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Aller au sommaire du numéro

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« Translating the New World » est celle de Jean de Léry et de son *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil*. De Léry était un calviniste français qui, à la fin du seizième siècle, alors que la France cherchait à s'établir en Amérique du Sud, conduisit une expédition qui lui fit rencontrer les Indiens Tupinamba du Brésil chez qui il demeura plusieurs mois. S'intéressant il est vrai plutôt à la faune et à la flore qu'à la conversion des indigènes, de Léry utilise surtout dans ses textes les termes tupinamba au lieu de chercher à leur donner des équivalents français, ne les « traduisant » qu'en donnant une forme écrite à des mots appartenant jusque là à une civilisation orale. En utilisant la taxonomie en usage au seizième siècle, elle-même basée sur celle de Pline, il aura ainsi contribué à « nommer » le Nouveau Monde puisque c'est sur la base de ce vocabulaire que nous parlons encore de nos jours d' « ananas », de « manioc », de « caïman » et de noix d' « acajou ».

Avec le dernier texte, nous retournons en Espagne où un jeune voyageur britannique, Robert Southey (1774-1843), invité par son oncle, pasteur de la colonie britannique de Lisbonne, se prit de passion pour l'histoire de l'Espagne et du Portugal, deux pays dont il maîtrisa rapidement les langues. Dans sa contribution, « *Amadis of Gaul* (1803) and *Chronicle of the Cid* (1808) by Robert Southey », **Juan Miguel Zarandona** s'intéresse surtout au facteur humain en traduction et à l'histoire de la traduction vue par les yeux des traducteurs eux-mêmes. À travers ces deux traductions d'épopées historiques, il explique comment Southey est resté fidèle aux principes qu'il avait formulés : prendre des libertés plutôt que de risquer de lasser le lecteur par un mot à mot trop strict ; compresser à condition de ne pas perdre ce qui fait la richesse de l'original ; respecter la balance des éléments constituant le texte original ; conserver le style de l'époque là où c'est possible ; porter une grande attention à la traduction des noms propres (une façon de maintenir l'exotisme du texte) ; faire de la modestie la vertu primordiale du traducteur. Particulièrement intéressant est le fait que la *Chronique du Cid* n'est pas la traduction d'un seul texte, mais bien l'amalgame d'une chronique, d'un long poème et de ballades dont Southey retint, dans sa traduction, les éléments les plus intéressants.

Selon le vœu des compilateurs, il est à souhaiter que ces exposés sur la méthodologie et l'histoire de la traduction donnent une nouvelle image de l'histoire de la traduction en tant que discipline autonome et ouvrent la voie à de nouvelles recherches dans un secteur où beaucoup reste à faire.

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NOTE

1. <http://www.ensayistas.org/critica/manifiestos/H-debate.htm>. La version originale est en espagnol ; il existe toutefois une version anglaise et française.

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There are nine chapters in this book, essays on translation, each one with a particular slant on the complexity of "unpacking" the truth of the literary text and the challenges of translating it.

Multiple insights into literary translation are here, translation of poetry in particular. Some of the chapters are good résumés of theory and practice already known to the specialist but the section that appeals to me most is "Poetry as Knowing," a brilliant analysis of the poem as an "inexhaustible inscape" and the fact that translation can lift the veils of a poem in an unrelenting effort to remove the last veil and reveal the truth of the text. The latter will never be the same as the original, obviously not in terms of signs, but usually not

in affect either. A translation that succeeds in becoming a poem in its own right is very rare, in the process often revealing more about the translator than the writer. This is true of some great poetic monuments like FitzGerald's recasting of the Rubaiyat. To compare Khayaam's original with several recent translations is enough to realize the great leap FitzGerald performs in "appropriating" (Folkart's word which she rightly insists is not pejorative) the original text.

What is very much the pedal point of the book, playing through every approach to translation, is the ultimate fact that any attempt to reach the "text-to-come," is best accomplished by someone who is a writer first, and a translator second. Which brings to mind Yourcenar's admonition to unwary translators who are not already writers or who do not possess superior writing skills that their work will fall short of being a poem or literary text in its own right and will be merely some sort of approximation, equivalence, mirror-text, etc. One realizes Yourcenar was writing from direct experience after reading her profound translations of spirituals and of Woolf's "The Waves." In respect to the latter, Folkart's observation that the translation often reveals more about the translator than the original creator is quite true. And yet, "Les Vagues" remains a novel in French, uniquely Yourcenar's and written "from inside" the French language.

Folkart spends considerable time telling us that analysis is a necessary tool of literary studies but "translation studies must go further, venture into the yet unexplored reaches of writing." Well and good, say I. But does this not exclude the translator who is not of the elite, not of the gifted writer tribe? I have serious doubts about someone without the writing spark being able to fan the flame into something we would call genius or great or even very talented no matter how far *she* ventures into those unexplored reaches. I say *she* to keep in step with Folkart's annoying decision to use the feminine as generic when all it does is distract the reader, making *her* go backwards three or four lines to wonder what was missed or transmogrified without *her* realizing it. Perhaps a caveat at the beginning of the book would help, to warn all readers the feminine gender will be used throughout to include both sexes in a general sense. Luckily, male poets like Saint-Jean Perse, T.S. Eliot *et al.*, retain their *he(s)* and their *his(es).*

Getting back to the writer as translator, Folkart throughout gives us "working translations" of her own, some very fine, but often too embryonic to thrill to, or too indecisive (in the name of flexibility one presumes) to "get" the text as a whole and its subtleties. There seems to be a hiatus between the "sensory inputs of all sorts" and the text (form) and its music (body). Some of the other examples she gives are very good, Pound, Auguste Morel, Weinfield and others. What strikes the reader in these translations is the emotion that peels off the text and "sticks" to the skin. Does one "feel" differently in another language? The affective layers in one poem in one language compared to the layers in another, are not the same because the music is not, and cannot be, the same. It is not approximation nor is it total "appropriation." Ultimately, it all comes back, as Folkart suggests, to ourselves as readers. I dare say my reaction to a poem by Yeats may be deep and very moving but would it be the same as that of a reader of the times when he wrote, or even of other readers of English of any period who, each and every one, react differently to the rhythms, the singing, the allusions which are known to us all but which resonate within us according to our individual sensitivity and our personal "bagages"? And when the same reader turns to the same poem in translation, perhaps our resonance is in a different but similarly charged mode, and this is quite possibly what makes us vibrate in the presence of a great translation. I think this is what Barbara Folkart is aiming at when she talks of the "text-to-come" and what she calls the "theory of doing."

An excellent collection of important aspects of what every literary translator should be aware of.

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