

Carles Torner

The internationalisation of literature and essay. A decalogue

Some news about translations has arrived: the *New York Review of Books-Classics* is translating *El quadern gris* (The grey notebook) by Josep Pla. *El violí d'Auschwitz* (The Auschwitz violin), by Maria Àngels Anglada, was published in Greek at the end of 2009. The presence of Quim Monzó and Ernest Farrés at the World Voices Festival in New York this year was a success thanks to the wonderful English translations of *Benzina* (Gasoline) and *Edward Hopper*. Thus the level of projection of Catalan literature abroad, which is beginning to be considerable, is becoming consolidated.

But in the field of essay and research, a more difficult area, several interesting titles have also been published recently in different languages: *Filosofia d'estar per casa* (Informal Philosophy) by Xavier Rubert de Ventós in Castilian (by a Mexican publishing house), an anthology of texts about grammar by Pompeu Fabra in English and *Tres assaigs sobre Sartre* (Three Essays on Sartre) by Mercè Rius in French. Besides, *Encara no som humans* (We are not Human Yet) by Eudald Carbonell and Robert Sala, has been translated into German and *El llibre dels fets del Rei en Jaume* (Book of the Deeds of King James) a classic of the rich medieval Catalan tradition, into Japanese.

After its seven years' existence, the Institut Ramon Llull's persistent policy of supporting translation has begun to change the internationalisation scenario of Catalan literature and authors. It may be the moment to express our method in the form of a decalogue. And why not?

- 1.** It is necessary to identify the counterparts in Europe of institutions supporting Catalan literature. No doubt the keystone of our performance has been that foreign editors have dealt with Catalan representatives of the IRL in the same way as similar institutions from Finland, Holland or Portugal.
- 2.** It is necessary to participate in the construction of a European set of policies supporting translation as a contribution to the European Union. Participation in the network Literature Across Frontiers has provided the image of European ambition that associates us with sixteen or more similar institutions on the continent. Europe should be a network of networks, within which Catalan culture can play an important role on the basis of its belief in a Europe of translations.
- 3.** It is necessary to appear in the international context and tackle the challenge of translation into English

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together with all European literatures. The seminar *Standing in the Shadows* held in November 2009, coordinated by Lawrence Venuti and intended for critics, culture journalists, editors and other agents from the literary world, is the latest example of a project that started with the report *To be translated or not to be*.

4. It is necessary to offer foreign editors and translators tools to facilitate the translation and promotion of books that put Catalan authors on the same footing as their colleagues from other countries, following the logic of the publishing market.

5. It is necessary to take special care of those genres and authors that are not the chief focus of the publishing market: all literary genres must be promoted at the same time. Within these, narrative, poetry, theatre and essay require specific approaches.

6. It is necessary to promote authors from all the territories where Catalan is spoken and make sure that the unity of Catalan language and literature be clear in all cases.

7. Subsidies for translation, for authors' travel expenses and all subsidies for furthering the internationalisation of Catalan literature must be universal: at the service of the work of all writers without exception.

8. It is necessary to ensure a non-interventionist policy that will leave foreign publishers free to choose the work they want to include in their catalogue, the translator, the methods for promoting the book in the area they know best. On the other hand, it is necessary to ensure that publishers will guarantee the employment conditions of the translators as authors of the translations.

9. The policy of supporting translations is at the service of Catalan publishers, literary

agencies and writers and must be coordinated with the respective groups and associations.

10. The universality of linguistic rights and the universality of translation must be a target, so all languages into which Catalan authors are translated must be treated equally.

Transfer, the journal of contemporary culture that the Institut Ramon Llull brings out thanks to an agreement with Valencia University, is a clear example of many of these principles of action, to begin with by grouping journals from Valencia, Catalonia and Majorca in a common project. The magazine identifies the European counterparts of journals of culture and thought as *agents provocateurs* in the international debate, and attempts to integrate them in the European network of networks. This year *Transfer* has been made a partner of *Eurozine*, the netmagazine that comprises over a hundred cultural journals from all over the continent (and, through *Transfer*, all the journals in which the articles we translate into English are included).

The journal also sees the need to promote the essays and research written in Catalan on an international scale with specific tools. In the issue the readers have in their hands, the monograph contains fervent contemporary debates about translation. It is one of the major challenges facing civilisation at the present time, which requires an ambitious and politically articulated response. Albeit in a modest manner, *Transfer* forms part of these translation policies II

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