

Mediation, circulation, translation: too much contextualization?

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Discussion

- Before the seminar, **problematize** three questions on **mediation, circulation and translation** that you would like to address in class.
- These questions are based on the readings of the three articles (one question per article).



Problem

- Do we affect the literary value of a work by doing a sociological investigation of the writers?
- What is left for the value in this process? Did sociologists kill the magic effect of an artistic production?



Plan of the seminar

- 1) Mediation, translation, circulation: marketization of the literary work?
- 2) The profession of writer
- 3) The debate surrounding the circulation of francophone literature



1) Mediation, circulation, translation

- Emphasis on the sociological dimension of literary production
- Mediation : how literary work is produced. All the intermediary steps between the author and his/her work
- The production of a literary system where different actors influence the publication process (description of the system, the publishing process, the legitimization). Cultural and economic agents who are involved in the process.
- Sociological events for the reception and the consecration of an author (Book fairs, interviews, literary criticism...)



Mediation, circulation, translation

- The system contributes to highlight the “value” of a literary production.
- Is there still an “*aura*”, a sacred zone for the literary production? Cf Walter Benjamin and his reflection on the emergence of photography. The standardization of art (reproduction) kills its value
- Reception: the question of interpretation. Important role of the critic that tends to impose a literary discourse on the value of a literary work



Mediation, circulation, translation

- Sapiro (2016: 327). Heterodox/orthodox discourses
- The question: is it literary production which is criticized or its positioning in a literary field?
- Literary field: forces (reception, circulation, translation, ideological context) that might explain how a book can find an audience
- The definition of vanguardism that has an impact on the elaboration of literary canons. Heterodox discourse: influence on the norms



Mediation, circulation, translation

- Literary systems (centre / peripheries)
- Transnational reception and circulation (translations) : multiple effects of legitimacy
- The effect of the number of translations (Casanova 2002) as an international consecration (accumulation of symbolic capital).
- Translation in a dominated language of a work from a dominating language. It reinforces the centrality of the *medium* (language). Relations between “international” languages and vernacular languages. Multiple phenomenon of diglossia.



Mediation, circulation, translation

- The process of legitimization through important translators/ well-known mediators (Casanova 2002: 11)
- Translation has an impact for the reception and consecration of an author. Gao Xinjiang translated into French (Nobel prize in 2000).
- The case of Le Clézio (the Swedish Nobel Prize), <https://www.thelocal.se/20081026/15220/>
- Struggle between the mediators, attention paid to the prefaces and the paratexts (editorialization)



STOCKHOLMS UNIVERSITET Universitetsförvaltningen
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Doknr

Till berörd institution

Inför 2012 års nomineringar till Nobelpriset i litteratur gjordes en del förändringar i inbjudningsrutinerna. Försättningsvis kommer inbjudningsbrev (till att föreslå kandidater för priset) att som nu sändas till er institution, för vidarebefordran till de enskilda förslagsställarna.

Vi ber er därför vänligen att distribuera och vid behov mångfaldiga de bifogade inbjudningsbreven till de hos er verksamma professorerna inom språk och litteratur.

Det är viktigt att förslagsställarna får brevet så snart som möjligt, eftersom Nobelkommittén önskar samtliga förslag inkomna senast den 31 januari 2015.

Observera att förslagsskrivelser via e-post inte godtas.

Stockholm i november 2014

Magnus Halldin

Litteraturhandläggare

Svenska Akademiens Nobelkommitté

Mediation, circulation, translation

- Sapiro (2016: 330): the actors : “publishers, editors, literary agents, translators, writers, critics, academics”
- The bodies: “publishing houses, literary agencies, cultural services in embassies, national institutes supporting translation, and book fairs” (Sapiro 2016: 330)
- I would add : “journalists” / newspapers, journals, TV, radio, podcasts, blogs, tweets (recensions, comments....)
- Focus on discourse analysis is very important to understand the strategies of (self) promotion (Casanova 2002)



2) *Profession écrivain*

- Question: is there a risk to reduce the writer to his/her positioning in the literary field?



How does a writer live?

- Economic aspect (taxes / relation with the publishing house, rights and duties / royalties / copyright issues)
- Prestige of the writer in France (Sapiro 2019)
- Protection of his/her productions
- 1791 / 1793, two copyright laws in France, they can use their right of selling, distributing on the territory of the Republic.
- First international convention on copyright issues 1886 under the initiative of the *Association Littéraire et Artistique Internationale (ALAI)*



