

Writing in Another Language

Authors writing outside of their native language is a growing phenomenon. The emerging trend has so far mainly been studied from the point of view of identity, migration, exile or unconventionality: the results of critical analysis however still appear fairly limited, and evidently the topic of the convergence/divergence of the authors' native tongue with the foreign has never been thoroughly investigated.

Of course, current literary criticism does take into account the unavoidable inconsonance and linguistic limitations an author must face in making his/her working choices. But by simply focusing on the manifest and ingenious reflections of authors or critics what the discussion has failed to deal with is the real structural effects produced by the new language. Current analysis has come up short in answering what it means for a writer to handle this different tool and explain the tangible effects of working within a non-native linguistic field. For the essential question after all is: what are the textual effects produced by the author's immersion in a new medium?

We therefore offer researchers interested in taking part in the debate – scholars, writers, editors and/or co-authors – the following options, according to their own experience:

1. Can poetry be written in a language different from one's own native language?
2. Why and to what extent, does moving from one linguistic medium to another change an author's literary production?
3. What of the inexpressible can be defined only through using another language?

In order to properly answer such questions, it is essential the general approach be placed at the intersection of several potential avenues: literary, linguistic, psychological, sociological, cultural approaches and so forth. This implies the sharing of a common principle, i.e. the assumption that one's relationship with a language is neither straightforward nor simple, but truly complex and contradictory.

Effectively the language we speak is always the language of the Other: as children we open ourselves up to the adoptive language that is our mother tongues. Or rather, we were given our native language in the most formative moments of our lives. Its influence therefore runs deep; from our native treasury of signifiers and their syntax to parental prohibitions. This constitutes a nexus of knowledge not true of our second languages.

The sounds and logical connections of our first language were rooted in our memory and bodies as echoes of inaugural experiences first set in motion by a voice. How else could you explain the inherent confliction felt in a writer like Á. Kristóf when she speaks of French as an "enemy language" but refuses to write in any other. Or the choice of S. Beckett, or of J. Lahiri, to adopt a language deprived of any memory in order to unhinge the literary traditions they came from, or even V. Nabokov's statement that "the Russian word for sexual – polovoj – is slightly indecent and not to be bandied around. The same applies to Russian terms rendering various anatomical and biological notions that are frequently and familiarly expressed in English conversation"?

Deadlines:

- 31.12.2019 last day for sending abstracts (max. 450 words, including bibliography if needed)
- 29.02.2020 notification of acceptance or refusal of the proposal
- 31.05.2020 last day to send essays completed according to editorial standards

Proposals are to be sent to: janja.jerkov@gmail.com , sanela.musija@gmail.com and rivistacostellazioni@gmail.com

Editorial rules to be consulted at: <https://www.rivistacostellazioni.org/norme-redazionali>