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ROSMARIE WALDROP AND THEORIES OF TRANSLATION

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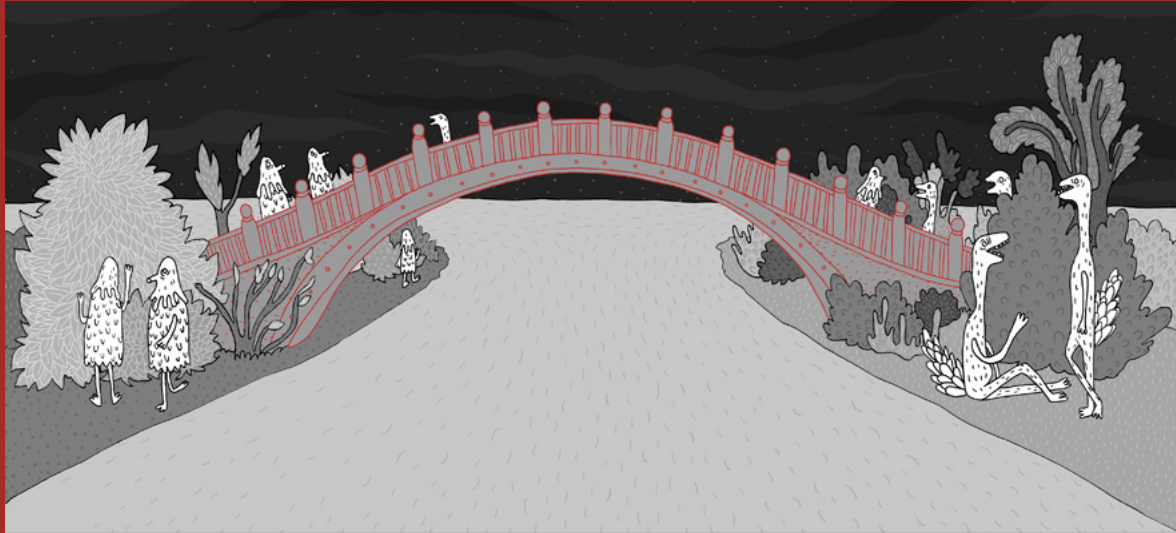
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Summary || Since the 1960s, the German-born US-American poet, Rosmarie Waldrop, has translated over 40 different works, largely from French and German, including 14 volumes by the Jewish French-language writer, Edmond Jabès (Jabès was expelled from Egypt in 1956 during the Suez Crisis). In 2003, Waldrop was made a Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres by the French Government, and in 2008 she received the PEN Award for Poetry in Translation in 2008, for her translation of Ulf Stolterfoht's book, *Lingos I-IX*. As well as practising translation, however, Waldrop has also written several significant essays which reflect on different theories of translation and their implications for practice. Much of these considerations are taken up with the question of the relation between translation and writing, of thinking the ways in which theories of writing might suggest the lines for developing a specific form of poetic practice.

This essay provides an overview of Waldrop's central thoughts on translation and contextualises these in relation to some of the major theories of literary translation. In the latter part of the essay, these ideas are developed in specific relation to Waldrop's translations of the work of Edmond Jabès and to the notion of writing practice it suggests.

Keywords || Rosmarie Waldrop | Translation | Difference | Strangeness | Poetic practice.

Translation it is that openeth the window, to let in the light; that breaketh
the shell, that we may eat the kernell; that putteth aside the curtain, that
we may look into the most holy place; that removeth the cover of the
well, that we may come by the water.

“Preface to the Reader,” King James Translators

The German-born contemporary US-American poet Rosmarie Waldrop begins the “Translation” section of her volume of collected essays, *Dissonance*, with an epigraph drawn from Anne Carson’s poem which reads, “the space between two languages is a space like no other” (Waldrop, 2005: 135). The translator of over 40 works from French and German, it is this “no other” which is particularly relevant to understanding Waldrop’s theory and practice of translation. For Waldrop, that is to say, translation is non-equivalent. As she puts it in interview, “what matters”, Waldrop writes, “is not things but what happens between them. Or if you take the linguistic model, it is not the phoneme but the connection of phonemes that makes language, the differences in the sequence [...] The gaps keep the questions in relation” (Retallack: 349).

“Between” also happens to be the title of one of Waldrop’s earliest poems written in English and, perhaps more than any other, it is the word that best characterises Waldrop’s distinctive and highly influential approach to both poetic practice and translation over the last four decades. Hers is a writing of betweens, of crossings, of differences and relations. “I enter at a skewed angle,” Waldrop writes in the notebook, *The Ground is the Only Figure*, “through the fissures, the slight difference” (Waldrop, 2005: 223). As the speaker of that early poem comments, “I’m not quite at home / on either side of the Atlantic” because “to change your country / doesn’t make you / grow”:

it doesn’t make you change so much
you can’t remember
I remember
things are much the same
so much the same the
differences are barbed (Waldrop, 1972: 16).

Since the beginning Waldrop has been careful to caution against any simple conflation of writing with biography, remarking on one occasion that “it is not just a matter of my personal situation between countries and cultures. Our reality is no longer substances, but systems of relations” (Waldrop, 2005: 265). But then, of course, neither is it easy to maintain life and work at a permanent distance from one another. The proper relation is one of cross-tracing, a subtle and always shifting contour weaving itself between life and writing and back again. The same applies to the work of translation. As another of Waldrop’s early poems, “For Harriet”, has it:

you can't pick out
a thing all by itself
each weaves together
with the next
inside and outside (Waldrop, 1972: 43).

In a different register, just as no author stands alone so no text exists independently of the various lives of its author(s). So it is that, for Waldrop, translation is frequently turned in at least two directions at once. No doubt these directions are in part primarily geographical, the result of Waldrop's relocation from Germany to America in the late 1950s. As Waldrop puts it, "as an immigrant to the United States, I came to a point where I could not go on writing poems in German while "living" in English. Translating (from English to German, at that time) was the natural substitute" (Waldrop, 2005: 137). Yet as Waldrop goes on to add, writing in her adopted language of English "came before translating into it, so that even my particular state as a person between languages cannot altogether account for any persistence in this seemingly unrewarding, nearly impossible activity" (Waldrop, 2005: 137).

Developing these notions with specific reference to the practice of translation, Waldrop goes on to specify how translation does not aim at simple transmission of content, but rather opens a rift between word and meaning, a discord which, in its opening, draws attention to a strangeness at the heart of language, a restlessness which does something else, something other than simply render a work from one language to another. As Edwin Gentzler points out, etymologically "translate" is derived from the Latin word *translatus*, meaning "carried over", and *translatus* is the past participle of *transferre*, whereby:

the Latin *ferre* means "to carry" or "to transport" as in carrying a shield, and was often used to mean to bear or convey with the notion of motion (Homer), as in ships borne by the forces of wind. It also meant to endure, to suffer, as in to bear a mental burden, and survives in expressions such as "you're not faring well" [...] translation refers to the sense of roads or ways that lead to a place, as in a door leading to a garden, or a road leading to a city, conveying a sense of stretching or extension toward (Gentzler, 2001: 166).

In her essay from 1984, "The Joy of the Demiurge", Waldrop wonders about the reasons for engaging so fully in such an activity. "I have often asked myself why I go on translating," Waldrop comments, "instead of concentrating exclusively on writing my own poetry. The woes of the translator are all too well known: little thanks, poor pay, and plenty of abuse" (Waldrop, 2005: 137). Add to this, Waldrop continues, the reluctance of US-American publishers to add non-commissioned translations to their lists, and the sheer persistence of Waldrop's enterprise seems perhaps even more idiosyncratic. Occasionally,

Waldrop writes, the process and discipline of translation has helped refocus her own writing when it was stalled. Similarly, at least in part her interest in translation stems from an interest in assuming the role of “mediator” between languages, although as Waldrop also adds, if that really was one of the central motivations behind her work as a translator, she would have served readers better simply by “teaching them the language” (Waldrop, 2005: 137).

As might be expected from these comments, Waldrop locates the main reasons for her ongoing engagement in the work of translation somewhere else, that elusive other world of the elsewhere which, as it turns out, always somehow manages to evade both definition and appropriation, and which carries with it the unsettling yet not uncommon reverberations of the uncanny. “As I read the original work,” Waldrop writes, “I admire it. I am overwhelmed. I would like to have written it. Clearly, I am envious – envious enough to make it mine at all cost, at the cost of destroying it. Work, I take pleasure in destroying the work exactly because it means making it mine. And I assuage what guilt I might feel by promising that I will make reparation, that I will labor to restore the destroyed beauty in my language – also, of course, by the knowledge that *I do not actually touch the original within its own language*” (Waldrop, 2005: 138). Like every reader, the translator reads through their own experience. As Alberto Manguel puts it, “beyond the literal sense and the literary meaning, the text we read acquires the projection of our own experience, the shadow, as it were, of who we are” (Manguel, 1996: 267).

This is a view which is widespread across translation studies. Christopher Middleton, for instance, himself published by Burning Deck in 1970, echoes this notion of the importance of engagement between the translator and the work, commenting in interview how “it is necessary to know as much as you can about the whole work of the author. Not necessarily about his life and epoch, but to be receptive to the stratagems of his mind, his kind of sentence, and the kind of syntactical behaviour his language shows” (Honig, 1976: 1592). Even in the context of such theories of translation, however, Waldrop’s last statement here is striking in its sense of translation as leaving the original work well alone. For John Johnston such a view corresponds to a sense of translation as a simulacrum whereby, in contradistinction of the Platonic model which privileges similitude and self-identity and construes the simulacrum as bad in respect of its difference to the Idea, the simulacrum is that which simultaneously produces and maintains difference, which de-centres and diverges, and as such opens out into other resonances. Rather than faithfully reproducing meanings of a text, then, Johnston argues translations “forge a new language in which both languages “are present as two diverging but resonant series of words. In a reversal of the relationship between “original” and “imitation,” the translations propose themselves as the

“origin” of a new set of meanings sometimes indistinguishable from a-signifying verbal intensities” (Johnston, 1992: 49). In this sense, translation does not so much alter the original work as simultaneously preserve its language and recast it into something else, something beyond resemblance. As Johnston continues:

the Latin *ferre* means “to carry” or “to transport” as in carrying a shield, and was often used to mean to bear or convey with the notion of motion (Homer), as in ships borne by the forces of wind. It also meant to endure, to suffer, as in to bear a mental burden, and survives in expressions such as “you’re not faring well” [...] translation refers to the sense of roads or ways that lead to a place, as in a door leading to a garden, or a road leading to a city, conveying a sense of stretching or extension toward (Gentzler, 2001: 166).

Indeed, it is precisely the implications of such an argument that underpins Waldrop’s notion of translation as what she terms “irreducible strangeness”. For Waldrop translation is an act of exploration or what Waldrop terms a “double exploration” because “the translator must not only explore the original, but also search the target language for an idiom, a language within language” (Waldrop, 2002: 7). As Walter Benjamin writes in his essay, “The Task of the Translator,” translation should aim to “expand and deepen [...] language by means of the foreign language,” to sound “some strangeness in the proportion”, “a trace of the foreign in the translation” (Benjamin, 1968: 74). For Benjamin, that is to say, the “transmission” or “carrying of one to another” of translation is centred on notions of contiguity rather than similitude. Every translator, Benjamin suggests, “lives by the difference of languages; every translation is founded upon this difference” (Benjamin, 1968: 79). Thus, it is not so much that a translation seeks to resemble the work to be translated, but rather, as Blanchot notes, that translation raises “a question of an identity on the basis of alterity: the same work in two languages, both because of their foreignness and by making visible, in their foreignness, what makes this work such that it will always be *other*” (Blanchot, 1997: 59-60). The translated work, in other words, is never at home¹.

As a result of this alterity, Benjamin continues, “translation must in large measure refrain from wanting to communicate something, from rendering the sense” (Benjamin, 1968: 81). Here Benjamin echoes the hugely influential ideas on translation set out by the German Romantic Friedrich Schleiermacher’s concept of “foreignisation” and of bringing the reader to the foreign text, that is, of aiming “to give the reader, through the translation, the impression he would have received as a German reading the work in the original language” (Schleiermacher, 2004: 50). Or as Wilhelm von Humboldt put it a year later in his introduction to his translation of Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* in 1816, it is important to give “the translation a certain tinge of foreignness” (Humboldt, 1997: 240). Yet while one of Benjamin’s

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1 | For more on the ‘unhomeliness’ of translation, see Andrew Benjamin, ‘Translating Origins: Psychoanalysis and Philosophy,’ in Venuti (1992): 18-41.

main critical aims was to conceive a practice of translation which does not attempt to sound as if it were written in the host language, Benjamin's ultimate and increasingly influential hermeneutic notion of "translatability" or "pure language" marks the point at which Benjamin's and Waldrop's conceptions of translation diverge most significantly. For Benjamin, that is to say, translation aims both for a kind of illumination and liberation, one currently forgotten but which precedes the attempt to build the tower of Babel when, according to the Book of Genesis, before the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech" and which the Kabbalists believed was also the language of paradise. "Seen thus," George Steiner writes, "translation is a teleological imperative, a stubborn searching out of all the apertures, translucencies, sluice-gates through which the divided streams of human speech pursue their destined return to a single sea" (Steiner, 1975: 244).

Yet it is a form of illumination and liberation which also remains faithful to Saint Paul's excursus on *pneuma* in I Corinthians 14 which instantiates an irresolvable differentiation between letter and spirit and which prohibits the translation of "spirit", "authentic speech" and understands the words of Christ to be beyond the scope of human discourse, unspeakable, what St Paul terms, in an interesting echo of the above sense of foreignisation, "arcana verba", a language of tongues, inassimilable, always already non-equivalent, foreign, otherwise, those noumena which, in Kant's phrase, "mark the limits of our sensible knowledge" and which "leave open a space which we can fill neither through possible experience nor through pure understanding" (Kant, 1929: A289/B343). Translation, St Paul goes on to elucidate in II Corinthians 12:4, would be blasphemy, or at the very least that form of translation which does not simultaneously erase itself in the face of its tracing of the foreign, translating the untranslatable *as untranslatable*. As Christopher Middleton puts it, "one of the simplest and most creative ways of considering the act of translation is to regard it as a minimal, perhaps vestigial, but still exemplary encounter with 'the other'" (Honig, 1976: 1602). Translation is exemplary precisely because it registers difference *qua* difference, because it is not quite equivalent, because it leaves a space open for disagreement and disappearance, Heraclitus's one differing in itself, *hen diapheron heautoi*, where *diapherein* is based on the root *diaphero* which means "to carry from one to the other, to carry across," but which in Heraclitus also carries the metaphorical meaning "to toss about, to be disrupted" and which Derrida, in *Margins of Difference*, goes on to term the "play of traces" or *difference* (Derrida, 1980: 15; Liddell, 1925: 417). The absent text, Middleton continues, "is the one we are helped to conceive of by the existence of the text before us" (Honig, 1976: 1602). Or as the contemporary US-American poet, Forrest Gander, puts it, "in a good translation, the original may be veiled, but it doesn't disappear" (Gander, 2000:

88). Walter Benjamin: good translation does “not cover the original, does not black its light, but allows the pure language, as though reinforced by its own medium, to shine upon the original all the more fully” (Benjamin: 1968: 72).

Waldrop’s reading of Benjamin’s sense of “pure language” is both more pragmatic and more material. For Waldrop, in other words, “pure language” is premised first and foremost on the assumption of a “central relationship between languages”, the possibility of which is confirmed by the fact that translation is considered possible at all (Waldrop, 2005: 139). Waldrop’s critical difference here stems from her sense that translation does not progress towards some kind of abstraction but, on the contrary, “toward another embodiment in a concrete, particular language” (Waldrop, 2005: 139). In this, Waldrop suggests, the task of the translator is not to try to render the original work *as it is* in another language but to approximate its “‘figures’ of thought”, in Cicero’s famous phrase, Nietzsche’s “the movement of style”, to give some kind of sense of its form, its rhythm, its tonal structure, its grammar and its contexts, all the while emphasising both the failure of equivalence and the establishment of something, if not new, then different (Cicero, 1960: 364). As Ezra Pound put it when introducing his translations of Cavalcanti, “it is conceivable the poetry of a far-off time or place requires a translation not only of word and of spirit, but of “accompaniment” (Pound, 1983: 12). As Waldrop continues, the notion of translation as accompaniment holds also for contemporary works. “We must understand,” Waldrop writes, “what Walter Benjamin has described as the intentionality of a work, the ways in which it relates to its language and culture” (Waldrop, 2002: 55).

Translation is approximation rather than duplication. A re-giving of form. I’ve sometimes described it as trying to get down to the genetic code of a work [...] And from that “genetic code,” you rebuild it in the other language, but having the instructions that a code would have (Foster, 1994: 149).

Translations “are woven into a textual history that is always transforming terms, translating other terms” (Gentzler, 2001: 171).

