Gertrudis Payàs & José Manuel Zavala, eds. *La mediación lingüístico-cultural en tiempos de guerra: cruce de miradas desde España y América*. Temuco: Universidad Católica de Temuco, 2012. 219 pp.

Icíar Alonso Araguás, Alba Páez Rodríguez & Mario Samaniego Sastre, eds. *Traducción y representaciones del conflicto desde España y América: una perspectiva interdisciplinar*. Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2015. 257 pp.

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These collective volumes came out of two international conferences organized jointly by the research groups *Frontera de Lenguas* and *Alfaqueque* in Temuco, Chile, in 2010 and in Salamanca, Spain, in 2014. Both volumes generally address intercultural relations in the Spanish empire and their legacies today through the lens of power struggles. Because those relations required language brokering and, eventually, linguistic mediation proper, translators and interpreters feature as key actors in such struggles. Specifically, the contributors seek to challenge "the naïve ideal of a peaceful involvement of translators"[1] (Salas 2012, 136)[2] in situations of violent conflict that allegedly pervades the historiography of intercultural relations.

The editors of the 2012 volume[3] argue in this regard that greater attention to "the mixings and juxtapositions [that occur in frontier societies], […] [and to the] migrations and borders" that follow from violent conflicts should result in greater awareness of the potential of translation research to help "explain other phenomena of sociocultural transformation not based directly on language" (Payàs and Zavala 2012, 13). One such juxtaposition can be found on the volume's cover, which reproduces Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala's drawing of the encounter between the Inca ruler Atahualpa, placed at the center, and the conquistador Francisco Pizarro and the friar Vicente de Valverde, who appear kneeling on either side of the ruler. To the far left of Atahualpa, between the two parties, stands the inter-

1. All translations are my own.

2. Author-date references will be used to identify individual contributions to the two (2012, 2015) volumes being reviewed here.

3. The book is freely available at: repositoriodigital.uct.cl/bitstream/handle/10925/981/MEDIACION_PAYAS_2012.pdf?sequence=1. Accessed August 8, 2018.

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preter known as Felipillo, who is depicted staring at Atahualpa with his left arm bent at the elbow and his index finger pointing upward in a threatening manner, in sharp contrast with Pizarro and Valverde's seemingly subservient attitude.

Felipillo's reputation as an interpreter could not be farther from the ideal of the peaceful translator for obvious reasons: the murder of Atahualpa has been linked in various degrees to his participation in the encounter. Yet Felipillo is apparently meant to serve only as an icon of the mercenary interpreter, since the 2012 volume does not deal with the relations of the Spanish with the Incas but, for the most part, with the people that kept the southern expansion of the Incas at bay: the Araucanians (or Mapuches), who inhabited the south bank of the Biobío river in Chile. In what follows, I mainly refer to those contributions that address the relations between the Araucanians and the Spanish, which comprise the greater part of the 2012 volume and three chapters in the 2015 volume, and I make passing references to some of the other contributions.

The chapters that are focused on southern Araucanía show that the colonial history of the region was not very similar to the colonial histories of Mesoamerica and the Andes. The region was never conquered by the Spanish, and the continued defense of the territory by the Araucanians resulted in the emergence in the late sixteenth century of a distinctive colonial institution known in Spanish as *parlamentos* (i.e., parleys held upon the termination of a war to secure peace and negotiate the terms of cooperation). The position of strength of the Araucanians in this regard allowed them to retain their language (Mapudungun) and the oral mode of communication at *parlamentos*, which "determined the need to always have interpreters" (Payàs 2012, 28).

In addition to the close attention paid to *parlamentos*, interpreters hold a place of honor in these volumes for several reasons. One of them is that the cultural facets of linguistic mediation, which are emphasized in the 2012 volume in order to argue the need for a multidisciplinary approach, become more salient in the case of interpreting than in that of translation. This is because interpreters are present in the very "contexts in which [cultural interface] takes place and […] [have a bearing on] the ways in which individuals, groups, and societies communicate, their spaces, their rituals and symbols, and the instances and channels for the transmission of ideas and representations" (Payàs and Zavala 2012, 12). Moreover, it is no exaggeration to say that at no point in the history of intercultural communication had the problems related to cultural differences been greater than in the encounters between peoples who had hitherto remained unknown to each other. The fact, on the other hand, that cultural interface in the so-called New World also involved the interface between oral and literate modes of communication only compounded those problems and made the cultural facets of interpreting more evident.

