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INTERVIEW WITH MARY SNELL-HORNBY

MARY SNELL-HORNBY / GUSTAVOALTHOFF\(^1\) & ALICE LEAL\(^2\)

Since 1989 Mary Snell-Hornby has been Professor of Translation Studies at the University of Vienna. She was a founding member of the European Society for Translation Studies (EST) and its first President (from 1992 to 1998), she was on the Executive Board of the European Society for Lexicography (EURALEX) from 1986 to 1992 and was President of the Vienna Language Society from 1992 to 1994. From 1997 to 2010 she was an Honorary Professor of the University of Warwick (UK). In May 2010 she was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of the University of Tampere (Finland) for her contribution to the discipline of Translation Studies.

Before her appointment in Vienna she worked in German and English Language and Literature, specializing in translation, contrastive semantics and lexicography. She has published widely in fields varying from Language Teaching, Literary Studies and Linguistics, but particularly in Translation Studies, and is a member of a number of advisory boards and the General Editor of the Series Studien zur Translation (Stauffenburg Verlag, Tübingen). She has worked as a visiting professor at many universities around Europe and other parts of the world, including Hong Kong, the Philippines, Thailand and Brazil (Fortaleza, UFSC Florianópolis).

In the present interview, the vast majority of the questions are focused on the interviewee's 2006 *The Turns of Translation Studies: New Paradigms or Shifting Viewpoints?*, as well as on some of the remarks made by José Lambert in his interview to Scientia Traductionis in 2010 (issue number 7). As ever, the main objective of the interviews carried out in the present journal is to reveal the interviewees' standpoint as far as Translation Studies is concerned, so as to help to build the history of the discipline through their voices, thus allowing Translation Studies to continually reassess and contemplate itself. In the case of

\(^1\) Gustavo Althoff has a major in Social Sciences from Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC) and is a PhD candidate at the Postgraduate Translation Studies programme (Pós-Graduação em Estudos da Tradução - PGET) in the same institution. He is also the assistant editor of Scientia Traductionis and a researcher at Núcleo de Estudos do Pensamento Político (NEPP) at UFSC. His research interests include the theory and the history of translation, the translation of philosophical texts, and political theory.

\(^2\) Alice Leal has recently concluded her PhD in Translation Studies (awaiting viva) at the University of Vienna, where she works as Temporary Lecturer in Portuguese and Translation Studies and coordinates the Department of Portuguese of the Centre for Translation Studies. She has an MA in Translation Studies from Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, and a BA in Portuguese and English from Universidade Federal do Paraná. Her main research interest is the intersection between postmodern thought and translation.
Mary Snell-Hornby, her point of view is clearly European, closely related to the predominantly Germanic pioneer branch of the discipline that broke with the equivalence paradigm – hence her choice of quotations in the interview.

**SCIENTIA TRADUCTIONIS**: We would like to start this interview by asking you about the history of Translation Studies (TS) from your perspective and role in it. We would like to focus on one particular institutional development in TS with which you had direct involvement, namely the creation of the European Society for Translation Studies (EST)\(^3\), of which you were one of the founders and first president, and whose inception took place in Vienna, Austria, in September 1992 during the “Translation Studies Congress”\(^4\). In your book *The Turns of Translation Studies*\(^5\) you situate the genesis of the EST against the backdrop of social changes that came about in Europe in 1989, symbolised by the Fall of the Berlin Wall (2006: 69-70). Could you elaborate a bit on the historical context and scholarly goals behind the EST? Additionally, what role has it played in helping to establish TS as an independent discipline?

**SNELL-HORNBY**: The founding of EST was the culmination of a ferment of activity that went back to the late 1970s and materialized in the form of publications and conferences (then not nearly as frequent as they are now) during the 1980s\(^6\). There were several groups of scholars working separately from each other, but basically with the same goal: to free Translation Studies from its subaltern status of being a mere branch of applied linguistics or comparative literature. Then in 1989 there came the Fall of the Berlin Wall, and this was precisely the time when I was appointed to the new Chair of Translation Studies (*Übersetzungswissenschaft*) at the Institute for Translator and Interpreter Training (as it was then called) in Vienna\(^7\), and until 1994 I was the Director of the Institute with the means and the infrastructure to organize academic events. It was an immensely exciting time, when people could meet who for decades had been separated or isolated by the Iron Curtain. I remember the pleasure we had in inviting the ambassadors of all the new democracies whose languages were represented at our Institute to my inaugural lecture in January 1990\(^8\). In this general spirit of optimism and euphoria, the Austrian government provided funds for travel to universities in these new democracies to promote the development of Translation Studies programmes, and this took me round Poland,

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2. The founding meeting of EST was held during the Translation Studies Congress “Translation Studies – An Interdiscipline”, in Vienna, Austria, from 9th to 12th September 1992. The proceedings of this Congress were published in the following volume: Snell-Hornby, Mary; Pöchhacker, Franz; and Kaindl, Klaus (eds). 1994. *Translation Studies. An Interdiscipline*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. (Source: [http://www.est-translationstudies.org/congress.html](http://www.est-translationstudies.org/congress.html))
5. At the same time new Chairs of Translation Studies were created and appointments made in the Institutes in Innsbruck (Annemarie Schmid) and Graz (Erich Prunc).

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