



THE GOTHAM TRANSLATOR



A WORD FROM THE EDITOR ABOUT WORDS

by Rosene Zaros

In the beginning was the word...

(John 1:1)

Every word has three explanations and three interpretations. (Proverb)

To talk without thinking is to shoot without aiming. (Proverb)

The palest ink is better than the best memory. (Proverb)

Sticks and stones

May break my bones

But words can never hurt me. (Proverb)

The word which you keep between your lips is your slave, the word spoken out of season is your master. (Proverb)

There certainly is no dearth of proverbs about the power of the word. The very fact that the more common word for “proverb” is “saying” supports the existence of these maxims as “a truth expressed in figurative language,” and few would deny that, indeed, “the pen is mightier than the sword.” If this were not so, we would not see such an effort on the part of those in power to deny access to information and to stifle dissenting voices. We have to keep in mind that language is what separates us from the beasts of the fields and that we human beings are the only ones who use language to influence others of our kind. Words do, indeed, have the power to shape meaning and to shape thought.

There are those who would like to banish forever certain words from the English language. Contrary to what many would like to believe, language is not transparent. It can be used both to alter and to obfuscate meaning.

We, as translators, are aware that words have meanings, but it doesn’t end there. It goes beyond looking up a word in a dictionary. Language is slippery. Words may be spoken or written but, if they are to have any meaning at all, they must be seen as existing in a context. For example, how could we translate (or define) the English word “lead” if we had no context? Is it a noun? A verb? An adjective? The problems change when we have a context: I followed his lead; the lead horse went astray; he will lead your group; that paint contains lead; a collection of antique leaded glass windows. Now, we have a context. We can proceed to define or translate.

Perhaps it would be better to think of language in terms of meanings that have words—we are now involved in the eternal search for *le mot juste*. It can be a long and arduous search with many pitfalls. We have to be very sensitive to changes in the connotations of words. A word may have acquired a meaning that will forever alter its original meaning. For example, using the word gay to signify *happy, lighthearted, etc.* would no

longer convey that meaning because the word gay has acquired, while almost entirely obliterating all former meanings, the meaning of *homosexual*. Words that at one time were innocuous can no longer be used with impunity. Even words that would be acceptable in one context become taboo in another. Suffice it to reflect on Joe Biden’s use of the words “articulate” and “clean” in describing Barack Obama.

In the United States, we have become a society obsessed by language – and a great deal of that obsession involves the use of English. Words and the motivations behind the use of particular words are under constant scrutiny by the media.

(continued on page 3)

INSIDE

- 4 My Personal Journey
- 5 A Letter From Bernie Bierman
- 6 ATA Crusade For Quality
- 8 Networking in NYC
- 10 Legal Translation and Interpreting Seminar
- 12 Circle News
- 13 Spanish Round Table
- 14 Members’ Voice
- 15 Telephone Interpreting Book

NEW YORK CIRCLE OF TRANSLATORS

(212) 334-3060



2007 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Suzana D. Martinez, President
Work/Cell: (732)768-3948
president@nyctranslators.org

Lucien Morin, President-Elect
president-elect@nyctranslators.org

Gloria Barragán, Secretary
Work: (516) 977-9019
secretary@nyctranslators.org

Deborah Lockhart, Treasurer
deborah.lockhart@thelanguageshop.org

Lana Rachkovskaya, Program Director
H: (212) 988-9116 / Cell: (646) 752-1741
programdirector@nyctranslators.org

COMMITTEES

Continuing Education: Jordan Fox



THE GOTHAM TRANSLATOR

EDITOR

Rosene Zaros
editor@nyctranslators.org

EDITORIAL BOARD

Trudy Balch,
Ellen Sowchek,
and Betty Welker

DESIGN AND LAYOUT

Bahl Graphics
kbahlmann@austin.rr.com

PRINTING

Mail Boxes, Etc. South Orange NJ
mailboxso@verizon.net

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION

Please submit all contributions as e-mail attachments in Microsoft Word format. Articles should be limited to 1500 words or less.

The Gotham Translator is published six times a year by the New York Circle of Translators, Inc., a chapter of the American Translators Association. The deadline for acceptance of contributions is the first day of the month preceding the month of publication. Articles and other materials should be e-mailed to the Editor at editor@nyctranslators.org. The opinions and views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or the policies of the NYCT or the ATA. All material submitted is subject to editing and becomes the property of the New York Circle of Translators unless accompanied by a copyright statement.

© 2007 by the New York Circle of Translators. All rights reserved. Nothing contained in this issue may be reprinted without explicit prior permission of the editor or, in the case of copyrighted material, the copyright holder.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Gotham Translator accepts and welcomes contributions of articles about all aspects of translation and translator-related issues. These may include, but are not limited to, specific translation problems or approaches to translation, legal issues, and the business of translation. We also welcome dictionary and hardware/software reviews as well as reviews of books, conferences and workshops. The "Members' Voice" section of each issue is devoted to translations, stories, and poetry written by members.

In general, articles and other submissions should be limited to around 1500 words. All text should be submitted as e-mail attachments in Microsoft Word format. We prefer unpublished contributions. In the case of previously published submissions, please advise us of this fact at the time of submission. ■

Do you know someone who'd like to advertise in THE GOTHAM TRANSLATOR?

Please e-mail your text or artwork to the Editor at editor@nyctranslators.org no later than 30 days prior to the publication date. Please indicate the ad size desired. If your artwork is in soft copy (business card or other) please mail to the editor at the address below together with your payment.

Ad Rates (single insertion)

Full page (7.5" x 10")	\$150
One-half page (7.5" x 4.75").....	\$80
One-fourth page (3.5" x 4.75")	\$40
One-eighth page (3.5" x 2.25").....	\$20

Note: All prices are for black-and-white camera-ready copy.

Payment: As soon as you and the Editor have agreed to the ad size and publication date, you will be sent an invoice via email. **We must receive payment in advance before we can publish an ad.** Please allow enough time for checks to be received prior to the publication date. Please mail your check payable to the New York Circle of Translators for your ad placement to:

The New York Circle of Translators
P.O. Box 4051
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163-4051

(continued from page 1)

This greater introspection about word usage has resulted in greater sensitivity to the power of the word. “Sticks and stones may break my bones but...” words may, in reality have the power to destroy my self esteem and to diminish me.

Problems with the *mot juste* for translators are two-fold. When we are translating or interpreting, how do we deal with words that may be considered taboo or, at the very least, circumspect in the target language? While there may be a temptation to “soften” language, to make it more palatable and less offensive to general audiences (and oftentimes these discourses involve words that the translator/interpreter would never use), there is an overriding obligation to be true to the source, albeit spoken or written. We are committed to maintaining the register of the discourse. It’s a balancing act that requires an in-depth knowledge of two cultures and how words are used in those cultures.