Waldrop here is close to Derrida’s recasting of Benjamin’s abstracted sense of “pure language” as the constantly turning, detouring turn of phrase, *différance*². As a result, and in a manner similar to that which underpins her sense of the book rather than the individual poem or line as the primary compositional measure, Waldrop writes how “the *unit* of translation is the whole work rather than the single sentence or line – let alone the single word” (Waldrop, 2005: 139). Waldrop’s choice of language here underscores her sense of translation as something which, while being related to the original work, is also

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2 | See Derrida, J., ‘Des Tours de Babel’ in J.F. Graham (1985): 165-207.

particular, distinctive, different; it is related yet otherwise, the space of the between. Thus, while agreeing with Benjamin's sense that translation, at its best, "does not cover the original, does not block its light" (Benjamin, 1968: 70) Waldrop specifies how, rather than moving toward the Hegelian abstraction of Benjamin's "pure language", the translated work undergoes "something more like erosion. It is weathered by the passage of time" (Waldrop, 2005: 142). "A translation that can suggest the lost beauty of the original," Waldrop goes on to say, "is preferable to a smooth replica that pretends to be the original itself" (Waldrop, 2005: 143). No translation is transparent; "even the most faithful of translations will bear the mark of the translator, of her time, of her cultural background," and the cracks upon which the text rests and depends, into which perhaps translation might itself inevitably, clunkily fall, while not being directly visible, might still be felt, and sometimes even more acutely. As Christopher Middleton puts it, such a view of translation enables you "to look over the edges of the conventions of your own language" (Honig, 1976: 1596). Indeed, it is precisely from the perspective of this effect that Waldrop comments on the ways in which the locus of translation conjures "new ground somewhere between the two languages, stretching the border of the target language beyond where it was before" (Waldrop, 2005: 156). Or as Vincent Broqua puts it, Waldrop writes "between languages, in the slit, on the edge or in the "doorway" where one language becomes other." It is "in this infinitesimal site," Broqua continues, that Waldrop plays out the exchange of very particular idioms (Broqua, 2007).

Elsewhere Waldrop goes on to align the irreducibly strange work of translation with Hans-Georg Gadamer's notion of the "third dimension" of a work of literature, that zone where:

Nothing that is said has its truth simply in itself, but refers instead backward and forward to what is unsaid. Every assertion is motivated, that is, one can sensibly ask of everything that is said, "Why do you say that?" And only when what is not said is understood along with what is said is an assertion understandable.

As Waldrop puts it, "it takes words to make things visible" (Waldrop, 2005: 149). Here silence becomes a space "for the utterance rather than an ultimate limit" and "a space," Waldrop writes, no matter how transitive, "can be explored, even this space of the unsaid" (Waldrop, 2005: 150-1).

Within the contexts of these theoretical perspectives, and following a tradition of translation practice stretching back to Dryden and Goethe but being perhaps developed most significantly in Roman Jakobson's sense of the translation process consisting of the intralingual, the interlingual and the intersemiotic³, Waldrop's practice of translation

goes through three main stages. The first stage, Waldrop notes, involves an intense period of reading in tandem with an initial and very loose drafting process. As Waldrop puts it, during this process she is not after simply what the work says but rather both an understanding of and engagement with its very creative process, its procedures, methods, and idiosyncrasies, formal or otherwise. In the second stage Waldrop disregards the original entirely, treating what she calls “the mess of the first draft (which is not quite English, often makes no sense at all) as if it were a draft of my own” and attempts to make a work of her own out of it. Waldrop refers to this stage as “the stage of separation” (Waldrop, 2005: 159). In the third stage, Waldrop returns to the original text and tries to “wrestle the English as close to the original language as possible” (Waldrop: 2005: 158). Often the main work involved in this final stage revolves around syntax and rhythm, around letting the shape and flow of the translation approach those in the original text, around letting the translated work exist in the space of the between, in the space of open form, which however open is still a form, still contains bounds; or as Goethe formulated it, letting it be known that the translated text does not exist “instead of the other but in its place” (Steiner, 1975: 258). George Steiner, in his hugely influential outline of the history of translation, *After Babel*, argues for the vital and expressive importance of this unresolved space of the between, writing how:

Good translation [...] can be defined as that in which the dialectic of impenetrability and ingress, of intractable alienness and felt “at-homeness” remains unresolved, but expressive. Out of the tension of resistance and affinity, a tension directly proportional to the proximity of the two languages and historical communities, grows the elucidative strangeness of the great translation (Steiner, 1975: 413).

As Waldrop puts it, and as with her poetics more generally, “translation’s ultimate task may be to bear witness to the *essentially* irreducible strangeness between languages – but its immediate task is exactly to explore this space,” the shape of thinking a text makes (Waldrop, 2005: 159). In this, Waldrop argues, translation is a process of “dialogue and collaboration” (Waldrop, 2002: 63). Indeed, this is precisely why Maurice Blanchot holds that translation “is the sheer play of difference: it constantly makes allusion to difference, dissimulates difference, but by occasionally revealing and often accentuating it, translation becomes the very life of this difference” (Blanchot, 1997: 58). “Not resemblance,” Blanchot goes on to develop, “but identity on the basis of otherness” (Blanchot, 1997: 58). Alberto Manguel puts it in the following terms:

As we read a text in our own language, the text itself becomes a barrier. We can go into it as far as its words allow, embracing all their possible definitions; we can bring other texts to bear upon it and to reflect it, as in a hall of mirrors; we can construct another, critical text that will extend

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3 | If for a brief overview of Jakobson’s theory, see Munday (2001): 37-8.

and illuminate the one we are reading; but we cannot escape the fact that its language is the limit of our universe. Translation proposes a sort of parallel universe, another space and time in which the text reveals other, extraordinary possible meanings. For these meanings, however, there are no words, since they exist in the intuitive no man's land between the language of the original and the language of the translator (Manguel, 1996: 276).

When the text that is to be translated is itself already linguistically difficult the theoretical and practical problems of translation becomes even more acute. As Forrest Gander asks, "how are we to deal with an original text that is itself syntactically innovative? If the literal-syntax translator translates a conventional word order (in the original language) into an unconventional order (in the target language), how can work that is unconventional in the first place be given its due?" (Gander, 2000: 118).

Given the particular type of avant-garde work Waldrop usually translates, it is a question which inevitably preoccupies much of Waldrop's practical work as a translator, but perhaps nowhere more acutely than in her landmark translations of Edmond Jabès, on which she has been engaged for four decades and which has also played one of the most pivotal roles in the development of Waldrop's own poetics.

Waldrop first came across Jabès's work when she and Keith came across a copy of Jabès's early collected poems, *Je bâtis ma demeure*, in a bookshop in Aix-en-Provence in 1957. Returning to Paris in 1966, Waldrop purchased a copy of the recently published first volume of Jabès's monumental *Le Livre des Questions*. As Waldrop describes it, "it was an overwhelming experience for me to read this first volume. It was a *coup de foudre*" (Foster, 1994: 140). By 1969 Waldrop had translated around fifty pages of *The Book of Questions* but had been unsuccessful in finding a publisher. All twenty of the publishers she approached rejected the manuscript on the basis that, while Jabès's work was interesting, the publication of translations was not profitable (Waldrop. 2002: 5). As a result, Waldrop temporarily shelved the project, deciding instead to concentrate, at least for a time, on her own writing. Yet Waldrop still travelled with a copy of *Le Livre des Questions* when she and Keith were to spend the year 1970-71 on fellowship in Paris, taking Jabès's text as a "back-up project" in case her own work stuttered to take hold. In January 1970 the US-American poet, George Tysh, organised a series of poetry readings at the Waldrop's apartment, to which the French poet, Claude Royet-Journoud comes and notices a copy of Jabès's *Le Livre des Questions* on the bookshelf. The next afternoon, Royet-Journoud brings Jabès to meet Waldrop. As Waldrop recalls, Jabès was a "slight" figure, "a deeply lined face, extraordinary blue eyes. Eyes that seem to be moving outward, toward me. Searching. A

sense of gentleness, decorum and warmth. I give him what I have translated. A few days later he recognizes himself in the rhythm” (Waldrop, 2002: 5).

This friendship has sustained and deepened her encounter with his highly individual, idiosyncratic writing. In point of fact, the matter of Jabès’s influence on the development and shape of Waldrop’s own poetics is complex, frequently personal and intuitive, and built up slowly over a long period of study, attention, and friendship. Waldrop credits Jabès with pushing her to think in terms of books as poetic unit, as space, ground, vessel within which to work, its layerings, increments, spacings. Indeed, as Waldrop puts it, it is “specifically “Jabès’s insistence on the book on the one hand (as the writer’s only place, as Mallarmé’s “spiritual instrument”) and fragmentation on the other, that focuses my own contradictory impulses toward flow and fragment” (Waldrop, 2002: 75). What really stands out from Jabès’s project for Waldrop is the way in which Jabès makes transparent “the structure of language, of signification. He makes us aware of the imaginary line between signifier and signified by constantly crossing it. And the line between symbol and index. So that at the limits of signification language is made to *show* itself” (Waldrop, 2002: 87). Or again:

Edmond Jabès writes a text over which he claims no authorial power, a text which he claims only to copy, make legible. This is a remarkable claim in itself [...] everything in his work – the shifting voices and perspectives, the breaks of mode, tautologies, alogical sequences and contradictory metaphors, the stress on uncertainty (the constant subjunctive) – all combine to subvert the authority we expect in a book. Authority of statement, of closure and linearity, the confidence in a narrative thread, continuity of temporal and causal sequence. And most of all, the authority of the author (Waldrop, 2002: 142-3).

As Rimmon-Kenan explains, “holes or gaps are so central in narrative fiction because the materials the text provides for the reconstruction of a world (or a story) are insufficient for saturation” (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 127). But those holes are also the condition of the world itself, its stutter, its ground, its experience. Thus, for Hank Lazer, “the qualities of exile, of otherness, of removal, of being beside that recur in Jabès’s writing have their foundation (in addition to Jabès’s personal, biographical experience) in Jewish history and in Kabbalistic interpretation” (Lazer, 2003).

Edmond Jabès has commented how “we always start out from a written text and come back to the text to be written, from the sea to the sea, from the page to the page” (Jabès, 1993: 40). “In the beginning is hermeneutics,” repeats Jacques Derrida (Derrida, 2001, 81)⁴. There always emerges on the page before us a blank spot, a *blindsight*, that experience where, according to the neuroscientist,

Antonio R. Damasio, a person actually sees more than they are consciously aware. It is how that blindsight is read that counts.

The notion that all writing is, in one form or another, a process of re-writing has a long history, stretching back at least as far back as Moses's breaking of the tablets or the Kabbalistic tradition of the breaking of the Vessels, where, according to Luria, God's light proved too much for the vessels meant to contain it and the vessels displaced or shattered. In both cases, the world, here and now, is out of place, composed of the shards of this broken light, these shattered words. As Waldrop notes, according to the Zohar, "in every word shine multiple lights." Similarly, as Susan Handelman develops: "Thus in Kabbalah, it is not only the tablets of the law that are broken. The universe itself has undergone a primordial shattering; God has withdrawn; the Vessels are broken; the divine sparks are lost in the material world. As Scholem reads it, Kabbalah is a great myth of exile" (Handelman, 1985: 21).

Here the practice of translation, like the art of reading well, involves being out of place, unsure, unsteady; it entails equivocation. It is to set off, to wander, to go looking, but to find myself travelling in circles, further away, elsewhere. In so doing, it necessitates that such reading be counter-intuitive, that it proceed in fits and starts, with questions and effacements, in manners always turning, always bouncing against the limit of what it is has not been quite possible to say: blindsights, pieces. Thus, as Waldrop puts it, "the spark given off by the edges of the shards, the fragments, is stronger the more abrupt the cut, the more strongly it makes us feel the lack of transition, the more disparate the surrounding texts" (Waldrop, 2002: 21).

Attempts to adhere as closely as possible to Jabès's French, the effect of his linguistic play, slippage, punning, sound, complexity, trying to reproduce his syntax, lexicon and typography, which involves trying to come up with comparable effects, often twisting English into strange new forms. Waldrop wants, she says, to "write" Jabès in English, "write à l'écoute de Jabès, write listening to his French" (Waldrop, 2002: 27). The methodological question at issue here concerns the criteria for determining the basis for a comparison, and this is a moot point. As Philip Lewis has noted, this is "the strong, forceful translation that values experimentation, tampers with usage, seeks to match the polyvalencies or pluralivocities or expressive stresses of the original by producing its own" (Lewis, 1992: 261).

"The translator's task is precisely to render the source text, the original author's interpretation of a given theme expressed in a number of variations, accessible to readers not familiar with these variations, by replacing the original author's variation with their equivalents in a different language, time, place, and tradition. Particular emphasis

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4 | For more on Jabès, see, among others: Caws (1988), Derrida (2001), Israel-Pelletier (2008), Mole (1997), and Motte (1990).

must be given to the fact that the translator has to replace *all* the variations contained in the source text by their equivalents” (Lefevre, 1975: 99). When specific word play is lost in the process of translation, Waldrop prefers to leave the section in French, accompanied by a more literal but less literary translation. It is, Waldrop writes, an “awkward” solution but as well as illustrating the manner and mode of the original text, it is a solution which has the added advantage of allowing “difference, foreignness to come to the fore.” It makes us aware, Waldrop writes, “of the space *between* the languages where translation lives” and the way in which the path from one language to another is neither straight nor symmetrical, but curved, a language where the question of language itself is at stake (Waldrop, 2002: 71).

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ROSMARIE WALDROP Y LAS TEORÍAS DE LA TRADUCCIÓN

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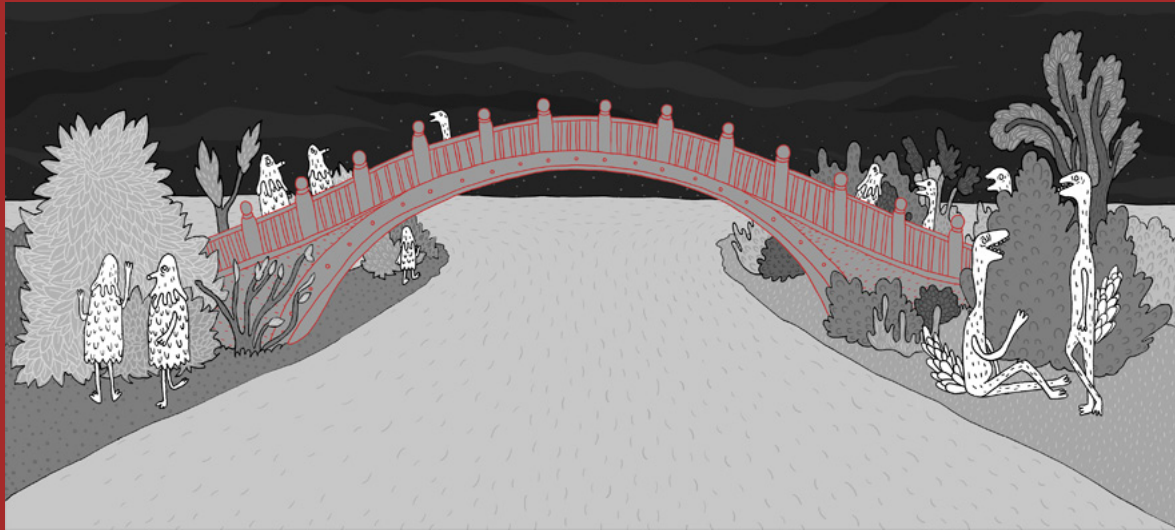
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Resumen || Desde los años 60, la poetisa Estadounidense de origen alemán Rosmarie Waldrop ha traducido cerca de 40 obras diferentes, en su mayor parte del francés y el alemán, incluyendo 14 volúmenes del escritor judío francófono Edmond Jabès (Jabès fue expulsado de Egipto en 1956, durante la Crisis de Suez). En 2003 Waldrop fue nombrada Caballero de las Artes y las Letras por el gobierno francés, y en 2008 recibió el *PEN Award for Poetry in Translation*, por su traducción del libro de Ulf Stolterfoht's, *Lingos I-IX*. Además de dedicarse a la traducción, Waldrop también ha escrito varios ensayos significativos que reflexionan sobre diversas teorías de la traducción y su repercusión en la práctica. Muchas de estas reflexiones abordan el tema de la relación entre traducción y escritura, y se plantean de qué maneras las teorías de la escritura podrían sugerir las pautas para el desarrollo de una forma específica de práctica poética. Este artículo proporciona una visión general de las principales ideas de Waldrop sobre traducción y contextualiza dichas ideas en relación con algunas de las más importantes teorías de la traducción literaria. En la última parte del artículo, estas ideas se desarrollan en relación específica con las traducciones de Waldrop de la obra de Edmond Jabès y con la noción de práctica de la escritura que dicha obra sugiere.

Palabras clave || Rosmarie Waldrop | Traducción | Diferencia | Rareza | Práctica poética.

Summary || Since the 1960s, the German-born US-American poet, Rosmarie Waldrop, has translated over 40 different works, largely from French and German, including 14 volumes by the Jewish French-language writer, Edmond Jabès (Jabès was expelled from Egypt in 1956 during the Suez Crisis). In 2003, Waldrop was made a Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres by the French Government, and in 2008 she received the PEN Award for Poetry in Translation in 2008, for her translation of Ulf Stolterfoht's book, *Lingos I-IX*. As well as practising translation, however, Waldrop has also written several significant essays which reflect on different theories of translation and their implications for practice. Much of these considerations are taken up with the question of the relation between translation and writing, of thinking the ways in which theories of writing might suggest the lines for developing a specific form of poetic practice. This essay provides an overview of Waldrop's central thoughts on translation and contextualises these in relation to some of the major theories of literary translation. In the latter part of the essay, these ideas are developed in specific relation to Waldrop's translations of the work of Edmond Jabès and to the notion of writing practice it suggests.

Keywords || Rosmarie Waldrop | Translation | Difference | Strangeness | Poetic practice.

Translation it is that openeth the window, to let in the light; that breaketh the shell, that we may eat the kernell; that putteth aside the curtain, that we may look into the most holy place; that removeth the cover of the well, that we may come by the water.

“Preface to the Reader,” King James Translators

La poetisa contemporánea estadounidense de origen alemán Rosmarie Waldrop comienza la sección sobre «Traducción» de su recopilación de ensayos *Dissonance* con un epígrafe extraído de un poema de Anne Carson que reza, «the space between two languages is a space like no other» (Waldrop, 2005: 135). Para Waldrop, traductora de unas 40 obras del francés y el alemán, es ese «ningún otro» lo particularmente relevante para entender su teoría y práctica de la traducción. Es decir, para ella la traducción no es equivalente. Tal y como explicó en una entrevista, «what matters», en palabras de Waldrop «is not things but what happens between them. Or if you take the linguistic model, it is not the phoneme but the connection of phonemes that makes language, the differences in the sequence [...] The gaps keep the questions in relation» (Retallack, 1999: 349).

