

Les mémoires de nos lauréats

Les trois prix de notre association ont été décernés cette année aux mémoires de M. Mergeai et C. Leroy pour leur « master en traduction », ainsi qu'à C. Gabrielle pour son mémoire de 3^e cycle (une filière désormais disparue). Les lauréates nous présentent ici les lignes de force de leur travail.

Céline Leroy : Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Wizard of the Crow*: Commented Translation

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o is a Kenyan writer born in 1938. Throughout his literary career, he has always been politically engaged and dedicated to the cause of the Kenyan masses in a country where democracy is nothing but a word in the mouth of the political leaders.

Ngũgĩ's latest novel, *Wizard of the Crow* (2006), is a satire of modern Africa. The story begins in the Free Republic of Aburiria, a fictional African country where a despotic "Ruler" exercises his boundless power over the poor and starving population. His two acolytes, Sikiokuu and Machokali, are in perpetual competition with each other to be seen to serve the Ruler's interests and thus get closer to the seat of power. During the meeting held to welcome the delegates from the Global Bank, who are in Aburiria to discuss the financing of Marching to Heaven, a project consisting in building the tallest tower in the world that would allow the almighty Ruler to visit Heaven whenever he pleases, a man called Kamĩĩ pretends to be a great wizard with supernatural gifts in order to escape from the police chasing him for disturbing the meeting. The reputation of this mysterious "Wizard of the Crow" quickly spreads and soon people are queuing in front of his shrine, expecting him to solve their problems...

Ngũgĩ first wrote *Wizard of the Crow* in Gikũyũ, his mother tongue, and then translated it into English. I therefore wondered about the legitimacy of my translation into French. As I was translating a translation, was I not further distorting the original work? What was I to do with the words that the writer left in Gikũyũ or Kiswahili in his English version? What about the characters' names –some were for instance made up of an English word plus a Kiswahili or Gikũyũ part? How far did I have to respect Ngũgĩ's literary style? How to properly convey the source text humour? How to translate the many songs, religious hymns, idioms and proverbs, and find French equivalents to some particular lexical items? What kind of syntactic adaptations was I authorized to without altering the source text? These are some of the problems I had to solve in order to propose a French translation of Book One of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's novel.