

The image features a white background with large, bold, red text that is partially obscured by overlapping lines. A thick green line starts from the top left, loops around the word 'Counterpoint', and extends downwards. A thin grey line starts from the top left and extends downwards. The text 'Counterpoint' is repeated in a large, bold, red font, with some parts being cut off or overlapping. The word 'Counterpoint' is visible in the middle and bottom right sections.

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**Counterpoint • No.2 • 2019**  
**CEATL's European Literary**  
**Translators' E-zine**

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# From the editors

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In these final days of editing *Counterpoint Issue No.2*, a lot of media coverage around Europe is focusing on what is happening in the United Kingdom. It seems that at the moment we are living in rather more interesting times than most people would probably like. So much is at stake, and we seem to be heading into quite uncharted territory, both in a European and a global context. But whether you are for or against Brexit, or don't know what to think, it seems very clear that cooperation across national borders is, and should be, as important as ever.

By definition, translators of all kinds work in a very concrete way with exactly this – and literary translators, the people that CEATL represents, are not only working across and hopefully bridging linguistic borders, we also constantly cross and re-cross real and imaginary borders and no-man's lands, creating a network, a field, a space (choose your own metaphor) of cultural, linguistic, political and temporal interconnectedness and cooperation.

This is what we, as editors, and CEATL as an organization, aim to contribute

to with *Counterpoint*. After a lot of hard work, collaboration, enthusiasm and sheer doggedness, we published the first issue of *Counterpoint* in May this year. It was, on a whole different level, also uncharted territory, for us personally, and for CEATL. But the reception of *Issue No.1* was quite overwhelming, the feedback from our own delegates and people outside CEATL very heartwarming. *Counterpoint*, and therefore CEATL and literary translators, has since been mentioned in several international magazines and websites and the list of subscribers is still growing. We wish to extend our sincerest thanks to all our contributors as well as to the other people who backed this ezine, even before it had a name.

In this issue, then, we proceed to deal with the various aspects of literary translators' work and lives in the political and cultural sphere. From different points of view, we hear about promoting both Irish and German literature, getting it translated and out into the world, we learn of the difficulties in translating between minority languages, what one can get

*“It seems very clear that cooperation across national borders is, and should be, as important as ever”*

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out of a residency, how a translation of Jamaican Marlon James ended up angering the Norwegian translators, and we learn what a Boost Book is and how you can contribute. We hear of the Italian translators' path into a union and we learn how to hum in ancient Greek. But not least, long-time delegate and treasurer of CEATL Shaun Whiteside relates his personal view on the importance of organizations such as CEATL and of cooperating across borders and languages.

Let this be an inspiration and perhaps also a reminder that beneath all the shouting across borders at high levels of government, literary translators and so many other good people are working hard, in concrete and metaphysical ways, to hold it all together.

As before, we welcome all suggestions and comments at [editors@ceatl.eu](mailto:editors@ceatl.eu). We hope you enjoy reading it.

**Hanneke van der Heijden,  
Anne Larchet &  
Juliane Wammen**

# CEATL – as necessary as ever

## Shaun Whiteside

Time sometimes creeps up on you: my first visit to a CEATL AGM was as a guest to the one in Oslo in 2009 – 10 years! Seriously? – before joining officially the following year as a successor to the outgoing Chair and TA delegate, Ros Schwartz. 2009 was the year when Turkish ÇEVBiR and Flemish VAV's applications for membership were accepted, bringing the total number of member associations to 27. Items on the agenda that year included an appraisal of the results of the [survey of working conditions](#) for literary translators in Europe, published the previous December; relations with other organizations ([EWC](#), [CAE](#), [HALMA](#), [FIT](#) and [RECIT](#)); and the revision of what was then the Decalogue, the much-debated set of ten sacred rules for translators' associations. Martin de Haan, speaking for the Dutch association, was concerned about an ageing (and hence diminishing) population of translators. The Finnish association was leading a campaign to enhance the visibility of our profession, and CEATL's Working Conditions survey was being discussed in the Finnish media. Of course, CEATL had been around for

a quarter of a century by the time I arrived, but this was my introduction to it, and a fascinating introduction it was too. Here was a group of individuals representing the interests of thousands of literary translators across Europe and, even though the discussions could sometimes become heated, making common cause. (We also, it should be said, had a lovely boat-trip up the fjord, and the weather was splendid.)

Aside from warmth, erudition, commitment and a considerable sense of fun, it was clear that CEATL's work was, and still is, characterized by a powerful sense of solidarity and an intense engagement with the institutions of the European Union. All of these factors remain the case, but we might need to explore some of them if we want to examine the question of what CEATL is for, exactly, and how it might evolve into the future.

### **Solidarity**

So do we need CEATL? Well of course we do. First of all, it's an opportunity for member associations to network and exchange advice on the topics that



*A spooky stroll through Norwich with CEATL delegates, May 2019*

*Photo: Shaun Whiteside*

concern them, as when, for example, CEATL backed the Turkish association ÇEVİR in advising the Turkish government not to introduce a system of certification for literary translators.

Moreover, a pan-European umbrella organization obviously carries much more weight than any number of small associations when it comes to lobbying the European Parliament on questions such as the Copyright Directive or working conditions, or indeed participating in the first **PETRA** conference in Brussels in 2011 and subsequent meetings of the same organization. There's strength in numbers, naturally, but there's also strength in the pooling of experience and expertise and in the ability to pull together. CEATL carries weight on the international stage and, perhaps most importantly, to stand together against unfair practices by monolithic private global companies – Amazon being a case in point – particularly when such enterprises are increasingly

operating in an international arena.

### **Fresh approaches**

And how has the organization changed since I've been a member? In the obvious sense that it's considerably larger now than it was ten years ago, thanks to the gradual accession of member associations from the former Eastern Bloc. Not only is the geographical scope of CEATL enlarged, it also means that it is turning from a North-West European institution into one that is properly pan-European. One unexpected consequence of that change has been the gradual decline of the use of the French language in the everyday business of the organization, although of course it lives on in the translation of documents and this very e-zine. Conversely, fresh ideas and approaches are pouring in from newer associations, such as those in Romania, Serbia and Macedonia, to complement and perhaps shake up more established perspectives. As to how I see things going: there's a lot of energy coming from the working



*Shaun Whiteside translates from French, German, Italian and Dutch, and has been Treasurer of CEATL since 2013. A former chair of the UK Translators Association, he lives in London with his wife and son.*

**Shaun Whiteside**  
**Photo: Georgina Morley**

groups – Best Practices (of which I’m a member) is coming up with useful and exciting ideas for the boosting of new associations in terms of networking, visibility, lobbying and finance; the Working Conditions group is back with a vengeance, and with access to new technology that wasn’t around when the original survey was carried out over ten years ago. Visibility, which went briefly into abeyance, has bounced back with the e-zine that you’re reading right now.

If I’m right, and my crystal ball is in some kind of working order, a lot more energy is going to be coming from the working groups in future; or, to put it another way, the organization of CEATL is going to be less top-down than it has perhaps sometimes been in the past. And current state of our finances, as long as they are used judiciously (speaking with my Treasurer’s hat on) means that there should be plenty of resources for the working groups to have all the meetings they need.

**“The organization of CEATL is going to be less top-down than it has perhaps sometimes been in the past”**

From a personal perspective, and writing at a time when my own country seems to be going through some kind of self-destructive mental breakdown, the confident sense of solidarity shown by CEATL acts as a kind of beacon, and a lifeline. It’s enormously important for us to know that we still have allies on the continent, and thanks to our connections the UK Translators Association is able to remain part of an international community, even when our political masters seem to have given up on the idea. In that context it was particularly important to be able to hold the 2019 AGM in Norwich. We’re with you, CEATL!