«Between» (Entremedias) también resulta ser el título de uno de los primeros poemas de Waldrop escritos en inglés y, quizás más que ninguna otra, es la palabra que mejor ha caracterizado el distintivo y enormemente influyente enfoque de Waldrop hacia la teoría poética y la teoría de la traducción durante las última cuatro décadas. La suya es una escritura de entremedias, de cruces, de diferencias y relaciones. «I enter at a skewed angle, escribe Waldrop en su cuaderno de notas, *The Ground is the Only Figure*, «through the fissures, the slight difference» (Waldrop, 2005: 223). Como relata el narrador de ese temprano poema, «I’m not quite at home / on either side of the Atlantic» puesto que «to change your country / doesn’t make you / grow»:

it doesn’t make you change so much
you can’t remember
I remember
things are much the same
so much the same the
differences are barbed (Waldrop, 1972: 16).

Desde el principio, Waldrop ha procurado advertir contra cualquier relación entre escritura y biografía, remarcando en una ocasión que «it is not just a matter of my personal situation between countries and cultures. Our reality is no longer substances, but systems of relations» (Waldrop, 2005: 265). Ahora bien, por supuesto, no es fácil mantener una distancia permanente entre vida y obra. La relación adecuada es aquella en la que ambas se entrecruzan, un sutil y siempre cambiante contorno que se entreteje entre la vida y la escritura una y otra vez. Lo mismo puede aplicarse al ejercicio de la

traducción. Como afirma otro de los primeros poemas de Waldrop, «For Harriet»:

you can't pick out
a thing all by itself
each weaves together
with the next
inside and outside (Waldrop, 1972: 43).

En otro registro, al igual que ningún autor puede aislarse, ningún texto existe independientemente de la vida de su autor o autores. Así, para Waldrop, la traducción suele girar al menos en dos direcciones a la vez. Sin duda, dichas direcciones son en su mayor parte geográficas, como resultado del traslado de Waldrop de Alemania a los Estados Unidos de América a finales de la década de 1950. Como explica Waldrop, «as an immigrant to the United States, I came to a point where I could not go on writing poems in German while “living” in English. Translating (from English to German, at that time) was the natural substitute» (Waldrop, 2005: 137). Aunque, como Waldrop añade, escribir en su idioma de adopción «came before translating into it, so that even my particular state as a person between languages cannot altogether account for any persistence in this seemingly unrewarding, nearly impossible activity» (Waldrop, 2005: 137).

Desarrollando estos conceptos en referencia específica al ejercicio de la traducción, Waldrop continúa precisando cómo la traducción no busca la simple transmisión de contenido, sino que, más bien, abre una brecha entre palabra y significado, una discordancia que, al producirse, desvía la atención hacia una rareza en el corazón del idioma, una inquietud que va más allá del simple hecho de trasladar una obra de un idioma a otro. Como señala Gentzler, etimológicamente, «translate» (traducir) deriva de la palabra latina *translatus*, que significa «guiado», y *translatus* es el participio pasivo de *transferre*, a través del cual:

the Latin *ferre* means «to carry» or «to transport» as in carrying a shield, and was often used to mean to bear or convey with the notion of motion (Homer), as in ships borne by the forces of wind. It also meant to endure, to suffer, as in to bear a mental burden, and survives in expressions such as «you're not faring well» [...] translation refers to the sense of roads or ways that lead to a place, as in a door leading to a garden, or a road leading to a city, conveying a sense of stretching or extension toward (Gentzler, 2001: 166).

En su ensayo de 1984, «The Joy of the Demiurge», Waldrop reflexiona sobre las razones para embarcarse por completo en tal actividad. «I have often asked myself why I go on translating», comenta Waldrop, «instead of concentrating exclusively on writing

my own poetry. The woes of the translator are all too well known: little thanks, poor pay, and plenty of abuse» (Waldrop, 2005: 137). Si a esto añadimos, continúa Waldrop, la reticencia de los editores estadounidenses a añadir traducciones que no sean de encargo a sus listas, la perseverancia de Waldrop en esta empresa parece aún más idiosincrásica. En ocasiones, apunta Waldrop, el proceso y disciplina de la traducción le han servido de ayuda para reenfocar su propia escritura cuando ésta se encontraba atascada. De forma similar, al menos en parte, su interés por la traducción proviene de un interés por asumir el rol de «mediadora» entre idiomas, aunque, como también añade Waldrop, si realmente fuera esa una de las principales motivaciones detrás de su trabajo como traductora, habría ayudado más a los lectores simplemente «teaching them the language» (Waldrop, 2005: 137).

Como cabría esperar de estos comentarios, Waldrop ubica las principales razones de su continua batalla en el ejercicio de la traducción en otra parte, ese otro mundo elusivo del «elsewhere» (otro lugar), que siempre acaba, de algún modo, logrando evadirse de la definición y de la apropiación, y que lleva consigo las perturbadoras, aunque no poco comunes, resonancias de lo extraño. «As I read the original work», escribe Waldrop,

I admire it. I am overwhelmed. I would like to have written it. Clearly, I am envious – envious enough to make it mine at all cost, at the cost of destroying it. Work, I take pleasure in destroying the work exactly because it means making it mine. And I assuage what guilt I might feel by promising that I will make reparation, that I will labor to restore the destroyed beauty in my language – also, of course, by the knowledge that *I do not actually touch the original within its own language* (Waldrop, 2005: 138).

Como cualquier lector, el traductor lee a través de su propia experiencia. Como señala Alberto Manguel, «beyond the literal sense and the literary meaning, the text we read acquires the projection of our own experience, the shadow, as it were, of who we are» (Manguel, 1996: 267).

Esta es una postura muy difundida en los estudios de traducción. Por ejemplo, Christopher Middleton, que fue publicado por Burning Deck en 1970, se hace eco de esta idea de la importancia del vínculo entre el traductor y la obra, como comenta en una entrevista: «it is necessary to know as much as you can about the whole work of the author. Not necessarily about his life and epoch, but to be receptive to the stratagems of his mind, his kind of sentence, and the kind of syntactical behaviour his language shows» (Honig, 1976: 1592). Sin embargo, incluso en el contexto de estas teorías de la traducción, Waldrop pone énfasis en su idea de una traducción que deje de lado la obra original. Para John Johnston tal punto de vista se corresponde

con la percepción de la traducción como un simulacro. Dicho simulacro, en contradicción con el modelo platónico que da prioridad a la similitud y a la propia identidad y lo interpreta como perjudicial con respecto a la Idea, es el que, de manera simultánea, produce y mantiene la diferencia, el que descentra y diverge, y que como tal se extiende hacia otras resonancias. En definitiva, Johnston sostiene que, más que reproducir fielmente los significados de un texto, las traducciones «forge a new language in which both languages are present as two diverging but resonant series of words. In a reversal of the relationship between “original” and “imitation,” the translations propose themselves as the “origin” of a new set of meanings sometimes indistinguishable from a-signifying verbal intensities» (Johnston, 1992: 49). En este sentido, la traducción no altera tanto la obra original, en la medida en que, a la vez, conserva su idioma y lo remodela en algo más, que va más allá de la semejanza. Como continúa Johnston:

those translations which accomplish something different by maintaining the originary difference in and through translation, that deterritorialize the target language in such a way that it can't be recoded and recuperated by appeal to established cultural and spiritual meanings, that thereby manifest something new in the language, are also simulacra, diverging from the original but also resonant with it, bringing to fulfillment or pushing along further what the original carried only as a precursor (Johnston, 1992: 54).

En efecto, son precisamente las implicaciones de tal argumento las que sientan las bases de la idea de traducción de Waldrop como lo que ella denomina «irreducible strangeness» (rareza irreducible). Para Waldrop la traducción es un acto de exploración, o lo que ella entiende como una «doble exploración», puesto que «the translator must not only explore the original, but also search the target language for an idiom, a language within language» (Waldrop, 2002: 7). Como escribe Walter Benjamin en su artículo «La tarea del traductor», la traducción debería aspirar a «expand and deepen [...] language by means of the foreign language», a parecer «some strangeness in the proportion [...] a trace of the foreign in the translation» (Benjamin, 1968: 74). Es decir, para Benjamin, la «transmisión» o «trasvase de uno a otro» de la traducción se centra en ideas de proximidad más que de similitud. Todo traductor, sugiere Benjamin «lives by the difference of languages; every translation is founded upon this difference» (Benjamin, 1968: 79). Así, una traducción no busca tanto parecerse a la obra que se ha de traducir sino que, más bien, como apunta Blanchot, dicha traducción plantea «a question of an identity on the basis of alterity: the same work in two languages, both because of their foreignness and by making visible, in their foreignness, what makes this work such that it will always be *other*» (Blanchot, 1997: 59-60). La obra traducida, en otras palabras, nunca es local¹.

NOTAS

1 | Para más información sobre la sensación de desarraigo (unhomeliness) de la traducción, véase Andrew Benjamin, «Translating Origins: Psychoanalysis and Philosophy», en Venuti (1992): 18-41.

Como resultado de esta alteridad, continúa Benjamin, «translation must in large measure refrain from wanting to communicate something, from rendering the sense» (Benjamin, 1968: 81). Aquí Benjamin se hace eco de las enormemente influyentes ideas sobre traducción del romántico alemán Friedrich Schleiermacher, y su idea de «extranjerización» y de llevar al lector hacia el texto foráneo, es decir, intentar «to give the reader, through the translation, the impression he would have received as a German reading the work in the original language» (Schleiermacher, 2004: 50). O como expuso Wilhelm von Humboldt un año más tarde en la introducción a su traducción del *Agamenón* de Esquilo, en 1816, es importante dar a «the translation a certain tinge of foreignness» (Humboldt, 1997: 240). Sin embargo, mientras que una de las principales intenciones críticas de Benjamin era la concepción de una práctica de la traducción que no intentara sonar como si hubiese sido escrita en la lengua de llegada, la definitiva y cada vez más influyente idea hermenéutica de Benjamin de «traducibilidad» o «lenguaje puro» señala el punto en el que la concepción de traducción de Benjamin y la de Waldrop discrepan de manera más significativa. Es decir, para Benjamin, la traducción persigue tanto una forma de iluminación como una liberación, actualmente olvidada, pero que precede al intento de construcción de la torre de Babel, cuando, según el Libro del Génesis, tenía entonces toda la tierra una sola lengua y unas mismas palabras, la cual los cabalistas creían que era también la lengua del paraíso. «Seen thus», escribe George Steiner, «translation is a teleological imperative, a stubborn searching out of all the apertures, translucencies, sluice-gates through which the divided streams of human speech pursue their destined return to a single sea» (Steiner, 1975: 244).

Sin embargo, es una forma de iluminación y liberación que también permanece fiel al excursus de San Pablo sobre el «pneuma» en Corintios 14, que ejemplifica una diferenciación irremediable entre letra y espíritu y que prohíbe la traducción de «espíritu», «discurso auténtico» y que entiende las palabras de Cristo como algo indescriptible, más allá del alcance del discurso humano, lo que San Pablo denomina, en una interesante resonancia del sentido de extranjerización anteriormente mencionado, «arcana verba», una lengua de lenguas, imposible de asimilar, sin equivalente, extranjera. Dicho de otro modo, esos nómenos que, en palabras de Kant «mark the limits of our sensible knowledge» y «leave open a space which we can fill neither through possible experience nor through pure understanding» (Kant, 1929: A289/B343). La traducción, aclara San Pablo en Corintios 12:4, sería blasfemia, o al menos ese tipo de traducción que, del mismo modo, no elimina su rastro de lo extranjero, traduciendo lo intraducible como *intraducible*. Como señala Christopher Middleton, «one of the simplest and most creative ways of considering the act of translation is to regard

it as a minimal, perhaps vestigial, but still exemplary encounter with "the other"» (Honig, 1976: 1602). La traducción es ejemplar precisamente porque registra la diferencia como diferencia, porque no es del todo equivalente, porque deja un espacio abierto para el desacuerdo y la desaparición, el «lo uno en sí mismo diferente», *hen diapheron heautoi*, de Heráclito, donde *diapherein* viene de la raíz *diaphero* que significa «llevar de uno a otro, llevar a través» pero que en Heráclito también conlleva el significado metafórico de «zarandear, desbaratarse» y que Derrida, en *Margins of Difference*, pasa a denominar el «play of traces» or *difference*» (Derrida, 1980: 15; Liddell, 1925: 417). El texto ausente, continúa Middleton, «is the one we are helped to conceive of by the existence of the text before us» (Honig, 1976: 1602). O como señala el poeta estadounidense contemporáneo Forrest Gander, «in a good translation, the original may be veiled, but it doesn't disappear» (Gander, 2000: 88). Walter Benjamin: una buena traducción «not cover the original, does not black its light, but allows the pure language, as though reinforced by its own medium, to shine upon the original all the more fully» (Benjamin: 1968: 72).

La visión de Waldrop de esta idea de «lenguaje puro» de Benjamin es más pragmática y material. Para Waldrop, en otras palabras, «lenguaje puro» parte primero y ante todo de la premisa del supuesto de la existencia de una «relación central entre lenguas», cuya posibilidad se ve confirmada por el hecho de que la traducción se considera algo mínimamente posible (Waldrop, 2005: 139). La diferencia crítica de Waldrop en este caso proviene de su impresión de que la traducción no progresa hacia algún tipo de abstracción sino que, al contrario, lo hace «toward another embodiment in a concrete, particular language» (Waldrop, 2005: 139). En este caso, sugiere Waldrop, la tarea del traductor no es interpretar la obra original *como si fuera* en otro idioma, sino aproximarse a sus «figuras de pensamiento», en las famosas palabras de Cicerón, o al «movimiento de estilo» de Nietzsche, para dar algún tipo de sentido a su forma, su ritmo, su estructura tonal, su gramática y su contexto, todo el tiempo dando énfasis tanto al fracaso de la equivalencia como al establecimiento de algo, si no nuevo, entonces diferente (Cicerón, 1960: 364). Como señala Ezra Pound en la introducción a sus traducciones de Cavalcanti, «it is conceivable the poetry of a far-off time or place requires a translation not only of word and of spirit, but of "accompaniment"» (Pound, 1983: 12). Como prosigue Waldrop, la idea de traducción como acompañamiento también se mantiene en las obras contemporáneas. «We must understand», escribe Waldrop, «what Walter Benjamin has described as the intentionality of a work, the ways in which it relates to its language and culture» (Waldrop, 2002: 55).

Translation is approximation rather than duplication. A re-giving of form.

I've sometimes described it as trying to get down to the genetic code of a work [...] And from that "genetic code," you rebuild it in the other language, but having the instructions that a code would have (Foster, 1994: 149).

NOTAS

2 | Véase Derrida, J., «Des Tours de Babel» en J.F. Graham (1985): 165-207.

Las traducciones «are woven into a textual history that is always transforming terms, translating other terms» (Gentzler, 2001: 171).

Aquí Waldrop se acerca a la reinterpretación de Derrida de la idea abstracta de «lenguaje puro» de Benjamin, como un giro, una forma de habla desviada, constantemente cambiante, una diferencia². Como resultado, y de un modo similar al que cimienta su idea del libro como la medida composicional primaria, antes que el poema individual o la línea, Waldrop describe cómo «the *unit* of translation is the whole work rather than the single sentence or line – let alone the single Word» (Waldrop, 2005: 139). Aquí, la elección de lengua de Waldrop subraya su idea de la traducción como algo que, aunque sea afín a la obra original, también es particular, distintivo, diferente; es afín pero aun así es otra cosa, el espacio de entremedias. De este modo, aunque esté de acuerdo con la idea de Benjamin de que la traducción, si ésta es la mejor posible, «does not cover the original, does not block its light» (Benjamin, 1968: 70) Waldrop especifica cómo, más que aproximarse la abstracción hegeliana del «lenguaje puro» de Benjamin, la obra traducida experimenta «something more like erosion. It is weathered by the passage of time» (Waldrop, 2005: 142). «A translation that can suggest the lost beauty of the original», prosigue Waldrop, «is preferable to a smooth replica that pretends to be the original itself» (Waldrop, 2005: 143). Ninguna traducción es transparente; «even the most faithful of translations will bear the mark of the translator, of her time, of her cultural background», y las grietas sobre las que el texto se apoya, y de las que depende, en las cuales la traducción quizás podría, inevitablemente, caer torpemente, aun no siendo directamente visibles, pueden sentirse, y a veces aún con más agudeza. Como señala Christopher Middleton, esta visión de la traducción permite «to look over the edges of the conventions of your own language» (Honig, 1976: 1596). De hecho, es precisamente desde la perspectiva de este efecto que comenta Waldrop cómo el locus de la traducción evoca «new ground somewhere between the two languages, stretching the border of the target language beyond where it was before» (Waldrop, 2005: 156). O como señala Vincent Broqua, Waldrop escribe «between languages, in the slit, on the edge or in the "doorway" where one language becomes other». Es «in this infinitesimal site», continúa Broqua, donde Waldrop desarrolla el intercambio de expresiones muy particulares (Broqua, 2007).

En otro lugar, Waldrop continúa alineando la rara e irreducible tarea de la traducción con la idea de Hans-Georg Gadamer de una "tercera dimension" de una obra literaria, esa zona en la que:

Nothing that is said has its truth simply in itself, but refers instead backward and forward to what is unsaid. Every assertion is motivated, that is, one can sensibly ask of everything that is said, “Why do you say that?” And only when what is not said is understood along with what is said is an assertion understandable.

NOTAS

3 | Para una breve información general acerca de la teoría de Jakobson, véase Munday (2001): 37-8.

