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TRABAJO DE FIN DE GRADO

Echoes of Poetry, Echoes of Translation: Rendering
into Spanish John O'Donohue's *Echoes of Memory*.

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ABSTRACT

Poetry translation has been a constant debate for centuries. Through some of John O'Donohue's poems from *Echoes of Memory*, different translating challenges are explained and justified. Irish native speaker, John O'Donohue, includes the west of Ireland, Gaelic terms and mystic symbolism in his poetry. How to translate these aspects from L1 (English) to L2 (Spanish), as well as poetry difficulties in general, is the central part of this project. Ten poems from John O'Donohue's *Echoes of Memory* have been chosen and each of them has been translated into Spanish. The analysis is divided into four blocks: Gaelic terms, mystic and symbolic allusions, poetic difficulties and linguistic challenges. Each of them examines the most problematic issues when translating, how they were solved and why that particular translation was chosen. Authentic poetry translation is difficult to achieve; however, with the proper skills it is possible to create a close version.

Keywords: John O'Donohue, translation, poetry, Gaelic, *Echoes of Memory*.

Durante siglos se ha debatido sobre la traducción poética. Con algunos poemas de John O'Donohue, pertenecientes a su poemario *Echoes of Memory*, se explican y justifican algunos retos que aparecen en la traducción poética. John O'Donohue, nativo irlandés y hablante de gaélico, incluye en sus poemas el oeste de Irlanda, términos en gaélico y símbolos místicos. La parte central de este trabajo aborda cómo se traducen estos aspectos en algunos de sus poemas del inglés al español, además de retos poéticos en general. Se han seleccionado 10 poemas de su poemario *Echoes of Memory* y han sido traducidos al español. El análisis de estos se ha dividido en cuatro bloques: términos gaélicos, alusiones místicas y simbólicas, dificultades poéticas y retos lingüísticos. Cada bloque examina los desafíos más problemáticos a la hora de traducir, cómo se han solucionado y por qué se han resuelto de esa manera. Es difícil alcanzar una traducción plenamente satisfactoria. Sin embargo, con la técnica adecuada y cierta dosis de habilidad es posible crear un versión aceptable.

Keywords: John O'Donohue, traducción, poesía, gaélico, *Echoes of Memory*

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1. Introduction and context

Translation brings us closer to understanding other cultures, important writings and also texts from other countries. With this great importance, a big controversy also arose. Translation requires an intricate knowledge of the source text as well as of the target one; what is more, it also demands vast familiarity with both cultures. Many individuals may reach the conclusion that a text can only have one translation. However, there is not a definitive translation since translation itself cannot be judged by simply one point of view; translation is dynamic, changing through generations. The many debates between content and form that have been ongoing for the past centuries until present are the proof of this dynamism. This essay will deal with poetry translation, which by some is considered to be more challenging than prose translation due to the use of poetic language and diction. For this purpose a book of poems written by the Irish poet John O'Donohue has been selected and this thesis will focus on the problems encountered when translating some of his poems. It would be impossible to deal only with one aspect of this. As such, all aspects will be covered from the cultural gaps to the linguistic challenges encountered when translating the poems. In this essay, an approach towards translation will be chosen and all the decisions taken when translating will be explained and justified.

Echoes of memory by John O'Donohue is the book of poems that I have chosen to examine in this thesis. John O'Donohue was born in 1956 in county Clare, Ireland. He was born into a Catholic family and was brought up as a native Gaelic speaker. These facts are important since most of his poetry echoes Irish references, including West Irish place names, Gaelic words or Catholic references. He went to Maynooth College in Co. Kildare as a novice to become a Catholic priest at the age of 18. There he achieved the degrees of English, Philosophy and Theology. After being ordained into the priesthood in 1982 he began in 1986 to work on a doctorate in Germany, at the University of Tübingen. By 1990 he was awarded with a Ph.D. in Philosophical Theology. Upon his return to Ireland, he continued with his priestly duties. Furthermore, he began with a post-doctoral work on Meister Eckhart - a philosopher and mystic figure from the 13th century- hence his passion for the mystic world and experience. During his life he wrote not only poetry but different philosophical essays and papers on different topics. O'Donohue is best known for his

book *Anam Cara*, an international best-seller, which means “Soul Friend” in English. This book helped to popularize Celtic Spirituality and established as a writer concerning this topic in most of his later writings. O’Donohue retired from public priestly ministry at the end of 2000 since he wanted to devote himself in a full-time manner to his writing and to a more public life of integrity in action. Among his best known books, it is worth mentioning the following: *Eternal Echoes: Exploring Our Hunger to Belong*, *Conamara Blues* or *Divine Beauty: The Invisible Embrace*. During his last years of life he was an environmental activist, which is reflected in the many references to nature in his poems and his desire for the preservation of nature. *Echoes of Memory*, the work to which this essay is devoted, was originally written in 1994 but it was only published in 2011. As far as I know, there is no official published translation of this work into Spanish. The author died in France in 2008.

The central section of the project, devoted to the analysis and commentary of the translated poems, will be divided into four different sections or blocks according to the difficulties encountered during translation. Ten poems have been selected which will present the largest translation challenges to allow a thorough analysis of the challenges faced. The first section, called *Gaelic terms*, deals with the Irish place names appearing in the poems as well as with Gaelic words. In this part it is shown how place names carry a lot of cultural weight and the methods used to solve these particular difficulties. The second section, called *Mystic and symbolic allusions*, explains other difficulties related to words or expressions evoking the symbolism and mysticism always present in John O’Donohue’s work. The third section, *Poetic difficulties*, includes difficulties found when translating poetry itself, most of the problems detected concerning figures of speech and specific features of poetic language. The last section, *Linguistic challenges*, deals with the problems that are not specific to poetry but commonplace when translating any literary genres.