# In Germanic lands

*Olivier Mannoni*

‘*Outre-Rhin*’ – across the Rhine: the expression commonly used in France to designate Germany is not only imprecise and restrictive, it has always profoundly annoyed me. It suggests that Germany’s western border ends in Bonn, that it includes at most the northern Rhineland and, at a pinch, the region around Frankfurt am Main, because of its stock exchange. And this has not changed, not even after reunification and the transfer of the capital to Berlin.

People may have a similar view of German literature. In France, there is still a widespread misconception that it is drab and grey, like the Saarland countryside on a foggy day in February, wise and sententious like a Sunday homily in rural Bavaria. Many publishers have asked me if a book they intended to publish was ‘too German’... Was Dostoevsky ‘too Russian’? Shakespeare ‘too English’? Miller ‘too American’?

My journeys through German literature have revealed to me so many detours, so many brilliant, surprising and thrilling splendours, that I sometimes have to force myself not to respond too sharply to this type of question.

After my initial, fascinating contact with German literature as a French schoolboy – with Schiller, Hölderlin, Mörike and, the epitome of modernity in schools and academia, Thomas Mann – I discovered my first ‘literary scene’ far from the Rhine and the French border, on the banks of the Elbe. The place was Gorleben, which had been designated as a site for storing and recycling nuclear waste material (and which was subsequently set up).

“*Wendland, a Republic of Letters*”

An early type of protest camp, the Republic of Wendland, was declared. A constant round of meetings, debates, parties and children’s entertainment was held by Germans who had absolutely nothing in common with the anthracite suits and refined speech of the Bonn Republic. When I arrived at the camp, aged twenty, I was on a kind of voyage of initiation, my own European tour. My journey brought me to Hans-Christoph



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*Olivier Mannoni  
Photo: Françoise Mancip-Renaudie*

Buch, who lived nearby, and who drove me to the camp in a wheezy old 2CV. Peter Schneider, Jürgen Theobaldy and Uwe Johnson were there or had passed through this place. The Republic of Wendland (I still have the passport) was a Republic of Letters. I spent an entire evening talking politics (this was the time of *Besser rot als tot*, “better red than dead”, a time when the United States and the Soviet Union seemed to be preparing for nuclear confrontation in central Europe). After I got back, in the same old 2 CV, zigzagging a little after the booze-laden discussions, after I left the Elbe and the searchlights of the East German police on the other bank scouring the surface of the water, my view of Germany had changed.

My reading then moved away from the classic paths and, despite my immense respect for the previously-mentioned authors, I started seeking out more contemporary writers: Heinrich Böll, Siegfried Lenz, Günter Wallraff, Friedrich Christian Delius and a handful of others. But also, and above all Günter Grass who, along with many other Gruppe 47 authors, posed the question of how and

whether the German language should be saved. *The Danzig Trilogy* moved me deeply. *The Rat*, a literary, Dantesque vision of an ecological apocalypse, convinced me that literature was still able to have an effect on the world. And much later, with *Too Far Afield*, that it could still be insolent and corrosive.

## “Is German literature too German?”

More than its political aspect, it was exactly this tartness – this sardonic side – which guided my research into German literature and my translation choices. Once I had embarked on this voyage, I entered a literary universe worthy of the brothers Grimm, and which, rather than tracing the line of the Rhine, went at times to faraway lands: the explosive eruptions of Thomas Bernhard from Heldenplatz in Vienna, the exuberant imagination and wonderful writing of Swiss writers Hugo Loetscher or Martin Suter, the incredible poetry of Milena

Michiko Flašar, the Austrian daughter of a Hungarian father and a Japanese mother, who tells the story of the meeting of a Japanese *hikokomori* and a *salaryman*, Frank Witzel's hallucinating fantasies of a paranoid universe that was still called Germany, the quest of Austrian Robert Menasse in the country of Babel that is the European Commission, or the terrifying depictions by Franzobel, another Austrian, of the story of *The Raft of the Medusa*. And then there was Ingomar von Kieseritzky, incredible scion of a noble Baltic family and one of the most caustic writers I have ever encountered, and his unforgettable *The Book of Disasters*. Another was Bernhard Schlink's *The Reader* and his detective stories with their never distant past; Patrick Süskind with his smells and his music. The teetering constructions of Arno Schmidt or Walter Kempowski, another mad collector. The list of imaginary wonders unfurled under our eyes by German-language literature goes on and on.

So, is German literature 'too German'? On the contrary: for a translator, it presents a fabulous palette of sensitivities, genres, styles and talents. *Outre-Rhin* is like the map of a fabulous country, peopled with caves, enchanted lakes, magnificent sagas. And with the blood-curdling tales that provided the foundation on which all these writers built their creations. The German tragedy has given birth to one of the most abundant and richest literatures in Europe. Let's hope that it will be able to face the brown mists that are again weighing on all German-speaking countries – and on our own.

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Over 700 German titles are translated and published every year in France, placing the language third behind English and Japanese (including mangas). This figure has been stable for years. Sales of German literature have been highly successful in recent decades: for example, Günter Wallraff (*Lowest of the Low*), Patrick Süskind (*Perfume, The Double Bass*), Daniel Kehlmann (*Measuring the World*), Martin Suter for most of his novels and, just recently, Robert Menasse with *The Capital*.

*Translated from the French  
original by Miriam Watchorn*

# The birth of a boost book

## Collecting best practices in translators' associations

Iztok Ilc

Every association encounters problems and obstacles of all sorts from time to time. How to solve them? Asking somebody who has gone through the same ordeal for advice is of course sensible, but it would be much easier to have many examples of good practices gathered together in one place. This is the goal of our [Best Practices Working Group](#).

The turning point was our meeting in Bucharest in February 2018 where Ika Kaminka ([Norsk Oversetterforening](#)), who was coordinator at the time, proposed building some sort of a web page or a blog with all the useful information about running an association. We started with the premise that a lot of useful information is hidden in the annual activity reports that every member association sends to CEATL. But it's not very realistic to expect people looking for a solution to read pages of texts which includes information that isn't relevant to them. It is like looking for a needle in a haystack.

After a fruitful discussion on how to organize this kind of "big data"

Ika, Shaun Whiteside ([Translators' Association](#)), Lavinia Braniște (ART LIT) and I ([DSKP](#)) decided upon a basic structure which revolves around three major issues: recruiting and keeping the membership, financing and lobbying. Then the monumental task of sifting through the annual reports began. It was a necessary yet tedious task to get a broad picture of just about everything related to these three topics: what do associations offer to their members; are membership fees the same for everybody or is there a diversification according to the status of a member (student, retired, associated member, full member); where do associations get their funds, how do they deal with bureaucracy and politicians when they want to bring up a specific problem for discussion, etc.

***“The goal is to collect concrete examples of good practices”***



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**Iztok Ilc**  
**Photo: Rok Vevar**

During conversations with colleagues some problems stood out from others: the most pertinent for all associations is how to recruit new members, how to persuade them to be part of an association in times when such structures seem old-fashioned, how to secure funding and how to improve the general acknowledgment for the work of literary translators.

Instead of endless lamenting about jaded association members, troubles with money and general political ignorance, the goal of our group is to collect concrete examples of good practices, as many as possible even on a single theme. Although we are aware that cultural/political situations in our countries are different and therefore not all practices can be directly transplanted everywhere, in this way associations can see various examples of problem-solving and try them out.

Our project, called Association Boost Book, was thus born and our plan more or less set. Having been initially concerned that it was overambitious, these fears were allayed at the CEATL

2018 AGM in Copenhagen with the inclusion of Eva Valvo (STRADE), Francesca Novajra (AITI) and Kalina Janeva (MATA). Simina Popa (ART LIT) also joined our group at the CEATL 2019 AGM in Norwich.

