

explorations



Explorations: A Journal of Language and Literature

REVIEW

Jean Ward. 2020. *The Between-Space of Translation. Literary Sketches*. Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego.

DOI: 10.25167/EXP13.21.9.9

Ewa Rajewska (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań)

ORCID: 0000-0002-8561-0638

Much has been written about the conceptualisation of translation and its metaphors. Translation Studies have for some time emphasized its double entanglement due to the fact that translation exists in two worlds, linguistic and cultural, following the laws of belonging and autonomy. Brian Harris once called translation a “bi-text” functioning in the two dimensions of here and there. Importantly, Jean Ward’s “translation zone” lies in between. As her collection of essays entitled *The Between-Space of Translation* testifies, this “in-betweenness” has several dimensions, too. The most obvious is a “specific border terrain, one particular literary, linguistic and cultural *between*” – that of “English and Polish” (9). Ward was born in England, graduated in English from Oxford and took up her interrupted academic career at the University of Gdańsk, where she received her PhD and where she heads the Division of Research into English Language Literature. Her comments on translation as presented in *The Between-Space* come from between or, more accurately, at the intersection of her fields of interest and professional activities as university lecturer, literary translator, translation scholar, essayist and critic. The generic affiliation of *The Between-Space of Translation* is also borderline – as Ward has it, her book is “not purely a discussion of translation, nor is it a work of pure literary criticism. Rather, it is something in between” (15). I would argue that in the phrase “in between” the preposition “in” is also significant. Ward herself openly admits it: “The reflections in this book are based on the experience of living in, and between, two cultures” (21).

While living “in” and “between” two cultures, two literatures, two languages and two discourses about translation, Ward manages to collate in her critical interpretations many different scholars and authors. Thus, Ronald Knox, Michael Edwards, Seamus Heaney, Octavio Paz, Theo Hermans, Lawrence Venuti, Michael Cronin, Mathew Reynolds (to name some of the most frequently discussed authors) meet Edward Balcerzan, Małgorzata Łukasiewicz, Stanisław Barańczak, Jerzy Jarniewicz and Agnieszka Romanowska (among others). Wilfred Owen encounters Józef Czechowicz, and Geoffrey Hill faces up to Czesław Miłosz. For Ward, a literary translation, which may be identified as an act of reading and a hermeneutic enterprise, is a meeting place. Central to her book is the question “What is translation?,” answered in subsequent chapters with the metaphors of encounter, friendship, loss and gain, colonisation, exploration, and

Explorations: A Journal of Language and Literature, 9 (2021), pp. 71-72

hospitality. It should be noted that these common metaphors gain here new meanings and non-obvious implications.

Importantly, Ward refers to the well-known metaphor of “Translation as Border Crossing” (this is the title of one of the chapters). Such a border is not exactly a line but rather a “between-space” or “border terrain.” As Ward notes: “I am thinking of the idea of crossing a border not as a conqueror who comes to subdue the conquered, but as someone looking to meet others on equal terms. I am thinking of borders as places of meeting, permeable areas of mutual enrichment, territories rather than lines, and even if lines, then lines which one is invited and encouraged to cross” (46). The meeting of literary texts from both sides of this border – or meeting with a literary text from the other side of the border – suddenly reveals “cultural history [i.e. also literary history] enshrined in ... language” (51). We might put it differently: “A translated text, if read beside the original, will almost always reveal something in that original, and in the language in which the original is written, which is not obvious until the translation draws attention to it; it will also often point to unsuspected or underexplored potential in the language of the translation” (22). The thesis is illustrated with many illuminating examples, some merely touched upon, others precisely and brilliantly analyzed. Ward concludes: “The metaphor of the border as a place of meeting, where the familiar and the foreign come together not to do battle with each other but to entertain each other in mutual ‘hospitality of words,’ provides an image of translation that is helpful here, implying as it does the equality – and the equal ‘visibility’ – of the participants in the encounter” (53).

Elegant. Revealing. Full of insights. A beautiful read.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License.
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>

AUTHOR’S BIO: Ewa Rajewska is Professor of Polish Philology at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. A translation scholar, editor and literary translator from English, she heads the M.A. Translation Specialization at AMU’s Institute of Polish Philology (www.przekladowa.amu.edu.pl). She is the author of *Stanisław Barańczak – poeta i tłumacz* [*Stanisław Barańczak as Poet and Translator*, 2007] and *Domysł portretu: O twórczości oryginalnej i przekładowej Ludmiły Marjańskiej* [*The Implied Portrait: On the Literary and Translation Works of Ludmila Marjańska*, 2016]. She co-edited and co-authored the monograph *Stulecie poetek polskich. Przekroje, tematy, interpretacje* [*The Century of Polish Women Poets. Studies, Themes, Interpretations*, 2020] Her translations from the English include Kenneth Burke’s *The Philosophy of Literary Form into Polish*.

E-MAIL: ewa.rajewska@amu.edu.pl