

Editorial

This edition of our Newsletter opens on a note of sadness. Our much-esteemed colleague Giuliana Lipizer died earlier in the year. She had for more than two decades been the pillar of our German interpreting department. Many of us were either fellow-students of hers or acquired our first notions of consecutive interpretation from her example and benefitted from her German lessons at the Goethe Institut in Trieste. She was a perfect example of that generation of interpreters able to transform the natural advantages of a bi-lingual background into a professional skill. Born in Fiume, now Rijeka, she grew up in a mixed German- and Italian-speaking environment and, though she also studied English for her interpreting diploma, she preferred to concentrate on what she felt she did best placing her professional skills above all at the disposal of the organisation Alpe-Adria which, long before the fall of the Berlin Wall, had demonstrated that relations between regions belonging to states professing different political philosophies were not only possible but also desirable and, indeed, agreeable. She would wish to be remembered for everything she did, within Alpe-Adria and outside, to dismantle the barriers of incomprehension here where Europe's three great language families meet. She would have rejected the definition of her own role as a liaison between the Germanic, Latin and Slav worlds and, indeed, the trite, though current, description of Trieste as the meeting place or crossroads of these three worlds, because she quite simply never believed in the separateness of the "worlds" in question. She will also be remembered by her University colleagues for the extraordinary clarity with which her teaching was imparted, for her studies in the language of economics, and for her fierce loyalty to her own convictions and those who shared them. Generations of students will be grateful for her commitment during and after their degree courses.

In dedicating this issue to Giuliana, the Editors feel that two of the articles would have particularly pleased her. She would have wished to become involved in the debate which the Editors propose to open with our colleague from Vienna and anyone else who wishes to contribute to the question of theory versus practice to which our next Newsletter could profitably be devoted. She

would also have welcomed the contribution of our Turkish friend as part of Trieste's very particular range of historical, geographical and linguistic responsibilities. The unacceptable consequences of ignoring the non-Christian world are, alas, daily before our eyes. May the translating "school" of Toledo serve as a model where cultures explain themselves, absorb and reflect each other. It was not a school producing precepts or theory but a workshop manufacturing products after study and experience of manufacturing technique.

This is our reply to the reproach, couched in the most courteous terms, coming from Vienna that the research carried out by our young graduates on a wide range of disparate subjects is not underpinned by any interpreting theory. We feel analysis of production (manufacturing) technique and collection of a wide range of data must precede the processing of same and transformation of the results into principles claiming general validity. We wish to retain our eclectic approach and analyze the results rather than produce or apply "theory of interpreting". Some of us feel the need to draw upon the field of linguistics with the wealth of theoretical and practical support it provides in the solution of problems raised by the transformation of an idea into a different syntactic and semantic structure. Others concentrate upon the collection and processing of experimented data, but all of us reject the idea of being strait-jacketed by one single intellectual or methodological approach.

We would not wish a product of the Trieste School to be identified with any of the previously existing schools of thought from the Pentecostal school onwards (those who believe that the gift of tongues was conferred by the Holy Spirit upon some happy few, comforted by the vast majority who feel - the sensation cannot be the result of thought - that interpreters are "lucky" because they know foreign languages). We realise, rather, that interpreting skills are the result of long, painstaking and effortful processes to acquire practical experience of the realities of communication. We welcome the contributions of other disciplines - the research carried out on cerebral hemispheres would have been impossible without collaboration from the Faculty of Medicine. We remain, however, suspicious of the omni-comprehensive theory fearing that constant application of same could lead to stifling aridity comparable to the heavy hand of a dictatorial head of department.

There may come a time when we feel justified in drawing more general conclusions from the results

of our observations. For some time to come though we shall continue to be seeking specific answers to specific problems and putting the proposals we come up with to the test. How can I correct myself elegantly and imperceptibly when what I con-

fidently assumed was a "ne pas" in my French source-text turned out to be a "ne que" and how often and under what circumstances will my newly-found solution not work? We may even illustrate the results of our enquiries in cartoon form!