2. The challenge of translating poetry

There is a question that comes up frequently when translating poetry and that is: “what is poetry?” As Robert Frost said: “Poetry is what gets lost in translation” (Robert Frost, 1959). With this statement he meant that it is impossible to transfer all the poetic characteristics from one language to another. As the Irish poet Seamus Heaney once said: poetry is in itself freedom:

Creativity in the literary arts consist in being able to make language garner and guarantee that which we feel to be the most inward and essential to our being ourselves. As a poet, I am perhaps less interested in themes and issues than in the images and cadences which fix these elusive yet definitive states in words. Poetry comes into being because of a neediness that will only be satisfied when the right words get said, a feeling that those words are the only foundations upon which life can proceed. The poem is the fully persuasive word which the language speaks to itself, and when a poet writes a true poem, he always has the sensation of having outstripped his own biography; which is a way of saying that the experience of linguistic rightness is an experience of extension and liberation. And from this comes the liberating and consolidating power of literature itself (In Ruiz Casanova 2005, p.21).

I believe words are the main key to create images and therefore to create poetry; a language involves culture, so every language has its own way of expressing - its own way of freedom. Besides, it is true that there are different ways of making new versions and it is within the power of the person translating that he or she chooses the best option for him or her. Therefore, who is to set the limits of freedom? It is just the translator himself.

Different theories have been forwarded on whether translation is or is not possible. In the following paragraphs I will explain some defending the impossibility of translation and some supporting the idea of translating. I consider it is worth starting by reproducing here those very well-known words by Ezra Pound:

The translation of a poem having any depth ends by being one of two things: either it is the expression of the translator, virtually a new poem, or it is as if it were a photograph -as exact as possible- of one side of the statue (Pound 1983, p.5).

As it emerges clearly from his words, Pound is quite sceptical when it comes to dealing with poetry translation: any attempt is doomed to failure, as it will never manage to apprehend the full essence of the original work.

Miguel Gallego Roca deals with the question of the possibility or impossibility of translation in his book *Traducción y literatura: Los estudios literarios ante las obras traducidas*. Roca supports that the human essence is present in the words of every poem; thus, he proposes that to translate poetry is quite the same as creating new poetry. He also argues that the side one takes is reflected in the time one is living; the culture background among other aspects is a key factor for him. He sets us in the grounds of: “which text should one take as the original; Shakespeare’s text or the French version that was taken to translate it into Spanish?” (Gallego Roca, Miguel 1994, p.12). Roca introduces Hugo Friedrich’s statement for his purpose. Friedrich goes as far as denying the possibility of translating modern poetry; once he said:

With the modern lyric abnormality increases, and not only in France, the impossibility of translation. The break up between the magical poetry language and the normal everyday use of language it has become in a break up between the European languages (In Gallego Roca 1994, p.13).

Roca introduces Croce's ideas as well. Croce’s proposal is the denial in the possibility of giving a new aesthetic form to something that already has. Literal translations are considered antiesthetic and only commentaries of the original according to Croce. Thus, translations cannot be carried out but only commentaries of the original works can be performed. Roca denies the existence of translation. He considers that it is not possible in any way and that since translation changes throughout history, there cannot be a real translation.

Within the arguments supporting translation José Francisco Ruiz Casanova gives some statements in favour of translated texts in the first chapter of his essay “The Translator’s Writing” (Ruiz Casanova, José Francisco 2005). In this writing Casanova speaks about Freud’s opinion on one of his works translated into Spanish. Freud makes a powerful statement saying that he is surprised on how the translation has perfectly shown his own thoughts as expressed in his original version. Freud is able to read Spanish due to the fact that he was so interested in reading *Don Quixote* in its mother tongue that he learned the language. From my point of view, Freud considered that it

was worth learning a whole new language so he could read and fully understand the essence, magic and madness of the text and its author; however, this does not mean that he did not like the translation. He is happy since the content and the intention were maintained.

Casanova explains that translations cannot exist without the original text and, as a consequence, both the original and its versions are considered one. Therefore, as he says, it may be difficult for the readers to recognize that the “new” version is not written by the same author. There is also an interesting point that Casanova remarks: the fact that there is a huge difference in old and new translations; each generation, each period, has a different mind-set and perspective of the world and life, and this is very visible in the versions; therefore, this fact always have to be taken into account.

In defending translation, Casanova perceives the translator as “protector” of the text for the new culture and time. Therefore, the translator is giving to society a text that is aware of everything surrounding the writer of the original version. Since this aim is very difficult to achieve due to culture gaps, he claims that the translation is clearly not the original version but just an approximation of it.

From my point of view, when someone is writing and he or she chooses a word to express a feeling, a situation, or to describe a scene, the writer is making a personal choice among all the possibilities available and for a specific reason; background, ideals, personality and the aim are only from oneself and it is very hard to recreate that in another language. Even with these apparent difficulties, I believe that with the proper approach to the text and to the author, and with the adequate translation skills, one can confer on the translated text both a sense and a feeling that remains very close to the original.

3. Original version and translated version of the selected poems

Poem 1

	Taken ¹	Arrebatado
	What did you see When you went out Into the cold region,	¿Qué viste cuando te fuiste a la fría región,
5	Where no name is Spoken or known, Where no one is Welcomed or lost, Where soon the face is Closed and erased?	donde ningún nombre se dice ni se sabe, donde nadie se pierde o es bienvenido, donde rápido el rostro se tapia o se pierde?
10	Could you touch The black hearts Of rocks hanging Outside their shells?	¿Pudiste tocar los corazones negros de suspensas rocas fuera de sus caparazones?
15	Were you able To sense the loss Of colours, the yellows And cobalt blue that you loved, The honey scent of seasoned hay You carried through the winter	¿Pudiste tú sentir la pérdida de colores, los amarillos y el azul cobalto que amabas, la dulce esencia a heno que llevabas en invierno
20	To cattle on the mountain? Could you hear no more	al ganado en la montaña? ¿Dejaste de escuchar

¹ All the poems here reproduced have been taken from the following edition: O'Donohue, John. *Echoes of Memory*. London: Transworld Ireland, 2009.