When we presented the first draft at CEATL's annual general meeting in Norwich (2019), the response from colleagues was very positive. Some technical questions still have to be solved, primarily where the page should be stored, and how it should be accessed. At this point I would like to invite my CEATL colleagues to share their stories, material from good vibes sessions, minilabs or anything which might be useful for the others, in line with the old adage *A trouble shared is a trouble halved*.

## TRANSLATING BETWEEN SMALL LANGUAGES

# A celebration of otherness

## *Translations into and out of Basque*

*Garazi Ugalde Pikabea*

In the first issue of [Counterpoint](#), Máire Nic Mhaoláin spoke to us about Celtic languages and her experiences as a translator between Welsh and Irish. She summed up by saying that literary translations in that language combination are still rare. Literary translation between two minority languages is not a common phenomenon, as these languages tend to gravitate towards bigger or more dominant languages in search of prestige and visibility, in an effort to make a place for themselves in the world of letters. However, literary translation between minority languages does exist and can be very diverse as regards both its motivation and its form.

In Basque literature, translations into and out of bigger or geographically close languages such as Spanish, English, French, Catalan or Galician prevail. There are far more translations into Basque than out of it, although a lot of work has gone into translating and promoting Basque literature abroad in recent years. For example, [The Etxepare Basque Institute](#), whose task is to promote and spread Basque language and culture at

an international level, provides grants for the translation of works originally written and published in Basque, as well as a prize for literary translation. There are many translations between Basque, Galician and Catalan, all languages which share the same hegemonic language and have co-official status in their respective regional autonomies. Let's remember that since 1979 Basque enjoys official status together with Spanish in the Basque Autonomous Region and in one area in Navarra, whilst it has no official recognition in the French territories (a legal situation it shares with Catalan).

### **Collaboration with publishers**

There has been considerable exchange of literary translations between these three languages since the 1980s and this has been centred around children and young adult literature in particular, followed by poetry and other genres. There are publishing houses that collaborate closely with each other in publishing translations or other publishers like Kalandraka, who have published in the four principal languages of Spain works written originally in one of the co-official languages of the Spanish

## “Spanish acts as a bridge language”

state. However, everything points to the centre still being of importance in the relationships between the peripheral languages: Spanish acts as the bridge language between the smaller literatures, either through indirect translation through Spanish or because the translations are a response to the state’s concept of the market. But that very relationship of going through the centre could contribute to the development of peripheral literary systems and a more egalitarian and autonomous relationship between them.

Literary translations between Basque and other minority, geographically close languages like, Asturian, Aragonese or Aranese – minority languages which don’t enjoy the same sociolinguistic status as those previously mentioned – aren’t so systematic and are very few in number. Nor can we talk about a systematic relationship with minority languages in France, although there has been a particular exchange of translations with Occitan and Breton.

Outside of market considerations, we can find sporadic Basque translations from Occitan, Scots Gaelic, Irish, Kyrghiz or Quechua, whilst literary works written originally in Basque have been translated on occasion into Breton, Welsh, Frisian and Quechua. In spite of being isolated and marginal translations (some were published in reviews) they are very

interesting from the sociolinguistic and symbolic point of view.

### Inspiration from neighbouring countries

Among the translations from Occitan, the epic poem *Mireio* (1859) by Federic Mistral, a symbol of the renaissance in Occitan literature, stands out. The translation into Basque was published in 1930, at a time when the Basque people were inspired by Provence, waiting for a Basque Mistral who would save the language of their forebears. Decades later, the poem *Lo Dider de Guernica* by the well-known Occitan writer Bernat Manciet, would be published in Basque. The poem denounced the massacre of Gernika and its translation led to a multi-lingual re-edition on the 75th anniversary of the bombing.

In 1991, we had a collection of texts in Quechua entitled *Pongoq mosqoynin*, which included a song, various poems and a short story to which the title owes its name: *The dream of Pongo*, an indigenous story which the Peruvian writer, José María Arguedas heard from the mouth of a farmer from Cuzco. The Basque edition is a bilingual book in Quechua and Basque, apparently translated from another Quechua- Spanish bilingual edition published in Cuba. Furthermore, as of 2013, we have been able to read the Quechua translation of the first book published in Basque: *Linguae vasconum primitiae* by Bernart Etxepare (1545). This work of great symbolic value for the Basque language – previously available in Spanish, English, French, German and Italian – was translated simultaneously into Arabic, Romanian, Chinese, Quechua, Galician and Catalan



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**Garazi Ugalde Pikabea**  
**Photo: Private Archive**

for Basque Language International Day, thanks to an agreement between the Basque Parliament and the Academy of the Basque Language. Clearly, these are specific, isolated translations, but their very existence is interesting because it hints at a will to move closer to other minority literatures and a need for exchange between languages of a similar status.

## “Translation can have a double effect on minority languages”

In short, translation can have a double effect on minority languages: on the one hand it can be an indicator of dependency if it revolves around a dominant language or literature; conversely, it can give rise to a constructive and strengthening process which can have a bearing on

the autonomy of the minority language, and can contribute to building bridges between peripheral literatures. As Michal Cronin, author, translator and Director of the Trinity Centre for Literary and Cultural Translation, Dublin, has said, in an article in the journal **The Translator** translation between minority languages can be a celebration of otherness and can bring us to look for references and establish more egalitarian relationships for those languages: “Difference does not have to result in the pathology of closure. A celebration of difference can lead to an embrace of other differences, the universalism lying not in the eradication of the other but in sharing a common condition of being a minor other.”

*Translated from the Spanish original by Anne Larchet*

# How does that translation land on your desk?

## *Tracking a book's path with Literature Ireland*

*Anne Larchet*

Sinead Mac Aodha's aim, as Executive Director of [Literature Ireland](#), is "to have the finest of Irish contemporary fiction published by the finest of publishing houses and translated by the finest of translators." A tall order indeed.

Well, if *Counterpoint* thought this would be an A to Z journey, we were sadly mistaken. It is a bi-directional exercise with Literature Ireland promoting Irish literature abroad and, at the same time, publishing houses and translators tapping into their programmes.

Literature Ireland, (then known as Ireland Literature exchange) was established in 1994 as an initiative of the Arts Council, the Cultural Relations Committee of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Bord na Leabhar Gaeilge (Irish Book Board). It was inspired in part by FILI, [Finnish Literature Exchange](#) and has grown from modest beginnings in one room in the Irish Writers' Centre, Parnell Square, to become a key partner in the [Centre for Literary and Cultural Translation](#) in Trinity College Dublin.

"It's a great honour to be able to bring the stories of Ireland around the world. The Irish literary imagination seems to strike a special chord with readers right across the globe. However, without our special relationship with international publishers and literary translators and their great expertise and dedication to bringing Irish writing to their countries, Irish literature would not have the international reach it currently enjoys," adds Mac Aodha. The works LI supports come from a range of genres including Irish fiction, literary nonfiction, poetry, children's books and drama. By its 21st birthday

***"It's a great honour to be able to bring the stories of Ireland around the world"***

in 2015, 1,650 Irish books had been translated into 55 languages.

Literature Ireland has a many-pronged approach to getting Irish literature out into the world. Its instrument of broadest reach is at major international book fairs, particularly at the Frankfurt and London fairs, aided by its annually produced catalogue, *New Writing from Ireland*. At the fairs, LI talks face-to-face with the publishers about Irish writers' works and it is LI's passion and in-depth knowledge of Irish writers which can result in works being translated and published in foreign language territories. It is of note that a large amount of Irish literature, written in English, is published in the UK by international publishing houses.

