



NOTIS NEWS

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Tapping Into the Olympic Spirit: The Pillars of Translation

by Jost Zetzsche

(This article will also appear in the "Translatum Journal")

At other times we might talk about the "foundation" or the "basics" of translation, but during this year of the Greek Olympics it seems more fitting to imagine underlying structures in the shape of beautifully shaped pillars.

When we speak of translation, what are the pillars that we need to rely on, that we could not be without as translators?

Profound knowledge of the grammatical rules that govern the source and target language(s) is essential; hardly anyone (except some radical translation theorists) would dispute this. These are the analytical tools that we need to correctly disassemble a text in one language and reassemble it from scratch in another language. In fact, I sometimes wish that my main working languages—English and German—were not so (relatively) similar to each other. Perhaps then it would

force my mind not to skip the complete process of disassembly and reassembly.

Lexical knowledge of source and target language and the complicated relationships between the two lexicons is another pillar that we can't do without. Even less than in the grammatical/syntactical world, we all know that there is no one-to-one

relationship between source and target term and/or phrase. In my well-worn example, "cat" in English not only means a feline mammal but can also be a short form for Caterpillar machinery, a slang term for

prostitutes, and (to let the proverbial cat out of the bag) a computer-assisted translation tool. (I'm still waiting for a participant in one of my workshops to jump up and tell me that an identical term is indeed used for all these lexical fields in his language!)

The primary area that makes us as translators superior to a mechanized transfer of rules and words is the living knowledge of language that we all possess.

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**Northwest Translators and Interpreters
Society**

A chapter of the
American Translators Association

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NOTIS NEWS is published in February, May, August, and November. Letters to the Editor, short articles of interest, and information for the calendar and other sections are invited. Please send submissions to Editor sarah.garriott@aolti.com. Submissions become the property of *NOTIS NEWS* and are subject to editing unless otherwise agreed in advance. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Editor, the Society, or its Board.

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NOTIS Notes

Welcome to New Members

Individual

Jay Adams-Feuer	Spanish > English French > English
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Danielle Allen	English > Portuguese
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Yuliy Masinovsky	English <> French English <> Russian
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Helene Olsen Richards	Norwegian <> English Swedish > English Danish > English Danish > Norwegian
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Andres Zavala	English <> Spanish
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Rejoins

Maxine Loo	Cantonese > English Mandarin > English
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Address to NOTIS Members

*Larissa Kulinich, NOTIS President; Marilyse Benyakar, NOTIS Vice President;
Ann G. Macfarlane, Past ATA President, Past NOTIS President*

Dear NOTIS members!

We want to invite you to dialog about NOTIS and to identify the challenges we face as a volunteer organization, and ways of dealing with them.

Probably one of the most obvious challenges many voluntary organizations confront is that they are finding it a little hard going in today's world. While the Internet benefits a translator's job, it also tends to draw people to their computer for diversion. Many individuals find themselves working harder than ever just to survive economically with less leisure time available. And easy access to the Internet and videos may tend to keep people at home for recreation, rather than inclining them towards a gathering with their colleagues. Do you see evidence that any of these trends is affecting NOTIS? Perhaps you may see their manifestation even in your own home.

Associations bring balance to our life, getting us away from technology, bringing us closer to each other through networking, socializing and making friends. Meeting someone in person is not replaceable by online communication. E-mail and IM are very practical because they enable us to access our clients and colleagues without leaving our office, but becoming personally acquainted with these people makes a big difference in our profession! Marilyse shares her personal experience to that effect: "I worked with a subcontractor from Paris for a few years, knowing her only from our online communication. During one of my trips to France, I arranged to meet with her. We had dinner and walked around Paris for the 'fête de la musique'. It was a fun evening. When we work together on a project now, it is so much nicer since I know her in person."

NOTIS can help put more of that human element into our professional life.

The Board of Directors is working on making NOTIS a more vibrant, viable association of professionals serving its members in a fulfilling way. Any organization is only as strong as its membership. We can accomplish a lot together, which implies drawing in new members among other things. The Board of Directors has been taking a number of steps towards this goal. One of them is the Membership Drive, which is being implemented by a com-

mittee of nine people headed by Christina Zubelli, NOTIS Office Manager and Membership Coordinator. The committee includes Maiyim Baron, George A. Fowler, Iris Heerhold, Yuki Hiramitsu, Franzisca Willnow, Kwang Chough, John Falconer, Jonas Nicotra, and Christina Zubelli. The hard work of these dedicated members is highly appreciated. For more details, please read an article by Christina Zubelli in this issue. You can contact Christina at: tripura@earthlink.net

Another undertaking is the Membership Satisfaction Survey that was put together and conducted by a committee of five members: Christina Zubelli, George Fowler, Franzisca Willnow, Maiyim Baron, John Falconer, headed by Director George Fowler. Thanks go to all these people. And we would also like to thank the NOTIS members who participated in the Survey. Your responses provide an invaluable input, which helps form future NOTIS policies, identify a direction for the board, and devise various activities for our members. Currently the Board of Directors is analyzing the responses, focusing on the members' needs and interests reflected in the survey, taking specific actions to meet them.