25	<p>The shoals of wind swell wild Within the walls in Fermoy², Or be glad to sense the raw rhyme as those rosaries of intense limestone claim the countenance of every amber field From weather and time?</p>	<p>el cúmulo de vientos crecer salvajes entre las paredes de Fermoy, o de estar contento al sentir tiernas rimas cuando aquellos rosarios de intensa caliza reclamaban la posesión de cada campo ámbar al tiempo y a las estaciones?</p>
30	<p>Or was everything dream- Fragments stored somewhere In a delicate glass On which a dead hand landed?</p>	<p>¿O fue todo fragmentos soñados, guardados en algún lugar en un delicado recipiente donde una mano muerta aterrizó?</p>
35	<p>Did you plod through The heavy charcoal shadow To a sizzling white bush, Stop and repeat Each of our names Over and over, A terrified last thought Before all thought died?</p>	<p>¿Te arrastraste entre la pesada sombra negra hacia un abrasador arbusto blanco, te paraste y recitaste cada uno de nuestros nombres una y otra vez, un último pensamiento aterrador antes de que todo pensamiento muriese?</p>

² Located in Co. Kerry, South-West of Ireland.

Poem 2

	Beannacht	Bendición
5	<p>On the day when The weight deadens On your shoulders And you stumble, May the clay dance To balance you.</p>	<p>El día en el que el peso pese en tus hombros y te tambalees, que el barro baile y te equilibre.</p>
10 15	<p>And when your eyes Freeze behind The grey window And the ghost of loss Gets in to you, May a flock of colours, Indigo, red, green, And azure blue come to awaken in you A meadow of delight.</p>	<p>Y cuando tus ojos se petrifiquen detrás de la ventana gris y la muerte te aposente, que un arcoíris de color añil, rojo, verde y azul celeste vengan a florecer en ti un prado de placer.</p>
20	<p>When the canvas frays In the currach of thought And a stain of ocean Blackens beneath you, May there come across the waters A path of yellow moonlight To bring you safely home.</p>	<p>Cuando el lienzo se desgaste en la barca del pensamiento y una pizca de océano ennegrezca en ti, que aparezca sobre las aguas un camino de luz amarillo luna para que regreses sana y salva a tu hogar.</p>
	<p>May the nourishment of the earth be yours,</p>	<p>Que tuyo sea el alimento de la tierra,</p>

25	May the clarity of light be yours, May the fluency of the ocean be yours, May the protection of the ancestors be yours.	que tuya sea la claridad de la luz, que la fluidez del océano sea tuya Y también la protección de los antepasados.
30	And so may a slow Wind work these words Of love around you, An invisible cloak To mind your life.	Y así, que un leve vuelo haga activar en ti estas palabras de amor, como un abrigo invisible para que te cuide.

Poem 3

	November Questions	Preguntas de noviembre
5	Where did you go When your eyes closed And you were cloaked In the ancient cold?	¿Dónde te fuiste cuando tus ojos se cerraron y te ocultaste en el antiguo frío?
10	How did we seem, Huddled around The hospital bed? Did we loom as Figures do in dream?	¿Qué parecíamos, apiñados alrededor de la cama del hospital? ¿Acechábamos como los personajes de los sueños?
10	As your skin drained, Became vellum, A splinter of whitethorn From your battle with the bush In the Seangharraí ³	Mientras tu piel seca se convertía en vitela, una astilla de espino de tu batalla con el arbusto en el Seangharraí

³ Located in Co. Cork, Ireland.

15	Stood out in your thumb.	sobresalía de tu pulgar.
20	Did your new feet Take you beyond, To fields of Elysia, Or did you come back Along Caherbeanna ⁴ mountain Where every rock Knows your step?	¿Acaso tus nuevos pies te llevaron más allá, a los campos Elíseos, o volviste por la montaña de Caherbeanna donde cada piedra conoce tus pasos?
25	Did you have to go To a place unknown? Were there friendly faces To welcome you, help you settle in?	¿Acaso tuviste que ir a un lugar desconocido? ¿Había allí caras amables acogiéndote ayudándote a adaptarte?
	Did you recognize anyone?	¿Reconociste a alguien?
30	Did it take long To lose The web of scent, The honey smell of old hay, The whiff of wild mint And the wet odour of the earth You turned every spring?	¿Te llevó tiempo perder la malla de esencias, el dulce aroma a heno viejo, la fragancia a menta fresca y el olor a tierra mojada al que volvías en cada primavera?
35	Did sounds become Unlinked, The bellow of cows Let into fresh winterage, The purr of a stray breeze Over the Coillín ⁵ , The ring of the galvanized bucket	¿Acaso los sonidos se volvieron inconexos, el mugido de las vacas dejó paso a fresco forraje, el ronroneo de la extraviada brisa sobre el Coillín , el anillo del cubo galvanizado
40		

⁴ Located in Co. Clare, Ireland.

⁵ Located in West Clare, Ireland.