Condition d'écrivain

Ex: Kim Thúy



Condition d'écrivain

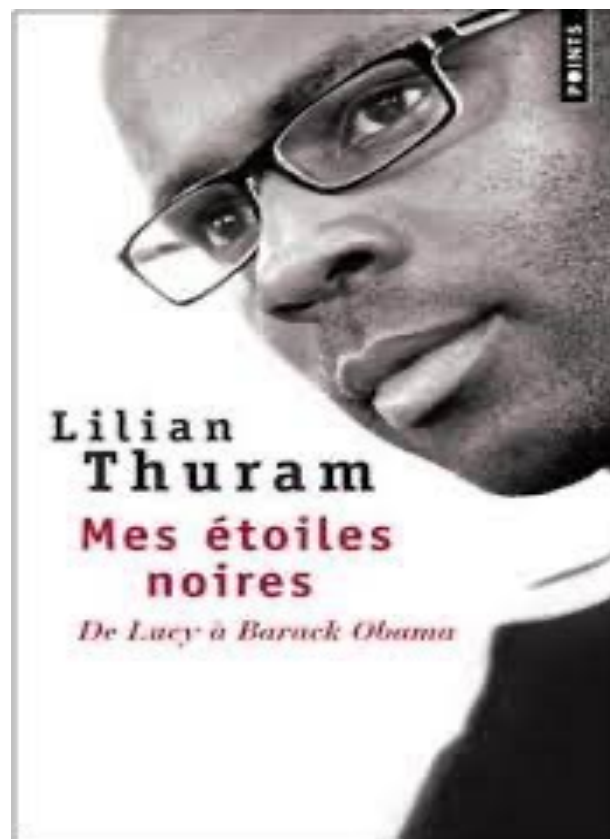
- The literary agents (influence on translations / relations with the publishing house)
- The phenomenon Kim Thuý (concrete examples of the impact of the translation)
- *Ru*, publication in 2009 (in French). Canadian-Vietnamese author who publishes in French (Québec)
- Swedish translation in 2011 (Marianne Tufvesson). Publishing house (Sekwa)
- Swedish translation of *Mãn* (2013), the book was originally published in 2013. Publishing house (Sekwa). <https://sekwa.se/forlaget/> Swedish translation of *Em* (2021).
- <https://www.svtplay.se/video/31340690/babels-bibliotek/babels-bibliotek-sasong-3-kim-th-y-om-em?id=egqa9n3>



Another strategy

- Celebrities who write to reach out a new audience
- Lilian Thuram (resources against racism)
- *Institut français de Suède*
- Diplomatic resources (cultural gate) / Cultural diplomacy
- <https://www.su.se/romklass/om-oss/evenemang/can-we-be-climate-refugees-tomorrow-1.337210>







Publishing houses in France

- <http://www.editions-galilee.com/f/index.php>
- <http://www.leseditionsdeminuit.fr/>
- <https://www.gallimard.fr/>
- <https://www.fayard.fr/>
- <https://www.grasset.fr/>
- <https://www.grasset.fr/foreign-rights>



The material condition of writers

- The question of a salary / the writer is a worker like the others (no myth of lost genius)
- Other activities in order to invest time and energy in writing (Sapiro 2019: 117)
- <https://www.secu-artistes-auteurs.fr/> (AGESSA) (Sapiro 2019: 113)



3) The debate surrounding the circulation of francophone literature

- Francophonie, the name for what?
- A political organization, the only reference that is missing in the attempt of defining the word (Apter 2005: 297)
- Transnational circulation
- Theory of creolization (Glissant 1997)
- Relation between the idea of a monolingual approach of French literature and the plurilingual option of Francophone literature
- *Littérature-monde* / World literature (2007)
- https://www.lemonde.fr/livres/article/2007/03/15/des-ecrivains-plaident-pour-un-roman-en-francais-ouvert-sur-le-monde_883572_3260.html



Manifeste pour une littérature-monde



List of writers who signed the manifesto

- Muriel Barbery, **Tahar Ben Jelloun**, Alain Borer, Roland Brival, **Maryse Condé**, Didier Daeninckx, **Ananda Devi**, Alain Dugrand, **Edouard Glissant**, Jacques Godbout, **Nancy Huston**, Koffi Kwahulé, **Dany Laferrière**, Gilles Lapouge, Jean-Marie Laclavetine, Michel Layaz, **Michel Le Bris**, **JMG Le Clézio**, Yvon Le Men, **Amin Maalouf**, **Alain Mabanckou**, Anna Moï, **Wajdi Mouawad**, Nimrod, Wilfried N'Sondé, Esther Orner, Erik Orsenna, Benoît Peeters, Patrick Rambaud, **Gisèle Pineau**, Jean-Claude Pirotte, Grégoire Polet, Patrick Raynal, Jean-Luc V. Raharimanana, **Jean Rouaud**, Boualem Sansal, Dai Sitje, Brina Svit, Lyonel Trouillot, Anne Vallaëys, Jean Vautrin, André Velter, Gary Victor, Abdourahman A. Waberi.



Francophone consecration

- Transnational logic
- Support of the International Organization of Francophonie (rivalry with the Commonwealth)
- Discourses against the uniformization of the world. Positioning of writers who legitimize this discourse
- Generation of francophone writers



Francophone consecration

- History of francophonie/Francophonie
- 1960s, one of the founding fathers of this organization is a writer and a politician, Sédar Senghor
- In 1962, he theorized the colonial encounter between the French culture and the African cultures
- “Le français, langue de culture” (a problematic and somewhat essentialistic perspective on the French language)



Francophone consecration



Francophone consecration

- Reactions of a more radical generation of Francophone writers in the 1970s and 1980s
- Mongo Béti, Ahmadou Kourouma
- Generation of African women (Calixthe Beyala, Aminata Sow Fall, Mariama Bâ)
- Generation of African francophone writers from the diasporas (Fouad Laroui...)



Conclusion

- In the French-speaking world, we still have a concentration of resources in Paris, even for the Francophone literature
- Francophonie: embarrassing but necessary system to support activities of promotion (it legitimizes authors and it can contribute to produce more translations)
- The value of a work is not only in the circulation/mediation/translation, there is something that is not marketized. Questions of visibility and reception



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