Culture appears as the key to challenging the ideal of the peaceful translator, especially in the 2012 volume, where linguistic mediation is conceptually broadened to include cultural mediation on the grounds that "translating does not only consist of making different linguistic codes comprehensible, but [also] of understanding different cultural worlds that involve meanings and practices" (Samaniego 2012, 117). In this regard, although the argument about broadening linguistic mediation might seem obvious today, the framing of translation and interpreting along the lines of culture runs the risk of failing to specify what kind of mediation translation and interpreting are. Despite the (long axiomatic) categorization of translation as a form of cultural, as well as linguistic, mediation, it appears from the chapters in the 2012 volume that translation and interpreting are, rather perplexingly, overly broad concepts for the purpose of defining the category of which they are a subset (i.e., mediation).

One of the contributors to, and co-editor of, the 2012 volume, José Manuel Zavala, defines mediation as "the action of taking part [in a dispute] in order to attempt to solve [it] […], be it on a formal communicative level […] [or] on a political/diplomatic level" (156). In this formulation, mediation is conceptualized as a conflict resolution activity that can be aimed at solving communication problems (e.g., translation and interpreting as solutions to problems of an interlinguistic and intercultural nature) or political/diplomatic problems (which need not be interlinguistic or intercultural). In both cases, Zavala argues that mediators "must have the necessary authority and neutrality to act as guarantor[s] that what is being communicated or agreed upon is what the [two] sides are really saying." On the other hand, the other co-editor of the volume, Gertrudis Payàs, raises the caveat in her own contribution (albeit in a footnote) that the choice of the term 'mediation' to describe the work of translators and interpreters "may convey a whitening or neutralization of highly unequal relations" (23), specifically in the case of violent conflicts, such as the Araucanian Wars.

In this regard, if, as a conflict resolution activity, mediation is assumed to be governed by an ethics of neutrality (as Zavala seems to imply), the role played by translators and interpreters in the case studies presented in these volumes (which stretch forward in time as far as the war in Afghanistan in Icíar Alonso's contribution and a recent dispute between the Argentine and the Spanish government over an oil and gas company in Alba Páez's) can hardly be categorized as mediation. Indeed, one of the most interesting aspects of the two volumes is their discussion of a wide range of job titles involving translation and interpreting in a variety of historical contexts, which goes to show how "[the] activities [of translators and interpreters] featured in a long list of jobs and duties that weren't always well-delineated or associated with what we

know today as professional translation and interpreting" (Alonso 2012, 40) and, by inference, with what is defined in the 2012 volume as mediation.

The label 'mediation' remains, however, a staple of the descriptions that the contributors make of those jobs and duties. To give some examples: the main role of the Morisco *adalides* who participated in the rescue missions and slave-trading expeditions carried out in the sixteenth century by Canary islanders in the Barbary region was to act as "linguistic mediator[s]" (Sarmiento 2015, 77); the *farautes* who were employed by the Spanish colonial authorities in the aftermath of the Araucanian rebellion of 1598 were commonly mistrusted on account of their being "mestizo mediators" (Payàs 2015, 25); the so-called *capitanes de amigos* in the Araucanía region were "indispensable mediator[s] for translating not merely the language [of the Araucanians], but [also] cultural difference" (Roulet 2015, 63); and, some four centuries later, 'terp' (a clipping of 'interpreter'), 'dusty', and 'fixer' are all names for different "linguistic mediators" serving in the most recent war in Afghanistan (Alonso 2015, 163). Needless to say, the variety of uses of 'mediator' shown above raises serious doubts about the assumption of neutrality that has come to be associated with the notion of mediation, but it also raises some doubts about retaining the collocation 'linguistic mediation' in the absence of any intent to actually solve a conflict (surely, none of the four types of 'linguistic mediators' mentioned above was in the business of conflict resolution).