45	<p>That fed the hens, The clink of limestone Loose over a scailp In the Ciorcán?</p>	<p>dando de comer a las gallinas, el tintineo de caliza suelta sobre una grieta en el Ciorcán?</p>
50	<p>Did you miss The delight of your gaze At the end of a day's work Over a black garden, A new wall Or a field cleared of rock?</p>	<p>¿Has añorado el encanto de tu contemplar al final de un día de trabajo en un oscuro jardín, una pared nueva o un prado sin rocas?</p>
55	<p>Have you someone there That you can talk to, Someone who is drawn To the life you carry?</p>	<p>¿Tienes alguien allí con el que puedas hablar, alguien que se sienta atraído a la vida que llevas?</p>
	<p>With your new eyes Can you see from within? Is it we who seem Outside?</p>	<p>Con tus nuevos ojos, ¿puedes ver desde dentro? ¿Somos nosotros los que parecemos estar fuera?</p>

Poem 4

	Uaigneas	Soledad
	Not The blue light of his eyes Opening the net of history,	Ni la azulada luz de sus ojos abriendo el camino de la historia,
5	The courage of his hands Making ways of light To the skulls of the blind,	la valentía de sus manos haciendo caminos de luz a las calaveras de los ciegos,
	The stories that never got in To the testament, how they came Upon him in the lonely places,	las historias que nunca se incluyeron en el testamento, cómo vinieron a él en lugares solitarios
10	His body kneeling to the ground His voice poised to let antiphons Through to the soundless waste,	su cuerpo arrodillándose en el suelo su voz lista para dejar sonar antífonas a través del mudo desperdicio,
	How her hunger invaded Until the stone of deity broke And a fresh well sprung up,	cómo hambrienta invadió hasta que la divina piedra se rompió y brotó un pozo fresco,
15	Nor why unknown to himself He wept when he slept A red furrow from each eye,	ni por qué sin él saberlo lloró cuando dormía un surco rojo de cada ojo,
	Nor his face set to dawn Through time on canvas and icon And his mind haunt thought,	ni su cara dirigida al amanecer a través del tiempo en lienzos y símbolos y su mente persiguiendo ideas,
20	No. The crevice opens in Death Alone in the whisper of blood.	no. La fisura da paso a la Muerte sola en susurros de sangre.

Poem 5

	Purgatorial	Expiatorio
	Beneath me sleep Splits like pliant silk, I drop derelict	Debajo de mí el sueño se rompe como seda flexible, me dejo caer descuidado
5	Into a bare dream, Where my language, Dry as paper	soñando al descubierto, donde mi idioma seco como el papel
	Is being burned By a young child Over a black stove.	es quemado por un niño pequeño en un negro fogón.
10	I cannot see his face, But feel the fearsome Power of his play.	No puedo ver su rostro, pero puedo sentir el aterrador poder de su juego.
	His uncanny hands Herd every private word Back to its babble shape,	Sus extrañas manos devuelven cada palabra privada de nuevo a su balbuceante forma,
15	Fixes them in lines, Mutters at the order Then, in a swerve	las coloca en versos, se queja del orden, luego, con un cambio brusco
	Drives them over the edge Into the fire's mass Of murmuring tongues.	las lleva traspasando el borde hasta la masa ígnea de lenguas susurrantes.
20	He takes too My inner antiphon Of wild, wind-christened Placenames:	Él también toma mi antífona interior de nombres de lugares salvajes, bendecidos por el viento:
25		

	Caherbeanna ⁶ , Creig na Bhfeadóg ⁷ , Poll na Gcolm ⁸ , Ceann Boirne ⁹ .	Caherbeanna, Creig na Bhfeadóg, Poll na Gcolm, Ceann Boirne.
30	My weak words Crust the pages.	Mis débiles palabras endurecen las páginas.
35	Our shy night-words, Which no other had heard, He spatters with Yellow laughter; To crackle like Honey in the flame.	Nuestras tímidas palabras nocturnas, que nadie más ha escuchado, él las salpica con risa malvada; Para restallar como miel en el fuego.
40	I am glad to see his Fingers grab the sheets, Matted with the cockroach phrases Of other voices that Crawled in to hurt.	Me alegra ver su mano agarrar las sábanas apelmazadas con las frases de cucarachas de otras voces que entraron reptando para dañar.
45	He stops When he sees the white scroll And backs off From its silence.	Él se detiene cuando ve el pergamino blanco y huye de su silencio.

⁶ Located in Co. Clare, Ireland

⁷ Located in Co. Antrim, Ireland.

⁸ Located in Co. Clare, Ireland.

⁹ Located in Co. Galway, Ireland.

Poem 6

	Self- Distance	Distancia personal
	Near me Scents of bath oil Veiled by her dress.	A mi lado aceitosos aromas afrutados se ocultan en su vestido.
5	Near me In a language I cannot receive A lone tree stirs To nurse the air.	A mi lado en una lengua que no recibo un árbol solitario se agita para mecer el aire.
10	Near me The dark crouched In you leaks to Soot the light.	A mi lado la oscuridad agazapada en ti se escapa para teñir la luz de hollín.
15	Near me Estranged from his bones in Fanore ¹⁰ The silence of my father Hears me.	A mi lado separado de sus huesos en Fanore el silencio de mi padre me escucha.
20	Near me The frustration, the invisible Sculptures, thoughts make On unmirrored air.	A mi lado la frustración, las esculturas invisibles, los pensamientos se crean en aire que no se refleja.
25	Around me Black streams Through the silence Of white bone.	A mi alrededor la oscuridad fluye a través del silencio de huesos blancos.
	Somewhere inside The wings of the heart	Allá en el interior las alas del corazón

¹⁰ Located in Co. Clare, Ireland.

Make their own skies.	hacen su propio cielo.
In me A tenderness I find Hard to allow.	En mí, la ternura la encuentro difícil de permitir.