For example, there was a time when it was acceptable to use the word “handicapped” to describe “people with disabilities,” but that is no longer the case. Various organizations have made an effort to educate the public, and the Illinois Attorney General even has a style manual for depicting people with disabilities: www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/rights/manualstyle.html. People with disabilities claim it is a slur, based on one derivation of the word which claims that the word “handicapped” comes from “cap in hand,” to describe “handicapped people” begging with their caps in their hands. Another source claims that it comes from “hand-in-cap,” a betting game (Wikipedia) where players placed their bets in a cap. It later came to be used to describe the “handicaps” or “burdens” used in scoring many games and competitive sports such as golf and horseracing. From there it evolved into a term used to describe the “burdens” inflicted on people through no fault of their own.

We may never know the true derivation of the word, nor does it matter. This is a

case where the perception has become the reality. People are offended and that offense has been used to change acceptable speech. Another issue involving language centers on the N Word. As can be seen in a BBC online article written in early March of 2007 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/6406625.stm>, the media in Europe do not feel the same constraints about using the word. Although it has long been considered a racial slur, in the wake of Michael Richards’ tirade, outrage against the use of the word has reached new heights in the United States. In early March, the City Council of New York voted to ban the use of the word. It was, in large part, a symbolic ban, to be sure, accompanied by a great deal of speculation about possible ramifications if it were to have the weight of law. For however great the outrage may be, are we ready to burn all the books where the word appears? The discussion is ongoing and the Journalist Jabari Assim expresses some ideas on the subject in his book *The N Word: Who Can Say It, Who Shouldn't and Why*.

Equally problematic is the use of figurative language that is used to capture the essence of an issue. It presents difficulties for the translator in that a literal translation will almost never work and oftentimes there is no equivalent in the target language. In this case, the translator must determine the meaning and then find the words in the target language.

We are linguists. Language is our business, our stock in trade, but we are human beings as well as translators. We use language in our own right and we must use it responsibly. We must make every effort to keep abreast of changes in usage by keeping abreast of what is going on in the world – and, knowing the power of language, we must make every effort to assure that our leaders use it responsibly. In my opinion, the greatest danger to democracy is an uninformed or misinformed citizenry..

I have long been a fan of Dario Fo, the Italian satirist, playwright, theater director, and composer, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1997. Written in

1970, the subtext of Fo’s comedy, *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* deals with the art and rationality of official lying. Washington audiences during the last months of the Nixon administration would have found it hilarious. Contemporary audiences would see even greater parallels with the current administration, for Fo is contemplating something much more sinister than Watergate. He is thinking of sanctioned criminality – the kind that is capable of killing and torturing – accompanied by an endless manipulation of records. One has the sense of inhabiting a surrealist painting where facts are like shapes that dissolve and mutate into new shapes, as we see in the metamorphoses of M.C. Escher. And we become painfully aware that an environment lacking in certain psychological and moral restraints will result in an irrevocable loss of the truth. In other words, we have history as Napoleon described it: *...a set of lies agreed upon*.

The greatest defense against the loss of historical facts is contained in one of the proverbs cited at the beginning of this article: *The palest ink is better than the best memory*. History should be captured in writing by those who live it, for even the best memory is mortal. It is our duty to be critical. To be critical of a policy is not to be against the maker of the policy but rather to bring greater awareness of problems, unwanted side-effects, etc. Frequently, this requires a high degree of what the Germans call *zivilcourage*, the courage to stand up for one’s beliefs. Marguerite Shore has written an article in which she describes her years as a translator, her experiences with professional organizations, and her concerns for the future. Bernie Bierman has written a letter to friends and colleagues, sharing his first-hand knowledge of ATA matters and exposing some little-known facts. Both display just this type of *zivilcourage* which is so sorely needed right now. They are printed in this issue. ■

MY PERSONAL JOURNEY

by Marguerite Shore

As with most freelancers, my life and work are closely intertwined. My point of departure was an involvement in, indeed a passion for the visual arts. There were brief forays into other fields, but that sort of work left me feeling numb and resigned, as if I were “just doing a job.” Translation clients and often the subjects of my translations have become friends, contributing to a rich fabric of life – variegated but holding together as a unified piece. With the exception of a handful of contacts, all my work has come through the art world that is my larger home.

Personal recommendations, word of mouth, have been my lifeline. In the early 1990s a parent in my son’s schoolyard told me about something called the New York Circle of Translators. I had never even thought about being part of a “profession,” only part of a world. As I raised my young children, translating was a way of staying in touch with art, spreading the word, literally, about something I thought mattered, and helping to support my family. Curious that there was, indeed, a profession, I began going to NYCT meetings. I learned about something called the ATA, joined, and decided to go to a conference. Shortly thereafter I took and passed an accreditation exam and was invited to become an Italian>English grader. Meanwhile, I stayed active in the NYCT, serving as Program Director and President for one term each. I met some terrific people and discovered a shared love of language that went beyond my life in the arts.

Recently, in the past few months, I resigned from the ATA, a conscious and painful decision, which I would like to explain. In recent years, I had become increasingly alienated from the ATA’s corporate culture. I am not naïve, and I realize that as organizations expand they inevitably change. From a grader’s perspective, I saw the human and individual contribution inexorably overlooked in

favor of codified rules and so-called standards. But the more serious problem was the Association’s obsequious courting of official approval from government agencies. I am not going to expound my personal political views, but to quote Tip O’Neill, “all politics is local.” While creating job opportunities for its membership is a fine idea, I believe that the formation of alliances with the FBI, NSA, and other government agencies – without evaluating the ethical risks – is blind opportunism that shades off into criminal complicity. Within this climate, two specific acts of the ATA and its current board necessitated my resignation. First, when our colleague Mohamed Yousry was indicted, prosecuted, and found guilty as a co-conspirator, for acting as interpreter for Lynne Stewart, a lawyer defending Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, who had been convicted of terrorism, the ATA turned its collective back on him. Less than a year ago, David Cole wrote in the *Nation* (May 15, 2006): “Translation is the art of erasing oneself in order to speak in another’s voice. Good translators speak for others ... he relied on the lawyers to make the decisions about what could be communicated to the sheik, and about what could be said about the sheik to the outside world.” The ATA not only refused to lend support to a colleague whose life was on the line, but also publicly and privately accused him of unethical behavior. The

ATA’s focus on so-called professional “standards,” in my opinion, was a cowardly retreat and an obvious attempt to maintain questionable ties to government agencies. Then, shortly before the 2007 ATA annual conference, the voting membership received a mailing, urging all members to vote against an anti-torture resolution submitted by Aaron Ruby. Ruby presented an eloquent yet reasoned case for all translation professionals to condemn and disavow the use of torture. Of course this was a response to the current political climate, where translators and interpreters have been complicit in atrocities at Abu Ghraib, Guantánamo, and elsewhere. But “politics is local,” politics is personal, and if we participate, even passively, in immoral practices, we have failed, both as professionals and, more importantly, as citizens.

Thus I resigned from the ATA. I treasure some individual friendships, which I know will continue, and I am keeping my membership in the NYCT, hoping that it will manage to retain its feisty independence in the face of pressure from its parent organization. On the other hand, the NYCT may become a colorless rubber-stamp outpost for ATA policies and doctrines. I hope not, and I urge my fellow NYCT members to prevent that from happening. ■

AN OPEN LETTER FROM BERNIE BIERMAN

“Once we make a decision, it is the Board decision and everyone supports it; the Board speaks with one voice”.