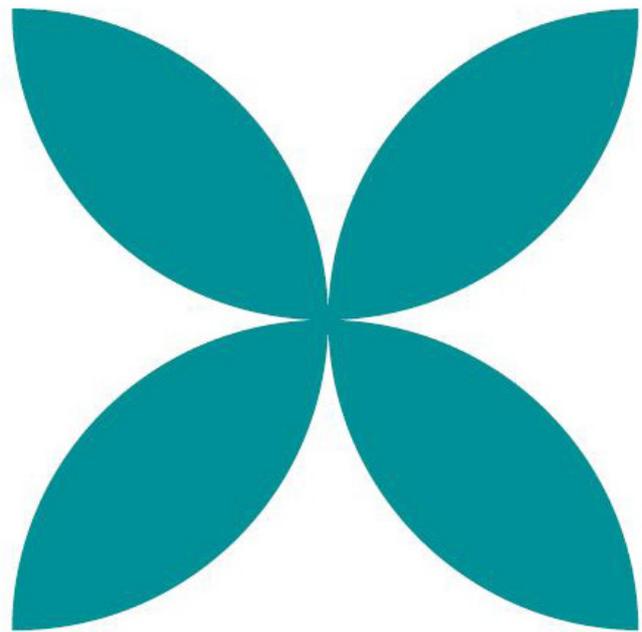
### Starting point

The first step in the journey of the Irish writer's work to the translator's desk can begin at these fairs. If, for example, a German or Spanish publishing house feels that an Irish writer's novel would be of interest to their particular readership, the first step for them is to contact either the agent or the publishing house and make a bid for the rights. Once the rights have been acquired, the publishing house abroad can apply to Literature Ireland for a translation grant to help with the translation costs.

LI has a policy of funding a maximum of four titles by any one author in any one territory. This is to allow for new writers' work to have the opportunity of being translated and also because it is hoped that if a publisher is publishing a fifth book then they have already succeeded in creating a profile for the writer and demand for his/her books. The timing of this is of course, like

so many things, crucial. Should a writer win a literary prize, say the Booker or the Dublin International Literary Award, then the price of the foreign rights can rocket upwards.

## New Writing from Ireland



Literature Ireland  
Promoting and Translating Irish Writing

As with all things international, geopolitical events colour the routes the books take. For different reasons, at different times in recent history, different regions are targeted. A good example of this was the fall of the Berlin wall, the subsequent opening up of Eastern bloc countries and more importantly, the imminent entry of the 10 'new' European countries into the EU. In line with government policy, Literature Ireland went east in the early years of the new century to promote Irish fiction in Eastern European

countries: Bulgaria, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Also, in this instance, it was a two-way exercise, Mac Aodha says, in that former communist countries were keen to publish new writing in translation. Publishers from these countries actively sought out Irish writers to be translated into their national languages. So, LI backed up this promotion by running a translator residency programme, putting out a call for applications to translators in these countries on LI's website, through Irish embassies in countries where there was diplomatic representation and through local translator associations – something for CEATL members to be aware of.

annual programme of short residential bursaries for professional translators working on publisher-commissioned translations of works of Irish literature. The purpose of the bursaries is to enable translators, who apply directly to LI, to spend a period of time in Ireland working on a translation, meeting with authors, carrying out research in Irish libraries and generally immersing themselves in the cultural, linguistic and artistic environment of contemporary Irish literature.

**“A large amount of Irish literature, in English, is published in the UK by international publishing houses”**



**Section of titles recently supported by Literature Ireland**  
**Photo: Literature Ireland**

**Openings for translators**

One is the **Residential Translator Bursary Programme**, which is a small

Since 2003, LI has supported some 50 translators from all over the world including Ma Ainong who translated works by Claire Keegan and William Trevor, Kuppuswamy Ganesan who translated John Banville's *The Sea* into Tamil and Jerzy Jarniewicz who has translated many great Irish poets including Seamus Heaney and Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill into Polish. There is also the annual **Translator-in-Residence Programme** where every year, Literature Ireland and the Trinity Centre for Literary and Cultural Translation collaborate and co-fund the post of Literature-Ireland-Trinity

College Dublin Translator-in-Residence. This four-month post is targeted at a specific language territory each year and is awarded to a practising literary translator of established track record who is working on a translation of a work of contemporary literature. In addition to working on their translation-in-progress a condition of the bursary is that the translator runs a number of translation workshops for Trinity students on the Masters in Literary Translation. In 2019, the Literature Ireland- Trinity College residency was awarded to a translator working in the Japanese language, Hiroko Mikami who translated a number of the late Tom Murphy's play. In 2020 the focus will be on German language translator.

The [Translation Grant Programme](#) allows international publishers to apply for a contribution to the cost of a translator of a work of Irish literature from English or Irish into another language. The process is rigorous – a package of documents is required including proof of rights, translator contract, list of previous publications, translator's cv etc for assessment by LI. The package must include a ten-page sample translation which is then reviewed, anonymously, by an independent expert translator, who sends back a report. There are three rounds a year of almost 250 requests from publishers. In 2018, 85 proposals were funded.

Sinead Mac Aodha is very clear on what her remit does NOT include – either choosing the translator or even recommending one. Nor does LI choose the book to be translated. She feels an arm's length is necessary to maintain balance and transparency

and that LI cannot take on the role of agent when dealing with either the translator or the publisher.

**“The former communist countries were keen to publish new writing in translation”**

Literature Ireland shares the view of many in our profession that an important part of the translator's role, as specialist and in a position to give an informed view, is to bring other language writers' work to publishing houses. Mac Aodha recounts the case of the translator Mirela Hristova, translator of Sebastian Barry's *A Long Long Way* into Bulgarian, who came to Ireland as a translator and left as a publisher. Plenty of scope for the literary translator!

## NOTES FROM AROUND EUROPE: ITALY

# How Strade became part of the workers' union

*Eva Valvo*

“Strade” is the Italian word for “streets” or “roads”, but since 2012 it also stands for advocating literary translators’ rights in our country. Nowadays our “Sezione TRADuttori Editoriali” (‘Section of Literary Translators’) is a section of a larger union, but we’ve come a long way before getting there, as I’ll try to summarize here.

After having been the translators’ section of the national writers’ union for eight years, Strade was founded as an independent organisation in January 2012. Later that year, Strade signed a memorandum of understanding with SLC-CGIL. SLC is a communication workers’ union (ranging from cinema and television to postal services, from the publishing industry to telecommunications), while CGIL is the Italian General Confederation of Labour, i.e. the largest and most important workers’ union in Italy.

In collaboration with SLC-CGIL, Strade opened negotiations with publishers, drafted debt rescheduling plans for translators in financial difficulties, monitored how those plans were

implemented, and signed an agreement on good practices with ODEI, an organisation of independent publishers. The positive results achieved through this collaboration convinced the membership of Strade that the union should merge with the union SLC-CGIL.

Strade went through a complex administrative process, which lasted nearly two years (2016-2018) and involved several voting sessions on statutory changes, the election of a new board etc. This administrative undertaking took up most of our energies, even though we still tried to keep up with our main tasks, i.e. to protect and promote the interests of literary translators. Strade has thus become the translators’ section of SLC and its official name is now **Strade-SLC**.

**“Having a big union behind you surely helps your voice to be heard”**



*Members of both Strade boards, the coordinator of Strade's contract advice desk, and members of SLC, in Rome, September 2019. Photo: Private Archive*

### Two-fold nature

While strengthening our endeavours to protect translators in relation to their workers' rights on the one hand, we decided to found an independent association called StradeLab on the other, specifically focusing on cultural activities, e.g. by offering training opportunities and maintaining relationships with book fairs and other external partners.

As of today, Strade's work is carried out by two technically separate entities. Strade-SLC has a board of three, the current one being elected during the national CGIL congress in January 2019 for a four-year mandate, while StradeLab has a board of three, which was elected by its general assembly in February 2019 for a two-year mandate. One person has been appointed to both boards in order to have a clear link between the two and to ensure that both boards will function – wherever possible – as a single body.

