

Editorial

Stand devotes this issue to work in translation and to the consideration of writers from many cultures who would not be known to most of us without translation. Readers who have known *Stand* for some time might, we hope, be pleased to see translation again in such a prominent role.

One of the contributors to the dialogue about translation in the 1970s in *Stand* (12/1) was Avril Pyman. Writing to *Stand* from Cold War Moscow she said 'The influence of the translator's work is usually at its height either when a language is in a state of flux or when a civilization is re-assessing its values. Sometimes it is easier to see this through the examples of literature not our own'. Avril Pyman later wrote a major article on the role that *Stand* has played in introducing Russian writing to the West. She saw it as part of a process in which 'publishing translations by poets for whom translation is a landmark in their own development, has a contribution to make both to the development of literature and to "the brotherhood of man" ...'. I like to think that this active participation in personal, literary and political inter-change is fundamental to all writing and reading but with some special qualities in the case of translation. Tony Rudolf, one of the contributors to the debate 30 years ago, contributes a major article on this process working through memory, writing and text. And the dialogue is continued through Ian Fairley's translations and writing on translation. Grevel

Lindop considers Fairley and Rudolf as translators of Celan and Bonnefoy. We also welcome Robin Fulton back to *Stand* as well as many other new writers and translators.

There are many reasons why Avril Pyman's sense of the historical importance of translation is still crucial. We are not just looking at the simple impact of individual translations and their readership but at the creative two-way process of encounter and discovery which only becomes available in this extraordinary event. Susan Bassnett describes it well in her recently published translations from Alejandra Pizarnik: 'Translation is a form of meeting, it is an encounter between writers I started to translate her work because it was a way of getting closer to her, of finding out more about her. Then, I came to see that the act of translating was changing my own writing.' Of course, one can be enormously stimulated and excited by reading and studying a writer in one's own language. But how different it is to go through the process of realising that mixture of familiarisation and defamiliarisation through creating something new, the inevitable result of translation. Michael Hamburger has also expressed this voyage into the unknown in which 'persona' and 'translation' are intertwined: 'It is the feelings of the empirical self which poetry enlarges, complements or even replaces with fictitious ones, but only because the empirical self is not the whole self, cramped as it is in its shell of convention Both Middleton and Hill have resorted to invented authors for an extension of historical consciousness...'. So this is a really extraordinary process whereby the fictitious becomes historical and the persona has a real consciousness. The linguistic self-discoveries through meeting new selves may be affectionate

and admiring, as Bassnett describes them, or suspicious and self-destructive as George Steiner describes Celan: '...Celan could displace German into a position of salutary strangeness All of Celan's own poetry is translated *into* German'. Jon Silkin's copy of Steiner's *After Babel* has beside these words the annotation, 'v subtle v fine point.' One sees here Silkin's deeply felt sense of poetry as an organic process of discovery in which translation is the nearest model for a poet's use of his or her own fractured language.

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