Como sostiene Waldrop, «it takes words to make things visible» (Waldrop, 2005: 149). En este sentido, el silencio se convierte en un espacio «for the utterance rather than an ultimate limit» y «a space,» escribe Waldrop, sin importar su transitividad, «can be explored, even this space of the unsaid» (Waldrop, 2005: 150-1).

Dentro de los contextos de estas perspectivas teóricas, y siguiendo la tradición de una práctica de la traducción que se remonta a Dryden y Goethe pero que tal vez se desarrolla de forma más significativa en la idea de Roman Jakobson de un proceso de traducción consistente en lo intralingüístico, lo interlingüístico y lo intersemiótico³, la práctica de la traducción de Waldrop atraviesa tres fases principales. La primera fase, apunta Waldrop, supone un intenso periodo de lectura conjuntamente con la elaboración de un borrador inicial y muy distendido. Como señala Waldrop, durante este proceso no busca simplemente entender lo que dice la obra sino más bien un entendimiento a la par que un compromiso con el proceso creativo del mismo, sus procedimientos, métodos e idiosincrasias, formales o de otro tipo. En la segunda fase, Waldrop descuida por completo el original, tratando lo que ella llama «the mess of the first draft (which is not quite English, often makes no sense at all) as if it were a draft of my own» e intenta elaborar un trabajo propio a partir de él. Waldrop se refiere a esta fase como «the stage of separation» (Waldrop, 2005: 159). En la tercera fase, Waldrop vuelve al texto original e intenta «wrestle the English as close to the original language as possible» (Waldrop: 2005: 158). A menudo la obra principal implicada en esta fase final gira en torno a la sintaxis y al ritmo, a dejar que la forma y la fluidez de la traducción se aproximen a las del texto original, a dejar que la obra traducida exista en el espacio de entremedias, de una forma que, aunque abierta, sigue siendo forma, sigue teniendo límites; o como lo formuló Goethe, dejando que se sepa que el texto traducido no existe «instead of the other but in its place» (Steiner, 1975: 258). George Steiner, en su esbozo de la historia de la traducción, *After Babel*, de enorme influencia, alega a favor de la importancia expresiva y vital de este espacio de entremedias sin resolver, escribiendo cómo:

Good translation [...] can be defined as that in which the dialectic of impenetrability and ingress, of intractable alienness and felt “at-homeness” remains unresolved, but expressive. Out of the tension of resistance and affinity, a tension directly proportional to the proximity of the two languages and historical communities, grows the elucidative strangeness of the great translation (Steiner, 1975: 413).

Como expone Waldrop, y como sucede de forma más general con su poesía, «translation's ultimate task may be to bear witness to the *essentially* irreducible strangeness between languages – but its immediate task is exactly to explore this space», la forma de pensamiento de un texto (Waldrop, 2005: 159). A este respecto, alega Waldrop, la traducción es un proceso de «dialogue and collaboration» (Waldrop, 2002: 63). De hecho, es precisamente por esto por lo que Maurice Blanchot sostiene que la traducción «is the sheer play of difference: it constantly makes allusion to difference, dissimulates difference, but by occasionally revealing and often accentuating it, translation becomes the very life of this difference» (Blanchot, 1997: 58). «Not resemblance», Blanchot continúa desarrollando, «but identity on the basis of otherness» (Blanchot, 1997: 58). Alberto Manguel lo expone en los siguientes términos:

As we read a text in our own language, the text itself becomes a barrier. We can go into it as far as its words allow, embracing all their possible definitions; we can bring other texts to bear upon it and to reflect it, as in a hall of mirrors; we can construct another, critical text that will extend and illuminate the one we are reading; but we cannot escape the fact that its language is the limit of our universe. Translation proposes a sort of parallel universe, another space and time in which the text reveals other, extraordinary possible meanings. For these meanings, however, there are no words, since they exist in the intuitive no man's land between the language of the original and the language of the translator (Manguel, 1996: 276).

Cuando el texto que ha de traducirse ya tiene por sí mismo cierta dificultad lingüística los problemas teóricos y prácticos de la traducción se vuelven aún más acuciantes. Como se pregunta Forrest Gander,

how are we to deal with an original text that is itself syntactically innovative? If the literal-syntax translator translates a conventional word order (in the original language) into an unconventional order (in the target language), how can work that is unconventional in the first place be given its due? (Gander, 2000: 118).

Dado el particular tipo de obras de vanguardia que Waldrop suele traducir, cabría preguntarse qué es lo que, inevitablemente, concierne en su mayor parte a la obra práctica de Waldrop como traductora, pero en ningún otro caso habría de hacerse con más hincapié como en sus célebres traducciones de Edmond Jabès, en las que ha permanecido inmersa durante cuatro décadas y que además han jugado uno de los papeles más cruciales en el desarrollo de la propia poesía de Waldrop.

Waldrop tuvo su primer contacto con la obra de Jabès cuando ella y Keith se encontraron con una copia de *Je bâtis ma demeure*, una recopilación de sus primeros poemas, en una librería de Aix-en-Provence en 1957. Al volver a París en 1966, Waldrop adquirió un

ejemplar del recientemente publicado primer tomo del monumental *Le Livre des Questions*, de Jabès. Como Waldrop lo describe, «it was an overwhelming experience for me to read this first volume. It was a *coup de foudre*» (Foster, 1994: 140). En 1969 Waldrop ya había traducido unas 50 páginas de *El libro de las preguntas* pero no había conseguido encontrar un editor. Los veinte editores a los que acudió rechazaron el manuscrito basándose en que, si bien la obra de Jabès era interesante, la publicación de una traducción no aportaría beneficios (Waldrop. 2002: 5). Como consecuencia, Waldrop archiva el proyecto de forma temporal, decidiendo concentrarse en su lugar, al menos por un tiempo, en sus propios escritos. Aun así, Waldrop viajó con una copia de *Le Livre des Questions* cuando ella y Keith fueron a pasar el año 1970-71 a París con una beca de investigación, tomando el texto de Jabès como proyecto adicional en caso de que el de escribir su propia obra no se consolidase. En enero de 1970 el poeta estadounidense George Tysh organizó una serie de lecturas de poesía en el apartamento de Waldrop, a las que acudió el poeta francés Claude Royet-Journoud, el cual se fijó en la copia de *Le Livre des Questions* de Jabès que había en la estantería. A la tarde siguiente, Royet-Journoud lleva a Jabès a conocer a Waldrop. Como Waldrop recuerda, Jabès era una «ligera» figura, «a deeply lined face, extraordinary blue eyes. Eyes that seem to be moving outward, toward me. Searching. A sense of gentleness, decorum and warmth. I give him what I have translated. A few days later he recognizes himself in the rhythm» (Waldrop, 2002: 5).

Esta amistad ha sustentando y hecho más profundo el encuentro de Waldrop con la enormemente individual e idiosincrásica escritura de Jabès. De hecho, el tema de la influencia de Jabès en el desarrollo y forma de la propia poesía de Waldrop es complejo, a menudo personal e intuitivo, y se edifica poco a poco sobre un largo periodo de estudio, atención y amistad. Waldrop atribuye a Jabès su impulso a pensar en el libro como unidad poética, como un espacio, un territorio, un contenedor en cuyo interior hay que trabajar, sus capas, incrementos y espacios. De hecho, como señala Waldrop, es «specifically Jabès's insistence on the book on the one hand (as the writer's only place, as Mallarmé's "spiritual instrument") and fragmentation on the other, that focuses my own contradictory impulses toward flow and fragment» (Waldrop, 2002: 75). Para Waldrop, lo que realmente sobresale del proyecto de Jabès es la manera en la que éste hace transparente «the structure of language, of signification. He makes us aware of the imaginary line between signifier and signified by constantly crossing it. And the line between symbol and index. So that at the limits of signification language is made to *show itself*» (Waldrop, 2002: 87). O de nuevo:

Edmond Jabès writes a text over which he claims no authorial power, a text which he claims only to copy, make legible. This is a remarkable claim

in itself [...] everything in his work – the shifting voices and perspectives, the breaks of mode, tautologies, alogical sequences and contradictory metaphors, the stress on uncertainty (the constant subjunctive) – all combine to subvert the authority we expect in a book. Authority of statement, of closure and linearity, the confidence in a narrative thread, continuity of temporal and causal sequence. And most of all, the authority of the author (Waldrop, 2002: 142-3).

NOTAS

4 | Para más información sobre Jabès, véanse, entre otros: Caws (1988), Derrida (2001), Israel-Pelletier (2008), Mole (1997), y Motte (1990).

Como explica Rimmon-Kenan, «holes or gaps are so central in narrative fiction because the materials the text provides for the reconstruction of a world (or a story) are insufficient for saturation» (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 127). Pero dichos agujeros son también la condición de ese mismo mundo, su tartamudeo, su terreno, su experiencia. Así, para Hank Lazer, «the qualities of exile, of otherness, of removal, of being beside that recur in Jabès's writing have their foundation (in addition to Jabès's personal, biographical experience) in Jewish history and in Kabbalistic interpretation» (Lazer, 2003).

Edmond Jabès ha comentado cómo «we always start out from a written text and come back to the text to be written, from the sea to the sea, from the page to the page» (Jabès, 1993: 40). «In the beginning is hermeneutics» repite Jacques Derrida (Derrida, 2001, 81)⁴. Siempre, en la página que tenemos ante nosotros, emerge un espacio en blanco, una *ceguera cortical*, esa experiencia en la que, según el neurocientífico Antonio R. Damasio, una persona ve en realidad más de lo que es consciente. Lo que importa es cómo se lee esa ceguera cortical.

La idea de que toda escritura es, de una manera o de otra, un proceso de reescritura tiene una larga historia, que se remonta hasta, al menos, la ruptura de las tablas de la Ley por Moisés o la tradición cabalista de la rotura de los receptáculos, en la que, según Luria, la luz de Dios demostró ser demasiado grande para los recipientes que habían de contenerla y dichos recipientes se cayeron o se hicieron añicos. En ambos casos, el mundo, aquí y ahora, está fuera de lugar, compuesto por los fragmentos de esa luz rota, de esas palabras quebradas. Como apunta Waldrop, según el Zohar, «in every word shine multiple lights». De manera similar, como desarrolla Susan Handelman,

Thus in Kabbalah, it is not only the tablets of the law that are broken. The universe itself has undergone a primordial shattering; God has withdrawn; the Vessels are broken; the divine sparks are lost in the material world. As Scholem reads it, Kabbalah is a great myth of exile (Handelman, 1985: 21).

Aquí la práctica de la traducción, como el arte de leer bien, supone estar fuera de lugar, inseguro, inestable; conlleva equivocarse. Es ponerse en camino, deambular, ir buscando, pero encontrarse a uno mismo caminando en círculos, más allá, en otro lugar. Para llevarlo

a cabo, es preciso que dicha lectura sea intuitiva, que se lleve a cabo en ajustes y comienzos, con preguntas y eliminaciones, de maneras siempre cambiantes, siempre rebotando contra el límite de lo que no ha sido posible decir: cegueras corticales, pedazos. Así, como apunta Waldrop, «the spark given off by the edges of the shards, the fragments, is stronger the more abrupt the cut, the more strongly it makes us feel the lack of transition, the more disparate the surrounding texts» (Waldrop, 2002: 21).

Intentos de asemejarse lo más estrechamente posible al francés de Jabès, el efecto de su juego lingüístico, cadencia, engranaje de palabras, sonido, complejidad, tratando de reproducir su sintaxis, léxico y tipografía, que supone intentar alcanzar efectos comparables, a menudo deformando el inglés en nuevas y extrañas formas. Waldrop busca, según dice, «to write “Jabès in English”, write *à l’écoute de Jabès*, write listening to his French» (Waldrop, 2002: 27). La cuestión metodológica que aquí se discute concierne a los criterios que determinan las bases para una comparación, y este no es un tema sujeto a debate. Como apuntó Philip Lewis, esta es «the strong, forceful translation that values experimentation, tampers with usage, seeks to match the polyvalencies or pluralivocities or expressive stresses of the original by producing its own» (Lewis, 1992: 261).

The translator’s task is precisely to render the source text, the original author’s interpretation of a given theme expressed in a number of variations, accessible to readers not familiar with these variations, by replacing the original author’s variation with their equivalents in a different language, time, place, and tradition. Particular emphasis must be given to the fact that the translator has to replace *all* the variations contained in the source text by their equivalents (Lefevere, 1975: 99).

Cuando un determinado juego de palabras se pierde en el proceso de traducción, Waldrop prefiere dejar el segmento en francés, acompañado de una traducción más literal, pero menos literaria. Es, escribe Waldrop, una solución «torpe» pero que a la vez ilustra la forma y el modo del texto original; es una solución que tiene la ventaja añadida de permitir que «difference, foreignness to come to the fore». Nos hace conscientes, escribe Waldrop, «of the space *between* the languages where translation lives» y la manera en la que el camino de una lengua a otra no es ni recto ni simétrico, sino lleno de curvas, una lengua donde la cuestión de la lengua misma está en juego (Waldrop, 2002: 71).

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ROSMARIE WALDROP I LES TEORIES DE LA TRADUCCIÓ

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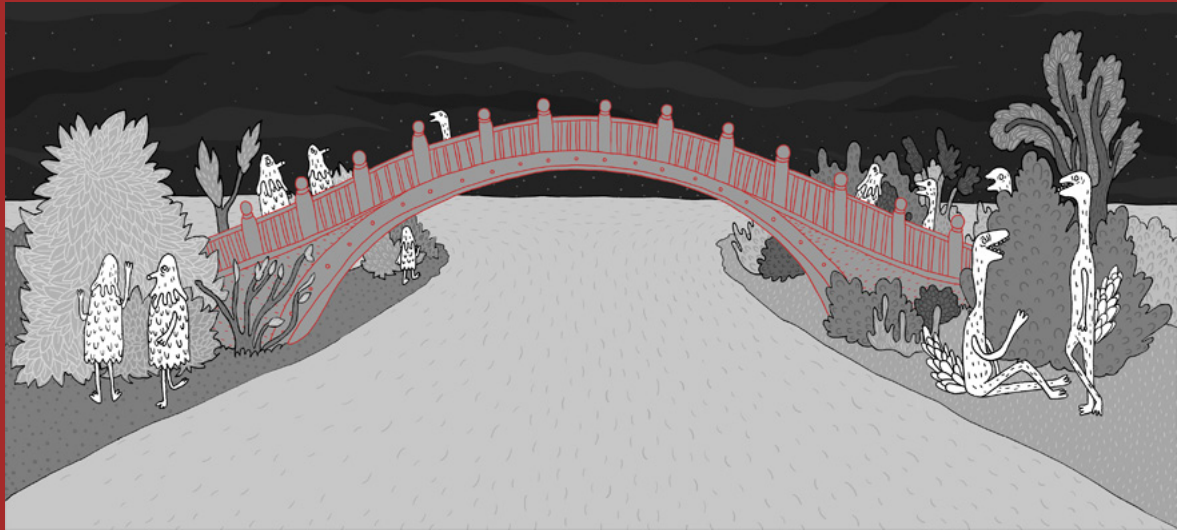
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Resum || Des dels anys 1960, la poeta nord-americana nascuda a Alemanya, Rosmarie Waldrop, ha traduït més de 40 obres diferents, majoritàriament del francès i l'alemany, incloent 14 volums del jueu Edmond Jabès, escriptor en llengua francesa (Jabès va ser expulsat d'Egipte l'any 1956 durant la Crisi de Suez). L'any 2003, Waldrop va ser anomenada Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres pel Govern francès, i el 2008, va rebre el PEN Award for Poetry in Translation (premi PEN a la traducció de poesia), per la seva traducció del llibre *Lingos I-IX*, d'Ulf Stolterfoht. A més de les seves traduccions, però, Waldrop també ha escrit importants assajos que mostren les diverses teories de la traducció i la seva aplicació pràctica. Moltes d'aquestes reflexions aborden qüestions com ara la relació entre la traducció i l'escriptura, la reflexió sobre com les teories de l'escriptura podrien suggerir les pautes del desenvolupament d'una pràctica poètica determinada. Aquest assaig ofereix una visió general de les principals idees de Waldrop sobre la traducció i les contextualitza en relació amb algunes de les grans teories de la traducció literària. Al final de l'assaig, suggereix que aquestes idees estan desenvolupades en una relació específica amb les traduccions de Waldrop de les obres de Edmond Jabès i el concepte de la pràctica de la escriptura.

Paraules clau || Rosmarie Waldrop | Traducció | Diferències | Estranyesa | Pràctica poètica.

Summary || Since the 1960s, the German-born US-American poet, Rosmarie Waldrop, has translated over 40 different works, largely from French and German, including 14 volumes by the Jewish French-language writer, Edmond Jabès (Jabès was expelled from Egypt in 1956 during the Suez Crisis). In 2003, Waldrop was made a Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres by the French Government, and in 2008 she received the PEN Award for Poetry in Translation in 2008, for her translation of Ulf Stolterfoht's book, *Lingos I-IX*. As well as practising translation, however, Waldrop has also written several significant essays which reflect on different theories of translation and their implications for practice. Much of these considerations are taken up with the question of the relation between translation and writing, of thinking the ways in which theories of writing might suggest the lines for developing a specific form of poetic practice. This essay provides an overview of Waldrop's central thoughts on translation and contextualises these in relation to some of the major theories of literary translation. In the latter part of the essay, these ideas are developed in specific relation to Waldrop's translations of the work of Edmond Jabès and to the notion of writing practice it suggests.

Keywords || Rosmarie Waldrop | Translation | Difference | Strangeness | Poetic practice.

Translation it is that openeth the window, to let in the light; that breaketh the shell, that we may eat the kernell; that putteth aside the curtain, that we may look into the most holy place; that removeth the cover of the well, that we may come by the water.

