

O OBRADOIRO DE TRADUCCIÓN DA UNIVERSIDADE DE OXFORD

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A comezos do ano pasado, o lector de galego da Universidade de Oxford, Benigno Fernández Salgado, e mais eu buscamos algunha maneira de conseguir que un maior número de estudantes británicos se animasen a aprende-la lingua galega. Desde que se fundou o Centro de Estudos Galegos de dita Universidade en outubro de 1991, isto é unha das nosas meirandes preocupacións. E non é unha tarefa doada nunha universidade e nun país nos que o mesmo castelán é minoritario entre as linguas estranxeiras; pois o francés e mailo alemán son, con moita diferenza, os idiomas que máis se estudian alí. Ademais, o galego non forma parte obrigatoria de ningún curso da nosa universidade, só é unha opción entre moitas. Despois de matinar bastante, ideámo-lo que sería o primeiro taller de traducción da Universidade de Oxford. Tanto Benigno coma min compartíamo-la crenza de que os estudantes británicos atoparían máis atraente a aprendizaxe do galego a través da traducción en grupo cás tradicionais clases de gramática.

A verdade é que non me gusta o emprego, bastante de moda hoxe en día, do termo “taller”, en inglés *workshop*, para se referir a actividades intelectuais e académicas. Parece reflectir certo sentido totalmente infundado de culpabilidade por non estarmos facendo un traballo físico con resultados evidentes e materiais. Pode representar un torpe intento de disfrazalo traballo intelectual de traballo manual, ou sexa unha concesión máis ós valores imperantes, contra o que tiñamos que estar loitando. Recórdame aquel chiste do profesor que chega ó seu taller de non sei que, e que se desculpa cos alumnos dicindo que se lle descompuxo o coche e tivo que levalo ó seminario para que llo amañasen. Pero a pesar de todo decidimos quedármonos co termo *workshop*, porque non atopamos outro xeito de indicar cunha palabra a novidade e o carácter experimental e cooperativo da nosa iniciativa.

A resposta que tivemos veunos confirmar que hai bastante interese por este tipo de actividade. O obradoiro –gústanos máis este termo, polas súas

resonancias artesanais e santiaguesas– comezou a traballar en abril de 1992 e atraeu entusiastas de tódalas clases: estudantes de primeiro, de segundo e de derradeiro ano, estudantes de posgrao e profesores. Fomos catorce persoas os que nos xuntamos semanalmente para traducir de maneira cooperativa varios textos galegos ó inglés. Catorce é un número de asistentes máis que respectable no hispanismo de Oxford, e forma un grupo de tamaño ideal para que poida funcionar ben un obradoiro deste tipo. Para asistir ó Obradoiro non se requiriu dos estudantes ningún coñecemento previo do galego, soamente do portugués ou do castelán, pois non é difícil achegarse ó galego a través de calquera destas linguas, e, efectivamente, somos moitos os galegos e non galegos que aprendemos este idioma dende o castelán. Tódolos participantes comezaron cun bo coñecemento do castelán, mais aqueles que tamén sabían portugués encontraron a aprendizaxe do galego moito máis doada.

Axiña foi xurdindo un método de traballo. Decidimos traballar con relatos curtos do galego contemporáneo, empezando por “Que non quede nada” de Manuel Rivas, publicado na súa colección *Un millón de vacas* (1989). Eliximos este relato para inicia-lo labor do obradoiro porque nos parecía sinxelo e exento de dificultades lingüísticas. O proceso de tradución revelaríano-lo superficial e pouco axeitado da nosa apreciación. Moitas veces un dos maiores logros da arte consiste en esconde-la súa propia natureza artificiosa, en parecer espontánea e natural, e isto é o que pasa cos mellores relatos de Manuel Rivas. Polo tanto, a tradución de “Que non quede nada” deunos moito máis que facer do que pensabamos.

Na primeira sesión do Obradoiro distribuímos, co texto orixinal galego, copias dunha tradución literal castelá, para supli-la falta de dicionarios galego-ingleses. Animamos ós participantes a traballaren ata onde fose posible co orixinal galego, e a recorrerren á versión castelá só en caso de necesidade. A inexistencia dun dicionario galego-inglés é un problema, pero ten unha vantaxe, porque obriga a pensar con coidado no texto orixinal en vez de caer na preguiza de simplemente ir buscando as palabras descoñecidas unha por unha no dicionario bilingüe, cousa que acostuman face-los estudantes de castelán, con resultados ás veces desastrosos.

