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## Translation of Chantal Danjou's *D'autres que les hommes*

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Chantal Danjou is an author, literary critic and member of the Editorial committee of Editions Encre Vives. Born in Algeria, having lived for years in Paris, she now lives and works in the Var region of France. She currently teaches in teachers training schools; her role is in creating memoirs and offering courses on contemporary poetry, and devising projects on reading and poetic experiences. She has raised the profile of contemporary poetry through her work at La Roue Traversière, the association she co-founded in 1989 and worked at until 2021 (Danjou Biographie, 2025). Her works comprise poetry, essays and prose. The translation of this latest unpublished work reflects her poetic style.

As there is little literature on Danjou's prose work, I searched for background information and read an excerpt from 'L'Ombre et le ciel' (Danjou, 2021) as well as an article she wrote 'Méditerranée, vers un noir paysager. Jalons d'un itinéraire personnel' (Danjou, 2014) and another article she wrote with Dominique Hecq, "Hush, A Fugue" (2017). In addition, there was an interview from Florence Saint-Roch in which Danjou (n.d.) described how she finds the poetry in the mundanity of life and regards poetry and prose interchangeable in her work.

The poetic prose of the extract was a challenge to translate, and I aimed to capture the enigmatic nature of her poetic prose. She creates visual images and mood which I aimed to replicate in my translation. Her narrative is in the form of visual metaphors so that my challenges involved recreating the metaphors and retaining the mood of the ST (source text). For example, she writes in the third person as a witness to a frightening scene where the female protagonist is alone except for the presence of strange men around her house.

I found the visual aspects particularly difficult to translate and aimed for an equivalence strategy which had the goal of respecting the ST while creating a similar effect of that on the Source Audience on the Target Audience as described by Christiane Nord (quoted in Pym, 2023), as communicative equivalence.

For example, in relation to the metaphors she uses, Danjou herself sees the 'noir' as a site where there is potential for metamorphosis and resistance (Danjou, 2014). In the translation passage the scenario occurs at night and there are male silhouettes and outlines which threaten the female protagonist. She describes the 'noir' of the night as uncertainty. This uneasy scenario is emphasised by the last line where the protagonist felt a shiver when confronted with all the strangeness of the scene and the behaviour of the men.

The strange and repellent aspects of the night are highlighted by the description of the roof of the house:

"son toit de lauzes, bombé, avec l'humidité une teinte plus foncée, brune sous laquelle un ocre un peu rouge osait percer à la faveur des premiers rayons de soleil après l'averse"

I translated this as being like the colour of a 'brown stylommatophora' through which "peaked a 'red ochre' grasping the first rays of the sun after the shower."

Another image which also proved a challenge, was that of:

"un mince filet de fumée sorti de la cheminée, sorte d'aboutissement de réflexion"

which I translated as:

"whisp of smoke exiting the chimney like the culmination of deliberation."

To me it suggested a moment of deliberation as well as a reflection of the men's voices.

My greatest challenge was that of a metaphor of the wind and rain hammering the roof.

“Les rafales et le ruissellement incessant tambourinaient si fort que le salon paraissait rempli de bâtons de pluie toujours renversés”

which I translated as:

“the gusts and the incessant rustling hammered the roof so much that the lounge room seemed full of reversed rods of rain.”

as I understood it as a musical metaphor because the rain is hammering the roof as if it were hammering a ‘tambourine’.

Overall, I found the main challenges in translating this text were maintaining the visual metaphors, the music of the prose and the poetic mood of the text.

To this end, I found that an approach of communicative equivalence, while respecting the ST proved to be the best way to translate the complex visual, metaphorical, and poetic text.

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*D'autres que les hommes*  
Chantal Danjou

**Other than men**  
Chantal Danjou

Translated by Annette Mitchell

La profonde et profonde forêt  
entourait la maison, une si petite maison  
qui aurait presque eu l'air d'un  
champignon couleur de limace mûre.

Limace mûre ?

Ils regardèrent autour de la maison  
et échangèrent quelques clins d'œil, d'un  
air de dire qu'on n'avait jamais vu ni  
entendu parler du mûrissement des  
stylommatophores. Il valait mieux  
d'ailleurs ignorer que de telles choses  
pussent se produire. Il n'empêche que son  
toit de lauzes, bombé, avait pris avec  
l'humidité une teinte plus foncée, brune  
sous laquelle un ocre un peu rouge osait  
percer à la faveur des premiers rayons de  
soleil après l'averse.

Mais les voilà qui s'interrogeaient :  
stylommatophores ?