“Exceptions to policy often cause major problems down the road; don't promise them to or seek them for anyone”.

Dear Friends and Colleagues:
The above two statements are taken from the minutes of a recent ATA Board of Directors meeting. They are significant in that they are representative of a culture, in this case the culture of the ATA.

However, make no mistake about it, this culture is not of recent vintage. It has been around a long time. It came into being in 1971, not coincidentally in connection with another unpopular war, the Vietnam war.

Some of you have used the word “democracy” or the expression “democratic procedures” in connection with what you would like to see carried out within the Association, or in connection with how you would like the Association to act or behave.

But the terrible fact of the matter is that when a cornerstone of democracy, i.e., open and free discussion of issues and the encouragement thereof, is removed, what remains is only a skeleton of democracy. We saw that at work with the recent anti-torture resolution offered by Aaron Ruby.

Having been around the ATA for some 46 years, I could give you all a detailed narrative of how this corporate culture started, how it developed and how it has turned the Association into an uninspiring body at best, and a vengeful and unforgiving entity at worst. Indeed, I know all of ATA's well-hidden historical secrets (and even some of its more contemporary ones).

The American Translators Association does not like dissent. It does not like opinions that differ from so-called “established policy”. It does not like people who criticize, even if such criticism is offered out of love and care; love

for the association and care about its future, about its effectiveness, about its welfare. Clearly, some if not many of you are very critical of many of this country's political and/or economic policies. Are you critical because you hate this country? No, you are critical because you love it and want to make it even better. You are critical because you think and know that your country can do better.

I would like at this time to call your attention to just one of many manifestations of ATA's corporate culture. It may seem at first sight somewhat insignificant or even irrelevant, but it is far from insignificant or irrelevant when we look at the entire picture of the ATA. I refer to the Alexander Gode Medal, an award that was conceived in the earliest days of the Association, and given to a person whose contributions to or achievements in or accomplishments within the field of translation merited recognition. There were no qualifiers, no conditions, no caveats. It was merely contribution, achievement or accomplishment. And that is the way Alexander Gode wanted it. He believed that if an award of recognition was to bear his name, there would be no conditions to contribution, achievement, accomplishment. And this is not something I heard from others. On the contrary, I knew Alex Gode personally. We lived in the same village (Croton-on-Hudson, NY) for many years. Our children attended school together. Alex and I rode together many a morning on a commuter train to New York. I was very well acquainted with what he thought about translators, translation and translator organizations.

After his death in 1970 and following the events of 1971, the rules respecting the awarding of the Gode medal were modi-

fied. A qualifier – anathema to Dr. Gode – was inserted, to wit:

Individuals or institutions nominated do not have to be members of ATA; however, a history of constructive relations with ATA and the language professions in general is desirable. Nominees do not have to be U.S. citizens.

Alex Gode wanted a symbol of recognition for pure contribution, achievement or accomplishment. His successors felt otherwise. They felt that contribution or achievement or accomplishment should be predicated on “constructive relations with ATA...”

Naturally, that eliminated a good many people who contributed or achieved or accomplished many things, but who for one reason or another did not behave or refused to behave like ATA sycophants.

[If we followed ATA's line of thinking, Richard Wagner's music would be banned from our opera houses; Beethoven, an awful social boor, would also be banned, likewise Liszt, an addicted womanizer and wife-stealer. And think of all of the recognized artists and writers who did not have “constructive relations with society”.]

The setting of this qualifier to contribution or achievement or accomplishment in translation constituted one of the initial steps in the establishment of today's ATA culture.

Let me close this narrative on a very personal note:

My father, a painfully-modest man despite all of his talents, banged into my head that talking about one's own achievements and accomplishments was unacceptable social behavior.

(continued on page 7)

THE AMERICAN TRANSLATORS ASSOCIATION AND THE “CRUSADE FOR QUALITY”

by Bernie Bierman

Last November, Marian Greenfield, the current president of the American Translators Association, announced that the Association would embark on a “*Crusade for Quality*”.

I was somewhat jarred by that slogan, given the fact that the word “crusade” has taken on – rightly or wrongly – a most negative connotation in the past decade or so, not just in the Islamic world, but also in the non-Islamic world. Indeed, I wrote to several colleagues acerbically asking why the ATA didn’t select a slogan like “*A pogrom to achieve quality in translation*” or “*The final solution to quality in translation*” or “*An inquisition to attain quality*” or “*Achieving quality through cleansing*”.

But in my kindness and benevolence (and driven by my general lack of interest in ATA doings), I attributed the ATA’s and/or Ms. Greenfield’s choice of nomenclature to naiveté and/or to 100% immersion in matters translational, so much so that they both were unaware of the furor caused when President George W. Bush used the term “crusade” at the outset of the Iraq war (Mr. Bush has not used it since, at least not publicly) and the general disfavor that the term has fallen into.

Obviously, I was mistaken in my attribution of naiveté as the reason for the use of the word “crusade”, for in the February 2007 issue of *The ATA Chronicle*, Ms. Greenfield once again announced “*ATA’s Quality Crusade*”, writing “*Much is planned for 2007 to continue ATA’s ‘quality crusade’ and I hope that you will not only find it exciting, but that you will also contribute*”.

It certainly appears that with this latest reiteration of “*Quality Crusade*”, Ms. Greenfield and/or her colleagues in offi-

cial ATA circles deliberately selected a word around which swirls all sorts and manner of controversy, say nothing of its extremely offensive connotation to hundreds of millions of people, including in particular those who practice Islam, Christianity, Judaism and those to whom religion is anathema.

I cannot help but ask, why would a president of an international organization like the American Translators Association, which is home to hundreds of Middle Eastern-language translators and interpreters (some of whom may be practicing Muslims and others secular Muslims), select a word that has become so offensive and so riddled with negative connotations? Clearly, our very rich English language provides a veritable trove of words that would convey the same idea, e.g., “*Quest for Quality*”.

The more I look at the unfortunate use of the word “crusade” and the more I review the events in the ATA of the past 5 or so years with particular respect to the involvement of translators and interpreters in the so-called “War on Terror”, the more I see signs that the slogan “*Quality Crusade*” as used by Ms. Greenfield in November of 2006 and February of 2007 was not a mere manifestation of naiveté. There is more than sufficient evidence to indicate that it was deliberate and planned. If the two-time use of the word “crusade” is a manifestation of anything, it is a manifestation of the Association’s political sympathies, notwithstanding its protestations that it is a non-political organization and that its members in the exercise of their professional duties must always demonstrate neutral objectivity. And that manifestation of political sympathies is evidenced by the following events:

1. The ATA’s closing the door (in 2004 and subsequent years) on an open discus-

sion of the Mohammed Yousry case. While the ATA made and disseminated several statements after 2004 condemning the actions of Mr. Yousry (an Arabic-English interpreter for Lynne Stewart, defense counsel for persons involved in political terrorism acts), it steadfastly refused to allow publication of views defending Mr. Yousry actions and conduct as an interpreter.¹