To take the above example of *farautes* as a case in point, it is also far from clear how appropriate it is to frame translation and interpreting as a form of cultural (besides linguistic) mediation in situations of violent conflict, where there is a high degree of mistrust toward colonial subjects and intercultural communication is more often than not filtered intraculturally. Payàs notes in this regard the existence of "a whole system of mediation" (2012, 27) in southern Araucanía that went well beyond the (intercultural) work of interpreters. Priests, for example, had the duty to oversee and, if necessary, challenge interpreters at *parlamentos* on account of their being "accredited mediator[s] in the eyes of the divine" (Valenzuela 2012, 199). Similarly, in her description of an Inquisition trial in Mexico in 1539, Alonso observes how the three Franciscan priests that acted as interpreters had been "endowed with the absolute trust of the dominant group (colonial authorities and the Spanish church authorities) and had proven their experience in the field (knowledge of cultural and anthropological aspects) and their broad knowledge of the language [Nahuatl]" (2012, 57). By contrast, the two indigenous interpreters who also served in that trial are portrayed as standing much farther away from colonial power, "even if they were employed by top colonial officials, and there was no other option but to trust willingly and beforehand that their renditions would be truthful" (58). It appears, then, that the intercultural mediation of indigenous and, at times, *mestizo* interpreters was largely overridden by

the greater authority and credibility of priests as members of the same culture as the colonizers.

Payàs goes some way in the direction of providing alternatives to the categorization of translators and interpreters as mediators by portraying them instead as 'military assistants', 'agents', and 'soldiers' who provide "not only interpreting services [to their principals] but [also] other information [i.e., intelligence] services" (2012, 23). Hers is the most explicit attempt to question the assumption of neutrality by replacing 'mediator' with more pointed terms. At the same time, her discussion of interpreters does not make her drop the term 'mediator' altogether, since, regardless of questions of ideology and allegiance, the use of interpreters was driven by a mutual interest to achieve benefits through cooperation. It is significant to note here that, although by the nineteenth century interpreting was no longer strictly needed for the purposes of negotiation, interpreters kept rendering their services at *parlamentos* because, as Payàs writes, "the [two] sides recognize[d] the [strategic] need for [the figure of the] interpreter [and] beg[a]n to learn to operate with him and use him" (29).

Putting aside the somewhat facile arguments about neutrality and the ideal of the peaceful translator, the discussion of interpreters in these volumes makes clear that the (more or less successful) normalization of intercultural relations in southern Araucanía was aided by the recourse to linguistic mediation. On the other hand, while such discussion may help clarify the cultural facets of mediation in situations of violent conflict, it is far from clear how attention to these facets may illuminate our understanding of translation and interpreting as forms of (cultural, yes, but also linguistic) mediation. Two final examples should suffice to illustrate this point: during the conflicts between the Pehuenche and the Huilliche Araucanians in the late eighteenth century, the specific mediators that epitomize the figure of the cultural translator in these volumes (the *capitanes de amigos*) were "not required to speak the Mapudungun language" (Roulet 2015, 57). By contrast, the Spanish captives in southern Araucanía who joined the colonial army after being released in 1641 were recruited as interpreters for their "accurate knowledge of the [Mapudungun] language" (Iván Inostroza, quoted in Alonso 2012, 46).

To summarize and conclude, these volumes will furnish readers of Spanish who are interested in colonial translation with an assortment of case studies on the roles played by translators and, especially, interpreters in the Araucanía region as well as in the Barbary region and a variety of other places in the case of the 2015 volume. To my knowledge, these places have hardly received any attention in translation history, and many of the contributions to these volumes convincingly show that they are of interest. Specifically in the case of Araucanía, the chapters on Spanish-Araucanian relations are a welcome addition to recent scholarship on

translation in the Spanish empire (e.g., Valdeón 2014; Ríos Castaño 2014) and provide rich fodder for power-focused translation studies.

The volumes will also furnish readers with some theoretical reflections that verge in some cases on the obvious and the facile (namely, in the case of the arguments on the cultural facets of translation and the interpreter's neutrality) and seem vague in others (in the case of the use of the label 'mediation'). These shortcomings notwithstanding, both volumes make a valuable contribution to the study of translation in situations of violent conflict (e.g., Inghilleri and Harding 2010).

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