Of Special Interest

20th Anniversary of EST
EST symposium in Vienna
7th EST Congress in Germersheim

Editorial: 20th Anniversary of EST

Dear EST members,

This May 2012 issue is a very special one. At least, that is what we think, but let us invite you not to take our word for it: do go ahead, read and judge for yourselves.

First of all, you will have noticed that we have a new look. We had already adapted the "old" format somewhat in the May 2011 and November 2011 versions, but were not altogether pleased with the result. Then our President sent us the current format a number of months ago, suggesting we try it out, and we have. A big thank you to Lucja for "taming" this new format and making it suit our purposes.

Now we would like to know what you think:
- Is the new format
  a) Excellent
  b) Acceptable
  c) Dreadful

Thank you for letting us know. We also welcome your feedback on the content of specific sections and suggestions for their improvement. More extensive personal comments are also accepted. Please send them by mail to: aline.remael@artsis.be.

Secondly, the balance of the content has shifted somewhat because this is also a special issue in a different sense. The Newsletter still contains the usual sections with news from the board, from TS generally, a summary of recent postings about summer schools, publications, journals, and a few important reminders of activities to come.

However, the rubric entitled "Hot Topics in Translation Studies", which we introduced in the May 2011 issue, has grown exponentially. We invited former EST presidents and former EST young scholar award grantees to share their views on the future challenges for Translation Studies with us and the response has been extraordinary. In the November 2011 Newsletter we wrote that even TS scholars only have 24 hours in day and no more than 7 days in a week, but judging from the articles that we received, we are beginning to wonder. Maybe some of us have secret powers.

In other words, dear colleagues, you had better be well prepared for the Vienna Symposium in September, "Same Place, Different Times", marking the 20th anniversary of the founding of the European Society for Translation Studies. We are starting the discussion here and now, more specifically on page 6.

We are looking forward to seeing you in Vienna!

Aline & Łucja

Aline Remael, Department of Translators and Interpreters, Artesis University College Schildersstraat 41, 2000 Antwerpen, Belgium; e-mail: aline.remael@artsis.be

Łucja Biel, Department of Translation Studies, Institute of English, University of Gdańsk, ul. Witosa Stwosza 55, 80-952 Gdańsk, Poland; e-mail: angib@ug.edu.pl
2. The former young scholars

Quo vadis: "Historical Turn"?
Cemal Demiricioğlu

The question of what the fundamental topic/topics in Translation Studies are today is undoubtedly a question which invokes subjectivity, and for this reason, various answers are possible. All of those answers will be a personal evaluation, a particular reading of the field. On the other hand, this question bears a potential power which compels us to turn an eye to both the past (retrospective) and the future (prospective) of our field. In this respect, inherent to the question is a kind of call to 'awareness'.

I would like to briefly address the question primarily from the perspective of a scholar of the history of translation. For me, the most fundamental topic in Translation Studies today are those related to what translation looks like, especially in translation traditions outside of Europe. I therefore attribute particular importance to studies in the history of translation. I think that in the near future, the findings of historical research conducted on the cultures of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and other non-Eurocentric cultures will give rise to some revolutionary developments in our theoretical formulations. Small-scale studies in this area in recent years have led to an awareness of translation as a time- and culture-bound phenomenon, and of the need to think about translation outside the parameters of Eurocentric approaches. This situation in turn opens up to question our western oriented perception and definitions of translation as well as the theoretical approaches that hinge upon them, hence the increasingly urgent need to re-read our classics in the realm of theory and to question Eurocentric theoretical approaches. It is within this context that I predict that work in the history of translation is one field of study that will only gain in interdisciplinary importance in Translation Studies of the 21st century.

In discussing the impact of postmodernism upon the history of translation, Paul F. Bandia pointed out the existence of the 'multilingual cultural histories of our common civilization'. Studies in the history of translation contribute to our awareness of the multilingual, multicultural traditions that we possess in the era of the nation-state, or even thereafter. This awareness requires increased research and intercultural dialogue. Especially in an age of multi-national capitalism, with its increasingly globalized and asymmetrical relations, the need for intercultural dialogue becomes increasingly acute. Intercultural dialogue generally foregrounds history and the dialectics of history. Therefore, historical research is bound to occupy a special place in all kinds of dialogues developed by cultures via translation. It is within this framework that I think we are likely to witness a 'historical turn' in Translation Studies. This historical turn at once serves to foster the re-discovery of history in different traditions while also unveiling culturally and temporally bound aspects of the concept of translation; it reminds us of non-centrality, pluralism, diversity, and change. And this undoubtedly points to a process whereby we will be forced to re-evaluate our largely Eurocentric theoretical formulations.

As we all know, ever since James Holmes' manifesto, our field has undergone constant growth; thanks to myriad interdisciplinary influences, it has witnessed many 'turning points' leading in various different directions. In her book 'The Turns of Translation Studies' (2006), Mary Snell-Hornby takes up these turning points in detail and predicts that in the 21st century, Translation Studies will gravitate towards 'translation'. It is within this context that Snell-Hornby emphasizes not conflict but intercultural dialogue. I find her prediction to be particularly meaningful with respect to the framework I am trying to draw here. However, I do not think that the turn to 'translation' that Snell-Hornby speaks of will be possible without first turning towards 'history'.

As we all know, in our discipline in the post-1990s, small-scale but highly significant historical studies drawing upon postmodern and deconstructionist approaches have been conducted in the Asian, African, and Latin American traditions. The International 'Asian Translation Traditions' symposium, the fifth of which is to be held this year, is both an indicator and a result of such approaches. The importance of such small-scale studies lies in how they show us that we need to reconsider translation theory and certain theoretical assumptions within non-Eurocentric and non-Western-centric contexts as well as contexts outside of and transcending the nation-state. In the 21st century, historical studies conducted in a variety of different translation traditions, especially those which are non-Eurocentric, will contribute significantly to helping us realize the cultural and linguistic pluralism and diversity existing in our globalized world.

While discussing the question of why and how we should write the history of translation, Lieven D'Haulet stresses that history is a field conducive to raising awareness within the discipline of Translation Studies and that perhaps it is the sole means that can help us to understand the structure of the discipline itself. I agree with him completely. This emphasis on 'awareness' is also one of the primary points of departure for the arguments of Sergia Adamo who also advocates for the necessity of 'microhistorical' studies. Recalling the dialogue between the present and the past, Adamo suggests researching translation phenomena of the past which have remained marginal, and states that this must inevitably begin with a historical 'awareness'. The emphasis upon 'awareness' that we find in the approaches to history on the part both D'Haulet and Adamo as well as many other scholars can undoubtedly be considered an implication in our field of the deconstructionist approach, which is a form of post-structuralist thought. Being aware, or becoming aware of things opens the doors to new paths, new directions, thus making it possible for us to read phenomena through new lenses.

In a multilingual, multicultural world, shifting the focus to traditions which remain peripheral vis-à-vis Eurocentricism, and to the historical translational phenomena occurring in such traditions will most certainly open new windows in theoretical perspectives, which inevitably draw upon historical data. The emphasis of small-scale historical studies conducted in non-Eurocentric cultures in recent years upon the problematic aspects of Eurocentric theoretical perspectives seems to me nothing less than a harbinger of the aforementioned 'historical turn'. These are harbingers which not only give rise to 'awareness' but also such awareness by means of the findings of historical research. And indeed, we cannot, and should not, think of the tradition of Translation Studies and its basic topics independent of 'history'.