2. The ATA’s immediate condemnation of the so-called “Anti-torture resolution” offered in October 2006 by Aaron Ruby, an ATA-member-translator from Texas. Indeed, when forced by legal statute to accept Mr. Ruby’s resolution for a vote by the membership, the ATA reacted under the leadership of Ms. Greenfield by telling the membership that it should vote against Mr. Ruby’s anti-torture resolution. It was only at the eleventh hour under pressure from less dogmatic and doctrinaire heads that the ATA relented and offered its own watered-down anti-torture resolution, notwithstanding the fact that this counter-resolution smacked of all sorts of illegalities in terms of procedure.²

3. The ATA’s cold refusal to come to the assistance of its chapter, the New York Circle of Translators, when the Circle received an implied threat of legal action from the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters & Translators (NAJIT) over the circle’s publication of an article by Mr. Ruby describing the resistance he received within NAJIT over his efforts to enact an anti-torture resolution in that organization. It remains noteworthy that both the ATA and NAJIT were strongly allied in their condemnation of Mohammed Yousry’s work as an interpreter in the Lynne Stewart case. Although the New York Circle of Translators is an official ATA chapter and therefore an integral member of the ATA family, ATA officials were more than willing to allow the Circle “to twist in the legal wind”; evidently, the “mother” did not particularly care for the views

of its “rebellious child”, and appeared more than willing to have its “child” duly spanked by an outsider.

No, “crusade” as in “quality crusade” wasn’t a slip of the tongue or a manifestation of political naiveté on the part of Ms. Greenfield and her ATA colleague-officers. This was a word deliberately chosen to reinforce previous messages (vide supra) about where the organization and its leaders stand politically. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bernie Bierman has been a member of the American Translators Association since 1961 and served it in various capacities between 1961 and 1995. He was managing editor of “Translation News” (1989-1995). A privately-published newsletter. He is also the author of the only published book about the early history of the ATA, entitled “A Translator-Warrior Speaks: A Personal History of the American Translators Association, 1959-1970”

This article first appeared on line at: <http://theprogressivetranslator.blogspot.com>

NOTES

¹ The first and also last article published in the ATA Chronicle offering an explanation of Mr. Yousry’s problems was a piece by Maya Hess written in September 2003, to which the ATA added a disclaimer. Two subsequent articles by Marguerite Shore and Alison Dundy, respectively, defending Mr. Yousry’s conduct as an interpreter were not picked up for publication in the ATA Chronicle, but were published in “The Gotham Translator”, the newsletter of the New York Circle of Translators, which also published the official views of the ATA about Mr. Yousry’s work as an interpreter.

² No official notification, i.e., by United States mail, was given by the Association to its voting members, as clearly prescribed by the New York Not-for-Profit Corporation Law, the law which governs organizations like the ATA. But even if the ATA had followed proper procedure as called for by law, and not merely inform members in a random manner by e-mail that a counter-resolution could be viewed on the Association’s website, it had clearly missed the prescribed deadline for submitting its counter-resolution. The vote at the November 2006 annual conference should have been either in favor of the Ruby resolution or against it. Instead, the Association had its illegal counter-resolution on the ballot, and that illegal counter-resolution won by a few votes over the legal Ruby resolution.

(continued from page 5)

He believed that it was better for one’s character when others learned of another person’s achievements and accomplishments by themselves (adding that this self-imposed modesty also provided for an aura of mystery!).

Anyway, right or wrong, correct or incorrect, justified or unjustified, the head job that my father did remained with me my entire life, and it was always difficult – and still is – to “fly my flag” without fearing that I may be coming across as a braggart. Indeed, when in 1995 I crossed the “border” from being a translation service company owner/executive to a freelance translator, one of the hardest things for me was to formulate a resumé or C.V.

Having so prefaced, I shall herewith “fly the flag” (for whatever such flying may be worth).

In two years from now, the American Translators Association will be celebrating its 50th anniversary. Some of you might be aware that the Association is planning to write some kind of commemorative history. Several people who have been around the organization for many years have been contacted either by ATA headquarters or by certain ATA officials.

But there has been absolutely no contact with the one person who is the unqualified authority on ATA history, the one person who has written a book about the first eleven years of the ATA, a person who knows the pre-history of ATA, a person whose knowledge of translation (particularly industrial translation) in the United States prior to the coming of the ATA dwarfs that of anyone else.

Indeed, who else will be able to answer questions authoritatively about translation practices, translation economics, translation this-or-that in the years previous to the coming of the ATA and in the many many years following its establishment?

The answer is very clear: No one except your correspondent.

But your correspondent carries heavy baggage. He is *persona non grata* within the ATA. He has dissented. He has criticized. He has not been “loyal”. He has called the ATA’s sacred “accreditation” (now “certification”) program “intellectual fraud”. He defended the ATA’s first “beast”, the “notorious” Dale Cunningham; he has demonstrated a patent unwillingness to accept “ATA discipline” (ATA President Thomas Wilds, 1971); he “embarrassed” the ATA vis-à-vis its members by disclosing all of the secrets it was trying to hide from them during the investigation by the Federal Trade Commission into the association’s antitrust practices (1989-1994).

The “official” ATA history will “speak with one voice”. Just as one voice will speak on issues of translators/interpreters involved with torture, or translators/interpreters dismissed from the military because of the way they like their sex, or translators/interpreters who will refuse to work with prosecutors who themselves are in violation of laws.

I hope that this little insight into the culture of the ATA will provide each of you with the whys and wherefores of some of the current events and happenings.

Many thanks “for lending me your ears”. — Bernie ■

NETWORKING COMES ALIVE IN NEW YORK CITY

by Deborah Lockhart of The Language Shop

The Language Shop hosted its second Networking Lunch on March 10, 2007, at Notaro Ristorante on Second Avenue in New York City. This time, it



Deborah Lockhart

was planned as a result of the overwhelmingly positive reaction to the first Networking Lunch on January 20, where there were 21 partici-

pants. The Lunch lasted from 12 noon to about 3:30 p.m. There were 22 translators and other professionals in attendance. The Networking Lunch was founded on principles very similar to the stated objectives of the New York Circle of Translators as can be seen on its website: *"Our translators and interpreters are committed to the exchange of ideas and mutual support. Another goal is to educate the general public about the professional nature of interpreting and translating."*

Deborah Lockhart, the President of The Language Shop welcomed attendees and thanked them for participating in the Lunch. She stated the objectives of the Lunch: namely for language professionals and those in the wider business community to network. She also introduced a new component to the Lunch: to reach out to those in need. As planned, the Lunch participants brought generous

donations of food and clothing items for the featured charity: The Jean Lambert Project at St. Agnes Roman Catholic Church. St. Agnes Church reaches out to the local and national homeless and hungry, including Katrina victims in Louisiana, and has sent relief supplies to disaster-stricken and war-torn countries such as the Philippines and Rwanda.

Greetings were conveyed on behalf of Suzana Martinez, the President of the New York Circle of Translators, Rosene Zaros, the Editor of the New York Circle of Translators' publication, *The Gotham Translator*, and Emily

Tell, the Director of Tellmealgo Translations, who assisted in spearheading the first Networking Lunch. They were all unable to attend the Lunch that day.

