-geographical position, which explains why so many important literary figures have emerged in former British colonies. This idea in turn dovetails with Sarduy's three main theoretical figures for the Latin American neobaroque: transvestism, anamorphosis, and *trompe l'oeil*, each