Poem 7

	The voyage of Gentians	El viaje de las violetas
	Through this fester of bony earth, trying To avoid on their way the snares of root That trap whatever leaves the dark, what do These tribes of blue gentian come up here for?	Durante esta podredumbre de tierra huesuda, intentando evitar a su paso sus raíces tramposas que atrapan todo lo que deja la oscuridad, ¿A qué han venido estas tribus de azules violetas?
5	It is enough for them to climb onto This April day above in Caherbeanna ¹¹ Into light confused with yellow and grey And whorled by the song of a cuckoo?	¿Les es suficiente trepar hacia este día de abril en Caherbeanna hacia la luz confusa amarilla y gris y ser maleadas por la canción de un cuco?

¹¹ Located in Co. Clare, Ireland.

Poem 8

	Damage: A Conamara¹² Cacophony	Daño: una cacofonía de Conamara
	These stones in the wild Hold winter inside.	Estas salvajes rocas llevan dentro el invierno.
	Their bleak quiet Unnerves the varicose bog.	Su desapacible calma perturba el varicoso pantano.
5	Their rough faces Puncture light.	Sus duros rostros perforan la luz.
	The wrestle Of aggressive grass Cuts windsong to gibberish.	La lucha de hierba agresiva corta sin sentido el susurro del viento.
10	The pools of bog Have tongues That can lick Iron to nothing.	Las aguas de los pantanos tienen lenguas que dejan el hierro hecho trizas de una lametada.
15	Now and then, A raven Lines the air With a black antiphon.	De vez en cuando, un cuervo planea en el cielo con una antífona negra

¹² Located in Co. Galway, Ireland.

Poem 9

	Gleninagh	Gleninagh
	The dark inside us is sistered outside In night which dislikes the light of the face And the colours the eye longs to embrace.	Nuestra interna oscuridad se refleja en el exterior en noches que desagradan la luz del rostro y en los colores que la vista ansía acoger.
5	Night adores the mountain, wrapped to itself, A giant heart beating beneath rock and grass And a mind stilled inside one, sure thought.	La noche adora la montaña, envuelta en ella, un corazón gigante latiendo bajo rocas y césped y una mente tranquila, pensamiento firme.
	Something has broken inside this spring night, Unconsolably its rain teems unseen Onto Gleninagh Mountain's ¹³ listening depth.	Algo se ha roto en esta noche de primavera, su lluvia rebosa inconsolablemente sin ser vista en el profundo escuchar de la montaña de Gleninagh.
10	Next morning the light is cleansed to behold The glad milk of thirty streams pulse and spurt Out of unknown pores in the mountain's hold.	La luz de la mañana siguiente es pura para contemplar la leche pura de treinta riachuelos manando de poros desconocidos en la montaña.

¹³ Located in Co. Clare, Ireland.

Poem 10

	Conamara ¹⁴ in Our Mind	Conamara en nuestra mente
5	It gave us The hungry landscapes, Resting upon The unalleviated Bog-dream,	Nos dio los paisajes hambrientos descansando sobre el inaliviable sueño pantanoso,
10	Put us out There, where Tenderness never settled, Except for the odd nest Of grouse mutterings In the grieving rushes,	nos puso allí fuera, donde la ternura nunca se asentó excepto en el singular nido de murmullos quejosos en los juncos de luto,
	Washed our eyes In the glories of light.	nos abrió los ojos a la belleza de la luz.
15	In an instant The whole place flares In a gaze of pools, As if a kind sun Let a red net Sink through the bog, Reach down to a forgotten Infancy of granite,	En un instante todo el lugar resplandece en un contemplar de estanques, como si un sol amable dejase a una trampa roja hundirse en el pantano, llegar a una infancia de granito olvidada,
20		
25	And dredge up A haul of colours That play and sparkle Through the smother of bog,	y arrastrar a la superficie abundantes colores que juegan y destellan a través del asfixiante pantano,

¹⁴ Located in Co. Galway, Ireland.

30	<p>Pinks, yellows, Amber and orange. Your saffron scarf, Filled with wind, Rises over your head Like a halo, Then swings to catch The back of your neck Like a sickle.</p>	<p>rosas, amarillos ámbar y naranja. Tu bufanda color azafrán cubierta de viento, se levanta sobre tu cabeza como un halo, luego se balancea para atrapar la parte trasera de tu cuello como una hoz.</p>
35	<p>The next instant The dark returns This sweep of rotting land, Shrunken and vacant.</p>	<p>Al siguiente instante la oscuridad devuelve esta extensión de tierra podrida, reducida y vacía.</p>
40	<p>Listen, You can almost hear The hunger falling Back into itself.</p>	<p>Escucha, casi puedes oír el hambre caer de vuelta a sí mismo.</p>
45	<p>This is no place To be.</p>	<p>Este no es lugar para estar.</p>
50	<p>With the sun Withdrawn, The bog wants to sink, Break The anchor of rock That holds it up.</p>	<p>Con el sol retirado, el pantano se quiere hundir, romper el ancla de la roca que le hace estar a flote.</p>
	<p>We are left.</p>	<p>Quedamos nosotros.</p>

4. Analysis and commentary

After the translation of the poems, the analysis of the most significant challenges will be undertaken. However, before starting this procedure, a few lines will be dedicated to explaining some of the key differences between Spanish and English which are particularly relevant when translating poetry.

Firstly, most English words are monosyllabic whereas in Spanish most stress is placed on the penultimate syllable. This presents two consequences: on the one hand, lines in L1 (English) are shorter due to the short length of words and visually longer in L2 (Spanish). On the other hand, rhythm and musicality, as well as rhyme, are different. Thus, the approach to the texts is to be different in L1 and in the translation.

The frequency of use of explicit personal pronouns in L1 and L2 is also different. L2 does not need so many explicit personal pronouns. It can be considered as an advantage in poetry translation since the missing pronouns can be compensated with other words. However, sometimes the person needs to be specified to know the gender of the person that the author is referring to.

