

# From the editors

---

Visibility for all translators of all genres, and most particularly literary translators, is often a matter of passionate debate, never more so than the present time. Who can translate what? Who decides who can translate what? Is a translator's race, ethnicity, sexuality, colour, religion, nationality, gender, and/or age more important than their translation abilities and professional experience? Less important? And is this even the right way to pose the question, as a choice between the two? Sometimes it is a necessity for the translator to be visible – and sometimes a liability. Where does the point of equilibrium lie? And what does (political) correctness mean when it comes to literary translation? These are some of the many questions that our translator community frequently faces, which are complex and maybe impossible, to answer. But the discussion in itself brings new insights and is always worth delving into.

So, in this issue of *Counterpoint* we look at different experiences and consequences of visibility: Mascha Dabić writes about the difference between being a visible translator and being a visible author, Maya Hess tells the story of how Red T fights to bring attention to the often highly precarious situation of overlooked interpreters and translators in conflict zones, and from Belarus, we hear how the regime is actively disrupting the visibility and spreading of Belarusian literature.

**“Discussion in itself brings new insights”**

By agreement, and in light of recent events, the author's name and any identifying facts have been removed in order not to compromise their

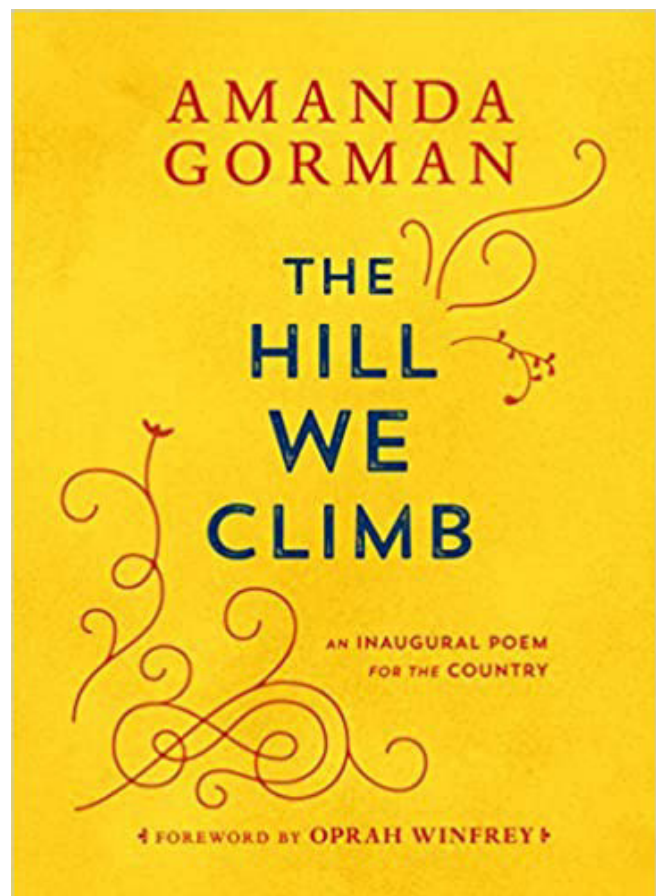
personal safety. Likewise the name of the translator of the article. The publication of this article is a stark real-life reminder of the dangers of translation, including literary translation. Any illusion that translators just convey what's already there and therefore can not be held responsible for the content is clearly dispelled.

## “CEATL has joined forces with FIT”

At the moment, national governments are working on implementing the DSM (Digital Single Market) Directive into national legislation – and much is at stake when it comes to how it will be implemented. If the process goes well, fair remuneration, transparency and better contracts could all be a bit more accessible to translators. CEATL has played an active role in the shaping of the directive and continues to advise on its implementation. At the same time, the European Commission has gathered experts from across the EU to offer input on actually spreading literature from all languages across Europe. In that way, focus is turned towards literary translators at a political level in more ways than one, bringing our work and our place in the literary circuit to attention.

Children's literature, on the other hand, still seems to get unmotherly treatment, including when it comes to translation. In this matter, CEATL has joined forces with the global translators'

organisation FIT and participated in the Bologna Book Fair in June, trying to raise awareness so that this extremely important part of the literary landscape is not mistreated or indeed overlooked. While work goes on in the EU to enhance diversity, spread languages and literature, and while it seems that most nations and regions in Europe are rather proud of their literary heritage and keen to spread the word(s), the case is quite the opposite in Belarus. Here the state's attitude seems to be that spreading translated literature from Belarus is undesirable because using this language is considered a political protest. Even the spelling of the name of the language is a topic of political debate.



In the light of the ongoing debate this spring – regarding the translation of American poet Amanda Gorman's

*The Hill We Climb* – supposedly on “who is allowed to translate whom”, but in reality about questions that are a good deal more complex and therefore rather difficult to answer in two short sentences; in the light of the persistent imprisonment of translators, and of the work of the EU to support the diversity of languages through translation, at least two things are clear: literary translation is (also) political and the visibility of literary translators may be a complex issue.

## “Literary translation is also political”

There are, on the other hand, joys to be found, such as sifting through a 250-year-old dictionary to find just the right word, experiencing your own writing being translated, or feeling the strength of a collegial community when fighting for translators’ rights – in a boat on the river Spree in Berlin. All of this and more is part of this fifth issue of *Counterpoint* which we are both proud and happy to present. As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions at [editors@ceatl.eu](mailto:editors@ceatl.eu)

Hanneke van der Heijden,  
Anne Larchet and Juliane Wammen



**Hanneke van der Heijden** is a literary translator and interpreter from Turkish into Dutch, and writes about *literature from Turkey*.

**Photo: Private Archive**



**Anne Larchet** is a freelance interpreter and translator from Spanish to English.

**Photo: Martin de Haan**



**Juliane Wammen** is an award-winning literary translator from English, Norwegian and Swedish into Danish.

**Photo: Tim Flohr Sørensen**