

1988

Tribaliks: Contemporary Congolese Stories by Henri Lopes, Andrea Leskes

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Recommended Citation

Smith, Pamela J. Olúbùnmi, "Tribaliks: Contemporary Congolese Stories by Henri Lopes, Andrea Leskes" (1988). *Goodrich Scholarship Faculty Publications*. 33.

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Congo

Henri Lopes. *Tribaliks: Contemporary Congolese Stories*. Andrea Leskes, tr. London. Heinemann. 1987. xx + 86 pages. \$7.

The primary aim of every translation is to make the original accessible to a wider audience. This is particularly true of translations of literary works written in African and European languages (French and Portuguese). Because a translation vacuum exists in African literature at this time, competent translations of African-language literature and African literary texts written in French and Portuguese are particularly welcome to teachers of African literature in America, who will, to a lesser degree, no longer rely only on literary works originally written in English. Moreover, the availability of competent English translations will produce a somewhat comprehensive portrait of African literature which shows the diversity, complexity, and interest potential of this literature.

Consequently, *Tribaliks*, a book of eight short stories about modern Africa's Westernized urban elite who nurture the very neocolonialist structures which inhibit the development of egalitarian modern states in Africa today, is a welcome addition to the relatively small number of existing translations of African literature. The themes in-

clude sex, politics, the role of women in African society, and tribalism. The accompanying introduction, though sketchy, provides the non-African reader with biographical and historical information on the cultural tensions and upheavals which have ingrained tribalism into the political fabric of modern Africa. However, the translator's note justifying the rendering of *Tribaliques* as *Tribaliks* is troubling.

Unfortunately, Andrea Leskes's choice of a construct rather than the retention of the original French title, as Anne Adams did in her translated version of *Tribaliques*, erroneously delineates a recurring but not necessarily central theme. Also missing in the Leskes translation is a crucial preface to the original by Guy Tirolien which is retained in the Adams version. A separate glossary of African words would have been helpful. A few errors, probably oversights in proofreading, stand out: "some were doubled up two [to] a bed" (66); "the policeman had shoved him [in] the back" (76); and a footnoting error, 14 should have been 15 (translator's note). Nonetheless, the stories are sound in content and style.

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