



FIFTY FIFTY FIFTY
FIFTY YEARS OF
MODERN POETRY
IN TRANSLATION

14th May 2016 | The Queen's College Oxford
Translation Study Day

9.30 – ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION

10.00-11.30 – WORKSHOPS

For the morning session, we have a series of workshops for you to choose from. From 10.00-11.30 you can choose one workshop from A, B, C or D. Then after the break, from 11.50am-13.20 you must choose again from workshops E, F, G or H. Although some workshops will have a particular focus, whilst others will deal with more general questions of translation, all workshops will be suitable for participants who have no knowledge of the focus language. All workshop places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

WORKSHOP A – The Permissions of Translation: How Fake Translations Can Be Real Poems with Patrick McGuinness

Are poetry and translation part of a continuum rather than different exercises? Is the difference between the two really a relative and not an absolute one? In this workshop, participants will be discussing imaginary translations and real poems, and exploring the ways in which people might write poems by thinking of them as imaginary translations. Participants will be invited to invent a fictional character and then write a poem as if they were that person.

WORKSHOP B – Translating from the German with Karen Leeder and Ulrike Almut Sandig

Ulrike Almut Sandig is one of Germany's leading contemporary poets. In this workshop she'll be performing and exploring the translation of some of her recent work with the translator Karen Leeder. They'll be offering some strategies for finding good English equivalents for Ulrike's experimental uses of sound and film as well as leading some hands-on translation exercises.

WORKSHOP C – Translating from the Italian with Jamie McKendrick

In this workshop participants will be discussing some of the key strategies for poetry translation in contemporary practice, looking at a variety of examples, before making their own versions of a selection of Italian poetry by Attilio Bertolucci and Montale. No prior knowledge of Italian is necessary.

WORKSHOP D - Editing MPT No.1 with Sasha Dugdale

What decisions does an editor face when presenting poetry to a readership? What strategies can be used to help guide readers through unfamiliar work? In this workshop, participants will be reading the first issue of *MPT* together, discussing how readers respond to poetry online and in print, and exploring how tagging work with themes can help or hinder the reader. All participants will receive an A3 photocopy of the first issue as a souvenir.

11.30-11.50 – BREAK

11.50-13.20 – WORKSHOPS

WORKSHOP E – Old Norse Poetry Translation Workshop with Carlyne Larrington and Debbie Potts

Want to know what a ‘fire-slinger of the storm of the giantess of the protecting moon of the horse of boathouses’ is? Then this is the workshop for you. In this session you’ll be introduced to the two main forms of Old Norse poetry, their complex alliterative and rhyming patterns, and their extraordinary use of *heiti* (brief metaphors such as ‘feeder of eagles’) and *kenning* (extended metaphor). We’ll be looking at existing translations of individual verses and experimenting with new ones. Battle-poetry, praise-poetry and lament are traditional Norse forms; the creation and destruction of the world, dragon-slaying and devastating loss among its themes.

WORKSHOP F – Translating from the French with Stephen Romer

To the practised translator, poems can seem almost instantaneously translatable, while others are more recalcitrant. Seamus Heaney talked about the ‘tune’ and the ‘tone’ of a poem, whilst Ezra Pound identified what he saw as ‘the Hard and the Soft’ in French poetry. In this workshop, participants will be looking at examples from the Revolutionary poet André Chénier, all the way through to contemporaries like Yves Bonnefoy and Guy Goffette, examining the nitty-gritty of translation, and pinpointing some aspects to look out for when selecting a poem to translate.

WORKSHOP G – Translating from the Hebrew with Adriana Jacobs

The Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai was first introduced to English-language audiences in the very first issue of *MPT*. In this workshop, participants will work on translating Amichai’s poetry into the language of their choice, using a variety of translation strategies and materials. No knowledge of Hebrew is required. English cribs of select poems will be provided.

WORKSHOP H - Translating songs from the Paris Commune with Helen Constantine

How does translating songs differ from translating poems? In this workshop, participants will be looking at the lyrics of two songs of the Paris Commune: ‘Le temps des cerises’ and ‘Quand viendra-t-elle?’ and exploring what they mean in their historical context, as well as examining the different lyrical forms. Following a discussion on how these pieces might work in English you’ll be invited to write your own versions of parts of these songs.

13.20-14.30 – LUNCH

14.30-15.30 – **CENTRES OF CATAclySM**

As part of *MPT*’s 50th anniversary celebrations, Bloodaxe Books in partnership with has published a ground-breaking anthology, *Centres of Cataclysm*, which features the best poems, letters and essays from the magazine’s unparalleled 50 year archive. Some of the acclaimed poets and translators whose work features in the anthology join us to read their work and discuss the ways in which translation affects poetics and helps to transform the English-language poetic landscape. Featuring **David Constantine**, **Karen Leeder**, **Nikola Madzirov**, **Pascale Petit**, and **Ulrike Almut Sandig**. Introduced by **Sasha Dugdale**, Editor of *MPT*.

15.30-15.50 – BREAK

15.50-16.50 – **BRECHT IN MUSIC AND WORDS**

Former *MPT* co-editor and poet David Constantine has pioneered the translation of Bertolt Brecht’s poetry into English and is working, together with Tom Kuhn, Brecht scholar, translator and leader of the Writing Brecht project, on a major new English edition of Brecht’s poems. In this session David and Tom reflect on translating the great poet into many media, together with theatre director Di Trevis who has staged Brecht many times at the National Theatre and has a long history of working with both Brechtian drama and poetry. They are joined by composer Dominic Muldowney who has set many of Brecht’s poems and songs to music.

16.50-17.00 – BREAK

17.00-18.00 – **MPT Issue No.1**

In 1965, Ted Hughes and Danny Weissbort launched *MPT No.1*, a broadsheet-style publication printed on thin airmail paper. It featured English language translations of poems by great Eastern European poets such as Czesław Miłosz, Vasko Popa, Zbigniew Herbert, and Miroslav Holub, as well as work by the Israeli poet Yehudi Amichai. To mark the fiftieth anniversary of this remarkable publication, a brand new microsite dedicated to the first issue has been developed, featuring all of the original content, as well as a series of responses and reflections by outstanding contemporary poets and translators. In this event, we'll be launching and exploring the new site, and considering the legacy and impact of *MPT No.1*. With contributions and reflections from **David Constantine, Ed Cottrell, Karen Leeder, Nikola Madzirov, Ulrike Sandig** and **Pavel Theiner**. Chaired by Sasha Dugdale, Editor of *MPT*.

18.00pm – DRINKS