

## Watching out for bunny-rabbits

We have seen in the three main papers presented in this volume three different aspects of translatorial expertise. Each highlights the supposedly well-known contours of translation in a different colour, creating each time a different focus of interest and a different view of the translation landscape.

Benjamin Schmid has shown that if we take the notion of translation as cultural transfer seriously, so-called intralingual translation is just as much part of “translation proper” as any other form of translation. To deny this would be tantamount to denying that translation was fundamentally a process of bringing together different discourses and enabling mutual understanding across cultural (i.e. discursive) boundaries. This in turn would mean a de facto rejection of fundamental disciplinary insights and selective adherence to the concept of translation as mere surface-level decoding.

In her analysis of the market value of three key components of translatorial competence Bettina Höller has not only brought about a long overdue revision of what constitutes “translationally relevant” professional work, but has also identified the need for a fundamental change of perspective in the assessment and presentation of translation skills. It is only by being aware of how intrinsically interwoven the skills that constitute translatorial expertise actually are that we can begin to unravel them and at the same time learn to see the enormous practical potential of this know-how. This in turn creates a realistic, pragmatic context for broadening and deepening the theoretical definition of the translation process to incorporate an increasingly fine-grained yet homogenous explanation of what translation is and

can be.

Similarly, Aurelia Batlogg's definition of scientific communication as a process of translation opens up new channels of practical application and theoretical integration both in the study of inter- and trans-disciplinary communication and in Translation Studies itself. By using the conceptual instruments of translating as a form of communication, scientists can acquire a valuable practical tool for communicating the results of their research. (This of course also applies to Translation Studies scholars). At the same time, by incorporating scientific communication into the translation paradigm, Translation Studies broadens its scope without the risk of diluting its object of study into a nondescript hodgepodge of shapeless concepts. On the contrary, the identification of the mechanisms of translation in hitherto unseen (and unclaimed) areas of communication sharpens our picture of what translation is: the more instances and illustrations we have of a phenomenon, the clearer becomes the idea we have of it. This is just as true of the process of translation as of any other phenomena in the world.

What all the three contributions by these young scholars have in common is not only that they articulate a new or hitherto neglected perspective on translation as practice, but that in so doing they also shed light on what is needed to facilitate that change of perspective which is so crucial for the theoretical development of a discipline and is at the same time the sine qua non of successful translation or transcultural communication.

So what do we need to do in order to be able to find, instead of the duck that we're used to seeing, the bunny-rabbit that somebody

else has seen – or perhaps even an elephant or flamingo that nobody else has discovered but has been there all along?

The seven steps for bunny-rabbit watching are:

Remaining open to the possibility that not everyone in the world sees it as a duck.

Admitting that our duck could also be seen as a rabbit.

Actually starting to look for the bunny-rabbit.

Acquiring enough knowledge or information about other people's bunny-rabbits (what they look like, what features they have, where they could be...) to be able to re-interpret the features of our duck in the rabbit mould.

Admitting the validity of the rabbit and its equal claim for recognition as our duck.

Explaining to others why/how others see rabbits where we see ducks (or vice versa)...

... which means explaining their rabbit by means of the features of our duck (or vice versa).

Taken individually, each step appears very simple. Taken collectively, they constitute the essence of translatorial expertise – and are also reflected in the core skills of cultural competence, research competence and text competence.

This also illustrates once again that it is not necessary to leave our perspective (to stop seeing our duck) to see the interpretation of oth-

ers. In fact, it is only by remaining within our own picture that we can begin to see where the “other” one starts. We simply need to accept that there are different vantage points, to learn what can be seen from them and to understand our perception of the duck (world) in terms of somebody else’s.

Conclusion: we can all learn to see bunny-rabbits without giving up our own ducks. Learning how to do this requires time and the willingness to do so. But it can be done. It can also be analysed and taught.

Learning to grow into a given culture is part of every human being’s nature. We are however not restricted to just one culture, to just one worldview, to either bunny-rabbit or duck. As has become obvious to us all in the course of our lives, we can all see both (if we want to). This is what translating is, why it is possible and why it is so fundamental a part of successful communication.