Deborah made reference to the stated objectives of the New York Circle of Translators and introduced Lana Rachkovskaya, the Program Director of the New York Circle of Translators, who gave a brief address to the Lunch participants. She invited those who were not already members of the Circle to join

and take an active role in the Circle's activities. She mentioned the Circle's meetings and dinners as a useful resource for members to learn about the translation business and to network with each other.

Next, the main speaker, Rubén Díaz, the Founder and President of Titus Language and Educational Services, was introduced. Rubén is also a member of the New York Circle of Translators and the American Translators Association.



Rubén spoke, among other things, about his experiences while serv-

ing in the U.S. Navy since the age of seventeen as a Submarine Electronics Technician and later as a Military Linguist. He mentioned that he had recently returned from a business trip to his native island of Puerto Rico where he had gone to establish a language training project for the University of Connecticut. He spoke of how little he had anticipated as a Spanish-speaking child that he would ever have become bilingual, much less an interpreter or language educator. He mentioned that he had started learn-

ing English when he moved to New York City at the age of thirteen. This greatly inspired those in attendance at the Lunch who were not sure about the direction in which they wanted to go. He shared details



about his background and work experiences and also discussed professional aspects of the interpreting business, ranging from maintaining high personal and professional standards to setting and standing by prices. He also emphasized the importance of educating clients about the professional nature of the linguistics business since some clients sometimes had a tendency to confuse translation with interpreting and to not recognize the importance of having accurate translations, because of their preoccupation with saving money. There was an extensive question and answer session while lunch orders were being taken and lunch was being served. Rubén's presentation was very engaging and it was obvious that his contribution to the Lunch was very much appreciated by the attendees.

The pitches came next. Each attendee had 90 seconds to present his or her business. This part proved to be very interesting as there was a very diverse group of professionals at the Lunch. The translators and interpreters in the group

worked with various language pairs and had varied areas of specialization while the other professionals spoke different

languages and worked in varied roles and industries. Some presentations were very creative.

Immediately after the pitches, five classical CDs donated by The Language Shop and Sandra Niemann-Bird were raffled at \$2.00 per chance. A total of \$82.00 was collected from the raffle and all of the proceeds of the raffle, along with the items donated, were gratefully accepted by Jean Lambert for St. Agnes Church. The winners of the raffle were very happy with their selections. There was no shortage of humor and camaraderie and the Italian cuisine at *Notaro* was delicious.

Kerri Modla, the Senior Vice President of Sales at Ask Translation, a prior presenter at our November 2006, New York Circle meeting, was present. Apart from being responsible for selling the raffle tickets, she played a very valuable role in critiquing the Lunch and the participants' pitches. She discussed her impressions after the Lunch and commented on the length and focus of the pitches, attire of attendees, and general approach to networking as some areas

that could do with attention if these Lunches were to serve as networking events rather than merely as social gatherings.

Based on her comments and on the general consensus among those present that the Lunch should be a monthly affair, it was decided that each subsequent Lunch will be accompanied by a lecture, for the benefit of attendees. Kerri also agreed to present the lecture on *Effective Networking* at the upcoming Networking Lunch which is slated for April 28 at Costa del Sol Restaurant at 942 Ninth Avenue (50th Street) in New York City from 12:00 noon to 3:00 p.m.

The Networking Lunch recognizes the valuable support of Kerri Modla, Sandra Niemann-Bird, Lana Rachkovskaya, Nejat Abou-Sunima who took care of public relations and administrative aspects of the Lunch, Rubén Díaz, and Fouad Kheir who continues to play the role of photographer for all of our events. We look forward to continued participation in the Networking Lunches and welcome proposals for possible lecture topics in the future. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Deborah Lockhart is the treasurer of the New York Circle of Translators and the President of The Language Shop, a New York based Translation Company specializing in translation, interpreting, transcription, and various other linguistic services. She is the founder of the monthly Networking Lunch. She has worked as a freelance translator and educator since 1985. She founded the concept of the Networking Lunch. Contact: networkinglunch@thelanguageshop.org

LEGAL TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING SEMINAR

An ATA Professional Development Event

reviewed by Rosene Zaros

On Saturday, March 31, 2007, approximately 130 people met at the Doubletree Hotel in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to participate in a seminar focusing on legal translation and interpreting. While the majority of participants were from the east coast, there were a few who traveled some distance to attend. International participants included linguists from the UK, Puerto Rico, Uruguay, and Brazil.

After completing registration, finding friends (it's amazing how often we are not aware of what our friends are doing), and partaking of the continental breakfast provided by ATA, the participants were ready for the first of three sessions.

Session I. Untangling the Tortuous Tapestry of Legal Discourse

Janis Palma, a federally-certified, English↔Spanish judiciary interpreter since 1981, stressed that those of us who work as legal translators or judiciary interpreters live in a world of words: words with the power to regulate right and wrong in a society in the form of laws; words with a force and effect we do not see in other institutions. We must learn legal terminology in two languages that generally embody two separate legal systems. Her presentation addressed the salient characteristics of legal language as defined in *Legal Language* by Peter Tiersma (U. of Chicago Press, 1999) and other scholars – wordiness and redundancy, conjoined phrases and lists of words, unusual sentence structures, impersonal constructions, multiple negations—as well as the peculiar characteristics of courtroom discourse – telegraphic speech, use of legal slang and acronyms, code-switching between legalese and plain English, among others. She is convinced that as we identify the structure that holds together the obscure language of the law, we will also

identify ways to render it more effectively and efficiently when we translate or interpret. By identifying some salient traits of legal discourse, we can provide target language renditions that sound or read less like a third-language rendition and more like the type of discourse a legal professional would use in that particular target language.

Most of us are familiar with boilerplate language or phrases that will always be stated in the same manner and have the same meaning in whatever context they are used, so it should not come as a surprise to find this type of language used in contracts, appellate court opinions, and jury instructions, among others, taken from judges' bench books and publications such as the *American Jurisprudence Legal Forms*. For example:

Owner grants, sells, assigns, and transfers to purchaser, exclusively and forever...

I give, devise, and bequeath all of the rest, residue, and remainder of my estate, of whatever kind and character, and wherever located, to my children...

I... being of sound and disposing mind, memory and understanding, do hereby willfully and voluntarily make, publish and declare this to be my Living Will...

Interpreters and translators should become familiar with such boilerplate language and be prepared with target

language solutions whenever these come up in written or oral discourse. Solutions should be drawn, preferably, from legal documents in the target language.

Word order in other languages may be different from what we would expect in standard English, which has a preference for passive constructions in legal terminology. For example, English might use a sentence such as "The vehicle was seized by the agents." Translating this sentence, literally, into Spanish, for example, would result in an awkward construction, one that would appear "marked" as a translation. It would be more natural to use an active form: "The agents seized the vehicle." Sometimes it is necessary to change the verb. "Instructions were given to the officers." would become "The officers received instructions." An awareness of the differences between source and target languages will facilitate a better translation.

Another peculiar trait of legal English is the tendency toward wordiness. Legal English prefers phrases rather than single words. Thus, we find "place a limitation upon" instead of "limit," "in the event of" instead of "if," and "provide assistance" instead of "help." When English is not the target language, it is advisable to reduce the wordiness.