“Preface to the Reader,” King James Translators

La poeta nord-americana contemporània d’origen alemany Rosmarie Waldrop comença la secció “Translation” del seu volum de recopilació d’assajos, *Dissonance*, amb un epígraf extret d’un poema d’Anne Carson, que diu així: “the space between two languages is a space like no other” (Waldrop, 2005: 135). La traducció de més de 40 obres del francès i l’alemany és aquest “no other”, el qual és particularment rellevant per a la comprensió de la teoria de Waldrop i de la pràctica de la traducció. És a dir, per a Waldrop, la traducció no n’és equivalent. Tal com ella va dir en una entrevista, “what matters”, escriu Waldrop, “is not things but what happens between them. Or if you take the linguistic model, it is not the phoneme but the connection of phonemes that makes language, the differences in the sequence [...] The gaps keep the questions in relation” (Retallack: 349).

“Between” també s’ha convertit en el títol d’un dels primers poemes de Waldrop escrit en anglès i, potser, aquesta paraula, més que cap altra, és la que millor caracteritza l’enfocament distintiu i fortament influent a la pràctica poètica i a la traducció des de fa més de quatre dècades de Waldrop. La seva escriptura és una escriptura d’intermediaris, d’encreuaments, de diferències i de relacions.

“I enter at a skewed angle,” escriu Waldrop a l’assaig, *The Ground is the Only Figure*, “through the fissures, the slight difference” (Waldrop, 2005: 223). Com comenta l’orador sobre el primer poema, “I’m not quite at home / on either side of the Atlantic” perquè “to change your country / doesn’t make you / grow”:

it doesn’t make you change so much
you can’t remember
I remember
things are much the same
so much the same the
differences are barbed (Waldrop, 1972: 16).

Des l’inici, Waldrop ha procurat advertir sobre la seva posició contrària a la fusió d’escrits amb la bibliografia, fins i tot, va arribar a comentar una vegada “it is not just a matter of my personal situation between countries and cultures. Our reality is no longer substances, but systems of relations” (Waldrop, 2005: 265). Però, és evident que no és fàcil mantenir la vida i la feina allunyades permanentment entre si. La relació correcta és un intercanvi d’experiències, un contorn subtil i permanentment canviant, entreteixit ell mateix entre la vida i l’escriptura, i viceversa. Això mateix s’aplica al món de la traducció.

Com diu un altre dels primers poemes de Waldrop, “For Harriet”:

you can't pick out
a thing all by itself
each weaves together
with the next
inside and outside (Waldrop, 1972: 43).

En un registre diferent, així com cap autor no està sol, tampoc cap text pot existir independentment de les diferents vides dels seus autors. Així és que, per a Waldrop, la traducció està girada en dos direccions alhora. Aquestes direccions són, sens dubte, principalment geogràfiques, el resultat de la seva reubicació a finals dels anys 50 des d'Alemanya a Amèrica. Tal com diu Waldrop, “as an immigrant to the United States, I came to a point where I could not go on writing poems in German while “living” in English. Translating (from English to German, at that time) was the natural substitute” (Waldrop, 2005: 137). Tanmateix, com afegirà Waldrop, escriure en la seva llengua adoptada “came before translating into it, so that even my particular state as a person between languages cannot altogether account for any persistence in this seemingly unrewarding, nearly impossible activity” (Waldrop, 2005: 137).

Desenvolupant aquestes nocions, amb especial referència a la pràctica de la traducció, Waldrop especifica com la traducció no té com a objectiu la simple transmissió de continguts, sinó que obre un esvoranc entre la paraula i el significat, una discòrdia, la qual, en encetar-se, crida l'atenció sobre una singularitat en el cor de la llengua, una inquietud que fa alguna cosa més que traduir únicament d'una llengua a una altra. Com assenyala Edwin Gentzler, “traduir” ve de la paraula llatina *translatus*, que vol dir “transferit”, i *translatus* és el participi passat de *transferre*, segons el qual:

the Latin *ferre* means “to carry” or “to transport” as in carrying a shield, and was often used to mean to bear or convey with the notion of motion (Homer), as in ships borne by the forces of wind. It also meant to endure, to suffer, as in to bear a mental burden, and survives in expressions such as “you're not faring well” [...] translation refers to the sense of roads or ways that lead to a place, as in a door leading to a garden, or a road leading to a city, conveying a sense of stretching or extension toward (Gentzler, 2001: 166).

Al seu assaig de 1984, “The Joy of the Demiurge”, Waldrop es pregunta per les raons per participar tan plenament en aquesta activitat. “I have often asked myself why I go on translating,” comenta Waldrop, “instead of concentrating exclusively on writing my own poetry. The woes of the translator are all too well known: little thanks, poor pay, and plenty of abuse” (Waldrop, 2005: 137). A això s'ha d'afegir, continua Waldrop, la disconformitat de les editorials dels Estats Units a afegir traduccions suboficials a les seves llistes i

potser la gran persistència de la empresa Waldrop sembla encara més idiosincràtica. De vegades, escriu Waldrop, el procés i la disciplina de la traducció l'ha ajudat a reorientar la seva escriptura, quan s'havia deturat. De la mateixa manera, si més no en part, el seu interès per la traducció es deu a un interès a assumir el paper de mediador entre les llengües, encara que, com també afegeix Waldrop, si hi havia una gran motivació darrere de la seva feina com a traductora, als seus lectors els hauria estat més útil simplement "teaching them the language" (Waldrop, 2005: 137).

Com era d'esperar arran d'aquests comentaris, Waldrop ubica les raons del seu compromís actual amb el treball com a traductora en un altra banda, aquest altre món escorredís d'un altre lloc on, com es pot apreciar, sempre se les apanya per defugir tant la definició com l'apropiació, i on, amb això, comporta les encara inquietants, però no atípiques, reverberacions del desconegut. "As I read the original work," escriu Waldrop, "I admire it. I am overwhelmed. I would like to have written it. Clearly, I am envious – envious enough to make it mine at all cost, at the cost of destroying it. Work, I take pleasure in destroying the work exactly because it means making it mine. And I assuage what guilt I might feel by promising that I will make reparation, that I will labor to restore the destroyed beauty in my language – also, of course, by the knowledge that I do not actually touch the original within its own language" (Waldrop, 2005: 138). Tal com fan tots els lectors, el traductor llegeix a través de la seva pròpia experiència. Com diu Alberto Manguel, "beyond the literal sense and the literary meaning, the text we read acquires the projection of our own experience, the shadow, as it were, of who we are" (Manguel, 1996: 267).

Aquesta és una visió que s'ha generalitzat en tots els estudis de traducció. Per exemple, Christopher Middleton, publicat per Burning Deck el 1970, es fa ressò d'aquesta noció de la importància del compromís entre el traductor i l'obra, en comentar en una entrevista com "it is necessary to know as much as you can about the whole work of the author. Not necessarily about his life and epoch, but to be receptive to the stratagems of his mind, his kind of sentence, and the kind of syntactical behaviour his language shows" (Honig, 1976: 1592). Tanmateix, fins i tot en el context d'aquestes teories de la traducció, l'última declaració de Waldrop sorprèn en la seva concepció de la traducció com a text independent de l'obra original. Per a John Johnston, aquest punt de vista correspon a un sentit de la traducció com a un simulacre, en el qual, a diferència del model platònic que privilegia la similitud i la autoidentitat i interpreta el simulacre com a dolent per la seva diferència respecte a la Idea, el simulacre és el què simultàniament produeix i manté la diferència que descentra i divergeix, i com a tal, s'obre en altres ressonàncies. Més que que reproduir un text fidelment, Johnston exposa que les traduccions

“forge a new language in which both languages” estiguin presents com a dues sèries de paraules divergents, però ressonants. En una inversió de la relació entre “l’original” i la “imitació”, les traduccions es proposen com “l’origen” d’un nou conjunt de significats, de vegades, indistingibles de les in-significants intensitats verbals” (Johnston, 1992: 49). En aquest sentit, la traducció no altera tant l’obra original com alhora preserva el seu llenguatge i la transforma més enllà de la semblança. Per això afegeix Jonhston:

those translations which accomplish something different by maintaining the originary difference in and through translation, that deterritorialize the target language in such a way that it can’t be recoded and recuperated by appeal to established cultural and spiritual meanings, that thereby manifest something new in the language, are also simulacra, diverging from the original but also resonant with it, bringing to fulfilment or pushing along further what the original carried only as a precursor (Johnston, 1992: 54).

De fet, són les conseqüències d’aquest tipus d’arguments que sustenten la idea de Waldrop del que és la traducció, com el que ella denomina “irreducible strangeness”. Per a Waldrop, la traducció és un acte d’exploració de termes, o segons els termes de Waldrop, una “double exploration” perquè “the translator must not only explore the original, but also search the target language for an idiom, a language within language” (Waldrop, 2002: 7). Com Walter Benjamin escriu a l’assaig “The Task of Traductor”, la traducció ha de tenir com a objectiu “expand and deepen [...] language by means of the foreign language,” perquè soni “some strangeness in the proportion”, “a trace of the foreign in the translation” (Benjamin, 1968: 74). És a dir, per a Benjamin, una “transmission” o “carrying of one to another” de la traducció se centra en les nocions de contigüïtat més que en la similitud. Cada traductor, suggereix Benjamin, “lives by the difference of languages; every translation is founded upon this difference” (Benjamin, 1968: 79). Per tant, no és tant que la traducció intenti semblar-se a l’obra a traduir, sinó més aviat, com assenyala Blanchot, que la traducció plantegi “a question of an identity on the basis of alterity: the same work in two languages, both because of their foreignness and by making visible, in their foreignness, what makes this work such that it will always be other” (Blanchot, 1997: 59-60). En unes altres paraules, l’obra traduïda mai és a casa¹.

Com a resultat d’aquesta alteritat, continua Benjamin, “translation must in large measure refrain from wanting to communicate something, from rendering the sense” (Benjamin, 1968: 81). Aquí Benjamin és fa ressò de les influents idees sobre la traducció establertes pel concepte romàntic alemany de Friedrich Schleiermacher de “foreignisation” i de portar al lector al text en llengua estrangera, és a dir, amb l’objectiu de “to give the reader, through the translation, the impression he would have received as a German reading

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1 | Per a més informació sobre “unhomeliness” de la traducció, vegeu Andrew Benjamin, ‘Translating Origins: Psychoanalysis and Philosophy,’ a Venuti (1992): 18-41.

the work in the original language” (Schleiermacher, 2004: 50). O com Wilhelm von Humboldt va expressar un any més tard a la introducció de la traducció de l'*Agamemnon* d'Esquil, l'any 1816, és important per donar a “the translation a certain tinge of foreignness” (Humboldt, 1997: 240). Mentre que un dels principals objectius crítics de Benjamin era concebre una pràctica de la traducció que no intenti sonar com si estigués escrita en la llengua d'acollida, la fonamental, hermenèutica i cada cop més influent idea de Benjamin de “translatability” o “pure language” marca el punt en el que les concepcions de traducció de Benjamin i Waldrop difereixen més significativament. És a dir, per a Benjamin, la traducció apunta cap a un tipus d'il·luminació i d'alliberació, que actualment està oblidat però que precedeix l'intent de construir la torre de Babel quan, segons el llibre del Gènesi, la terra tenia una única llengua i un únic llenguatge, el qual els cabalistes pensaven que era la llengua del paradís. “Seen thus,” escriu George Steiner, “translation is a teleological imperative, a stubborn searching out of all the apertures, translucencies, sluice-gates through which the divided streams of human speech pursue their destined return to a single sea” (Steiner, 1975: 244).

Tanmateix, és una forma d'il·luminació i d'alliberació que també es manté fidel a l'excurs de Sant Pau en el pneuma a I Corintis 14 que crea una instància d'una diferenciació irresoluble entre la lletra i l'esperit i que prohibeix la traducció de “spirit”, “authentic speech” i que considera les paraules de Crist fora de l'abast del discurs humà, inefable, que Sant Pau anomena, en un interessant eco de l'anterior sensació d'estrangerització, “arcana verba”, una llengua de llengües, inassimilable, sempre no-equivalent, estrangera, del contrari, aquells noïmens que, en paraules de Kant, “mark the limits of our sensible knowledge” i que “leave open a space which we can fill neither through possible experience nor through pure understanding” (Kant, 1929: A289/B343). Sant Pau elucida a II Corintis 12:4 que la traducció seria una blasfèmia, si més no, la forma de traducció que simultàniament no s'esborra davant del traçat de l'estranger, la traducció d'allò intraduïble com a intraduïble. Com Christopher Middleton diu, “one of the simplest and most creative ways of considering the act of translation is to regard it as a minimal, perhaps vestigial, but still exemplary encounter with ‘the other’” (Honig, 1976: 1602). La traducció és exemplar, precisament perquè registra la diferència com a diferència, perquè no és del tot equivalent, perquè deixa un espai obert per al desacord i la desaparició, el diferir d'un mateix d'Heràclit, *hen diapheron heautoi, on diapherin* es basa en l'arrel *diaphero* que significa “to carry from one to the other, to carry across,” però que amb Heràclit també comporta el significat metafòric de “to toss about, to be disrupted” i que amb Derrida, a *Margins of Difference*, passa a denominar el “play of trances” o *diferència* (Derrida, 1980: 15; Liddell, 1925: 417). El text absent, continua Middleton, “is the one we are helped to conceive of by the existence

of the text before us” (Honig, 1976: 1602). O com diu l’actual poeta nord-americà Forrest Gander, “in a good translation, the original may be veiled, but it doesn’t disappear” (Gander, 2000: 88). Walter Benjamin: la bona traducció “not cover the original, does not black its light, but allows the pure language, as though reinforced by its own medium, to shine upon the original all the more fully” (Benjamin: 1968: 72).

La lectura de Waldrop de la concepció Benjamin de “pure language” (“llenguatge pur”) és més pragmàtica així com també més material. En altres paraules, per a Waldrop, “pure language” es basa en primer lloc en el supòsit d’una “central relationship between languages”, la possibilitat que es confirma pel fet que la traducció es considera absolutament possible (Waldrop, 2005: 139). La diferència crítica de Waldrop prové de la seva concepció que la traducció no progressa cap a un tipus d’abstracció sinó, al contrari, “toward another embodiment in a concrete, particular language” (Waldrop, 2005: 139). En aquest sentit, indica Waldrop, la tasca del traductor no és intentar traduir l’obra original com si estigués escrita en un altre idioma, sinó aproximar-se a les seves “figures’ of thought”, en la coneguda frase de Ciceró, “the movement of style” de Nietzsche, per donar un tipus de sentit de la seva forma, el seu ritme, la seva estructura tonal, la seva gramàtica i els seus contextos, i alhora posar l’accent tant en la manca d’equivalència com en la creació, si no nova, com a mínim, diferent (Cicero, 1960: 364). Tal com va escriure Ezra Pound en la introducció de les seves traduccions de Cavalcanti, “it is conceivable the poetry of a far-off time or place requires a translation not only of word and of spirit, but of “accompaniment” (Pound, 1983: 12). Waldrop diu que la concepció de la traducció com a acompanyant val també per a les obres contemporànies. “We must understand,” escriu Waldrop, “what Walter Benjamin has described as the intentionality of a work, the ways in which it relates to its language and culture” (Waldrop, 2002: 55).

Translation is approximation rather than duplication. A re-giving of form. I’ve sometimes described it as trying to get down to the genetic code of a work [...] And from that “genetic code,” you rebuild it in the other language, but having the instructions that a code would have (Foster, 1994: 149).

Les traduccions “are woven into a textual history that is always transforming terms, translating other terms” (Gentzler, 2001: 171).

Aquí, Waldrop es troba a prop de la refosa de Derrida de la concepció abstracta de Benjamin de “pure language” com la constant *diferència*², alhora desviant-se de la frase. Per consegüent, i d’una forma similar, sosté el seu sentit del llibre més que el poema individual o frase com la mesura primària de composició, Walrop escriu com “the unit of

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2 | Vegeu Derrida, J., ‘Des Tours de Babel’ a J.F. Graham (1985): 165-207.

translation is the whole work rather than the single sentence or line – let alone the single word” (Waldrop, 2005: 139). L’elecció de Waldrop del llenguatge posa en relleu la seva concepció de la traducció com a una cosa que, tot i estar relacionada amb l’obra original, també és especial, distintiva, diferent, però que està relacionada d’una altra manera, l’espai entremig. Per tant, encara que està d’acord amb la concepció de la traducció de Benjamin, en el millor dels casos, “does not cover the original, does not block its light” (Benjamin, 1968: 70). Waldrop especifica com, en lloc d’avançar cap a l’abstracció hegeliana del “pure language” de Benjamin, l’obra traduïda experimenta “something more like erosion. It is weathered by the passage of time” (Waldrop, 2005: 142). “A translation that can suggest the lost beauty of the original,” diu Waldrop, “is preferable to a smooth replica that pretends to be the original itself” (Waldrop, 2005: 143). Cap traducció és transparent; “even the most faithful of translations will bear the mark of the translator, of her time, of her cultural background,” i les esquerdes sobre les que el text descansa i de les que depèn, que la traducció, potser, no podria evitar, una caiguda colossal, encara que no directament visible, es podria sentir, i de vegades, fins i tot, més extremadament. Com diu Christopher Middleton, aquest punt de vista de la traducció li permet “to look over the edges of the conventions of your own language” (Honig, 1976: 1596). De fet, és precisament des de la perspectiva d’aquest efecte que Waldrop comenta els camins en què l’emplaçament de la traducció evoca “new ground somewhere between the two languages, stretching the border of the target language beyond where it was before” (Waldrop, 2005: 156). O, com diu Vicente Broqua, Waldrop escriu “between languages, in the slit, on the edge or in the “doorway” where one language becomes other.” Això és “in this infinitesimal site,” continua Broqua, que Waldrop representa un intercanvi de modismes molt particular (Broqua, 2007).