The difference in the verb tenses can also be noticed between English and Spanish. The translator has to be aware of the uses that each tense has in each of the languages since they are not used in the same contexts. This task is usually simple but it is something to be aware of for a high-caliber translation.

Spanish has the need for more words to express the same idea; it is an expansive language. This feature can be particularly problematic in poetry translation, since the amount of words making up each line is a relevant feature. What can be just one word in English, may be a nominal phrase formed by two or three words in Spanish. In this case, the selection of words has to be performed as carefully as possible.

Another challenge when translating poetry is the facility in which English can play with sounds and create new words. English comprises of a vast number of terms, and these can be easily and quite freely combined to make up new ones. For this reason, it can be difficult on certain occasions to find the appropriate translation and to maintain both the meaning and the aesthetic characteristics of the poem.

4.1 Gaelic terms

All of the chosen poems contain one or more Gaelic terms: Gaelic is the native language spoken by the author as stated previously. Among these poems, two include Gaelic nouns, seven of them make reference to Irish place names in Gaelic, and even the title of four of them is written in this language. In this section I will try to explain each of the situations encountered and why I chose to maintain the original words in some cases and to change them in others.

- The title in the 2nd poem is “Beannacht”. This is a Gaelic term which means “blessing” and I have translated it as “Bendición”, which is the equivalent into Spanish. I did not maintain the original because this would not give any valuable information to the reader but rather make him or her lost.
- In line 14 of poem 3 there is the word “Seangharraí” which is a location in Ireland, Co. Cork. However, it is also an Irish word that means “old garden”. I consider that in this line it comprises both meanings since there is a “the” before the noun. Because of this double meaning a gap of comprehension would occur if I were to translate the term. I therefore decided to keep it as in the original because this carries a cultural weight that would be otherwise lost.
- In line 40 of poem 3, I encountered a similar difficulty. There is the word “Coillín” which means “little wood” and is also a location in West Co. Clare in Ireland. I decided for the same reason explained in the preceding paragraph to maintain the original term.
- In line 20 of the 3rd poem, line 26 of the poem 4 and line 6 poem 7 “Caherbeanna” appears, which is the place where the author was born. It should be noticed that the author uses it in many of his poems. I decided to keep the term in Gaelic to maintain the cultural relevance O’Donohue wanted to give.
- In poem 3 in line 45 the name “Ciorcán” appears. After a deep research in this word I could not find any matching results so I concluded that it is related to Cork, a county in the west of Ireland. I reached this conclusion because Cork in Gaelic is “Corcaigh” so a derivation of this word could be “Ciorcán” as in from Cork; the demonym of Cork.

- The title of poem 4 is a Gaelic term “Uaigneas” and it means “loneliness” in English. I translated this term into Spanish “soledad” for it will help the readers in the understanding of the poem.
- In lines 26, 27, 28, and 29 in poem 4, which is stanza 9, there is a list of Irish place names in Gaelic. “Caherbenna”, “Creig na Bhfeadóg”, “Poll na Gcolm” and “Ceann Boirne”. All these terms are related to nature; to mountains, valleys or rivers. I consider that they have, therefore, a double meaning to symbolize location and the nature within those locations. In the translation I opted for keeping the terms for the same reason as stated before in a similar case.
- In line 13 of poem 6 it appears the Irish location “Fanore” which also means “the golden slope”. As in other instances I decided not to translate the term and keep it as in the original so that the cultural value was maintained.
- In the title of poem 9, as well as in line 9 the word “Gleninagh” appears. “Gleninagh” is both the name given to a parish in Co. Clare and a mountain located in that parish. What is more, it means “the valley of ivy”. In the translation I decided to keep the term so that the effect wanted by O’Donohue is kept.
- “Conamara” appears in poems 8 and 10. Even though this Gaelic Irish location is very similar in English: “Connemara”, I decided to keep it in Gaelic because I consider that John O’Donohue chose to keep it in Gaelic for a reason.

It should be noticed that all the Gaelic place names that appear in the poems are located in the West of Ireland, the place where Gaelic was spoken by more people as their first language. O’Donohue took the West of Ireland as a reference in many of his poems, representing the wild landscape and mystic environment that surrounded him since childhood.

4.2 Mystic and symbolic allusions

John O'Donohue reflects in his poetry aspects he discovered and learnt during the four years he was a practising priest at the Catholic Seminary in Maynooth, Co. Kildare. All his experiences led to mystic, religious and symbolic representations in his poems. The most outstanding samples in the selection I have translated are the ones I am going to analyse and comment next.

- In the 1st poem in line 25 a religious symbol appears: “As those rosaries of intense limestone” which I translated as: “cuando aquellos rosarios de intensa caliza”. “Rosaries” is a religious element, which refers to an object intended to guide prayer in the Catholic Church. They are composed of a succession of stones, -called beads- and they commemorate the 20 mysteries of the life of Jesus Christ; each bead is a different prayer.
- The fields of Elysia are mentioned in the poem of “November Questions”, the 3rd poem, in line 18. According to the Greek mythology, the fields of Elysia, Elysian Fields, or Elysium Field was the place where heroes and virtuous men could finally rest after death. Linking this with O'Donohue's poem, where someone is asking questions to a dead person, it can be interpreted as life does not end after death but there is life beyond. Since the expression has already a fixed translation: “Campos Elíseos”, I decided to follow it and not to change it.
- In the title of poem 5 another religious symbol appears: “Purgatorial”. It is related with death and sins. It is a place where, according to Catholic dogma, venial sinners go to purge their sins before going to heaven. My translation is: “Expiatorio”, because it carries the same meaning.
- I consider that poem 2 almost in its entirety is constructed as if it was a prayer. Its title: “Beannacht”, which means “blessing”, is an indicative of a religious symbol, indicating the blessing the priest gives after the expiation of sins or at the end of a Catholic mass. Besides, stanza 4 is constructed in the same manner as an Irish blessing. Therefore, I believe that the whole poem evokes a halo of a religious blessing.