Nesa primeira sesión o profesor Fernández Salgado tamén leu o texto orixinal e fixo observacións sobre o autor e da gramática e pronuncia galegas. Logo, asignamos a cada participante un anaco do relato e pedímoslle que fixese, nos días seguintes, unha tradución bastante literal na que incluíse diferentes posibilidades para verbas ou frases concretas. Coa axuda do ordenador, xuntamos estas primeiras traducións para así termos unha primeira visión sobre a que traballar.

Despois, en sucesivas sesións semanais ó longo do trimestre, o grupo estudiou este borrador frase por frase, discutindo pormenorizadamente as traducións dadas e as moitas outras que se lle ían ocorrendo a cadaquén. Se se quere, a identidade do traductor de cada anaco pódese suprimir, para evi-

tar posibles rivalidades, confrontacións persoais e outras situacións violentas, pero no noso obradoiro isto non foi necesario posto que se estableceu axiña un ambiente moi harmonioso. Sempre intentamos fomentar un espírito de colaboración para evita-la competición entre os alumnos, convencidos de que os nosos gobernantes están profundamente equivocados ó pensar que as leis do mercado teñen que prevalecer no ensino. ¿Cando se darán de conta estes señores que a aula non é unha praza de abastos?

Noutros talleres de traducción dos que teño oído falar si que existe, polo visto, un aire tenso de rivalidade, pero creo que isto é porque neles cada participante traduce inicialmente o texto enteiro, de xeito que cada traducción, despois de tanto gasto de tempo e esforzo, está en continua competencia con tódalas outras traduccións. Eu recomendaría o noso sistema, que evita rivalidades persoais e non require dos participantes que gasten moito tempo facendo traduccións o noventa por cento das cales vai ter que ser rexeitado.

En cada sesión, o profesor Fernández Salgado fornecía explicacións dos puntos gramaticais ó iren aparecendo, e lía cada pasaxe antes de ser discutida. O meu traballo era comenta-los problemas teóricos e prácticos, situándoo no contexto xeral dos principios, métodos e obxectivos da traducción literaria.

Ningunha decisión acerca da versión final foi imposta por ninguén. Todo foi obra dun consenso xeral. Por exemplo, despois dunha longa discusión sobre a enigmática relación entre as palabras 'que non queda nada' e o relato que encabezan, chegamos á conclusión de que se referían á paulatina perda de ilusión e de ideais que experimenta o protagonista, e que culmina na conversión do parauguiñas en fusil. Nisto pódense observa-las razóns polas que os títulos das obras literarias teñen que se-lo último en traducirse. Para traducir este título ningunha versión literal polo estilo de *let nothing be left* era aceptable, e pasamos un longo tempo a falar do problema sen chegar a unha solución que nos gustase. Foi unha alumna de primeiro ano quen tivo a excelente idea –bo exemplo da creatividade da mellor traducción literaria– de propoñer como traducción deste título a cita o derradeiro verso da canción inglesa *The Little Nigger Boys*, na que os negriños van morrendo un por un ata que non queda ningún deles. *And then there were none* conserva, coidamos, o aire enigmático e poético do orixinal, a mesma relación indirecta, tanxencial, co texto, e incluso o mesmo ritmo dactílico; isto último por pura casualidade, sen dúbida, pero así suceden as cousas ás veces na creación literaria, e o acerto non é por iso menos válido. Todo este incidente é un exemplo de como a experiencia do Obradoiro é moi útil e saudable para que o profesor conserve a debida modestia e humildade, pois a arrogancia é imposible ante un alumnos que unha e outra vez atopan solucións moito mellores e máis imaxinativas cás súas propias. Coa súa xenerosidade de sempre, o mesmo autor confesounos que nunca se puxera a pensar na relación lóxica entre o título e o relato, porque o título se lle ocorreu de maneira intuitiva;

pero que a nosa análise lle parecía acertada, e que lle gustaba máis o título inglés có galego.

Manuel Rivas fíxonno-lo honor de asistir á sesión na que rematámo-la traducción deste relato, e a súa presenza foi un grande aliciente para todos. Así puidemos preguntarlle, por exemplo, se o fillo mantén o paraugas en sentido vertical ou horizontal ó darlle voltas entre as mans ó final do relato; porque no primeiro caso o verbo inglés máis adecuado sería *to turn round*, mentres que no segundo sería *to turn over*. Este é un bo exemplo da necesidade dunha constante visualización das escenas evocadas ó facer traducción literaria, cousa que non sempre fan nin os tradutores profesionais. Despois de pensalo moito, o escritor respondeu que, en vista do que o neno fai inmediatamente despois co paraugas, nese momento mantíñaos en sentido horizontal.