L'un d'eux parla de stylet ; un  
autre de voir ; « l'œil au bout de deux de  
leurs tentacules » précisa en criant un  
troisième qui restait à l'orée du bois. Il  
fallait être trois pour parvenir à une  
conclusion. Élever la voix parfois pour se  
faire entendre. Un mince filet de fumée  
sortit de la cheminée, sorte  
d'aboutissement de réflexion.

Ils disparurent.

Ils s'effacèrent.

Le vent.

Les gerbes d'eau qui tombaient des  
arbres.

La gouttière qui sifflait.

La maison s'enfonça.

La terre toute gonflée. La moindre  
empreinte se creusait. D'épais bourrelets  
et bien gras brillaient de chaque côté. Il  
n'y avait vraiment plus que la maison. Ce

The deep dark forest encircled the house,  
so small that it almost seemed to be a  
mushroom, the colour of a ripe slug.

A ripe slug?

They looked around the house and winked  
at each other, as if to say that they had  
never seen or heard about slugs ripening.  
It is better not to know that such things  
can happen. That didn't stop its domed  
slate roof, in the humidity, becoming a  
deeper brown out of which peaked a  
slightly red ochre grasping the first rays  
of the sun after the shower.

But then they asked themselves:

Stylommatophora?

One of them spoke of styluses: another  
watched. At the edge of the woodland, the  
third cried "the eyes at the end of their  
tentacles". It took three to reach a  
conclusion. Occasionally raising their  
voices to be heard. A fine thread of  
smoke exited the chimney like the  
culmination of reflection.

They disappeared.

They left no trace.

The wind.

The water sprayed from the trees.

The gutter whistled.

The house dug in.

The land was so swollen that the smallest  
footprint left a mark. Thick, fatty bulges  
glistened on either side. There was really  
nothing but the house. Surrounded by the

quasi noir autour. Dès qu'on s'éloignait d'un mètre de ses murs tout plongeait dans l'incertitude. Et ces limaces sur le toit, sur les chemins, ces rubans de limaces. Toute cette longueur invraisemblable de limaces. Quelle odeur avaient-elles ? Un peu sucrée sans doute. L'homme qui était resté à la lisière de la forêt réapparut. Il acquiesça : « Oui, un peu sucrée. ». Il se tint immobile un moment. Seul et roide. Un peu penché sur la droite. Aussi sombre que les troncs qui s'alignaient à côté de lui.

Lonie pencha légèrement la tête vers la gauche. Elle eut l'impression qu'il s'éclipsait. Ou s'éteignait. Elle hésita. Une silhouette à peine détachée de celles des arbres portant au front la loupote rouge d'une lampe frontale. C'était ça. Effrayant. Mais puisqu'il s'était volatilisé... Lui, oui. Pas ce sucré qui lui sembla envahir la pièce. Elle regarda à nouveau à l'extérieur. À quoi bon ? La nuit tombait brusquement. Le soir était peu marqué. Tout se jouait dans la pièce à présent. Les rafales et le ruissellement incessant tambourinaient si fort sur le toit que le salon paraissait rempli de bâtons de pluie toujours renversés. Une odeur d'humidité avec son irrésistible note sucrée imprégnait les murs, la fenêtre à petits carreaux avec son rideau à damier blanc et bleu, le canapé.

Du bois.

Il lui aurait fallu trois ou quatre bûches de plus. L'idée de ressortir... « Ressortir » – répéta en écho l'homme des frontières, entre forêt et hameau, bien que les autres maisons soient vides, entre bêtes et humains. Mais il n'y avait qu'elle et ces hommes étranges qui venaient avec le soir et la pluie. Elle eut un frisson.

near darkness. When you stepped a metre away from its walls everything was plunged into uncertainty. And these slugs on the roof, on the paths, these ribbons of slugs. All that improbable line of slugs. What did they smell like? No doubt, slightly sweet. The man resting at the edge of the forest reappeared. He agreed: "Yes, slightly sweet". He stood still momentarily. Alone and rigid. Slightly tilted to the right. As sombre as the tree trunks lined up beside him.

Lonie tilted her head slightly to the left. She thought that he was slipping away. Or was extinguished. She hesitated. A silhouette barely detached from the trees, wearing the red headlamp on its forehead. That was it. Frightening. But then he vanished. Him, yes. Not the sweet scent which seemed to invade the room. She looked outside again. What good was it? The night fell abruptly. The evening was only slightly marked. Everything was taking place in the room at that moment. The gusts and the incessant rustling hammered the roof so much that the lounge room seemed full of inverted batons of rain. An odour of humidity with its irresistible sweet note impregnated the walls, the small-paned window with its white and blue chequered curtain, the sofa.

Wood.

The fire needed three or more logs. The idea of going outside ... "Go outside" echoed the frontiersman, between forest and hamlet, although the other houses were empty, between beasts and humans. But she was alone with these strange men who brought the night and the rain. She felt a shiver.