- The word “testament” is mentioned in line 8 of poem 4. It refers to the two main parts of the Bible; therefore, it is referring to a religious element. My translation for it is: “testamento”.
- In poem 4 in line 11, poem 5 line 23 and poem 8 line 17 “antiphons” are mentioned. This word has a religious significance. It refers to a prayer which is sung at some point of the service in a Catholic mass. I translated it as “antífona”.
- What is more, I consider that the entire poem 4: “Uaigneas” is a symbol of Jesus’ life, when he died in the cross and some of the remarkable moments of his earthly stage. The loneliness represented in the title can be linked with the feeling Jesus experienced during some moments of his life, as well as the loneliness some priests or nuns have to endure as part of their lives. To support this feeling of loneliness the Bible says: “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46). Furthermore, “a red furrow from each eye”, line 18, can be interpreted as Jesus’s tears when he was in the cross. In line 23 “The crevice opens in Death” I consider that John O’Donohue was making a reference to the instant when the rocks stumbled from the walls the moment Jesus Christ died in the cross. In fact, in Matthew 27:51 it says: “And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent”. Overall, I believe that this poem is a representation of different moments of Jesus’ life.
- In poem 5 line 24 it can be seen how some places are “wind-christened”. Once again this expression has to do with religion. With this expression the places are blessed with the wind as a child when is baptised. My translation is: “benedicidos”.

4.3 Poetical difficulties

In this part I will deal with the difficulties implicit in translating poetry; those ones such as figures of speech or aesthetic elements. When translating the selected poems I have tried to maintain the prosodic aspects of the original ones.

- In poem 1 lines and 2; “What did you see”/ “When you went out”, there is an alliteration of the sound “w”. Alliteration is the repetition of sounds in words in this case that are close in a line. In my translation I managed to maintain the alliteration, with other sequence of sounds (iste), in the same lines; “¿Qué viste”/” cuando te fuiste”. In stanza 2 in the same poem the alliteration of the sound “w” continues. In this case I solved it in a different way; “se dice ni se sabe”/ “se pierde o es bienvenido”/ “se tapia o se pierde”; I repeated the sequence “se”.
- In Poem 1 line 22 which goes; “The shoals of wind swell wild” / “El cúmulo de vientos crecen salvajes”, there is an alliteration in the original with “shoals” and “swell”, and “Wind and wild”. This time I could not solve this literary figure in the translation; however, the rhythm of the translated poem was not broken.
- In lines 3 and 4 in poem 2 there is alliteration: “On your shoulders”/”And you stumble”. Since in the translation I could only repeat the sound of a consonant: “en tus hombros”/”y te tambalees”, in line 2; “The weight deadens” / “el peso pese” I created an alliteration to compensate for the literary figure.
- In line 10 of the 2nd poem there is a metaphor: “And the ghost of loss” and instead of translating it in a literal way “el fantasma de la pérdida” I decided to uncover it for the reader: “y la muerte”. A metaphor is a figure of speech or literary figure that transforms the literal meaning of words into a figurative meaning. I decided to uncover the real meaning so that the content of the poem is clearer for the readers.
- In line 12 of the 2nd poem ;“ May a flock of colours”/”Que un arcoiris de color” I considered that the option “arcoiris” for “flock” was a better option than the literal translation which is “rebaño”. Besides, it preserves the whole meaning of the stanza since it names different colours in the following lines.

- The fourth stanza in the 2nd poem has a symproce, which is the repetition of the beginning and the end of the lines. However, even though I tried to maintain the same structure in the translation I finally decided not to because this would sound excessive. To solve this problem then, I intermingled repetitions giving the same effect as in the original; “May the nourishment of the earth be yours,”/ “May the clarity of light be yours”/”May the fluency of the ocean be yours”/”May the protection of the ancestor be yours.” / “Que tuyo sea el alimento de la tierra,”/ “que tuya sea la claridad de la luz”/ “que la fluidez del océano sea tuya”/”y también la protección de los antepasados”.
- In line 29 in the 2nd poem there is an alliteration with the sound “w”; “Wind work these words”. This time I could not keep this figure but I managed to maintain the tone and the meaning; “Haga activar en ti”. However, I compensated for the alliteration in the previous line: “And so may a slow”/ “Y así, que un leve vuelo”. This way the intention of the author is kept and the content is unchanged.
- The author plays with different words related to the smell sense. He does so to fully recreate that sense in the reader’s mind. In the translation of the stanza 8 in the 3rd poem I maintained that play-word and I translated “scent” for “esencias”, “smell” for “aroma”, “whiff” for “fragancia” and “odour” for “olor”. This way the stanza stays as sensorial as in the original poem.
- In line 17 in the 4th poem there is an alliteration; “He wept when he slept”. I could not keep this literary figure in my translation; “Lloró cuando dormía”. However, I made a compensation as soon as I could and I managed to do it in the following line. “Ept” was the sequence repeated in line 18 in my translation; “Un surco rojo de cada ojo”. I chose the sequence “ojo”, also containing 3 letters. This way I managed to solve the literary figure gap by compensating at a different point in the poem.
- In line 39 in poem 5 I created a synecdoche in the translation by placing “mano” for “fingers”; “Fingers grab the sheets,”/”Mano agarrar las sábanas”. I made this change because I consider that in L2 it is more natural to use the expression with “hands” rather than with “fingers”.