En altres llocs, Waldrop alinea el treball irreductiblement estrany de la traducció amb la concepció de Hans-Georg Gadamer de la “third dimension” d’una obra de literatura, aquesta zona on:

Nothing that is said has its truth simply in itself, but refers instead backward and forward to what is unsaid. Every assertion is motivated, that is, one can sensibly ask of everything that is said, “Why do you say that?” And only when what is not said is understood along with what is said is an assertion understandable.

Com diu Waldrop, “it takes words to make things visible” (Waldrop, 2005: 149). Aquí el silenci es converteix en un espai “for the utterance rather than an ultimate limit” i “a space”, escriu Waldrop, no importa si és transitiu, “can be explored, even this space of the unsaid” (Waldrop, 2005: 150-1). Dins dels contextos d’aquestes perspectives teòriques, i seguint una tradició de la pràctica de la traducció que es remunta

a Dryden i a Goethe, però que està potser més desenvolupada més significativament en la concepció de Roman Jakobson del procés de traducció que consisteix en la extralingüística, la interlingüística i la intersemiòtica³, la pràctica de Waldrop de la traducció passa per tres etapes. La primera etapa, escriu Waldrop, implica un intens període de lectura conjuntament amb un procés de redacció inicial i balder. Com diu Waldrop, durant aquest procés no és tant el que diu l'obra, sinó la comprensió i el compromís amb el seu propi procés creatiu, els seus procediments, mètodes i la idiosincràsia, formal o no. En la segona etapa, Waldrop no té en compte l'original complet, fa el que ella anomena "the mess of the first draft (which is not quite English, often makes no sense at all) as if it were a draft of my own" i tracta de fer una obra fora d'ella mateixa. Waldrop es refereix a aquesta etapa com "the stage of separation" (Waldrop, 2005: 159). En la tercera etapa, Waldrop retorna al text original i intenta "wrestle the English as close to the original language as possible" (Waldrop: 2005: 158). Sovint el treball principal d'aquesta etapa gira entorn de la sintaxi i el ritme, es tracta de deixar que la forma i el flux de la traducció s'apropin al text original, de deixar que l'obra traduïda existeixi en l'espai entremig, en l'espai de la forma oberta, que no obstant també té límits; o com formula Goethe, donant a conèixer que el text traduït no existeix "instead of the other but in its place" (Steiner, 1975: 258). Steiner, en el seu influent resum de la història de la traducció, *After Babel*, argumenta a favor de la vital importància expressiva d'aquest espai intermedi sense resoldre i escriu que:

Good translation [...] can be defined as that in which the dialectic of impenetrability and ingress, of intractable alienness and felt "at-homeness" remains unresolved, but expressive. Out of the tension of resistance and affinity, a tension directly proportional to the proximity of the two languages and historical communities, grows the elucidative strangeness of the great translation (Steiner, 1975: 413).

Com Waldrop diu, i igual que amb la seva forma poètica més general, "translation's ultimate task may be to bear witness to the essentially irreducible strangeness between languages – but its immediate task is exactly to explore this space," the shape of thinking a text makes (Waldrop, 2005: 159). En aquest sentit, argumenta Waldrop, la traducció és un procés de "dialogue and collaboration" (Waldrop, 2002: 63). De fet, és aquesta la raó per la qual Maurice Blanchot sosté que la traducció "is the sheer play of difference: it constantly makes allusion to difference, dissimulates difference, but by occasionally revealing and often accentuating it, translation becomes the very life of this difference" (Blanchot, 1997: 58). "Not resemblance," desenvolupa Blanchot, "but identity on the basis of otherness" (Blanchot, 1997: 58). Alberto Manguel ho diu amb els següents termes:

As we read a text in our own language, the text itself becomes a barrier.

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3 | Per a una breu descripció de les teories de Jakobson, vegeu Munday (2001): 37-8.

We can go into it as far as its words allow, embracing all their possible definitions; we can bring other texts to bear upon it and to reflect it, as in a hall of mirrors; we can construct another, critical text that will extend and illuminate the one we are reading; but we cannot escape the fact that its language is the limit of our universe. Translation proposes a sort of parallel universe, another space and time in which the text reveals other, extraordinary possible meanings. For these meanings, however, there are no words, since they exist in the intuitive no man's land between the language of the original and the language of the translator (Manguel, 1996: 276).

Quan el text a traduir és ja per si mateix difícil lingüísticament, s'accentuen els problemes teòrics i pràctics de la traducció. Forrest Gander pregunta, "how are we to deal with an original text that is itself syntactically innovative? If the literal-syntax translator translates a conventional word order (in the original language) into an unconventional order (in the target language), how can work that is unconventional in the first place be given its due?" (Gander, 2000: 118).

Donat el particular tipus d'obres d'avantguarda que generalment tradueix Waldrop, és una pregunta que preocupa inevitablement a gran part del treball pràctic de Waldrop com a traductora, però potser més especialment en les traduccions històriques d'Edmond Jabès, per a les quals ha estat contractada durant més de quatre dècades i que ha desenvolupat un dels papers més fonamentals en el desenvolupament de la pròpia poètica de Waldrop. Waldrop va trobar casualment per primera vegada l'obra de Jabès quan ella i Keith es van trobar per casualitat una còpia de la primera antologia poètica de Jabès, *Je bâtis ma demeure*, en una llibreria de Aix-en-Provence el 1957. De tornada a París el 1966, Waldrop va comprar una còpia del colossal volum publicat per primera vegada de Jabès *Le Livre des Questions*. Com ho descriu Waldrop, "it was an overwhelming experience for me to read this first volume. It was a coup de foudre" (Foster, 1994: 140). L'any 1969, Waldrop havia traduït prop de 50 pàgines del llibre *The Book of Questions*, però no havia tingut sort en la recerca d'un editor. Les 20 editorials que van rebutjar el manuscrit es van excusar dient que tot i que l'obra de Jabès era interessant, la publicació de les traduccions no era rendible (Waldrop. 2002: 5). Com a resultat, Waldrop va ajornar temporalment el projecte, i va decidir dedicar-se a la seva pròpia escriptura, si més no, durant un temps. No obstant això, Waldrop encara viatjava acompanyada d'una còpia de *Le Livre des Questions*, quan ella i Keith van passar l'any 1970-71 a París amb una beca d'investigació, i van agafar el text de Jabès com a "back-up project", en cas que el seu mateix treball trontollés. Al gener de 1970, el poeta nord-americà George Tysh va organitzar una sèrie de lectures de poesia a l'apartament de Waldrop, a les quals va assistir el poeta francès Claude Royet-Journoud i va trobar una còpia de *Le Livre des Questions* de Jabès

al prestatge. La tarda següent, Royet-Journoud va portar Jabès a conèixer Waldrop. Waldrop recorda que Jabès tenia una “slight” figura, “a deeply lined face, extraordinary blue eyes. Eyes that seem to be moving outward, toward me. Searching. A sense of gentleness, decorum and warmth. I give him what I have translated. A few days later he recognizes himself in the rhythm” (Waldrop, 2002: 5).

Aquesta amistat s’ha mantingut i ha aprofundit la seva trobada amb una escriptura summament individual i idiosincràtica. En realitat, la qüestió sobre la influència de Jabès en el desenvolupament i la forma de la poètica pròpia de Waldrop és complexa, sovint personal i intuïtiva, i va anar creixent progressivament durant el període d’estudi, atenció i amistat. Waldrop acredita Jabès com el que la va impulsar a pensar en el llibre com a la unitat poètica, com l’espai, la terra, el vaixell amb què treballar les capes, els increments i les separacions. De fet, com diu Waldrop, és la “specifically Jabès’s insistence on the book on the one hand (as the writer’s only place, as Mallarmé’s “spiritual instrument”) and fragmentation on the other, that focuses my own contradictory impulses toward flow and fragment” (Waldrop, 2002: 75). El que destaca realment del projecte de Jabès per a Waldrop és la forma en que Jabès fa transparent “the structure of language, of signification. He makes us aware of the imaginary line between signifier and signified by constantly crossing it. And the line between symbol and index. So that at the limits of signification language is made to show itself” (Waldrop, 2002: 87). O també:

Edmond Jabès writes a text over which he claims no authorial power, a text which he claims only to copy, make legible. This is a remarkable claim in itself [...] everything in his work – the shifting voices and perspectives, the breaks of mode, tautologies, allogical sequences and contradictory metaphors, the stress on uncertainty (the constant subjunctive) – all combine to subvert the authority we expect in a book. Authority of statement, of closure and linearity, the confidence in a narrative thread, continuity of temporal and causal sequence. And most of all, the authority of the author (Waldrop, 2002: 142-3).

Edmond Jabès ha comentat com “we always start out from a written text and come back to the text to be written, from the sea to the sea, from the page to the page” (Jabès, 1993: 40). “In the beginning is hermeneutics,” repeteix Jaques Derrida (Derrida, 2001, 81)⁴. A la pàgina que tenim davant sempre apareix un punt blanc, una ceguera, aquella experiència de que, segons el neurocientífic Antonio R. Damasio, una persona veu més del que és conscient. És la manera en què aquesta ceguera es llegeix el que importa.

La idea que tota escriptura és, d’una forma o una altra, un procés de reescriptura té una llarga història, que es remunta com a mínim tan lluny com al trencament de Moisès de les taules o la tradició cabalística de la ruptura dels navilis, on segons Luria, la llum de Déu

NOTES

4 | Per a més informació sobre Jabès, vegeu, entre d’altres: Caws (1988), Derrida (2001), Israel-Pelletier (2008), Mole (1997), and Motte (1990).

va demostrar que la càrrega era massa pels navilis i els navilis van ser desplaçats o destrossats. En tots dos casos, el món, l'avui i l'ara, està fora de lloc, integrat pels fragments d'aquesta llum, aquestes paraules trencades. Com assenyala Waldrop, d'acord amb el Zohar, "in every word shine multiple lights." Similar al que desenvolupa Susan Handelman: "Thus in Kabbalah, it is not only the tablets of the law that are broken. The universe itself has undergone a primordial shattering; God has withdrawn; the Vessels are broken; the divine sparks are lost in the material world. As Scholem reads it, Kabbalah is a great myth of exile" (Handelman, 1985: 21).

Aquí, la pràctica de la traducció, així com l'art de llegir bé, implica estar fora de lloc, insegur, vacil·lant, el que implica equivocacions. Ha de sortir, vagar, anar a mirar, per trobar-se donant voltes, més lluny, en un altre lloc. En fer-ho, cal que la lectura sigui contra-intuïtiva, que procedeixi entretalladament, amb preguntes i esborranys, sempre girant, rebotant contra el límit, del que no és gaire possible dir: visions cegues, peces. Així, com ho diu Waldrop, "the spark given off by the edges of the shards, the fragments, is stronger the more abrupt the cut, the more strongly it makes us feel the lack of transition, the more disparate the surrounding texts" (Waldrop, 2002: 21).

Els intents d'adherir-se tan estretament al francès Jabès, a l'efecte del seu joc lingüístic, les baixades, els jocs de paraules, el so, la sintaxi, l'intent de reproduir la seva sintaxi, el lèxic i la tipografia, el que implica, per intentar arribar a efectes comparables, retorçar l'anglès en estranyes formes noves. Waldrop vol, diu, per "escriure" Jabès en anglès, "write à l'écoute de Jabès, write listening to his French" (Waldrop, 2002: 27). La qüestió metodològica que aquí es disputa concerneix els criteris per determinar la base per a una comparació i aquest és un punt discutible. Com ha apuntat Philip Lewis, això és "the strong, forceful translation that values experimentation, tampers with usage, seeks to match the polyvalencies or pluralivocities or expressive stresses of the original by producing its own" (Lewis, 1992: 261).

"The translator's task is precisely to render the source text, the original author's interpretation of a given theme expressed in a number of variations, accessible to readers not familiar with these variations, by replacing the original author's variation with their equivalents in a different language, time, place, and tradition. Particular emphasis must be given to the fact that the translator has to replace all the variations contained in the source text by their equivalents" (Lefevere, 1975: 99). Quan el joc de paraules es perd durant el procés de traducció, Waldrop prefereix deixar la secció en francès, acompanyada d'una traducció més literal, però menys literària. Això és, escriu Waldrop, una solució "awkward", però la manera que millor il·lustra el mode i la manera del text original, és una solució que té l'avantatge addicional

de permetre la “difference, foreignness to come to the fore.” Això ens fa conscients, escriu Waldrop, “of the space between the languages where translation lives” i de què el camí d’una llengua a una altra no és recte ni simètric, sinó corbat, una llengua on la pròpia qüestió de la llengua està en joc (Waldrop, 2002: 71).

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#07

ROSMARIE WALDROP ETA ITZULPEN TEORIAK

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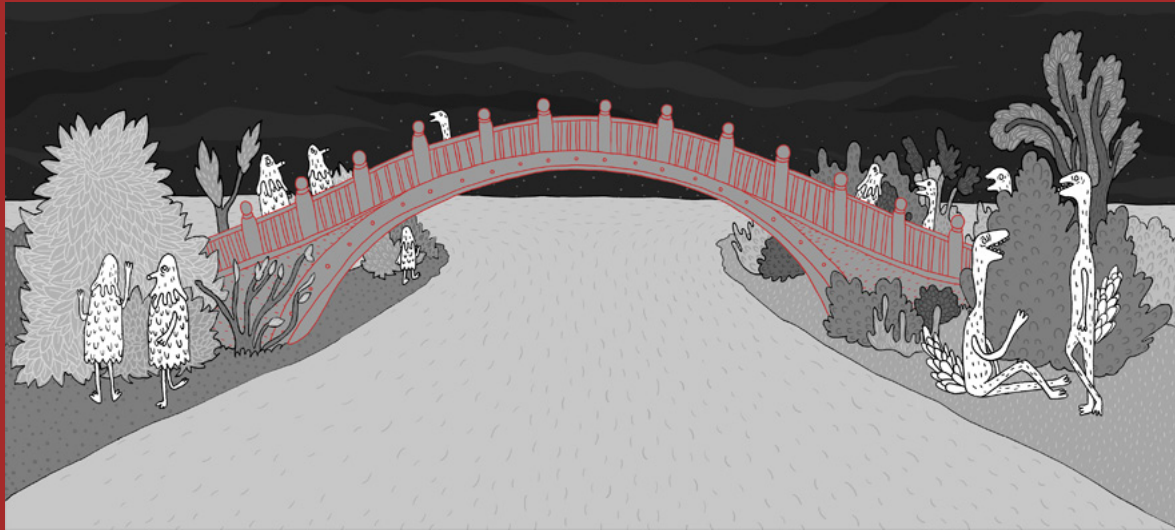
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Laburpena || 60ko hamarkadatik hona, Alemanian jaiotako eta AEBko poeta Rosmarie Waldrop 40 obra inguru itzuli ditu, frantses eta alemanetik nagusiki, frantsesez idazten duen idazle judutar Edmond Jabèsen 14 liburuki barne (Egiptotik kanporatu zuten Jabès 1956an, Suezko krisialdian). Frantziako gobernuaren eskutik, 2003an *Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres* izendatu zuten, eta 2008an poesia itzuliaren kategoriako PEN saria jaso zuen, Ulf Stolterfohten *Lingos I-IX* liburuaren itzulpenagatik. Itzulpengintzan aritzeaz gain, Waldrop 40 zenbait saiakera idatzi ditu ere bai, eta horien bidez itzulpen teoria batzuei buruz hausnartu du, eta baita horietan itzulpen jardueran dituzten eraginei buruz ere. Gogoeta horietako askori heldu die itzulpengintzaren eta idaztearen arteko harremanaren harira, idaztearen inguruko teoriak poesiagintza-forma zehatza garatzeko bideak iradokitzen diren erakundearen harira.

Idazlan honek itzulpengintzari buruzko Waldropen burutazio nagusien ikuspegi orokorra ematen du, eta burutazio horiek kokatzen ditu literatur-itzulpenaren teoria nagusietako batzuekin harremanak ezarrita. Idazlanaren azken zatian, ideia horiek garatzen dira Waldrop 40 eginiko Edmond Jabèsen obraren itzulpenak aintzat hartuta, eta obra horiek iradokitzen duen idazte jardueraren nozioari lotuta.

Hitz gakoak || Rosmarie Waldrop | Itzulpengintza | Desberdintasuna | Arrarotasuna | Poesiagintza.

Summary || Since the 1960s, the German-born US-American poet, Rosmarie Waldrop, has translated over 40 different works, largely from French and German, including 14 volumes by the Jewish French-language writer, Edmond Jabès (Jabès was expelled from Egypt in 1956 during the Suez Crisis). In 2003, Waldrop was made a Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres by the French Government, and in 2008 she received the PEN Award for Poetry in Translation in 2008, for her translation of Ulf Stolterfoht's book, *Lingos I-IX*. As well as practising translation, however, Waldrop has also written several significant essays which reflect on different theories of translation and their implications for practice. Much of these considerations are taken up with the question of the relation between translation and writing, of thinking the ways in which theories of writing might suggest the lines for developing a specific form of poetic practice. This essay provides an overview of Waldrop's central thoughts on translation and contextualises these in relation to some of the major theories of literary translation. In the latter part of the essay, these ideas are developed in specific relation to Waldrop's translations of the work of Edmond Jabès and to the notion of writing practice it suggests.

Keywords || Rosmarie Waldrop | Translation | Difference | Strangeness | Poetic practice.

Translation it is that openeth the window, to let in the light; that breaketh the shell, that we may eat the kernell; that putteth aside the curtain, that we may look into the most holy place; that removeth the cover of the well, that we may come by the water.

