

say, because his wife is in labour and groaning without reserve; but when he chooses this verb he does not mean to be damning himself as a shirker. The likelihood is rather that he is reproving his wife for not getting the messy business over before tea. In English, however, he is shirking, whatever dictionary translation is chosen.

This may help explain why lady characters are usually more successful than gentlemen in Japanese novels. The moral tone added by translation and unconsciously read into the original by an Occidental can give the ladies a certain cat-like charm. The gentlemen are only feckless.

JAPANESE, we may conclude, offers special difficulties in the application of Lord Woodhouselee's principles. The Japanese have a plaintive way of asking whether foreigners *really* understand their literature. No doubt they have a right to wonder. The "Japan boom," particularly in the United States, has produced fakery in all its myriad forms. From the moment Lowell Thomas

arrives at Haneda Airport, Cinerama cameras unfurled, and is greeted by dancing girls, to the moment Anthony West departs with his brief-case full of bogus reasons for anti-American sentiment, the only valid distinction is between obvious Hollywood fakery and clever New York fakery. (West's *New Yorker* letters are perhaps the cleverest exercises to date in the art of making sage Orientals utter one's own complaints about the 20th century. That art deserves far more extended treatment than it can be given here.)

The question is a fair one, then. But what is one to answer? "I haven't the faintest idea whether foreigners, including me, really understand or not"? Or perhaps: "They say they do, the poor unknowing dears, except Mr. Macdonald"? To suggest that Japanese is, in a way, somewhat untranslatable is to invite a look compounded of pain and relief, the look of one hoping and yet fearing that the key has been found. Let us only say that there are difficulties, and that translation, as Allen Tate said of criticism, is for ever impossible and for ever necessary.

Stephen Spender: To a Japanese friend,
translating my poems from English

My English writing runs behind your eyes
Through your metamorphosing brain
Along your nerves, until it reappears
Out of the finger tip of the ink brush
Upon the page, in characters to me
Unintelligible as snow crystals.

徳永昭三へ

Two friends sit staring, face to face,
And each translates the other into signs
That are the separate language of his seeing.
Midway between their meeting opposites,
Their crossing tongues exchange identities
And where one is the other, both are one.

Conservative Thoughts Out of Season

TRADITIONALLY, the Conservative Party Conference ends with the delegates rising to their feet and singing "Land of Hope and Glory." At the last conference this time-honoured ritual was omitted. Presumably the delegates just did not feel in the mood. It seems to me that this omission is as revealing a symptom of the Conservative Party's current malaise as anxiety about inflation, or resentment against high taxation. For the Conservative Party just cannot afford to have its members not in the mood for singing "Land of Hope and Glory." If it is unable or unwilling to tap the springs of national pride, if it dare not evoke the national memory, it will have cut itself off from the last major asset of which it has lately enjoyed a virtual monopoly. The Conservative Party can never simply depend on the fact that the middle class naturally, out of selfish motives, vote Tory. If, under universal franchise, it is to win office it must appeal to some vested interest potentially present among *all* ranks of citizens. It must touch some chord to which *all* classes are to some extent responsive. At different times, defence of the Anglican Church, of the Crown, of the landed interest, has given the Conservative Party this indispensable national appeal. But during the last hundred years or so, it was the Conservative Party's ability to evoke pride in the national past, and to exploit public satisfaction at being part of a great and imperial power, that have

been the most solidly-based planks in its platform.

Toryism has a unique claim to represent and defend an ordering of society which, whatever its faults, certainly made Britain great. As the only existing viable party associated with Britain's past, it is the only party intimately associated with Britain's glory. The Socialists cannot in logic challenge this claim. The Socialist Party came into existence precisely because it insisted that old England was anything but glorious; and its emotional appeal lay in the injustices of Britain's past, not in its glories. Its task has been to point out what went wrong, not what went right. It is difficult to debunk aristocracy, as the Left does, without debunking the whole pantheon of British national heroes, from the Duke of Marlborough down to the Duke of Wellington and even Sir Winston Churchill; it is difficult to denigrate imperialism without undermining many of the assumptions of superiority which afford Englishmen so much satisfaction.

If the Socialists have been able to rely on appealing to the sense of social justice present in all classes, the Conservatives have been able to rely on appealing to the strain of national pride also present in all classes. Just as the spectacle of Britain's remaining slums, or a glimpse of a cigar-smoking businessman relaxing in the back of a chauffeur-driven Rolls Royce, tend to invoke feelings that instinctively strengthen the Socialist