

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.

Mathilde Mergeai : Lawrence Hill's Any Known Blood (PARTIM): Commented Translation

My dissertation consisted in the translation of two chapters of Lawrence Hill's fiction, Any Known Blood published in 1997. The author was born in Toronto, Canada in 1957 from a white mother and a black father, both Civil Rights activists. So far, he has published three novels and two non-fictions.

Apart from my great interest in that particular Black Canadian author, the idea of translating this novel was challenging. To set up the context, let us say that the narrative focuses on the main protagonist, Langston Cane V, and follows him along his investigating the Canes' family past, especially the lives of his four namesake male ancestors. The novel was very interesting translating material because of its broad time span: the characters' language varies from one generation to another and therefore adds to the richness of the author's style. I translated the sixth and the twenty-third (and last) chapters, which were set in different periods of time, one in the present and one in the mid-twentieth century. The main issue, of course, was to render the language that fitted with the time of the narration, the expressions and registers which Lawrence Hill had so perfectly integrated to his writing to give an impression of authenticity. I had to find French equivalents to slang words from the nineteen-fifties, or translate cultural references of different eras. Those problematic aspects of the translating process were thus exposed in the translation commentary.

To conclude, I was very glad to be able to translate a Black Canadian novel since this kind of literature (particularly when written in English) is almost unknown in the little corner of the world that is Belgium. It was undoubtedly a very enriching work for me to achieve and I certainly hope it was also a (small) step towards a wider knowledge Black Canadian literature.