“Preface to the Reader,” King James Translators

Alemanian jaiotako eta AEBko poeta garaikide Rosmarie Waldropek *Dissonance* liburukian bildu zituen bere idazlanak, eta “Translation” atalari hasiera ematen dio Anne Carsonen poema baten epigrafe honekin: “the space between two languages is a space like no other” (Waldrop, 2005: 135). Frantsesetik eta alemanetik ingelesera eramandako 40 bat obraren itzultzaile, “no other” hura bereziki beharrezkoa da Waldropen itzulpen teoria eta jarduna ulertzeko. Waldropentzat, nolabait esateko, itzulpena ez da baliokidea. Elkarrizketa batean esan bezala, “what matters”, dio Waldropek, “is not things but what happens between them. Or if you take the linguistic model, it is not the phoneme but the connection of phonemes that makes language, the differences in the sequence [...] The gaps keep the questions in relation” (Retallack: 349).

“Between” bada, gainera, Waldropek ingelesez idatziriko lehen poemetako baten izenburua eta, beharbada beste edozein baino, hitz huraxe da poesiagintza eta itzulpengintzarako Waldropen hurbilketa bereizgarria eta eragin handikoa hobekien ezaugarritzen duena. Berea tartekoen idazkera da, gurutzatzeena, ezberdintasun eta harremanena. “I enter at a skewed angle,” idazten du Waldropek *The Ground is the Only Figure* koadernoan, “through the fissures, the slight difference” (Waldrop, 2005: 223). Hasierako poema horretako hizlariak dioen gisara, “I’m not quite at home / on either side of the Atlantic”, zeren “to change your country / doesn’t make you / grow”:

it doesn’t make you change so much
you can’t remember
I remember
things are much the same
so much the same the
differences are barbed (Waldrop, 1972: 16).

Hasieratik, Waldrop idazketaren eta biografiaren arteko nahasterik ez egoteaz arduratu da, eta hauxe azpimarratu zuen behin: “it is not just a matter of my personal situation between countries and cultures. Our reality is no longer substances, but systems of relations” (Waldrop, 2005: 265). Baina, jakina, ez da kontu erraza bizitzaren eta lanaren artean distantzia bera gordetzea beti. Harreman egokia joan-atorrikoa da, soslai sotil eta aldakorra beti, bizitzatik idazketara eta berriro sorrerara doana. Gauza bera aplikatu dakioke itzulpengintzari. Waldropen lehenengo poemetako batek, “For Harriet” izenekoak, adierazi bezala:

you can't pick out
a thing all by itself
each weaves together
with the next
inside and outside (Waldrop, 1972: 43).

Beste erregistro batean, egile batek bakardadean egoterik ez duen bezala, ez dago egile(ar)en bizitzatik independentea den testurik. Hortaz, Waldropentzat, itzulpena bi norabideetan gutxienez suertatzen da sarri, eta aldi berean. Ezbairik gabe, norabide horiek, hein batean, geografikoak izaten dira nagusiki, Waldropek 1950eko hamarkadan Alemaniatik Amerikara eginiko lekualdatzearen ondoriozkoak. Waldropek esan bezala, “as an immigrant to the United States, I came to a point where I could not go on writing poems in German while “living” in English. Translating (from English to German, at that time) was the natural substitute” (Waldrop, 2005: 137). Halere, Waldropek gaineratzen du geroago hartutako hizkuntzan idaztea, hots, ingelesez idaztea “came before translating into it, so that even my particular state as a person between languages cannot altogether account for any persistence in this seemingly unrewarding, nearly impossible activity” (Waldrop, 2005: 137).

Nozio horiek itzulpengintzari dagozkolarik garatuz gero, Waldropek zehazten du itzultzearen helburua ez dela edukia transmititzea bakarrik, baizik eta hitzaren eta esanahiaren arteko arrakala sortaraztea ere. Desadostasun horrek, sortzean, atentzioa ematen du eta hizkuntzaren bihotzean dagoen arrarotasun batera garamatza. Baina beste zerbait egiten du ezinegonak, hizkuntza batean dagoen obra bat beste hizkuntza batean emateaz gain. Edwin Gentzlerrek adierazten duen gisara, “translate” aditza, etimologikoki, latinezko *translatus* hitzetik eratorria da eta “carried over” esan nahi du. Gainera, *translatus transferreren* partizipioa da:

the Latin *ferre* means “to carry” or “to transport” as in carrying a shield, and was often used to mean to bear or convey with the notion of motion (Homer), as in ships borne by the forces of wind. It also meant to endure, to suffer, as in to bear a mental burden, and survives in expressions such as “you’re not faring well” [...] translation refers to the sense of roads or ways that lead to a place, as in a door leading to a garden, or a road leading to a city, conveying a sense of stretching or extension toward (Gentzler, 2001: 166).

Waldropen 1984ko “The Joy of the Demiurge” idazlanean, horrelako jarduera batean zeharo murgiltzearen arrazoiak bila aritzen da. “I have often asked myself why I go on translating,” aipatzen du Waldropek, “instead of concentrating exclusively on writing my own poetry. The woes of the translator are all too well known: little thanks, poor pay, and plenty of abuse” (Waldrop, 2005: 137). Eta horri gehitu behar zaio, Waldropen arabera, argitaratzaile estatubatuar eta amerikarren gogo txarra beraien zerrendetan ordainik jasotzen

ez duten itzultzaileak agerrarazteko, eta Waldropen ekimenaren pertseberantzia hutsak oraindik idiosinkratikoagoa dirudi. Batzuetan, Waldropek idatzi bezala, itzulpen prozesuak eta diziplinak lagundu izan diote bere idazteari, nora jo ez zekienean. Era berean eta hein batean behintzat, itzulpengintzan duen interesa hizkuntzen arteko bitartekaria “mediator”) izatearen interesetik datorkio, nahiz eta Waldropek gaineratzen duen horixe izan balitz itzultzaile lanetan aritzeko zio nagusia, irakurleei lagungarriagoa gertatuko litzaikeela “teaching them the language” (Waldrop, 2005: 137), besterik gabe.

Iruzkin horiek ikusita espero zitekeen moduan, Waldropek beste nonbait kokatzen ditu itzulpengintzan murgilduta jarraitzeko arrazoiak, beste nonbaiteko mundu iheskor horretan, hain zuzen. Dirudenez, mundu hori beti moldatu egiten da hura definitzea eta eskuratzea ekiditeko, eta berarekin dakartza bitxia denaren ondorio kezagarriak, ezohikoak ez badira ere. “As I read the original work,” dio Waldropek, “I admire it. I am overwhelmed. I would like to have written it. Clearly, I am envious – envious enough to make it mine at all cost, at the cost of destroying it. Work, I take pleasure in destroying the work exactly because it means making it mine. And I assuage what guilt I might feel by promising that I will make reparation, that I will labor to restore the destroyed beauty in my language – also, of course, by the knowledge that *I do not actually touch the original within its own language*” (Waldrop, 2005: 138). Irakurle orok egiten duen gisara, itzultzaileak bere esperientziaren bitartez irakurtzen du. Alberto Manguelen ustetan, “beyond the literal sense and the literary meaning, the text we read acquires the projection of our own experience, the shadow, as it were, of who we are” (Manguel, 1996: 267).

Ikuspegi hura itzulpengintzako ikasketetan zehar hedatu samar dago. Esaterako, 1970ean Burning Deckek Christopher Middletonen lanen bat plazaratu zuen, eta hark itzultzailearen eta obraren arteko harremanaren garrantzi hori aipatzen du, elkarrizketa batean honakoa esan zuelarik: “it is necessary to know as much as you can about the whole work of the author. Not necessarily about his life and epoch, but to be receptive to the stratagems of his mind, his kind of sentence, and the kind of syntactical behaviour his language shows” (Honig, 1976: 1592). Itzulpen teoria horien testuingurua kontuan hartuta ere, Waldropen azken hitz horiek harrigarriak dira, itzulpena jatorrizko obra bakar samar uztea delako zentzuan. John Johnstonentzat, ikuspegi horrek itzulpena simulakrotzat jotzen du eta, simulakroak, antzekotasuna eta autoidentitatea pribilegiatzen dituen eta, Ideiarekin alderatuta, simulakroa txartzat hartzen duen eredu platonikoak ez bezala, desberdintasuna sortu eta gorde egiten du, simulakroa erdigunetik atera eta urrundu egiten da, eta, hala, beste oihartzun batzuetara zabaltzen da. Testu baten esanahia leial ematea baino, Johnstonen argudioen arabera, itzulpenek “forge

a new language in which both languages are present as two diverging but resonant series of words. In a reversal of the relationship between “original” and “imitation,” the translations propose themselves as the “origin” of a new set of meanings sometimes indistinguishable from a-signifying verbal intensities” (Johnston, 1992: 49). Alde horretatik, itzulpenak ez du jatorrizko obra aldatzen, baizik eta hizkera gordetzen du aldi berean, eta baita hizkera beste zerbait bihurtu ere, parekotasunetik harago doan zerbait. Honela jarraitzen du Johnstonek:

those translations which accomplish something different by maintaining the originary difference in and through translation, that deterritorialize the target language in such a way that it can't be recoded and recuperated by appeal to established cultural and spiritual meanings, that thereby manifest something new in the language, are also simulacra, diverging from the original but also resonant with it, bringing to fulfilment or pushing along further what the original carried only as a precursor (Johnston, 1992: 54).

Hain zuzen, horrelako argudio baten ondorioek beraiek eusten diote Waldropen itzulpen nozioari, hark “irreducible strangeness” izendatu duena. Waldropentzat, itzultzea esploratze egintza bat da, edo “double exploration” deitzen duena, zeren “the translator must not only explore the original, but also search the target language for an idiom, a language within language” (Waldrop, 2002: 7). Walter Benjaminek “The Task of the Translator” deritzon lanean adierazten duenez, itzulpenaren helburua izan beharko litzateke “to expand and deepen [...] language by means of the foreign language”, izatea “some strangeness in the proportion”, “a trace of the foreign in the translation” (Benjamin, 1968: 74). Benjaminentzat, nolabait esateko, itzulpenaren “transmission” edo “carrying of one to another” delakoa albokotasunean oinarritzen da antzekotasunean baino. Benjaminen ustez, itzultzaile oro “lives by the difference of languages; every translation is founded upon this difference” (Benjamin, 1968: 79). Hortaz, kontua ez da itzulpen baten xedea itzultzeke dagoen obraren antza izatea dela, baizik eta, Blanchotek aipatu bezala, itzulpenak egiten duela “a question of an identity on the basis of alterity: the same work in two languages, both because of their foreignness and by making visible, in their foreignness, what makes this work such that it will always be other” (Blanchot, 1997: 59-60). Bestela esanda, obra itzulia ez dago etxean inoiz¹.

Bestetasun horren ondorioz, Benjaminek uste du “translation must in large measure refrain from wanting to communicate something, from rendering the sense” (Benjamin, 1968: 81). Hitz horien bidez, Benjaminek gogora ekartzen ditu itzulpenaren inguruko eta eragin itzeleko ideia batzuk, Friedrich Schlegelmacher egile erromantiko alemanaren “foreignisation” kontzeptuak sortuak, hain zuzen ere. Ideia horiexek, bestalde, irakurlea testu arrotzera hurbiltzea dute

OHARRAK

1 | Itzulpenaren ‘etxekotasun eza’ kontzeptuari buruz gehiago jakin nahi izanez gero, ikus Andrew Benjaminen ‘Translating Origins: Psychoanalysis and Philosophy,’ in Venuti (1992): 18-41.

xede, hau da, “to give the reader, through the translation, the impression he would have received as a German reading the work in the original language” (Schleiermacher, 2004: 50). Edo, Wilhelm von Humboldttek urtebete geroago adierazi bezala Aeschylusen *Agamemnonen* 1816ko bere itzulpenaren sarreran, garrantzitsua da itzulpenari ematea “a certain tinge of foreignness” (Humboldt, 1997: 240). Nahiz eta Benjaminen helburu inportanteenetako bat zen itzulpengintza ez jotzea ahalegintzat, alegia, idatzi batek xede hizkuntzan sortua izan balitz bezalako itxura izateko saiotez, Benjaminen azken aldiko eta gero eragin handiagoko “translatability” edo “pure language” nozio hermeneutikoak agerian uzten du zein puntutan ez datozen bat nagusiki Benjaminen eta Waldropen itzulpenari buruzko ikusmoldeak. Benjaminentzat itzulpenak halako argialdia eta askapena bilatzen ei ditu, gaur egun ahantzia, baina Babelgo dorrea eraikitzeko ahaleginaren aurretik gertatua. Izan ere, Genesiaren arabera, Lurra elebakarra zen, diskurtso bakarrekoa, eta kabalistentzat paradisuko hizkuntza zen hura. “Seen thus,” deritzo George Steinerrek, “translation is a teleological imperative, a stubborn searching out of all the apertures, translucencies, sluice-gates through which the divided streams of human speech pursue their destined return to a single sea” (Steiner, 1975: 244).

Hala ere, bada argialdi eta askapeneko forma bat, eta jarraitzen du I Korintoarrei 14ko *pneumari* buruzko San Pabloren *excursusari* leial izaten. Bertan, letra eta espirituaren arteko alde gaindiezina irudikatzen da, eta debekatu ere egiten du “spirit”, “authentic speech” delakoaren itzulpena, Kristoren hitzak giza diskurtsotik harago ei baitaude, esanezinak baitira. Interesgarria da arestian aipaturiko atzerrikotze kontzeptuaren halako oihartzuna dela San Pablok erabiltzen duen terminoa: “arcana verba”, lengoaien hizkuntza bat, bereganatu ezinezkoa, baliokiderik gabea hasi aurretik, arrotza. Gainerakoan, Kanten hitzetako hau egiten duten noumenoak dira: “mark the limits of our sensible knowledge” eta “leave open a space which we can fill neither through possible experience nor through pure understanding” (Kant, 1929: A289/B343). II Korintoarrei 12:4 atalean, San Pablok argitzen du itzultzea biraoa izango litzatekeela, edo behintzat arrotzaren bilaketaren aurrean bere burua aldi berean ezabatzen ez duen itzulpen forma horietako bat litzatekeela, itzulezina *itzulezin* gisa itzultzen duelarik. Christopher Middletonen esanetan, “one of the simplest and most creative ways of considering the act of translation is to regard it as a minimal, perhaps vestigial, but still exemplary encounter with ‘the other’” (Honig, 1976: 1602). Itzulpena eredutzat har daiteke desberdintasuna *qua* desberdintasun erakusten duelako, ez delako erabat baliokidea, desadostasun eta desagerpenerako tokia uzten duelako zabalik, Heraklitoren desberdintasuna bere barnean: *hen diapheron heautoi*. *Diapherein* hitza *diaphero* errotik dator, eta “to carry from one to the other, to carry across” esan nahi du, baina Heraklitok badakar beste esanahi

bat, metaforikoa: “to toss about, to be disrupted”. Azken horren kasuan, Derridak berak *Margins of Difference* lanean “play of traces” izendatzen du, edo *desberdintasuna* ere bada (Derrida, 1980: 15; Liddell, 1925: 417). Ez dagoen testua, jarraitzen du Middletonek, “is the one we are helped to conceive of by the existence of the text before us” (Honig, 1976: 1602). Edo Forrest Gander AEBko poeta garaikideak dioen gisara, “in a good translation, the original may be veiled, but it doesn’t disappear” (Gander, 2000: 88). Walter Benjaminek: itzulpen onek ez dute “cover the original, does not black its light, but allows the pure language, as though reinforced by its own medium, to shine upon the original all the more fully” (Benjamin: 1968: 72).

Waldropek beste irakurketa bat egiten du Benjaminen “pure language” deritzon nozioaren inguruan, pragmatikoagoa zein materialagoa. Waldropentzat, beste modu batera esanda, “pure language” horren oinarri lehena eta nagusia “central relationship between languages” bat badagoelako ustea da, eta berretsita suertatzen da itzulpena zeharo posibletzat jotzen delako. Waldropen iritzi ezberdina, itzulpenari buruz duen ideiatik sortzen da, ez baitu uste itzulpena abstrakziorantz mugitzen denik, guztiz aurkakoa baizik, “toward another embodiment in a concrete, particular language” (Waldrop, 2005: 139). Hala, Waldropek iradokitzen du itzultzailearen zeregina ez dela jatorrizko obra *bere horretan* ematea beste hizkuntza batean, ez, hobe obraren “figures’ of thought” direlakoak hurreratu, Zizeronen hitzak erabiltzearen. Edo baita Nietzschek “the movement of style” hitzak ere, obraren formaren zentzuaren berri emateko, erritmoarena, egitura tonalarena, gramatika eta testuinguruena, beti ere nabarmentzen direlarik, batetik, baliokidetasunaren porrota eta, bestetik, zerbaiten ezarpena, zerbait berria ez bada, behintzat desberdina (Zizeron, 1960: 364). Ezra Poundek Cavalcantiren bere itzulpenak aurkeztean aipatu bezala, “it is conceivable the poetry of a far-off time or place requires a translation not only of word and of spirit, but of “accompaniment” (Pound, 1983: 12). Waldropek gaineratzen du, beste alde batetik, itzulpenaren nozioa laguntzaile gisa aplikatu dakiekeela obra garaikideei ere. “We must understand,” dio Waldropek, “what Walter Benjamin has described as the intentionality of a work, the ways in which it relates to its language and culture” (Waldrop, 2002: 55).

Translation is approximation rather than duplication. A re-giving of form. I’ve sometimes described it as trying to get down to the genetic code of a work [...] And from that “genetic code,” you rebuild it in the other language, but having the instructions that a code would have (Foster, 1994: 149).

Itzulpenak “are woven into a textual history that is always transforming terms, translating other terms” (Gentzler, 2001: 171).

OHARRAK

2 | Ikus: Derrida, J., 'Des Tours de Babel' in J.F. Graham (1985): 165-207.