Tódolos asistentes ó obradoiro participaron de cheo nas animadas discusións, mesmo ás veces acaloradas pero sempre con bo ton, en estraño e notable contraste cos lúgubres silencios que tan a miúdo caracterizan as clases normais de traducción, en Oxford polo menos. O resultado de todo isto foi que o avanzar ó longo do relato fíxose certamente de vagar, levándono-lo trimestre enteiro a traducción desta e doutra pequena peza de Manuel Rivas. Con todo, a ninguén lle importou isto, xa que todo o mundo rematou coa impresión de que aprendera, dunha maneira desenfadada, algo non só da lingua, da literatura e da cultura galegas senón tamén das técnicas e dos problemas da traducción literaria, e mais –para sorpresa de moitos deles– das complexidades do idioma inglés. Creo que os participantes agora comprenden ben, por exemplo, por que levou sete anos traducir *La Regenta* ó inglés.

Dende que rematamos este primeiro ensaio, usamos este mesmo método para traducir *Un millón de vacas*, o relato que dá título á colección de Rivas, despois dous relatos de *O crepúsculo e as formigas* (1958) de Xosé Luís Méndez Ferrín, e logo outro de Álvaro Cunqueiro, *Unha siria en Ribadeo*.

Disque a traducción en grupo, “traducción en comisión” como é alcuñada polos seus detractores, adoita producir prosa sen personalidade propia e sen sabor de seu. Eu, pola contra, penso que un grupo como noso do Obradoiro oxoniense, traballando en harmonía, con vigor e entusiasmo, xera a súa propia e forte personalidade colectiva que se reflicte nas traduccións que produce. ¿Acaso un cuarteto de corda ou unha orquestra non poden ter tanta individualidade coma un solista?

Que os lectores das nosas traduccións dos dous relatos de Manuel Rivas xulgan por si mesmos.

AND THEN THERE WERE NONE

He had sworn never to buy his son a toy weapon.

He had been a Greenpeace activist, he still paid his annual subscription, and he felt a fond nostalgia whenever he saw a peace march on television

defying the order not to enter the Nevada desert, where nuclear scientists were ecstatically sowing monstrous mushrooms in craters. His work as a rep took up all his time. He had married, too. And had a son.

"A son?" Nicolás had asked with a shocked look. He was a fellow-activist from the old days, and they had run into each other at the airport.

"Well, yes," he had said, feeling somewhat uncomfortable. He had never thought that such matters needed explanation. You have a son and that's that.

"No, listen. I only asked because of the courage it must take. I think you've got to be brave to had a son. I wouldn't be capable of coming to a decision like that. It would make my head spin."

The truth was that he had never thought about what it means to have a son. He'd married he'd felt like it and had had a son for the same reason. But Nicolás was still staring at him with the eyes of a confessor tormented by the sins of others.

"Don't you see? I think you've just got to regard it as a biological fact, without looking for a deep and hidden meaning. It's a question of accepting our animal nature. A child makes you feel good, that's all, just like an animal. Rediscovering our animality as something positive."

Nicolás laughed. He was a biologist, after all.

"I don't know. For me it's as if you and your wife had decided to play God for a moment. To bring someone into this world must be beautiful, but...it's so terrible as well. I don't know."

"Look, he's always waking up in the night. He calls out for us, and then he goes back to sleep. Several times at night. Maybe you are a god, but you're a knackered god. He couldn't give a damn. Sleeps whenever he wants."

Now they both laughed.

"Do you tell him stories?"

"You've no idea. I've told him thousands. When I'm at home, that is, I'm always on the move, you know, this bloody job of mine. There are nights when I tell him three or four stories and fall asleep before he does."

"What kind of stories? What are they about?" said Nicolás, mischievously.

"Oof! Mostly stories about animals. He loves animal stories. Animals with babies, and along come the hunters, and all that. I always try to make the wolf a goody." This last he said winking in an equally mischievous way.

"I'd like to see him sometime", said Nicolás as they parted.

His friend waved a last goodbye from beyond the glass door and he made his way to one of the airport shops. He always took a present back for his soon. There wasn't much choice. Mostly plastic guns. There were all kinds. The cowboys's colt, a special agent's pistol complete with silencer, a rifle with telescopic sights, a laser machine gun. And artillery too, and tanks,

and the most sophisticated developments in star wars. He walked past all of them with a look of disgust and finally chose a small umbrella of clear plastic with stickers of cute little animals on it.

When he arrived home, his son was asleep.

"I've brought this for him," he said with a smile.

"It's nice," said his wife.