Much of the redundancy we find in American legalese results from its origins in England after 1066. There was a need to cover all possibilities with language. Thus, we find such things as:

- Last Will [Old English] and Testament [Latin]
- Give, bequeath [Old English] and devise [Old French]
- Rest [Old English], residue [Latin] and remainder [Old French]

Legal systems based on Roman [Civil]

Law do not have the same redundancy.

Session II. Does It Mean What You Think It Means?

M. Eta Trabing, who, since 1956, has been involved in translation services of legal and commercial documents for large industries, court proceedings, and federal and state agencies of all kinds, made the point that some legal acronyms and words are quite difficult to translate or interpret because the concept behind the words is not immediately apparent. Translators and interpreters can make mistakes if they only *think* they know what something means. As this session was non-language specific, the concept behind more than 30 sentences was explained in English so that participants could decide if what they had written or thought in their own language was actually appropriate or in error. Items were taken from all levels of courts (municipal, county, state, and federal) as well as from other judiciary situations. Handouts included a worksheet for translation by participants with room for notes and other materials listing legal resources for various languages. Her “Selected Terminology” included definitions from Black’s Law Dictionary and Merriam-Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary. These were compared in Spanish to the Diccionario de la lengua española – 22a edición.

As the session progressed, it became more informal with the presenter dealing with questions as they arose, allowing for open discussion of issues involved in translating and interpreting. She acknowledged that there is a controversy between interpreting words and interpreting meaning. While it is possible to interpret words, it is also quite possible that those words will have no meaning at all as they go from one language to another. She gave the example of “mur-

der in the first degree,” a very common legal term in the United States, which, if translated literally, would be absolutely meaningless to someone unfamiliar with the U.S. legal system. It would thus be necessary to define the term in the target language.

Ms. Trabing was very candid in talking about her experiences as an interpreter. She alluded to personal controversies arising from translation and interpreting experiences. How one resolves these issues will always be personal, but she stated that sometimes it’s necessary to step out of the role of interpreter and become a citizen. She has published *The Manual for Judiciary Interpreters*, *The Pan American Livestock Dictionary*, *The Dictionary of Foods and Cookery*, and *The Glossary on Waste Management and Ecology*. Her list of dictionaries and glossaries along with U.S. sources was quite extensive.

Session III. Standard and Non-Standard Contract Clauses

Daniel Giglio, who received his Juris Doctor and Legal Translation degrees from the University of Buenos Aires, also holds an MA in Conference Interpretation (Spanish↔English) from the Monterey Institute of International Studies in Monterey, CA.

Mr. Giglio began by acknowledging that legalese poses a number of challenges for the legal translator. His presentation was designed to provide participants with useful examples and information for translating various contract provisions, with emphasis on the especially complicated concepts such as torts, damages, indemnity clauses, and other similar covenants. He also offered explanations of in-context legal terms and clauses. The session very quickly became one of

open participation with questions and comments from attendees.

Terms discussed included:

- Disclaimers: what someone will not be responsible for.
- Warranty: relates to the present and the past and assures responsibility for some quality or qualities of the product.
- Guarantee: relates to the future
- Tort: a wrongful act that is neither a crime nor a breach of contract, but that renders the perpetrator liable to the victim for damages.
- Act of God: violent and catastrophic event caused by forces of nature, which could not have been prevented or avoided by foresight or prudence.
- Affiliated Company: two companies are affiliated when one owns less than a majority of the voting stock of the other, or when both are subsidiaries of a third company.
- Subsidiary: a company whose voting stock is more than 50% owned by another firm.
- Force Majeure: an unavoidable cause of delay or of failure to perform a contract obligation on time. (Includes human beings.)

The speaker also provided insight into other somewhat obscure legal terms such as “good and valuable consideration,” “indemnify and hold,” and “jurisdiction.”

Networking Session

After a very full day, it was pleasant to have a drink in a relaxed atmosphere, talk with friends, and meet new people. All in all, most participants felt that it had been a worthwhile seminar. They had gleaned enough information and made enough contacts to feel satisfied. ■

CIRCLE NEWS

■ UPCOMING EVENTS

April 20-21

ASJA Writers Conference
Grand Hyatt Hotel
42nd and Grand Central Station, NY
Contact: <http://www.asja.org>

April 28

**Networking Lunch featuring
Kerri Modla presenting a lecture
on effective networking.**

Costa del Sol Restaurant
942 Ninth Ave. (50th St.)
New York
12 Noon – 3:00 PM
networkinglunch@thelanguageshop.org

April 28-29

**ATA Portuguese Language Division
(PLD) 12th Annual Mid-Year
Conference**

Briston Community College
Fall River, MA
www.atanet.org

May 2

NYCT May Meeting
www.nyctranslators.org

May 4-6

ATA Energy Conference
Houston, TX
www.atanet.org

May 18-20

**National Association of Judiciary
Interpreters & Translators
(NAJIT) 28th Annual Conference**
Portland, OR
www.najit.org

May 31-June 3

**ATA Medical Division (MD)
1st Mid-Year Medical Division
Conference**
InterContinental Hotel
Cleveland Clinic
Cleveland, OH
www.atanet.org

■ NEW WEBSITES, BLOGS, AND FORUMS

Kenneth Kronenberg

<http://theprogressivetranslator.blogspot.com>

German translator, writer, and editor states: "The purpose of this blog is to provide a forum, a clearinghouse, where progressive translators and other interested persons may discuss issues of concern, including, but not limited to, political aspects of translation, translation theory, the policies and structure of the ATA, and activism at the local group level."

Aurora M. Humarán

www.ndet.org

Aleph Translations has launched a forum for translators and interpreters. Although most of N. de T. is EN<>ES, there is a Babel section In Other Words, at <http://www.ndet.org/foro/forumdisplay.php?fid=44>

■ TRANSLATION MARKETPLACE

ICORN Babel journal seeking translations

Babel is the online journal for ICORN, the International Cities of Refuge Network. It is a quarterly literary/activist journal focused on freedom of expression, exile, identity and cross-cultural issues. They especially seek good bilingual work (original and translation or code-switching). Their audience is international and the work they publish reflects this. Prose, poetry (bilingual) essays and interviews are all welcome. They encourage creative twists on their themes. See submission guidelines at www.icorn.org (<http://www.icorn.org/sections.php?var=12>).

■ MEMBER NEWS

Alison Dundy

Alison Dundy recently published an excerpt from Alain Mackanbou's wonderful novel, *Bleu Blanc Rouge*. This appeared in Words Without Borders, an online literary magazine. You can read her translation and become more familiar with the magazine at:

<http://www.wordswithoutborders.org/article.php?lab=Bleublancrouge>

■ NOTE FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

It has been such a great pleasure serving the New York Circle of Translators for the past year and a half. I met a lot of new people and was able to reconnect with old friends and colleagues. I cannot stress enough the power of networking and communication in our industry. I thank each and every one of you for coming to our meetings, for your questions and input, as without you and your interest we are nothing. I hope that many of you enjoyed the meetings, presentations and dinners in 2006 and 2007. I know I certainly did enjoy meeting and seeing you every month.