A co-operation agreement between Strade-SLC and StradeLab was signed

in 2019. All members of Strade-SLC are entitled to become full members of StradeLab for a small additional fee, while translators who are not members of Strade-SLC can become associate members of StradeLab by paying a higher fee. However, all members have access to our services, such as our contract and tax advice desk and our health insurance plan.

All of this may seem a little complicated, and in some ways it probably is, but ultimately this new structure helps us to have a clearer overview of what we do and what we intend to do. We, translators, may advocate for translators' rights, for example, by organising a "translation slam" at a book festival and thereby increasing our visibility, or by negotiating better contracts and working conditions with publishers. Both activities are important but, while in the first case it is easier to act as a small and flexible independent association, in the latter having a big union behind you surely helps your voice being heard.



*Eva Valvo is a literary translator from Danish and Norwegian into Italian, and a board member of Strade-SLC and StradeLab, the two entities representing literary translators in Italy.*

**Eva Valvo**  
**Photo: Peter Ciaccio**

Anyway, the restructuring did create some confusion among our members in the beginning. Therefore, after thorough reflection, the Strade leadership decided to focus on unity of action and intent for both entities rather than on their different status, in order to become more effective in terms of communication and “branding”. Our subscription campaign strongly recommends translators to apply for both memberships. After a critical period with a decrease in members (probably due to the big changes within Strade and maybe some general confusion about its status), a positive trend started in 2018, a year for us to settle and find a new routine, and this trend is still going on.

### **Collaboration with other unions**

Being part of a larger union has had another positive outcome. While it is true that Strade’s main goal is to protect and promote the interests of all translators who work, partly or wholly, with texts governed by Italian authors’ rights law, we also seek to be a reference point for everyone working under authors’ rights law, involving people in projects and goals that are shared between different

unions. This is also why Strade is active in the CGIL council representing self-employed professionals and freelancers and the CGIL council on authors’ rights, where we co-operate with various other categories, ranging from writers to illustrators and artists, in order to have a stronger impact.

Strade has a few ambitious long-term goals, such as gradually working out minimum payment requirements, encouraging the creation of a specific fund to support translation (which Italy has never had), improving the existing authors’ rights law (particularly in terms of the length of time for which rights are granted and of secondary rights exploitation), and lobbying for a more transparent system for managing the proceeds of reprography (photocopies). A better-structured way of working, more effective lobbying and stronger network ties thanks to our new two-fold nature will hopefully help us to attain those goals.

# Too many unskilled cooks

## *Translating Marlon James' multivocality into Norwegian*

**Juliane Wammen**

In August 2018, the small independent Norwegian publisher **Mime Forlag** published a translation of the Booker Prize winning *A Brief History of Seven Killings* by Jamaican-born **Marlon James**. The novel takes an attempted assassination of Bob Marley as its starting point and is at the same time a modern history of Jamaica told through a myriad of different voices: Twelve different characters tell the story, their voices interchanging in short chapters, and the book has been rightly praised for (among other things) its precise and skillful rendering of the voices of these characters.

So, Mime Forlag decided, rather unusually, to have the book translated by not one, but twelve different translators, to make sure the differentiation was being maintained. So far so good: Mime Forlag may be commended, both for taking a risk by publishing a brilliant, but by no means mainstream novel in the first place, and for attempting to rethink the translation process. Thus, when publisher Kristian Bjørkdahl was asked by *Morgenbladet's* Marius Lien if they had “drawn the names [of the twelve

translators] from a hat”, he explained the selection process as follows:

“A part of it was a kind of typecasting. We took one of the voices and mulled it over for a little while, and then the four of us brainstormed: Who do we think of when listening to the voices in the novel? Then we drew up a shortlist for each character and started at the top.”

### **Writers, not translators**

From a literary translator's point of view, though, something felt a bit off. First, the idea that you need actual different people to translate different voices in a novel seems to undermine the idea of the author's (and in this case also the potential translator's) skill at writing: If you thought a writer wasn't able to write different voices with different tones in a convincing way, you'd be undermining the whole idea of novels representing a multiplicity of voices and worlds, which is arguably one of the main characteristics of any great novel.

Let us, however, grant the Norwegian publisher that they really tried to do something different and experiment

with the form – and perhaps it actually might prove interesting to have different people translate different voices: a way of taking the actual multiplicity of literature seriously, doing away with the much flawed and misguided “lone genius” idea. But the real issue, from the literary translators’ point of view, was that the publisher commissioned this audacious task to people who are amateurs and inexperienced in the field of literary translation: the twelve people asked to do the translation weren’t translators by profession, they were (are) primarily writers of fiction, and most of them had never translated anything, or very little, previously.

This points to the overall problem, namely that the respect for literary translation and translators is such that a publisher would assume that an author with no experience could do the job just as easily – and perhaps even better. The publisher might have experimented with the idea of different actual people translating the work. This kind of cooperation in translation is not at all uncommon: there are many benefits from sharing the work, of course, both practically, logistically and artistically, and it might all make for a better end result. But then why not ask twelve different professional translators who have the skill and experience needed to do the difficult job? Tellingly, when interviewed about the translation in a radio show, some of the writers expressed their amazement at how difficult it actually was to translate, and some even underlined their individual unwillingness to translate e.g. very racist words and expressions, as Gro Dahle also told Marius Lien in the abovementioned interview.

### The translators’ reaction

When asked about the case, the Norwegian Association of Literary Translators, **NO** commented that they were not happy about the whole set up, even though they haven’t published any official statement on the matter. The above-mentioned feeling of being disrespected is strong, but maybe more importantly, from the association’s point of view, the publisher did not use the Norwegian standard contract for translation, “**normalkontrakten**”.



**Marlon James**

**Photo: Mark Seliger (markseliger.com)**

The written agreements between Mime Forlag and the writers made clear that the writers would get their fee in installments, in accordance with the sales. The standard rate was used, but because sales didn’t go well, the full fees were never actually paid. In fact, Mime Forlag is now closing down, partly because of the risk they took translating this book.

As sorry as one may feel for the publisher and their laudable dream of “only publishing things we love ourselves”,

as Kristian Bjørkdahl expresses it, this doesn't change the fact that the people who translated this novel didn't get paid properly for the work they did, according to the agreements that the NO worked hard to reach in order to protect the Norwegian literary translators. This points to another, and just as serious problem, namely that inexperienced authors translating a difficult work such as this do not necessarily know what to expect and might end up being underpaid and losing their rights.