One thing is already obvious; the membership expects more programs, particularly seminars and workshops, which offer continuing education credits. Directors Michelle Privat Obermeyer (mpober@microsoft.com) and Deya Jorda Nolan (Deya24@covad.net) who are Program Committee Co-chairs, are trying to bring in more volunteers to help them organize events. They are working on setting up a meeting in September or October to increase the members of the Program Committee. Please, get involved and contact Michelle and Deya to offer support, help, and ideas.

The membership will be provided with NOTIS Board updates on a regular basis. We would like to maintain a productive, ongoing dialog.

In conclusion it would be appropriate to offer the following quote: "No man can have society upon his own terms. If he seeks, he must serve it too." (Emerson, *Journals*, 1833)

⊙⊙⊙ *Continued from page 1*

These two pillars are essential to our profession. However, like the dreaded machine translation—which to date has rested mostly on these two alone—things would be fairly shaky if those were our only two pillars.

The primary area that makes us as translators superior to a mechanized transfer of rules and words is the living knowledge of language that we all possess. Many would argue that native language expertise is a prerequisite for the target language (this isn't my topic, so I'll avoid delving deeper into that can of worms). Certainly we can all agree that you should not only have book knowledge of a source language, but also a previous or present exposure that enables you to understand the language's nuances—subtleties like sarcasm, hidden meanings, or alliterations in the texts that are to be disassembled.

Imagine a meeting of translators with someone proclaiming that he does not possess any of the pillars mentioned above in his chosen field of translation. I would venture to guess that the assembled translators would either see him as a fraud or would gently take him aside to strongly advise a change of profession.

Are those the three main pillars that make us who we are professionally? I can think of a variety of other supporting pillars, such as marketing, client education, and the ability to work on a team. But I would argue that these fall in the category of quantifiers (as opposed to qualifiers): they can make us *more* successful, and yet without them we can still be successful translators (albeit on our own and without any clients . . .).

However, just as one of those beautiful Greek structures would have a hard time standing on three main pillars, the same is true of us as translators. The fourth pillar (and I'm sure you saw this coming) is how we actually perform the translation.

Twenty years ago, a typewriter, paper, a reliable postal service (I have no idea how American translators survived back then!), printed reference material, and a good memory were sufficient equipment for performing a translation. Today, these have morphed into their electronic equivalents: the computer keyboard and screen, email, computer-based reference materials, and computer-assisted translation tools.

Let's assume for a moment that this is indeed the fourth pillar of our "translation structure." If I came to the next local translators' Christmas party and shared that I am "terrible" with my computer, can you imagine somebody taking me aside and telling me to change my job? I think that it's far more likely for the opposite to happen: immediately a group of fellow translators would surround me, more than willing to share that they are equally handicapped and with a plethora of ready anecdotes to illustrate it.

Of course, the reason for the Christmas party scenario is that we as a profession do not accept the fact that mastery of the technology we use to produce the "fruits of our labor" is one of the cornerstones (sorry, pillars) of our professional lives.

And for those who would argue that you can easily perform translation with three of the four pillars: you're right, that's exactly what machine translation does (it just skips the third pillar rather than the fourth). But does it produce translation? Sure! Just go to <http://world.altavista.com>, and have the machine translation engine translate something for you (using three of the four pillars). Don't like it? I don't either.

Jost is an ATA-certified English-to-German translator and translation consultant. A native of Hamburg, Germany, Jost earned a Ph.D. in the field of Chinese translation history and linguistics in 1996. He began working in localization and technical translation in 1997, and in



1999 co-founded International Writers' Group on the Oregon coast. In 2003 he published a computer guide for translators, and this year he launched a free computer-related newsletter for translators (see <http://www.internationalwriters.com/toolkit>)-

Translation & Interpretation Institute Bellevue Community College

**Course Schedule
Fall Quarter, 2004**

Free Information Sessions

F9381 Tuesday, September 7, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., BCC North Campus, Room W266

F9321 Tuesday, October 19, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. BCC North Campus Room W266

F9323 Tuesday, December 7, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. BCC North Campus Room W266

Workshops, Fall Quarter 2004

Windows and Utilities for Translators

F9373 Saturday, September 25, 1:00-5:00 p.m., BCC North Campus Room W202

Instructor: Jost Zetzsche. Fee: \$49.

Microsoft Office for Translators

F9360 Saturday, November 13, 1:00-5:00 p.m., BCC North Campus Room W107

Instructor: Roger Chriss. Fee: \$49.

T&I Certificate Courses, Fall Quarter (Sep 27-Dec 15)

Introduction to Translation and Interpreting (INTRP 101)

Ten Wednesdays 6-9 p.m., Instructor: Martha Cohen and Michelle LeSourd

This course provides an overview of the translation and interpretation fields and defines the skills necessary to work successfully in either profession.

