

## *Editorial*

ONE OF THE curious phenomena of our time is that few people actually listen to much of what is said by others. This may be a result of the constant barrage of sound, human, animal, and instrumental, passed on by electronic means: an over-kill of communication. It may be a result of the television age's development of the individual's desire to make his or her own decisions about everything, with a consequent over-emphasis on the views of minorities.

Apart from this habit of not listening to what others say, there is another equally curious habit to be observed. It may also stem from new kinds of learning, new ways indeed of thinking, which have been brought in by the new, insistent media. This is what might be called the habit of instant apprehension. Try the experiment of conveying some piece of information which you know to be entirely new (preferably in one sentence) to an audience which cannot have been aware of it before, and you will see (perhaps to your chagrin if you are not sufficiently detached to live philosophically in one of the world's zaniest periods of history) your audience nodding assent as if this was a long-accepted fact they had known for many years before you have even finished your sentence. There may even be a refinement of reception practised by some of your audience, who will repeat the last few words of your sentence instantly after you, thus conveying (sometimes with subtle if unintentional offensiveness) a sense of boredom with it all, as they then charge into their own act. Is this a result of the perhaps more rapid, indeed over-rapid assimilation of information which television may have promoted by providing aural and visual information at once?

Among the adverse effects of doing one's own thing these two habits may be listed: of both non-listening and over-rapid apprehension of information. The good effects are welcome because of the individual's development of self-expression, and among them we should list the translator's activity. This work does much to undo the ill effects of non-listening and over-rapid apprehension. The translator looks, listens, and lends his learning;

modestly, skilfully, sensitively. The reader realizes the nature of the operation; his or her apprehension of the artist is aided in two ways: either by a literal translation or a mimetic re-presentation of the original: either way, the reader must consider the nature of the literary transaction, and weigh the words involved with care.

What emerges from translation is an awareness of human issues: the transcending of the national or temporal boundaries of a particular language into a general apprehension of essentials. In these days of increasing cultural nationalism, when economic stringency may narrow local horizons to provincial limits, we need the wider awareness, the consciousness of humanity's general and universal nature as it can be provided in the widening, through good translation, of local, provincial and national writing into something we can all apprehend, assimilate — and appreciate.

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