## “It is about society's overall view of literary translation as a craft”

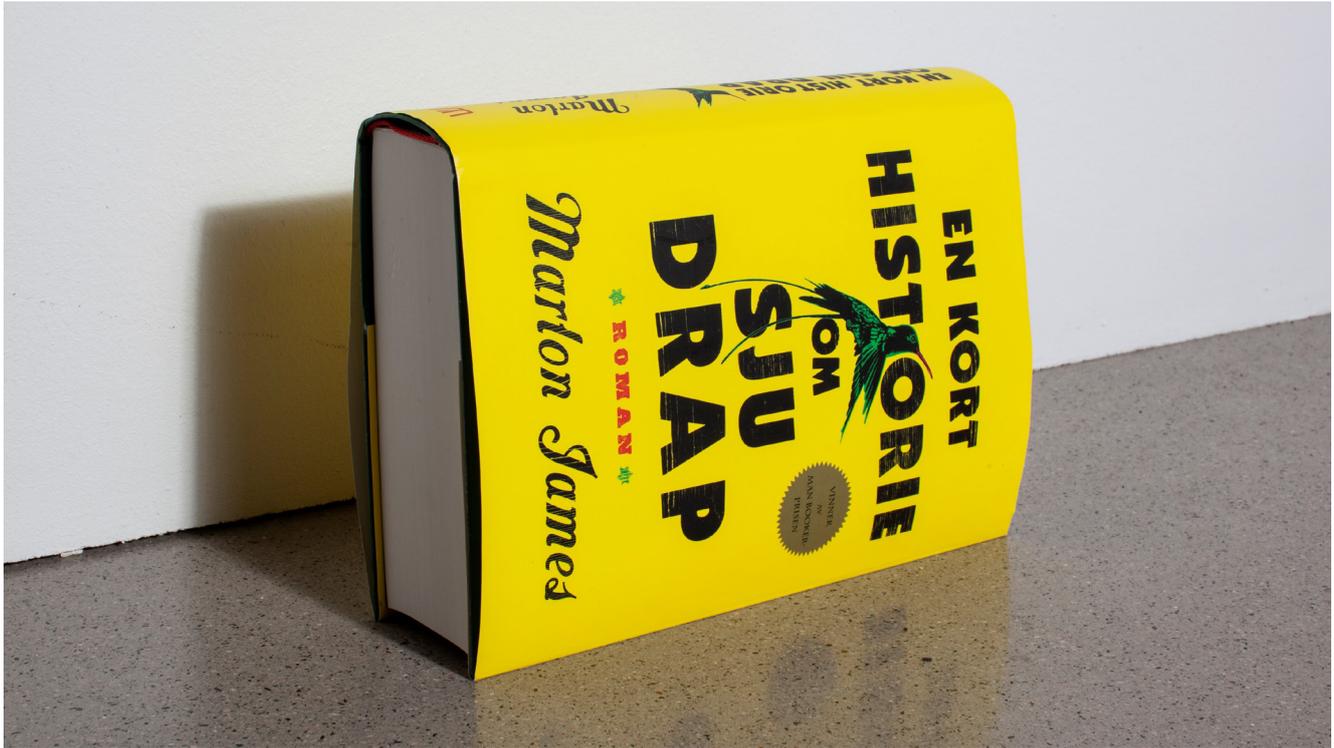
This story, then, is not just about Mime Forlag as either hero or villain (“independent publisher struggling to publish great literary works” vs. “evil publisher exploiting poor translators”), neither is it a (common enough) case of literary translators complaining about not getting the respect they feel they deserve – although these quite human and real emotions of course also play a part. It is about society's (including the writers') overall view of literary translation as a craft, a “taken-for-grantedness” of the position of the literary translator and the skill and effort it takes to be one. As in every

other profession, there are different levels of competence and experience, but automatically assuming that anyone who is a (good) writer is also a good translator, is a fallacy: Even when not taking the obvious need for a high level of linguistic skills into account, writing and translating still require quite different kinds of sensibilities and talents.

### Respect for professionalism

How did the actual novel end up, then? Well, the few reviews of the book went from rather unkind (see Ola Jostein Jørgensen's review in [BLA](#), 14.12.18) to noncommittal (see Odd W. Surén in [Mellom](#) #1, 2019) when it came to the translation. Among other things, Jørgensen thought the result was inconsistent and didn't do justice to the variety of voices and the skill of the original work – and this is unfortunate for the life of the book and for the Norwegian readers (and, as it turns out, for the publisher). But it does underline that commissioning amateurs to do work requiring highly skilled professionals is probably never a good idea – whether it is performing caesarian sections, teaching children math or translating novels. Or, as literary critic Ola Jostein Jørgensen puts it, just because you are really skilled at synchronized swimming, doesn't mean you can run a marathon.

Isn't the whole point of being a literary translator, and doing your job well, that you actually are capable of speaking in different voices and covering different stylistic scales and tones of speech? Many times, being a literary translator has been likened to an actor playing different roles or a musician playing different compositions on the same instrument, avoiding the sad,



**Cover of the Norwegian translation of *A Brief History of Seven Killings* (Jan Brøssen & Log Hurt / BLA Bokvennen litterær avis)**

common-place assumption that a good translation of a literary work is just a pale copy of a shining original. In a case like the translation of Marlon James' multifaceted, skillfully written piece of literature, this analogy makes more sense than ever: A good literary translator, with the required talent and provided with a realistic deadline, can of course translate a book with so many different voices, not because this person's voice is the (Norwegian) equivalent of a voice of a character in the story, but because they know their art and craft and how to use it.

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Marlon James' *A Brief History of Seven Killings*, published by Riverhead Books 2014, and translated to the Norwegian *En kort historie om sju drap* by Torgrim Eggen, Nina Lykke, Lars Ramslie, Simon Stranger, Birger Emanuelsen, Benedicte Meyer Kroneberg, Gro Dahle, Cornelius Jakhelln, Ørjan Nordhus Karlsson, Marius Leknes Snekkevåg, Ninni Nyhus and Jørgen Toralv Homme.

The novel won the **Man Booker Prize for Fiction in 2015** and has been translated into 32 languages.

## OUT AND ABOUT

# From Israel to Austria:

## *Six questions to Shiri Shapira*

*Hanneke van der Heijden*

*Literary translators often work at home. But sometimes they move their desks for a while to a place abroad. Shiri Shapira, translator from German, Yiddish and English into Hebrew, is one of them. Living in Israel among speakers of her ‘target language’, she took part in an Artists in Residence Programme in Vienna, one of the cities where the author she is working on lived in the 1930s.*

### **Where did you stay and how long?**

I stayed in Vienna for two months in the summer of 2019 as part of KulturKontakt’s Artists in Residence Programme. I applied for this particular residency because Austria was the missing piece in my knowledge of German literature. Apart from wanting to explore an unknown literary territory, I came upon the call for submissions shortly after I was commissioned to translate two Austrian novels. This residency was open for artists, writers and composers of all kinds, and literary translators could apply as long as their project involved Austrian literature. It seemed like a perfect opportunity not only to make use of the fact that I was

translating Austrian literature, but to be in a more interdisciplinary environment than my usual text-based interactions.

### **What have you been working on?**

I’d been asked to translate two novels by Ödön von Horváth – *Der ewige Spießer* (published in English as *The Eternal Philistine*) and *Ein Kind unserer Zeit* from German to Hebrew. However, within a two-month time frame, I only managed to complete part of the translation of the first novel.

### **In what way did the residency contribute to your translation project?**

Aside from enabling me to make time for translating simply by being away from my regular jobs at home, I had a chance to browse Horváth’s manuscripts of the two novels at the Austrian National Library, which was indeed illuminating with regard to his work process. It was somewhat encouraging, especially when dealing with such a seemingly effortless novel as *Ein Kind unserer Zeit*, to see that he had made countless major changes in the text before reaching the final version.



**Exterior of the residence in Vienna**  
**Photo: Kultur Kontakt Austria**

### **What is the biggest challenge of your translation project?**

*Der ewige Spießler* is full of humor and slang, two things that are especially difficult to retain in translations in general, but definitely in Hebrew translations in particular. Even today, there is no common approach to the representation of spoken language and dialect in Hebrew literature, and more so in Hebrew translations. This is a known problem, due to the unusual and non-continuous history of the language. Plus, Hebrew has no dialects. Between the two World Wars, the period in which the story takes place, there was still hardly any spoken Hebrew used in a modern context. So, in order to translate the dialogues in the book I have to generate a kind of artificial, older

colloquial language and make it seem as consistent and distinct as possible to represent each of the different variants of German the author used.

### **What was the best thing about your stay?**

I loved getting a taste of the local literary scene, which is unfortunately not as active during summer, but was still very approachable. **The O-Töne Festival** at the Museumquartier is most noteworthy here, and I was amazed at the massive public interest in prose readings by debut authors as well as by more established ones. I was also deeply inspired (and honestly, full of envy) by the extent to which the Austrian government supports literature, and especially young authors.