Oraingoan, Waldrop Derridatik hurbilago dago Benjaminen "pure language" zentzu abstraktuaren berregiteari dagokionean: etengabe jira eta bira dabilen hura, desbideratzen den esamoldea, *desberdintasuna*². Waldropek liburuaren nozioari eusten dio poema bakarrarenari baino, edo lerroarenari konposizio neurri gisa. Aipatutakoari eusten dion era bertsuan, Waldropek idazten du nola "the *unit* of translation is the whole work rather than the single sentence or line – let alone the single word" (Waldrop, 2005: 139). Waldropen hizkuntza hautuak azpimarratzen du zein den bere iritzia itzulpenari buruz, alegia, jatorrizko obrarekin lotuta dagoela, baina, aldi berean, berezia dela, bereizgarria, ezberdina. Haatik, tartekoaren espazioari lotua dago. Ondorioz, nahiz eta ados dagoen Benjaminen itzulpenaren inguruko nozioarekin, ona izanik ere itzulpenak "does not cover the original, does not block its light" (Benjamin, 1968: 70). Waldropek zehazten du itzulpena ez dela hurreratzen Benjaminen "pure language" abstrakzio hegeliarrarentz, baizik eta jasaten duela "something more like erosion. It is weathered by the passage of time" (Waldrop, 2005: 142). "A translation that can suggest the lost beauty of the original," uste du Waldropek, "is preferable to a smooth replica that pretends to be the original itself" (Waldrop, 2005: 143). Ez dago itzulpen gardenik: "even the most faithful of translations will bear the mark of the translator, of her time, of her cultural background", eta baita testuak bermatzeko erabiltzen dituen eta behar dituen arrailak ere. Beharbada, saihestezina litzateke itzulpena horren barnera jotzea, astun erortzea; zeharo ikusgarria ez balitz ere, senti liteke, eta batzuetan oraindik nabariago. Christopher Middletonen esanetan, itzulpenaren ikuspegi horri esker, gauza zara "to look over the edges of the conventions of your own language" (Honig, 1976: 1596). Izan ere, horixe bera da Waldropek oinarritzat hartzen duen ikuspegia itzulpenaren locusak ondorengo hau gogora ekartzeko erak azaltzeko garaian: "new ground somewhere between the two languages, stretching the border of the target language beyond where it was before" (Waldrop, 2005: 156). Edo Vincent Broquak agertzen duen gisara, Waldropek "between languages" idazten du, "in the slit, on the edge or in the "doorway" where one language becomes other." Broquaren arabera, "infinitesimal site" horretan gauzatzen du Waldropek esamolde biziki berezien trukea (Broqua, 2007).

Beste nonbait, Waldropek parekatzen ditu itzulpen jarduera erabat arraroa eta Hans-Georg Gadamerren literatur obra baten "third dimension" nozioa. Esparru horretan:

Nothing that is said has its truth simply in itself, but refers instead backward and forward to what is unsaid. Every assertion is motivated, that is, one can sensibly ask of everything that is said, "Why do you say that?" And only when what is not said is understood along with what is said is an assertion understandable.

Waldropek dioenez, “it takes words to make things visible” (Waldrop, 2005: 149). Bertan, isiltasuna gune bihurtzen da, “for the utterance rather than an ultimate limit” eta “a space,” idazten du Waldropek, ez du axola zeinen iragankor, “can be explored, even this space of the unsaid” (Waldrop, 2005: 150-1).

Aintzat hartu beharreko kontua da Dryden eta Goetheren garaian sorturiko itzulpengintza tradizioa, nahiz eta agian Roman Jakobsonen itzulpenaren nozioan (hizkuntzaren barnekoa, hizkuntzen artekoa eta intersemiotikoa³) garatu zen nabarmenkiago. Horretan eta aurreko ikuspegi teorikoen testuinguruetan oinarriturik, Waldropen itzulpen prozesua hiru fasetan datza. Waldropek dioenez, lehenengo fasean funtsezkoa da irakurketa intentsiboa egitea, zirriborro ez oso zehatza burutzearekin batera. Waldropek adierazi duen erara, prozesu horretan zehar ez du obraren esanahia bakarrik bilatzen, sortze prozesua ulertzea eta horretan murgiltzea ere bilatzen baitu, prozedurak, metodoak eta idiosinkrasiak barne, formalak edo bestelakoak. Bigarren fasean, Waldropek baztertu egiten du jatorrizko testua, eta berrikusten du “the mess of the first draft (which is not quite English, often makes no sense at all) as if it were a draft of my own” eta bere obra propioa idazten saiatzen da. Honela izendatu du fase hura: “the stage of separation” (Waldrop, 2005: 159). Hirugarren fasean, Waldrop jatorrizko testura itzultzen da, eta ahalegintzen da “to wrestle the English as close to the original language as possible” (Waldrop: 2005: 158). Eskuarki, azken fase horretako lan nagusia sintaxia eta erritmoaren ingurukoa izaten da, itzulpenaren forma eta etorria jatorrizko testura hurbiltzearen ingurukoa, obra itzulia tarteko espazioan egoten uztearen ingurukoa, forma irekiaren espazioan, zeina, irekia izanik ere, forma bat baita, mugak eta guzti. Edo, Goethek adierazi zuen gisara, kontua da agerian uztea testu itzulia ez dagoela “instead of the other but in its place” (Steiner, 1975: 258). George Steinerrek, *After Babel* izeneko itzulpenaren historiari buruzko bere eragin handiko lanean, tarteko espazio konpondugabearen garrantzi itzel eta adierazkorraren alde egiten du:

Good translation [...] can be defined as that in which the dialectic of impenetrability and ingress, of intractable alienness and felt “at-homeness” remains unresolved, but expressive. Out of the tension of resistance and affinity, a tension directly proportional to the proximity of the two languages and historical communities, grows the elucidative strangeness of the great translation (Steiner, 1975: 413).

Waldropen ustetan, eta oro har bere poesiarekin gertatzen zaion moduan, “translation’s ultimate task may be to bear witness to the *essentially* irreducible strangeness between languages – but its immediate task is exactly to explore this space,” testu batek sortzen duen pentsamenduaren forma (Waldrop, 2005: 159). Zentzu horretan, argudiatzen du Waldropek, itzulpena “dialogue and collaboration” prozesu bat da (Waldrop, 2002: 63). Izan ere, horixe da zergatia

OHARRAK

3 | Jakobsonen teoriari buruzko laburpen bat irakurtzeko, ikus Munday (2001): 37-8.

Maurice Blanchotek pentsatzeko itzulpena dela “the sheer play of difference: it constantly makes allusion to difference, dissimulates difference, but by occasionally revealing and often accentuating it, translation becomes the very life of this difference” (Blanchot, 1997: 58). “Not resemblance,” argitzen du Blanchotek, “but identity on the basis of otherness” (Blanchot, 1997: 58). Alberto Manguelk beste era batean azaltzen du:

As we read a text in our own language, the text itself becomes a barrier. We can go into it as far as its words allow, embracing all their possible definitions; we can bring other texts to bear upon it and to reflect it, as in a hall of mirrors; we can construct another, critical text that will extend and illuminate the one we are reading; but we cannot escape the fact that its language is the limit of our universe. Translation proposes a sort of parallel universe, another space and time in which the text reveals other, extraordinary possible meanings. For these meanings, however, there are no words, since they exist in the intuitive no man’s land between the language of the original and the language of the translator (Manguel, 1996: 276).

Itzuli beharreko testua bera hizkuntza aldetik zaila denean, itzulpenaren arazo teoriko eta praktikoak zorrotzago bilakatzen dira. Forrest Ganderrek galdetzen duen modura, “how are we to deal with an original text that is itself syntactically innovative? If the literal-syntax translator translates a conventional word order (in the original language) into an unconventional order (in the target language), how can work that is unconventional in the first place be given its due?” (Gander, 2000: 118).

Kontuan hartuta Waldropek itzuli ohi duen abangoardiako obra mota berezia, galdera horrek harreman handia du Waldropek itzultzaile gisa eginiko lan praktikoarekin, baina beharbada, are gehiago hark eginiko Edmond Jabèsen lanen itzulpen mugarriekin. Alabaina, lau hamarkadako lana izan da eta garrantzi izugarria izan du Waldropen beraren poesiaren garapenean.

Waldropek lehenengoz izan zuen Jabèsen lanaren berri berak eta Keithek Jabèsen hasierako poemak bildumaren ale bat topatu zutenean. *Je bâtis ma demeure* zuen izena, eta 1957an aurkitu zuten Aix-en-Provenceko liburu-denda batean. Parisera itzulita, Waldropek 1966an erosi zuen Jabèsen plazaratu berriko *Le Livre des Questions* obra ospetsuaren lehenengo liburukia. Honela deskribatzen du: “it was an overwhelming experience for me to read this first volume. It was a *coup de foudre*” (Foster, 1994: 140). Bestalde, 1969rako, Waldropek *The Book of Questions*en berrogeita hamar orrialde zituen itzuliak, baina oraindik ez zuen argitaratzailerik aurkitzen lortu. Hogei argitaratzailerekin jarri zen harremanetan eta guztiek baztertu egin zuten eskuizkribua zeren, Jabèsen obra interesgarria bazen ere, itzulpenak kaleratzea ez zen errentagarria (Waldrop,

2002: 5). Hortaz, denboraldi batez Waldropek utzi egin zuen proiektu hura eta, bolada batean behintzat, bere idazle lanari arreta osoa jartzea erabaki zuen. Horrela izanik ere, *Le Livre des Questions* en ale bat eraman zuen Parisera, 1970-71 ikasturtean Keithekin hara joandakoan egonaldi bat egitera; Jabèsen testua “back-up project” gisa eraman zuen, indarberritzeko, baldin eta bere lana ez aurrera ez atzera gelditzen bazen. Bestalde, 1970ean, AEBko poeta George Tyshek zenbait poesia irakurraldi antolatu zituen Waldropen etxean. Bertara agertu zen Claude Royet-Journoud poeta frantsesa, eta Jabèsen *Le Livre des Questions* obraren ale bat ikusi zuen apal batean. Hurrengo eguneko arratsaldean, Royet-Journoudek Jabès eraman zuen bertara, Waldrop ezagutu zezan. Waldropek oroitzen duenaren arabera, Jabèsek “slight” gorpuzkera zuen, “a deeply lined face, extraordinary blue eyes. Eyes that seem to be moving outward, toward me. Searching. A sense of gentleness, decorum and warmth. I give him what I have translated. A few days later he recognizes himself in the rhythm” (Waldrop, 2002: 5).

Adiskidetasun horri esker, itzultzaileak idazlearen idazkera biziki berezi eta idiosinkratikoarekin zuen harremana sostengatu eta sakondu zuen. Esan beharra dago Jabèsen eragina Waldropen poesiaren garapenean eta forman konplexua dela. Horrezaz gain, pertsonala eta intuitiboa izan ohi da, eta pixkanaka sortua, ikerketa, arreta eta adiskidetasunekoaldi luze batean zehar. Waldropen ustetan, Jabèsen liburuak unitate poetikotzat hartzera, espaziotzat behartu zuen, lurtzat, barruan lan egiteko itsasontzitzat, geruzak, gehitzeak eta espazioak barne. Gainera, Waldropek dio honi esker, “specifically” Jabès’s insistence on the book on the one hand (as the writer’s only place, as Mallarmé’s “spiritual instrument”) and fragmentation on the other, that focuses my own contradictory impulses toward flow and fragment” (Waldrop, 2002: 75). Baina, Jabèsen Waldropentzat eginiko proiektuari dagokionean, gailentzen da bereziki Jabèsen nola uzten duen agerian “the structure of language, of signification. He makes us aware of the imaginary line between signifier and signified by constantly crossing it. And the line between symbol and index. So that at the limits of signification language is made to show itself” (Waldrop, 2002: 87). Edo, berriro ere:

Edmond Jabès writes a text over which he claims no authorial power, a text which he claims only to copy, make legible. This is a remarkable claim in itself [...] everything in his work – the shifting voices and perspectives, the breaks of mode, tautologies, alogical sequences and contradictory metaphors, the stress on uncertainty (the constant subjunctive) – all combine to subvert the authority we expect in a book. Authority of statement, of closure and linearity, the confidence in a narrative thread, continuity of temporal and causal sequence. And most of all, the authority of the author (Waldrop, 2002: 142-3).

NOTES

4 | Per a més informació sobre Jabès, vegeu, entre d’altres: Caws (1988), Derrida (2001), Israel-Pelletier (2008), Mole (1997), and Motte (1990).

OHARRAK

4 | Jabèsen lanen berri gehiago izateko, ikus, besteak beste: Caws (1988), Derrida (2001), Israel-Pelletier (2008), Mole (1997) eta Motte (1990).

Rimmon-Kenanek azaldu bezala, “holes or gaps are so central in narrative fiction because the materials the text provides for the reconstruction of a world (or a story) are insufficient for saturation” (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 127). Baina zulo horiek munduaren beraren egoera dira, munduaren irregulartasuna, lurra, eskarmentua. Hortaz, Hank Lazerrentzat, “the qualities of exile, of otherness, of removal, of being beside that recur in Jabès’s writing have their foundation (in addition to Jabès’s personal, biographical experience) in Jewish history and in Kabbalistic interpretation” (Lazer, 2003).

Edmond Jabèsék aipatu izan du nola “we always start out from a written text and come back to the text to be written, from the sea to the sea, from the page to the page” (Jabès, 1993: 40). “In the beginning is hermeneutics,” errepikatzen du Jacques Derridak (Derrida, 2001, 81)⁴. Gure aurrean dagoen orrialdean beti dago zerbait, *blindsight* delakoa jazotzen da. Kasu horietan, Antonio R. Damasio neurozientzialariak dioenez, pertsona batek uste baino gehiago ikusten du, konturatzen ez den arren. Funtsezkoena da nola irakurtzen den *blindsight* hori.

Modu batean edo bestean dela, idaztea berridazketa prozesua delako usteak historia luzea du, eta sorrera Moisesek taulak hautsi zituenean koka dezakegu, edo baita itsasontzien hausturaren Kabalako tradizioan ere. Luriaren arabera, Jaungoikoaren argia gehiegizkoa zen itsasontziek eraman zezaten eta, hala, lekualdatu edo birrindu egin ziren. Gertaera bietan, mundua, hemen eta orain, lekuz kanpo dago, argi hautsiaren zatiez osatua, birrindutako hitzez osatua. Waldropek gogorarazi bezala, Zoharren hitzetan, “in every word shine multiple lights”. Era berean, hauxe dio Susan Handelmanek: “Thus in Kabbalah, it is not only the tablets of the law that are broken. The universe itself has undergone a primordial shattering; God has withdrawn; the Vessels are broken; the divine sparks are lost in the material world. As Scholem reads it, Kabbalah is a great myth of exile” (Handelman, 1985: 21).

Kasu horretan, beraz, itzulpengintzak, ondo irakurtzeko arteak bezala, lekuz kanpo egotea dakar, zalantzati, ziurtasunik gabe; huts egitea dakar. Abiatzea da, noraezean ibiltzea, begiratzea, baina nire burua etengabeko katean bidaiatzen aurkitu, handik urrun, beste nonbait. Hori egitean, irakurketak kontraintuitiboa behar du izan, aldietan eta hasieretan ekitea, galdera eta ezabapenekin, beti modu aldakorretan, beti mugen aurka, esaten zaila izan denaren mugen aurka: *blindsight*s, zatiak. Hala, Waldropek honela azaltzen du: “the spark given off by the edges of the shards, the fragments, is stronger the more abrupt the cut, the more strongly it makes us feel the lack of transition, the more disparate the surrounding texts” (Waldrop, 2002: 21).

Jabèsen frantsesari orpoz orpo jarraitzen saiatzen da, hau da, bere hizkeraren jokoaren efektuari, gorabeherei, hitz-jokoei, hotsei, konplexutasunari. Sintaxia islatzen saiatzen da, lexikoa eta tipografia eta, hori guztia dela medio, efektu antzekoak bilatu behar ditu nahitaez, eta horrek sarritan ingelesa moldatzea dakar, forma berri eta bitxiak sortuz. Waldropek dioenaren arabera, Jabès ingelesez “write” nahi du, “write à l’écoute de Jabès, write listening to his French” (Waldrop, 2002: 27). Hemen aipatu beharreko gai metodologikoa irizpide batzuei dagokie, erkatzeko oinarria zehazten dituztenak, hain zuzen, eta gai eztabaidagarria da. Philip Lewisek ohartarazi izan duen gisara, hau da “the strong, forceful translation that values experimentation, tampers with usage, seeks to match the polyvalencies or pluralivocities or expressive stresses of the original by producing its own” (Lewis, 1992: 261).

“The translator’s task is precisely to render the source text, the original author’s interpretation of a given theme expressed in a number of variations, accessible to readers not familiar with these variations, by replacing the original author’s variation with their equivalents in a different language, time, place, and tradition. Particular emphasis must be given to the fact that the translator has to replace *all* the variations contained in the source text by their equivalents” (Lefevere, 1975: 99). Itzultzean hitz joko zehatz bat galtzen bada, Waldropek atal hura frantsesetik uzten du aukera hobe delakoan, eta nagusiki hitzez hitzekoa eta horren literarioa ez den itzulpen batekin batera agerrarazten du. Waldropen esanetan, irtenbide “awkward” bat da, baina, jatorrizko testuaren nondik norakoak agerian uzteaz gain, abantaila bat du, “difference, foreignness to come to the fore” ahalbidetzen baitu. Horri esker, idazten du Waldropek, hauen jakitun izaten gara: “of the space between the languages where translation lives” eta hizkuntza batetik besterako bidearen jakitun. Bidea ez da zuzena ezta simetrikoa ere, kurbatua baizik, hizkuntza bat non hizkuntzaren beraren afera jokoan baitago (Waldrop, 2002: 71).

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