- In poem 6 there is the repetition of a sentence in almost all the stanzas (1, 2, 3, 4 and 5); this literary figure is called anaphora. In the translation I maintained it since it did not sound repetitive in L2; “Near me” / “A mi lado”.
- In line 3 in poem 8 I found the literary figure called “oxymoron” which consists on the contraposition of two opposite words, thus, creating a juxtaposition of elements. In the translation I managed to save this gap and maintained this figure; “Their bleak quiet” / “su desapacible calma”. Both the meaning and the form of the line were kept.

4.4 Linguistic challenges

This part is dedicated to those challenges concerning expressions, conventions, grammatical rules and words. Grammar, words and expressions have to be adapted to the new language and this is what I tried to do in the translation of the selected poems.

- In line 3 in poem 9 I changed on purpose the translation of a word; “And the colours the eye longs to embrace”. I considered that I had to achieve the same visual effect with L2; therefore, I changed the translation of “eyes” into “vista” for this purpose; “Y los colores que la vista ansía acoger”.
- In line 8, 2nd poem; “Freeze behind”/ “Se petrifiquen detrás” I did not choose the literal meaning for “freeze” which would be “congelar”. Instead I selected “petrificar” since it suited better this context.
- In poem 1 lines 4 and 5; “where no name is/ spoken or known” / “Donde ningún nombre/ “se dice ni se sabe”, I transformed the passive voice into an impersonal structure with the pronoun “se” in Spanish. Usually passives do not suit Spanish fluency. As a consequence, the tense of the verb is changed; from a past participle form in English to the impersonal with “se” in Spanish. This happens to be a common procedure when translating these poems. In lines 6, 7, 8 and 9 I proceed the same way.
- In the 1st poem in line 27; “From weather and time?” / “Al tiempo y a las estaciones?” *weather* and *time* generally share the same translation in L2: *tiempo*. For this reason, I chose the word “estaciones” for weather so as to avoid

- the repetition of “tiempo” and to highlight the contrast between the philosophical concept (time) and the meteorological concept (weather).
- Some words that appear in the singular form should be translated into the plural due to the fact that it sounds more familiar in Spanish. This is the case of “dream” which I changed into “sueños” in line 9 of poem 3rd; “Figures do in dream?”/”Como lo hacen las personas en sueños?”
 - In line 2 of poem 4; “The blue light of his eyes”, that personal pronoun “his”-marked gender- becomes “sus” in Spanish-unmarked gender- ; “La azulada luz de sus ojos”. For this reason, I made compensation later in the poem to show that it’s a male person whom the poem is referring to.
 - In line 13 of poem 4 I encountered the same case as before. Both personal pronouns, “his” and “her”, are translated as “su”/”sus” into Spanish; therefore, I needed a solution to show that this time it was referring to a female. That line is speaking about loneliness, so I made a change of grammatical category; from a noun “hunger” to the adjective “hambrienta” -grammatically marked in Spanish- ; “How her hunger invaded” / “Cómo hambrienta invadió”.
 - In lines 24 and 25 in poem 5 I had to change the order of the lines to follow the Spanish word order convention; “Of Wild, wind-christened”/ “Placenames”; “Nombres de lugares”/”Salvajes y bendecidos por el viento”. Since there is more than one adjective I placed the noun before them so that the meaning would not be lost in the translation.
 - In poem 5 in line 35, I found the problem of having to translate an expression; “Yellow laughter”. By doing research I found that this expression can be interpreted as “evil laugh”. In Spanish “risa amarilla” would not maintain the original meaning and it would be a usage translation mistake since it is not used in the L2. Therefore, I decided to translate it as “risa malvada”.
 - In line 11 of poem 6; “soot the light” I found a problem of an inexistent verb in Spanish. The verb “to soot” does not have an equivalent so I had to transform the sentence; “Para teñir la luz color hollín”. What I did was to include the noun from soot and the word “colour” so that the content would not be lost.

- In line 1 in poem 8; “These stones in the wild”, I made a grammatical change; from a complement of place to an adjective in the translation. Therefore, I used a transposition technique; “Estas salvajes rocas”. I consider that this was the best option since it is usually more common in L2 to have qualitative adjectives before nouns.

5. Conclusion

Translating poetry asks for boldness. It may even be referred to as temerity (because of all the challenges it poses) and, certainly, John O'Donohue's chosen poems in *Echoes of Memory* have been quite a challenge. As far as I know, there is not an official publication of *Echoes of Memory* in Spanish, which makes my translation even more of a dare due to the lack of comparison. Many writers have their opinion when it comes to poetry translation. Pound is quite sceptical in the topic: any attempt is doomed to failure, as it will never manage to apprehend the full essence of the original work. However, Casanova explains that translations cannot exist without the original text and, as a consequence, both the original and its versions are considered one. Poetry translation and its intricacies is still an open debate, and it will probably be like that for ever.

Apart from the specific intrinsic difficulties to this literary genre, other distinct and quite relevant characteristics of the chosen poems have been found. Due to a close relation with religion and with Gaelic language, John O'Donohue's selected poems are peppered with Gaelic terms, mystic allusions and religious symbols. John O'Donohue's poems have presented various challenges throughout the process. The Gaelic terms section allowed me to decide that Irish place names are better off maintained in Gaelic, but other Gaelic words should be translated to allow the reader to grasp the author's true meaning. Mystic allusions and symbols have been found in many of the selected poems and I have tried to maintain them in my translation so that the reader can fully apprehend and experience the atmosphere they recreate. Within the poetic challenges section, the difficulties that poetry itself presents have been tackled, to try and maintain aesthetics without losing the original meaning. In the linguistic part I rearranged sentences so that they were grammatically correct in Spanish.

During this arduous process I got the chance to get to know the difficulties that such poems entail, and to discover how many choices must be discarded before reaching a suitable solution. Poetry translation is both a skill and an art but, even though, I still believe that it is possible to capture all the nuances and details of the original version in translations.

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