



Edwin Gentzler. *Translation and Identity in the Americas: New Directions in Translation Theory*. New York, Routledge, 2008, 232 p.

Trish Van Bolderen

---

Volume 26, Number 1, 1er semestre 2013

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1036959ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1036959ar>

[See table of contents](#)

---

Publisher(s)

Association canadienne de traductologie

ISSN

0835-8443 (print)

1708-2188 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

---

Cite this review

Van Bolderen, T. (2013). Review of [Edwin Gentzler. *Translation and Identity in the Americas: New Directions in Translation Theory*. New York, Routledge, 2008, 232 p.] *TTR*, 26(1), 262–265. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1036959ar>

en anglais, français, espagnol, russe et arabe, ou encore celle du Service de traduction de l'UNESCO (UNESCOTERM; <http://termweb.unesco.org/>), qui englobe l'arabe, le chinois, l'espagnol, le français, l'anglais et le russe. Cependant, comme c'est le cas des autres banques de terminologie mentionnées précédemment, elles ne sont pas spécialisées dans les domaines qui nous intéressent. Enfin, les ressources terminologiques offertes par l'Organisation mondiale du commerce (OMC; WTOTERM; <https://wto.sdlproducts.com/multiterm>) et le Fonds monétaire international (FMI; <http://www.imf.org/external/np/term/fra/index.htm>), ne contiennent pas de définitions.

Dans un tel contexte, le glossaire que propose Áurea Fernández Rodríguez ne peut que répondre à un besoin. Celui-ci, créé à partir d'un corpus de textes parallèles en français et en espagnol portant sur la crise financière, vise à éclairer le sens des termes en discours. Une telle approche permet de voir comment les locuteurs de chaque culture perçoivent la réalité de la crise et comment celle-ci est exprimée par le biais de termes tels que *hipotecas basuras*, *productos tóxicos*, *turbulencias financieras*, *grandes quiebras bancarias*, *crisis del ladrillo*, etc. Les termes répertoriés proviennent de la presse de vulgarisation et de la presse spécialisée; des variantes terminologiques de différents registres sont aussi proposées. Le résultat: une ressource fort utile pour l'enseignement de la traduction spécialisée ainsi que pour les professionnels des deux langues concernées.

ANA LUNA ALONSO  
UNIVERSIDADE DE VIGO

**Edwin Gentzler. *Translation and Identity in the Americas: New Directions in Translation Theory*. New York, Routledge, 2008, 232 p.**

In *Translation and Identity in the Americas: New Directions in Translation Theory*, author Edwin Gentzler investigates the critical role translation plays in creating, transforming and reflecting the identities of those who live in Central, North and South America. Emphasizing minority and/or marginalized groups

and drawing on his own research as well as that of many other artists and scholars, notably Jacques Derrida, Gentzler focuses on multiculturalism in the United States, feminist translation and theatre translation in Quebec, anthropophagia (cannibalism) in Brazil, fiction writing in Latin America, and literature produced in the Caribbean and along the Mexico–United States border. Throughout, Gentzler’s text reveals that the study of translation and identity in the Americas is a valuable means of questioning and developing various concepts and postulates of translation studies.

Although the book frequently adopts the Jakobsonian definition of interlingual text-to-text transfer, it challenges fixed definitions of translation by embracing polysemy. For example, Québécois feminist translation is described as an *intralingual* practice, moving from patriarchal to non-patriarchal discourses; Brazilian cannibalist writer Mário de Andrade illustrates *corporeal* translation by changing the black skin of a native Brazilian character to white, which subsequently alters the character’s life because of the new ways in which he is perceived; and daily living for Caribbean natives is discussed as a process of perpetual *self-translation* between native and colonizing languages. Furthermore, when the text describes how translators in the Americas frequently use antitranslation, nontranslation and deliberate mistranslation to assert identity or to exclude the Other, it challenges theories advocating that translation render *all* aspects of the text. While such definitional openness regarding translation could be problematic in another context, perhaps leading to unfocused discussions, polysemy in this study broadens the potential for subsequent research on translation in the Americas and elsewhere.