*Shiri Shapira is a translator and editor from Jerusalem. She completed a BA in German Literature and Hebrew Language at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, as well as an MA in Literary Translation and a second MA in Yiddish Studies. Shiri Shapira translates novels, short fiction and essays from German, Yiddish and English into Hebrew. She also publishes short fiction in Israeli literary journals, and since 2016 writes the Hebrew literary blog “Books on Buses” (Sfarim be’otobusim).*

**Shiri Shapira**

**Photo: Jonathan M. Barzilai**

I still need to read more, though, to examine the question of whether this governmental support can also guarantee the making of good literature.

### **How is the position of literary translators in Israel different from that of your colleagues in Austria?**

Of course working terms as well as the financial circumstances for literary translators in Austria are better than those in Israel, as I imagine is the case with most other professional activities. From what I heard, the Austrian government supports local publishers, which helps sustain less commercial endeavors. The state of Israel invests very little money in the local publishing industry, and the support system is quite difficult to navigate. In addition, the investment in education is lacking, so the vast majority doesn't see the value in reading anymore, and book sales are continuously dropping. Naturally, an Austrian literary translator can also find work in the other German speaking countries, and I see the

advantage of this beyond the simple fact of reaching and selling to a much broader readership. Here I think the question of cultural and geographical diversity comes into play, and unfortunately Israel and the Hebrew language have unfulfilled potential in this sense. Before the Second World War, Hebrew (and – to a larger extent – Yiddish) was emerging in several countries as a language fit for modern literature. But the course of history and national and international politics stopped this trend, and turned Hebrew into a language mostly spoken in Israel. Indeed, nowadays there are some Hebrew-speaking writers in other countries as well, but they generally identify themselves as Israelis. It is a pity for Hebrew to be confined to this tiny dot on the map, as interesting as this dot may be. Imagine the possibilities!

# How to hum?

## A case of ancient Greek



Translating comedy and humour in any language is difficult. Translating ancient Greek comedy is exceedingly difficult since so much humour depends on the cultural context of the language, and ancient Greek jokes are, well, very ancient. Some are without context (another humour-killer), some far beyond our decorum, some completely incomprehensible, and sometimes we simply understand something as a joke, whereas the Greeks did not, while we miss other jokes that the Greek audience would have laughed at.

Having translated ancient philosophical prose of Plato and Aristotle and tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides from ancient Greek into Danish, for me the comic playwright Aristophanes still claimed the prize for being the most difficult to translate, because of the need to make the text just remotely humorous. It took a good two years to achieve a (hopefully) readable translation of the comedy, *Hippes* (commonly translated as *Knights*), which at times is funny, but at other times, the jokes need a commentary in order to explain the punch line – no better way to kill laughter. The translation

## Marcel Lysgaard Lech

is intended for reading, not for being acted on stage. In order to achieve this, it would need a thorough rewrite.



Cover of Aristophanes' *Rytteriet*  
(Ida Balslev / Hans Reitzel Publishers)

### Onomatopoetic words

The play is an allegory on the Athenian democracy, where politicians are depicted as slaves and Democracy as

the grumpy old master. Despite all the jokes, strange metaphors etc., one verse (Greek drama is mix of recited verses and songs) demanded extra attention. In the beginning of the play, two slaves discuss how awful their situation has become since their master bought a new slave, a real scoundrel (he is a new demagogue rising). They then begin to hum a “classic” tune by someone called Olympus, who is apparently Greek music’s grand old man. They explicitly refer to their humming as wailing together, as though they were playing the *aulos* (*auloi* in plural), a double wooden instrument like an oboe, which apparently had a distinct humming, or buzzing sound, like wasps.



**Pericles’ Funeral Oration (1852): A classic depiction of the ideal Athenian democracy, the target for Aristophanes’ satire**

In Greek, the hum follows the common iambic trimeter: *my my my my my my my my my my my*, but it is of course impossible to recreate the melody and the intonation of the hum. Perhaps the Greeks hummed like in the song by Crash Test Dummies *Mmm Mmm Mmm*, but since the Greeks needed vowels in order to create the rhythm of the verse, Aristophanes inserts the y-sound as a kind of onomatopoeic

glue. However, Greek onomatopoeic words often end with a x-sound, e.g. farts are “pappax”, the croaking of frogs are “brekekekex koax koax” etc., so it seems Aristophanes intended something more than the mere “mmm”-sound.

### Translating a hum

So how do we translate the hum that Aristophanes perhaps expected (some of) his audience to recognise as Olympus’ tune for *auloi* (which probably also had lyrics)? The slaves, however, didn’t know or didn’t remember the lyrics and the tune, and the reason for mentioning Olympus is probably because the audience didn’t remember them either: They knew the musical tradition rather than the specific song Aristophanes had in mind.

The common British/American translations recognise the difficulty, but do nothing to solve the problem, rendering the *my my*’s with “Boo hoo”’s, “Hoo hoo”’s, “whoa whoa”’s etc., clearly focusing on the wailing of the tune, and the “*my my*” might simply sound funny and not like wailing at all (the Greeks prefer “*oimoi, aiai*” and the like, when they describe crying and wailing). If I were translating directly for the stage, I would have done something similar and left the exact humming to the director and the actors, but since my translation was mainly for readers, the humming had to make some sense, without being just an onomatopoeic rendering. But there is more to the humming. Athenian slaves were mainly imported from the Persian empire, the part that is modern day Turkey, a region that the Greeks thought very exotic; however, there was a long musical tradition from these regions that the Athenian elite enjoyed. Olympus was



**Marcel Lysgaard Lech** is Associate Professor of Classical Studies at the University of Southern Denmark. His publications range from works on Greek Tragedy and Greek Comedy to Greek epigraphy, and he has translated works of Plato, Aristophanes and all the tragedians into Danish. See more on his work [here](#). The Danish translation of Aristophanes' comedy *Hippes* was published by Hans Reitzel Publishers in 2018 as *Rytteriet*.

**Marcel Lysgaard Lech**

**Photo: Morten Holtum ([mortenholtum.dk](http://mortenholtum.dk))**

part of this exotic musical tradition, and thus Aristophanes satirically depicts non-elite (slaves) humming like Athenian members of the elite.

The slaves are actually an allegory for the Athenian elite, and thus their taste for old and exotic music (Olympus was from Phrygia) is part of their elitist education, while the slaves as characters were supposed to be from more eastern (exotic) regions.

### **Modern allusions & meta-commentary**

What I did was to copy the humming of the Danish comedian [Frederik Cilius](#), who stars in a daily satirical radio show in character as the female journalist Kirsten Birgit. Among her many virtues as an elitist, snobbish, cultural conservative, she hums a lot, from children songs to Wagner, mainly to these “sounds”: skab, skib, skub, dab, dib, dub. As a result, I translated the verse like this “Dab dab skib skub skab skub skib skab skib skub skab skab”. This is of course complete gibberish for the uninitiated, (just like the *my mýs* for those who did not recognise the tune or were not familiar with

the tradition). But for those who are acquainted with the extremely popular radio show, the translated verse should make them recollect one of Kirsten Birgit’s deliberately annoying hums and hopefully make it possible for the reader to reconstruct any such tune by reading the verse. Furthermore, it captured an idea of cultural eclecticism, knowing Kirsten Birgit/knowing Olympus and recognising both’s elitism.

Thus, instead of being just a wailing or a hum, I hope I have captured more of the cultural meaning of the hum. And just as Aristophanes meta-poetically refers to the tradition of Olympus’ music, I translated the verse as a meta-commentary on the history of satire from Aristophanes to modern Danish satire, which after years of non-dangerous, non-political comedy, has regained its full satirical potential (like Aristophanic comedy) and generated a great deal of polemics and discussion in the media. This, of course, is far beyond Aristophanes, but I am quite sure that he would have condoned with a jolly smile.