Next morning, his son asked, "Are you going to work?" He replied, sadly, that he was and his son burst into tears.

"I've brought something for you," he said, jumping out of bed. His son stopped crying and waited eagerly for him to unwrap the present.

"Look, it's got pictures of Snoopy on it," he said with satisfaction, handing him the little umbrella.

His son looked at the present, turned it over to see all the animals, and seemed pleased.

Before he left, he gave him a kiss and ruffled his hair. He was about to open the door when he heard his son calling him. He turned round and saw him there, one leg thrust forward and the umbrella up against his shoulder in a perfect shooting position.

"Bang! You're dead, Dad!"

ONE MILLION COWS

She was not dressed in black, but in a blue and white print dress, and over her shoulders she wore a shawl the colour of old silver that looked like an extension of her hair. She signalled to me to stop from the shade of the bus shelter and, when I pulled over, she peered in through the car window, her owl-eyes staring at me from behind tortoise-shell glasses.

You'll be going to Vigo, won't you?

She asked as if there really weren't anywhere else I could go. Thank you, son, you've saved my life, she said after making herself comfortable in the seat and patting her hair with her hands. The pips on the radio signalled five o'clock in the afternoon and were followed by the news jingle. Oblivious to the intrusion, she explained straight away that she missed the bus and that she had an appointment at the doctor's. At my age it's all aches and pains, son, being old is a trial. In Galicia, the newsreader was saying, there are approximately one million cows. Oh, come now, I said out of politeness, don't say that. Nonsense, she said, they must think we're stupid, one million cows! They talk nonsense all day long. I switched off the radio and she turned towards me with a look of satisfaction. Nothing they say is true, son, nothing they say is true.

She asked me where I lived and I replied that I didn't really know. I'm always on the move. She smiled. The things you youngsters get up to! I've

lived in Madrid. Do you know Madrid? I lived in Madrid until very recently. I have a son there, he went to work and married there too. One day he turned up at home, in Soutomaioir, I was peeling the potatoes and he said to me come on, mum, get your things together and come with me. And I said to him but son, what do I do with the animals, and the house, who's going to look after the house? And he said look mum, someone will look after the animals, we'll leave them with the neighbours, and the house, no-one's going to take the house away. And that's what happened. I went off to Madrid.

And did you like Madrid?

What?

Did you like Madrid?

Oh yes. I liked it a lot.

The old lady, rummaging in her handbag, took out a small mirror and lipstick.

I liked it a lot, she said after the transformation. But I couldn't sleep. My son lived in a flat, a tiny flat, but it was all right. Well, it was passable. My daughter-in-law, she's a real gem. I always wanted him to find a local girl, but anyway he got married there, and I tell you she's a wonderful girl, a bit on the thin side, perhaps, but a fine wife for him. She wouldn't let me do a thing. She wouldn't even let me wash up. Mum -she'd say in Spanish: she used to call me mum- have a rest, you've done quite enough in your time. No more than anyone else, my dear. No mum, do sit down. But oh dear, son, the last thing I could do was sleep. The walls are paper thin, you see. The people in the upstairs flat had a baby, a tiny little thing which is used to cry, of course. The cot was right above my room. Would you believed those wretched parents didn't even get up to comfort him? Night after night and the child crying like a lost soul, until he would stop from exhaustion, the poor lamb. As for me, it made my blood boil. I met the mother in the hall one day, and I gave her a piece of my mind, I swear I did. I told her they must be heartless, letting the poor baby cry like that. You'd never guess what that shameless hussy replied. You mind your own business. That's what she said to me, damn her. But that wasn't the worst of it.

I looked at her out of the corner of my eye. Her lips were pursed and she was wringing her hands.

The worst of it was that my daughter-in-law said exactly the same to me. It's none your business, mum, everyone has their own life to lead. That night the child cried again. It made my blood boil. So I left. What do you think of that? I left the very next day.

As we drove down Meixueiro Hill, the chaotic silhouette of Vigo stood out below us like a overgrown strip of land in the paradise of the bay.

Are you going to the Hospital?

No, no. Drop me off at the edge of the town and I'll make my own way from there.

If you like, I can take you to the doctor's; I've got plenty of time.

She refused again, but when I stopped the car at the traffic lights at the Praza de España she put a hand on my knee and came closer as if to tell me a secret. Do you know where the Nova Olimpia disco is? I was surprised, but I told her that I did. Yes, I think so. Leave me there then. Today there's a dance for senior citizens. See? When I came back from Madrid, I got myself a boyfriend.

He wouldn't be a doctor by any chance?

Of course not! she said crying with laughter.

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