We have a lot of interesting things planned for the rest of 2007 and I am proud to introduce Margarite Heintz Montez who volunteered her time and efforts to serve as our new Program Director this year. I feel certain that you will enjoy her company and the events. I thank the Board, Gotham editors, Election and Continuing Education Committees for all their input and devotion, and it has been a wonderful journey for me which, unfortunately, came to an end – I prefer to think of it as a full circle though. Please continue coming to the meetings and participating in the NYCT events. I wish you prosperity and all the best in the work you do.

Kindest regards,
Lana Rachkovskaya

NYCT February Meeting – February 7, 2007

SPANISH ROUND TABLE

by Lana Rachkovskaya

The Spanish Round Table was a brainstorming event focused around one main issue: how to best communicate in foreign languages with our immigrant populations, how to best use and leverage our resources, including the resources put out by the federal government, and how to best use what we are learning from experience. The participants tried to ponder some of the challenges and the merits of working towards certain degrees of standardization in terms of communication.

An excellent starting point in the new government portal was presented by Laura Godfrey. Laura pointed out that the federal government is making a big effort to reach out to the Spanish community – taking baby steps to reaching out to the community in a way we can all relate to. GobiernoUSA.gov was one of the main websites reviewed during the meeting. All the government agencies are presented on this website. If the material exists in Spanish, it is here. Laura also mentioned that they do not produce the content, they link you to it. Another great resource is webcontent.gov. In general, the goal is to move towards standardization of the Spanish language at least in the government. “We want people to have access to the information,” – pointed out Laura. All participants agreed that everyone can benefit if we can standardize the language.

On www.usa.gov you can find Spanish Style Guides and Glossaries. These resources touch base on such issues as capitalization, punctuation and language use. Laura encouraged everyone to contact her office if the languages professionals would like to add any related content to the website. “Help us grow this [project]!” – said Laura. “Webcontent.gov is giving us

space to grow and resources for people who need contractors,” – she continued.

Some questions from the audience followed concerning the use of the consistent terms in agency names. “We try to communicate and talk about the benefits of the website, and we encourage the contractors to use it,” – explained Laura. When you are going to produce a document, you need to look at it as a whole, at all components. Do not let go of details. This is what will elevate the quality of translation.

Leticia Molinero commented further: “The same happens with other languages – Russian, Chinese – standardization issues.” From working with different agencies, Leticia would often come across different rendering of the same term. Different agencies often use different terms. “This website is a very practical resource,” – suggested Leticia. “I hope that similar websites will be created in other languages.”

The discussion turned to another important topic – how do you communicate in Spanish to the entire community of New York when there are so many dialects? The following suggestion was made by the panelists – you do not have to look at what the different people say, but at what they understand. What are the words that people really understand when they read? Leticia's hope is that a study on this topic will be conducted some day which will help people in defining the “universal language”.

An important comment was made by Maria Cornelio who pointed out that people often see certain terms and they feel that they are being talked down to. It is better to use a grammatically correct word

than trying to lower the level of your target audience. Education level does not matter – the audience should still understand both a document that is written correctly and a good quality translation. There is a difference between plain language and correct language.

Leticia Molinero continued the discussion on how the original authors of the English text create it. How to write a text for translation? It has to be different. The original writers have to be aware that the text is going to be translated. Whose responsibility is it to communicate well? Leticia explained that it is the translator's responsibility to insist that the errors in the source text should be corrected and not transferred to the translation.

Stefanie Trice talked about the translation feedback. It is important to give a feedback to the translators. The feedback on the source text that the agency receives from a translator is extremely helpful. “We catch a lot of errors by getting feedback from translators,” – explained Stefanie. And this communication should be working both ways.

“Although our starting point is a government website directed to communications in Spanish, we know that most of these principles and methodologies also apply to all other immigrant languages.” – commented the panel.

The lively discussion continued at the Bubba Gump Shrimp Co. over dinner. I personally would like to extend thanks to all the participants of the Spanish Round Table and to Leticia Molinero for making this event possible. ■



MEMBERS' VOICE

Nautical Imagery in Everyday Portuguese

by Tom Moore

Every culture and every language lives not only through its concrete vocabulary, but most vividly through its stock of poetic imagery and metaphor (the most compelling imagining of this may have been that episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, where Captain Picard was literally unable to communicate with an alien until he began to inhabit the other's references to literature and myth). And, of course, the imagery and metaphors vary depending on the physical (and meta-physical) circumstances of the culture involved. Portugal, like England, was a great-seafaring nation – a small strip of land on the Atlantic taking for its own the seven seas, bequeathed a language full of maritime expressions to its most important colony, Brazil, and the Brazilian popular vernacular still smacks of the sea.

Every Brazilian knows that "Navegar é preciso" (Navigating is necessary), and usually identifies this with Camões, the great Baroque poet of the Portuguese sea voyages of the early modern age, when Brazil was discovered (the full expression actually goes back to the Roman general, Pompey, who said *Navigare necesse est, vivere non est necesse!*) (Navigating is necessary, life is not necessary!). And the trials and tribulations of the storm-tossed caravel on the open ocean (or near the treacherous reefs and rocks of the coast) still serve to describe daily life on land in Brazil. When something is going well, you can say that "vai de vento em popa" – literally, the wind is directly astern (behind the poop, the elevated area at the stern with the captain's quarters), filling the square sails of the caravel, which sailed most effectively downwind. Of course a Brazilian proverb, still widely used, tells us that "De nada adianta o vento estar a favor se não se sabe pra onde virar o leme" ("It's no use to have a favorable wind if you don't know which way to turn the steering oar (leme)", or in everyday terms, "it's no use being lucky if you don't know what to do

with it". The Brazilian household is like a ship and its crew, with the man at the helm, of course. As the proverb has it "Mulher à vela, marido ao leme" – "Wife at the sail, husband at the tiller" – a team, working together, but with the husband giving the direction." And a woman without a husband is directionless – "Mulher sem marido, barco sem leme", and not only that – in grave danger, since another proverb tells the Carioca that "Navio sem leme, naufrágio certo" ("Ship without a tiller is a shipwreck for sure). This is not to say that the role of tillerman (for the husband) is all cakes and ale, since it is his responsibility to keep the ship safely on course, without letting it founder in open waters, or run aground – and one who doesn't want to suffer at the tiller, has to suffer on the rocks (Quem não quer sofrer o leme, tem de sofrer o escolho).

A nautical metaphor, which has gone so deep into Brazilian language that most Brazilians have forgotten its watery origins, is the expression "à toa" or "à-toa", which has come to have a broad spectrum of meanings. The literal meaning is "under tow", that is a ship with no sails raised, no motion of its own, not setting its own course, only moving through the water because there is a tow rope pulling it along. Figuratively it has come to mean things like "at random", "whatever", "worthless", "careless", "thoughtless", "useless", "unemployed". Originally these meanings were overwhelmingly negative and pejorative, but the stigma has weakened over time, due to the vagrancy of the carioca and the relaxed attitude of the Brazilian hippie of thirty years ago. Uma coisa à-toa is something insignificant, not worth worrying about ("Não se irrite por uma coisa à-toa", "don't get irritated for no reason"), but significantly "coisa à-toa" is also synonymous for "woman" (who as we saw above, is adrift without a man giving direction). And even worse, a "mulher à-toa" is one of the many ways

to say "prostitute".