# CEATL's Click List

## *Links to the world of translation*

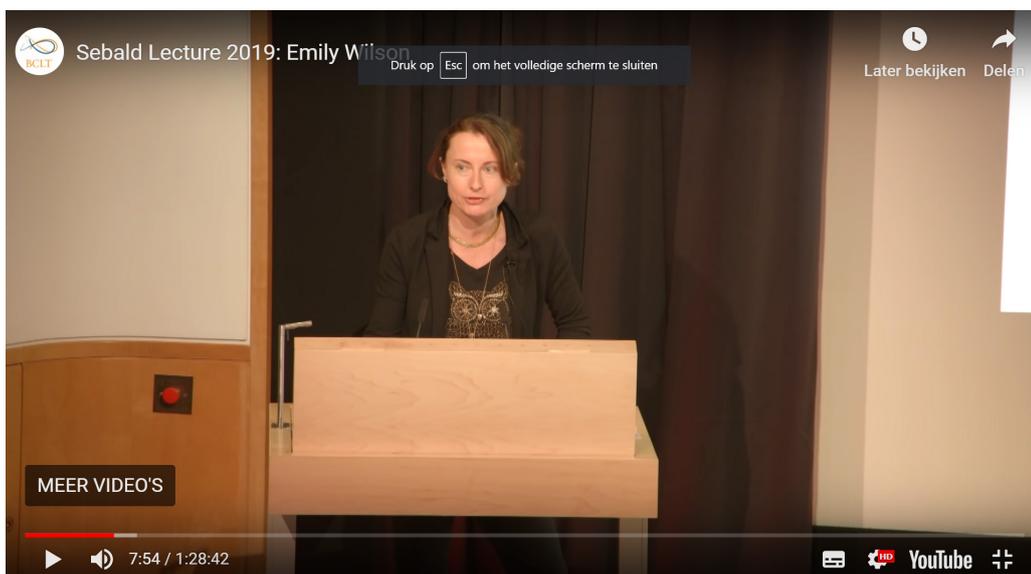
### **Translating classical Greek texts and more: The Sebald Lectures recorded**

In April this year, Emily Wilson gave a lecture on her new translation of the Odyssey, the first into English by a woman. Two years ago Michael Longley CBE spoke on 'Releasing the Lyric: Translating Latin and Greek Poetry'. Both lectures are part of the W.G. Sebald Lectures, organised annually by the British Centre for Literary Translation at the University of East Anglia (Norwich, UK). To watch videos of these and other previously delivered lectures, please click [here](#).

### **Residencies for literary translators**

Residencies in Vienna for literary translators (and other artists) last from one to three months. More information on the programme, organised by Kultur Kontakt Austria, and on the application procedure can be found [here](#).

The website of [TransArtists](#) offers general background information on residencies for literary translators. On this nifty site you'll also find a vast database with descriptions of residencies all over the world, links to their websites, and practical information on application procedures etc.



*Screenshot of Sebald Lecture by Emily Wilson ([bclt.org.uk/sebald](http://bclt.org.uk/sebald))*

### What makes a translation great?

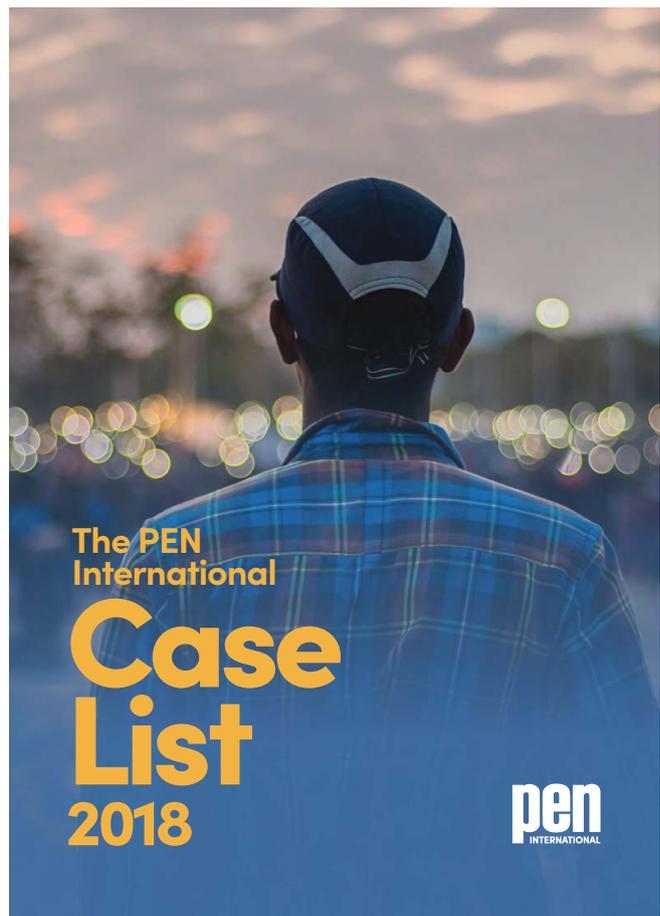
“It’s easy to say what a bad translation is. The ones that are accidentally jagged like the person wielding the scissors was drunk. The ones where someone has misunderstood the original, or perhaps misinterpreted it. The ones where all individuality has been smoothed out. But how do we identify a successful translation? When have we done our job well? What is it we want to achieve, beyond mere fluidity?” These questions were posed by editor and German to English translator [Katy Derbyshire](#). [Here](#) and [here](#) are the answers from ten literary translators from across the world – and why we need to be talking about it.

### An open letter to protect civilian translators/interpreters in (post) conflict situations

In cooperation with major international translator and interpreter associations, academia, Red T, a non-profit organization advocating for the protection of linguists at risk, and the International Refugee Assistance Project, PEN International also sent an Open letter to UN’s to Secretary General on the protection of civilian translators/interpreters in (post) conflict situations. The letter can be read [here](#).

### PEN International’s case list

Earlier this year, PEN International issued its annual Case List of transgressions against the freedom of expression. Affirming the idea that ‘Literature knows no frontiers and must remain common currency among people in spite of political or international upheavals’ and the principle of ‘unhampered transmission of thought within each nation and between all nations’, PEN International identified many cases of literary translators and other people of letters whose freedom of expression has been violated. The full case list can be downloaded [here](#).



Cover of PEN International’s Case List 2018



**Hanneke van der Heijden** is a literary translator and interpreter from Turkish into Dutch, and *writes about literature from Turkey*. She has an MA in Linguistics and Literary Theory, and in Turkish Languages and Literatures. She was the delegate of the Turkish Translators' Association *ÇEVBiR* for CEATL until Summer 2019. Currently she is the second delegate of the Dutch *Auteursbond*.

**Hanneke van der Heijden**  
*Photo: Private Archive*



**Anne Larchet** is a free lance interpreter and translator from Spanish to English. She has a BA in Arabic and Spanish, was a scholarship student at the American University Cairo, Egypt, and has Post Graduate studies in Translation and Law. She is on the Executive Committee of the *ITIA* (Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association) and is Editor of the *ITIA Bulletin e-zine*.

**Anne Larchet**  
*Photo: Martin de Haan*



**Juliane Wammen** is an award-winning literary translator from English and Norwegian into Danish. She has an MA in Comparative Literature and Anthropology, is second delegate for CEATL for the *Danish Translators' Association* and co-editor of *Babelfisken*, a Danish e-zine for literary translation.

**Juliane Wammen**  
*Photo: Tim Flohr Sørensen*

# Colophon

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