Gentzler’s investigation also challenges various binarisms common to translation discourse by showing how translation in the Americas repeatedly blurs the lines between so-called opposing pairs. Translation in *la frontera*—zones along the Mexico–United States border, which have belonged at times to Mexico, at times to the U.S.—reflects how notions of “home” and “foreign” are indistinguishable and how those living in such in-between spaces are simultaneously at home and abroad. “Original” and “translation” are conflated in works such as those by *frontera* writer, Rolando Hinojosa, who writes/self-translates texts in both Spanish and English, often producing bilingual works.

Moreover, the slippery nature of the distinction between “author” and “translator” is illustrated by this and other examples of self-translation, where author and translator are the same individual, and is further emphasized by instances where non-self-translating translators are listed as the original author, as in Quebec translator Michel Tremblay’s interpretations of several plays and in cannibalist translator Haroldo de Campos’s translation of Goethe’s *Faust*. *Translation and Identity* is an important publication partly because, as it reflects heterogeneity and hybridity in the Americas, it emphasizes the grey areas of translation theory as well as the agency and visibility of the translator and the creative nature of her work.

Gentzler’s text is weakened, however, by poor editing. In addition to many typographical errors, there are significant problems with its content: the subsection entitled “Tremblay, Garneau, and Germain,” contains no reference to Germain (pp. 48-51); though neither she nor her area of study is Québécois, Luise von Flotow is termed a “Québécois feminist” (p. 52); one subsection of the Latin American fiction chapter introduces both Julio Cortázar and Mario Vargas Llosa, yet Cortázar is not discussed again until two subsections later.

The more disappointing aspect of Gentzler’s text lies in the terminology he uses to designate groups of people. In the introduction, he addresses the complicated nature of terms such as “American,” which simultaneously refers to citizens of the United States and residents of the Americas; yet he continues to use this term equivocally throughout the book, thereby perpetuating the power it assigns to the United States. This is a surprising choice since his book focuses on the links between translation and power imbalances. Gentzler could have taken advantage of this opportunity to suggest and use a more progressive designation for U.S. citizens, particularly given that alternatives already exist in other languages in the Americas (e.g. *estadounidense* in Spanish and Portuguese; *Étatsunien/étatsunien* in French). In fact, the English word *Unitedstatesian* already exists, but it has not (yet) gained common currency. This would have been a perfect opportunity for Gentzler to mobilize it.

Nonetheless, Gentzler’s text is very compelling. He persuasively argues that, rather than being a transitional phase

in their evolution, translation is “constitutive” of the Americas (p. 5). Furthermore, his work corroborates both his call for and his anticipation of a new turn in translation studies—the social-psychological turn, which “expand[s] a functional approach to include social effects and individual affects” (p. 180). In doing so, he points out which research areas require further attention, thereby laying the groundwork for the eventual surge in this anticipated new turn.

TRISH VAN BOLDEREN  
UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

**Kieran O’Driscoll.** *Retranslation through the Centuries: Jules Verne in English.* Berne, Suisse, Peter Lang, 2011, 286 p.

*Retranslation through the Centuries* est la plus récente publication de Kieran O’Driscoll. Il s’agit d’un remaniement de sa thèse de doctorat, présentée à la Dublin City University en 2010. O’Driscoll se spécialise en histoire de la traduction ainsi qu’en études diachroniques des retraductions de l’œuvre de Jules Verne. Il est traducteur littéraire du français vers l’anglais et associé au projet de traduction des œuvres de Verne vers l’anglais de la North American Jules Verne Society.

Le livre présente une étude des retraductions vers l’anglais du roman *Le tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours* de Verne paru en 1873. L’étude se veut un essai de méthodologie transhistorique, une nouveauté pour les chercheurs en histoire de la traduction, qui vise à rassembler plusieurs (re)traductions parues en Angleterre et aux États-Unis sur une période de 131 ans, soit de 1873 à 2004. O’Driscoll présente une analyse de la première traduction vers l’anglais du *Tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours* ainsi que de cinq retraductions. Dans cet effort, il étudie une multitude de facteurs connexes, tels les renseignements biographiques des traducteurs et les enjeux de publication des retraductions.

Le livre est divisé en trois parties. Au chapitre 1, O’Driscoll présente les fondements théoriques de sa recherche, les faits historiques entourant l’œuvre et la carrière de Verne, les éléments pertinents liés à la réception du roman *Le tour du monde en quatre-*