The title of this anthology, *Currently & Emotion*, brings together two metonyms, the former indicating our current cultural and political moment, the latter its attendant concerns of subjectivity and identity.

The use of ‘emotion’ is also intended to underline the advocacy of a feminist approach to knowledge that promotes emotion, sharing, trust, responsibility, bodies, process and the absence of hierarchy over dominant, culturally masculine traits that include products, rules, universality and impartiality.

‘Currently’ and ‘emotion’ are intimately bound to each other and to translation. I want to explore these relationships here.
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Acknowledgements
It’s exhilarating to be alive in a time of awakening consciousness; it can also be confusing, disorienting, and painful ...

Re-vision — the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction — is for us more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival. Until we can understand the assumptions in which we are drenched we cannot know ourselves.

Adrienne Rich

Introduction

Adrienne Rich’s essay ‘When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision’ was first published in 1972 at the peak of second-wave feminism. The first part of Rich’s title is borrowed from that of Henrik Ibsen’s play, whose script concerns the male artist/thinker’s use of women, both in his work, ‘in the process of creating culture as we know it’, and in the other areas of his life. It is also a play about female consciousness, about ‘a woman’s slow struggling awakening to the use to which her life has been put’, an awakening that Rich, having undergone it herself, vividly describes: ‘The sleep-walkers are coming awake, and for the first time this awakening has a collective reality; it is no longer such a lonely thing to open one’s eyes. ’

Struck by the potential for change in the wake of the development of both men’s and women’s conceptions of the latter’s domestic, artistic and intellectual roles, Rich speculated on the challenges facing female writers, wondering how they might explore and negotiate this new ‘psychic geography’, how they might render it in language. The sense of possibility detected by Rich in the seismic ground of the early 1970s is one that is replicated for many writers working today. Currently, in 2016, we are witnessing rapidly occurring and measurable changes in attitudes towards race, gender, and modes of representation. Within literature, these changes in attitudes are evident in the persistent questioning, by a growing minority, of a culture built on patriarchal beliefs and forms of expression.

One characteristic of this collective change is a turn towards what Gayatri Spivak has termed ‘“to come”-ness’, meaning the prioritising of ‘a definitive future anteriority’ over the dogged preservation of current and past models, given that ‘diagnostic cartography does not keep the door open to the “to come”’. At the forefront of this ‘“to come”-ness’, which embraces non-exhaustive taxonomies, is translation, itself a fraught and contested space. Poet and translator Linh Dinh has said, ‘[the] worst translators are parasites and conmen, the best ones are parasites and pimps.’

Academic and critic Tejaswini Niranjana uses ‘the word translation not just to indicate a [linguistic] process but to name an entire problematic.’ Translation theorists Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere put forward a definition for translation as the study of the manipulation of literature:
Ventrakl
Christian Hawkey/
Georg Trakl

∞ ≠ §
Venktrakl takes as its source text the life and poetry of Austrian Expressionist Georg Trakl (1887–1914). The book is framed (via front matter and other paratext) as a collaboration between Trakl and contemporary poet and translator Christian Hawkey in a manner similar to that of Federico García Lorca’s beyond the grave correspondence with Jack Spicer in After Lorca (1957). Punctuating the dialogue are Hawkey’s translations of Trakl’s texts, as well as photographs from Trakl’s family collection, which are cropped, blown-up and closely read by Hawkey, who writes of Trakl’s work in his preface: ‘I was interested in approaching it and pointing to it ... from as many locations as possible’.

The translation strategies adopted by Hawkey during the making of Venktrakl were unorthodox and bodily, responding both to our contemporary context of production and to Trakl’s biography of trauma and addiction (his death, at thirty-seven, was the result of a cocaine overdose); methods included typing up the German source text in a Word document and using the English spellcheck to ‘correct’ and warp the text into an initial English-language draft; and shooting, ‘with a 12 gauge [shotgun], an open Trakl book from a distance of ten feet’, working afterwards with the remaining perforated text.

Threaded through the book is a nuanced discussion of translation that addresses a range of practical and theoretical concerns, including creative hierarchies and the instability of self as it pertains to authorship, textual encounter and translation as dialogue. This is underpinned by a series of quotes from practitioners including Walter Benjamin, Henri Michaux, George Oppen, Robert Walser, Roland Barthes, Ezra Pound and Stéphane Mallarmé — most of whom were alive during Trakl’s lifetime. I want to say something here about dead white males, and that this is a point being made; throughout Venktrakl Hawkey undercuts the androcentric matrix of the poetic traditions from which Trakl’s work emerged via conscious mimicry (in conversation with theorist Homi Bhabha) and the foregrounding of the figure of Trakl’s youngest sister, the pianist Grete Trakl.

The following is a small selection of work from Venktrakl, including most of the ‘[Colour]trakl’ pieces — centos made up of lines from across Trakl’s body of work that contain mention of the same colour.

‘the dark one’
‘the sick one’
‘the patient one’
‘the one alone’
‘the one sleeping’
‘the one dreaming’
‘the one watching’
‘the one moldering’
‘the one observing this’
‘the one gone’