Fundamentals of Interpreting (INTRP 102)

Ten Tuesdays 6-9 p.m., Instructor: Karine Avaginova

We invite you to celebrate
International Translators and Interpreters Day with

Harry Obst
Special presentation
Diplomatic Interpreting

Harry Obst came to the United States from Germany as an immigrant after completing a translator program at the University of Mainz. After several years in private industry, he joined the Department of State in Washington D.C. as a diplomatic interpreter. He interpreted for seven American presidents, as well as provided escort interpreting and consecutive and simultaneous interpretation for economic summits. He was director of the State Department's Office of Language Services.

Throughout his career, he has emphasized the need for the United States to improve the quality of foreign language instruction and of training programs for interpreters and translators.

Portland: Friday, September 17th from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. with hors d'oeuvres

Portland Community College, Central Portland Workforce Training Center

For directions, please visit: <http://www.pcc.edu/location/>, click on "Central Portland: CPWTC"

Seattle: Saturday, September 18th from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. with lunch

Diplomatic Interpreting and Consecutive Interpretation, Seattle Asian Art Museum

For directions, please visit: <http://www.seattleartmuseum.org/visit/visitSAAM.asp#>

Free museum access before and after workshop for program attendees

Application for **continuing education credits** is in progress for
Washington State Court Interpreters - Oregon Court Interpreters - American Translators Association
3 CE for Seattle 1.5 CE for Portland

Registration

Portland

- ❖ **\$20.00** - Earlybird special for attendees if registration is postmarked or received via PayPal by 9/8.
- ❖ **\$30.00** - Onsite registration if space available.

Seattle

- ❖ **\$25.00** - Earlybird special for members and their guests if registration is postmarked or received via PayPal by 9/8.
- ❖ **\$35.00** - Non-members rate via PayPal or check.
- ❖ **\$35.00** - Onsite registration if space available.

Refunds: We regret that no refunds can be given after September 8, 2004.

Detach and mail in the form at the bottom of page 7 or register online at www.notisnet.org using PayPal.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

By Christina Zubelli

Taking advantage of the energy being galvanized by the 2005 ATA Conference in Seattle, NOTIS is conducting a Membership Drive. With this, not only will NOTIS be able to increase its membership, but it will also provide an opportunity for many translators and interpreters to benefit from participating in a professional Translation & Interpretation (T & I) organization. It has been noted that a number of currently active interpreters and translators are not aware of NOTIS or of its programs.

The Drive consists of three phases: a Membership Satisfaction Survey, under the coordination of George A. Fowler; the identification of potential members, under the coordination of Christina Zubelli; and an invitation letter to join NOTIS, with the help of President Larissa Kulinich. The first phase has been completed and we hope that the

great ideas that have been received will contribute to more programs that will help both the new and the experienced T&I professionals. The second phase concluded with an extensive compilation of a list of universities and colleges that have foreign language departments, as well as ethnic associations, T & I companies, and other language-related institutions throughout the five states that constitute the NOTIS membership region (Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington). Thanks to Maiyim Baron, George A. Fowler, Iris Heerhold, Yuki Hiramitsu, and Franziska Willnow we now have the basis for the third and final part of the drive.

When the Membership Drive is finished we hope that the ongoing work of NOTIS will encourage many more people to join our society.

Send this form w/check to: International Translation Day, P.O. Box 25301, Seattle, WA 98165-2201

(Make check payable to NOTIS/International Translation Day)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Seattle Portland

Check all that apply: member of: WITS NOTIS SOMI ALO OIA CIAO
PCC Guest Other:

Event sponsors: Washington State Court Interpreters and Translators Society (WITS), Society of Medical Interpreters (SOMI), Northwest Translators & Interpreters Society (NOTIS), Associated Linguists of Oregon (ALO), Oregon Interpreters Association (OIA), Oregon Judicial Department, Court Interpreter Program (OJD), Court Interpreters Association of Oregon (CIAO), and Portland Community College - Healthcare Interpreter Program (PCC).

Calendar

Date	Event	Details	Time & Place
September 17, 2004 4:00 - 5:30 p.m.	International Translators & Interpreter's Day with Harry Obst	Register on-line and find directions at: www.notisnet.org	Portland Community College Central Portland Workforce Training Center, Portland, Oregon
September 18, 2004 11:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.	International Translators & Interpreter's Day with Harry Obst	Register on-line and find directions at: www.notisnet.org	Asian Art Museum, Seattle, Washington
October 19, 2004	NOTIS Board Meeting	+1(206) 382-5642	
October 13-16, 2004	ATA Conference	www.atanet.org	Toronto, Canada Sheraton Centre Hotel
November 6, 2004	Annual NOTIS Meeting & ATA Recap	www.notisnet.org	
December 4, 2004	NOTIS/ WITS Joint Holiday Potluck		UW Waterfront Activities Center, Seattle

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