Once your ship has run aground, hit a reef, it is *encalhado* (literally, on a rock), it is stuck, not going anywhere. Both men and women can be *encalhado*, but it is more frequently said of women. A *mulher encalhada* is single, and procurando uma aliança para ganhar de premio um macho para desencalhar (looking for a wedding ring so that she can win a man to get her off the rocks), from the usual macho point of view, a view only reinforced by the site of Singles by Choice (www.solteirosporopcao.com.br), which opines that "mulher encalhada é aquela que encalhou em algum marido porque não tem coragem de ficar sozinha" (an encalhada is someone who has run aground on some husband, because she doesn't have the courage to stay single.) Encalhado is also used when you are talking about goods that are past their sell-by date (another metaphor used about women, not very nice....), about beached whales.

A ship that has run aground may possibly get back off again, but if it is hit during a storm it may get pounded to pieces. Any sort of undertaking can get shipwrecked (naufragar), and the unlucky who are shipwrecked may swim, swim, swim, and die on the beach (nadar, nadar, nadar e morrer na praia). This is said of someone who worked their fingers to the bone, almost succeeded, and as we say "snatched defeat out of the jaws of victory", and frequently is used to talk about soccer teams (the archetypical example for Americans would be the Boston Red Sox).

Sea life, whether mammalian, piscine, or arthropod, is another rich source of metaphor. "Boca de siri" (crab mouth) means "keep your mouth shut, don't say anything about it (since the notion is that the crab's mouth is its claw, which doesn't even let go after the crab is dead. Or, as we would say in English, "clam up". And it doesn't matter which party is in power – it is always the little people who pay the price (Quando o mar briga com a praia, quem apanha é caranguejo – when the ocean fights with the beach, it's the crab that gets screwed.)

A recent ad campaign for a gym (Academia Runner, SP) asked women

"Você quer ser baleia ou sereia, neste verão?"(would you rather be a whale or a mermaid), causing a stir, but only because they were asking out in the open a question that Brazilian women were already asking themselves. Men, on the other hand, might not be whales, but one that is boring, uninteresting, too skinny, without a manly chest is "seco igual a um bacalhau" (all dried up like a salt cod). Once he has finally produced progeny, we can be certain the child will have a family resemblance, since "filho de peixe, peixinho é" (the son of a fish is a little fish – like father, like son).

Even the ferry from Niteroi to Rio has produced its metaphors (Origenes Lessa wrote memorably of the boy who dreamed of growing up to be a sailor with a woman in every port, and had to content himself, as a seaman on the Niteroi ferry, with one woman on one side of Guanabara Bay, and one on the other). The ferry, which used to be known as the Barca da Cantareira, is a metaphor for the bisexual(someone who walks both sides of the street), and the rocking of the floats where the ferry takes

on passengers recalls for some the weaving and wobbling of the Carioca who has had a few too many chopps.

Some of the most familiar expressions in Rio slang come from the beach, as you might expect. All Cariocas have their favorite beach, and their favorite spot on their favorite beach (my woman and I hang out on Ipanema near Posto 9). And so if we are invited to do something/go somewhere that doesn't appeal, we will usually say (without being pejorative) "não é minha praia" – "that's not my beach". Someone who is "boiando" (floating) is just there, out of it, clueless. A real loser is like "merda n'agua" (shit floating on the water) – he doesn't sink, but just goes where the current takes him. The winner, on the other hand, is someone who likes to show off his talents with a surfboard tirando onda (literally stealing a wave), but used for anyone who is being conceited and trying to show off. And one of the favorite activities of idle Carioca youth – lighting a baseado(joint) on the beach was immortalized by Gabriel o Pensador with the refrain

"sente a maresia" (smell the salt air...but the "salt air" that one smells is one with the perfume of burning cannabis leaves.

And finally a toponymical note: two Carioca neighborhoods have nautical names: Leme (the word for the steering oar mentioned above) – perhaps named thus because the small hill by the water reminded the sailors of the poop from which they steered; and Gavea, in English, "crow's nest", the small aerie on the mast where the lookout sits when spying for land or other vessels, certainly was meant to name the Pedra da Gavea, a lookout point if there ever was one. ■

*First published by Brazilmax.com
Used with permission.*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tom Moore is a frequent contributor to The Gotham. He translates from Portuguese, Spanish, French, Italian and German into English. He is presently a visiting professor of music at the University of Rio de Janeiro.

NEW BOOK ON TELEPHONE INTERPRETING

We have received advance notice about a forthcoming book about telephone interpreting, which we feel will be of interest to readers.

Title: Telephone Interpreting: A Comprehensive Guide to the Profession

Author: Nataly Kelly

Key Features:

- First major book to cover telephone interpreting
- Provides first public standards of practice for telephone interpreters

Description:

This book provides readers with a fascinating in-depth view into the world of remote interpretation via telephone. The first publication devoted exclusively to the topic, this book offers a wealth of information for interpreters, educators, training professionals and consumers of interpreting services within the realms of health care, legal services, public safety, finance, social services, insurance and numerous other industries where telephone interpreting services are used.

The author, Nataly Kelly, has spent more than a decade promoting standards of quality among telephone interpreters and educating others about the role. She has also served as an in-person interpreter in the fields of legal, health care and conference interpreting, and is a certified court interpreter for Spanish and English. Ms. Kelly is co-chair of the Outreach Committee on the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care.

Izabel Arocha, President, Massachusetts Medical Interpreters Association, and Professor of Interpreting, Boston University, wrote about the book:

Organizations of all kinds are awakening to the fact that telephone interpreting is not a substitute for other types of interpreting, but is a vital and growing specialized area within the field. Rich with examples, this book is a must-read for all interpreters, and is highly recommended to coordinators and managers of interpreting services.

The book is due to be published in May and is currently available for pre-orders at 20% discount on her website: www.multilingual-matters.com. You can also download Chapter 25: "Working Effectively with Telephone Interpreters" free of charge:

<http://www.multilingual-matters.com/multi/display.asp?isb=0853599883>



**THE GOTHAM
TRANSLATOR**



The New York Circle of Translators (NYCT) is a New York State not-for-profit corporation grouping independent translators and interpreters as well as companies and organizations. It is a chapter of the American Translators Association (ATA) which is, in turn, an affiliate of the International Federation of Translators (FIT).

NYCT members work in a variety of languages and specialties. Our members are committed to the exchange of ideas and mutual support. One of our goals is to educate the general public about the professional nature of interpreting and translating.

NYCT members enjoy the following benefits:

- Free monthly meetings featuring speakers on all aspects of the translation profession
- Networking opportunities at monthly dinners and annual holiday party
- Professional development workshops and seminars
- Subscription to our newsletter, The Gotham Translator
- Listings in the NYCT Online Membership Directory and the annual NYCT printed Membership Directory
- Referrals (if you indicate that you accept them, existing members may direct work requests to you or clients may contact you directly)

Visit us at www.nyctranslators.org and join online!



**THE GOTHAM
TRANSLATOR**

PO Box 4051
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163-4051